



BCD NewsFlash July 27, 2006

Landmark Court Opinion Affirms Clinical Social Work's Bio- psychosocial Approach

A New York Court has held that clinical social workers may provide services to those whose mental disorders or symptoms may be organic in nature or result from a concurrent physical ailment. In December, 2005, Judge Budd G. Goodman of the New York State Supreme Court issued his opinion, which strongly affirmed the new scope-of-practice section of New York's clinical social work licensure law and which set clinical social work on the same footing as psychology.

Judge Goodman found that, under New York law, "in terms of clinical functions, the scope of practice of psychology and the scope of practice of licensed clinical social work, although described using some different words at times, do not vary in substance and are wholly equal and the same." Relying, in part, on ABE's long-time definition of clinical social work, which includes a bio-psychosocial framework, the Court determined that, "as a matter of [New York] law, the failure of a psychologist or licensed clinical social worker to utilize a bio-psychosocial approach in the performance of diagnosis, assessment and treatment planning would constitute practice that, per se, violates the professional standard of care."

The legal issue arose in a case in which a person charged with assault had been examined by a psychiatrist and a psychologist, who reported that the defendant was not competent to stand trial as the result of dementia secondary to head trauma. Heeding the concerns of opposing counsel, the Court appointed Hillel Bodek, MSW, LCSW, BCD, to examine the defendant. Mr. Bodek is president of the New York State Society for Clinical Social Work. At that time, New York State's new licensing laws for psychologists and clinical social workers went into effect, replacing statutes which had protected professional titles but had not defined the scope of practice of psychology and clinical social work. Defense counsel argued that only physicians may assess a person and diagnose when there is a question of a biologically-based mental disorder. Mindful of the new licensure law, the Court denied counsel's application to rescind Mr. Bodek's appointment and to strike the report of the psychologist; instead, Mr. Bodek made his evaluation and the defendant, who was found competent, pleaded guilty to a lesser offense and received a sentence of probation.

Regarding forensic evaluations, Judge Goodman, who had served on the bench for 35 years, indicated that the quality of forensic experts depends "far more on the professional

involved and the thoroughness of his or her evaluation, rather than his or her discipline. ... Clinical social workers are uniquely suited to assist the courts as forensic experts because they have particular competence in assessing the impact of a person's mental and physical condition on his or her social functioning, a key element in rendering forensic mental health assessments and opinions."

For those who may wish to review the opinion and cite it in their advocacy, the case of *People v. RR* is reported at 12 Misc 3rd 161, 807 NYS 2d 516 (Supreme Court, New York County 2005), which may be accessed through the New York court decision archives at: http://www.courts.state.ny.us/reporter/3dseries/2005/2005_25561.htm . Any court, legislature, lobbyist, or advocacy organization, in any state or jurisdiction dealing with the role of clinical social work, would do well to become familiar with this decision.

Charles Curie, Clinical Social Worker Head of SAMHSA, Resigns

Charles G. Curie, administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) throughout most of the Bush administration, has resigned and will be leaving the agency on August 5th. Curie, a graduate of the University of Chicago School of Social Work, is the first clinical social worker to have headed SAMHSA, where he began as director in November, 2001.

In his resignation letter to President Bush, Curie gave no reasons for his departure, and claimed success for the administration's New Freedom Initiative and Access to Recovery programs. His future plans are unclear.

Holm Prizes Awarded

The 2006 Judith Holm Memorial Awards for Excellence in Preparation for Practice are cash prizes of \$2,000 each made to five winners of a national competition for second-year students in graduate schools of social work. The awards are named in honor of Judith Holm, the first president of ABE; the winners are selected on the basis of papers written about the students' most recent field placements. The papers, which should reveal a great deal about the values, knowledge, and skills that the student has developed on the way toward becoming a clinical social worker, are initially judged by faculty members from among the 170 schools of social work whose students are eligible. Neither the authors' names nor the school or geographical location are known to the judges.

This year, about eighty papers were received and judged. Final-round judging was conducted by the directors of the American Board of Examiners, with winners determined by their ratings from at least four different readings of the papers.

E. Magali Morales Gonzalez

Portland State University

Trauma Theory Applied to the Case of a Latina Survivor of Interpersonal Violence

Drena Fagen

New York University

Understanding the Impact of Cultural Identity on a Female Perpetrator of Domestic Violence: A Self Psychology Approach

Rosamond Kreilkamp

University of Maine

The Challenges and Rewards of Telehealth Forming Connections With Rural Clients via Satellite

Margo Nelson

Portland State University

Use of Evidence-Based Practice in the Treatment of PTSD and Methamphetamine Dependence: Trauma-Informed Treatment for a Client with Co-Occurring Disorders

Hope Atwell

Florida Atlantic University

Healing Relationships in Clinical Social Work: Exploring Relationships within the Therapeutic Framework as a Collaboration for the Client

As in the past, copies of most of the winning papers will be submitted for possible publication in the Smith College Studies in Social Work journal.

Major Provider System Revises Description To Favor Clinical Social Workers

Private Health Care Systems (PHCS), a major national preferred provider organization (PPO) based in Waltham, Mass., recently revised its description of clinical social work. The result of the change was to adopt a description that, in a brief format, does full justice to the professionalism of clinical social work.

The former description, which tended to be misleading and pejorative, was permanently retired. At the same time, the company significantly revised its description of psychology.

The changes came about as a result of an intervention requested by a BCD clinical social worker in New Jersey. Michael Brooks, MSW, BCD, ABE’s National Marketing Manager, contacted the officials at PHCS to discuss the insufficiency of their description. Brooks effectively made the case for clinical social work as a profession whose services are performed at a high level of efficacy rather than a generic purveyor of “organized work” in the “social services.” Personnel at PHCS showed a lively interest in correcting their public statement. Within two weeks, PHCS had revised the descriptions of both clinical social work and psychology, as seen below.

PHCS Former Descriptions

CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST	A masters level nurse practitioner specializing in behavioral health
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY	A provider with a masters or doctoral degree (PhD) who deals with mental processes both normal and abnormal and their effects upon behavior. Psychologists partner with an MD if they feel medication should be part of their treatment.
CLINICAL SOCIAL WORK	Organized work intended to advance the social conditions of a community, and especially of the disadvantaged, by providing psychological counseling, guidance, and assistance, especially in the form of social services.

PHCS Current Descriptions.

CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST	A masters level nurse practitioner specializing in behavioral health
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY	The science that deals with mental processes and behavior.
CLINICAL SOCIAL WORK	A provider with a masters or doctoral degree (MSW or DSW/PhD) who assesses, diagnoses, intervenes and treats individuals, families and groups with biopsychosocial problems or disorders. Clinical Social Workers partner with an MD if they feel medication should be part of their treatment.

Private Health Care Systems is now the nation's largest privately owned PPO, and has been a supporter of ABE and its BCD Directory since its inception. Your BCD credential is seen as a mark of preference by PHCS. Providers in rural areas are especially needed by PHCS. To find out more about the PHCS network and how to join for possible referrals contact PHCS.

Working with Children Credential

ABE is making rapid progress toward completing a new credential in the specialty area of Working with Children. If you have a specialty in that area, and are interested in reviewing the protocols of the credential, please contact Dianne Moran March at ABE, dmm@abecsw.org, or give her a call at 1-800-694-5285 x.18.

New Book from Nancy Bridges, MSW, BCD: *Moving Beyond the Comfort Zone in Psychotherapy*



Nancy Bridges, MSW, BCD

Nancy Bridges, MSW, BCD, a Belmont, Mass., clinical social worker, is author of *Moving Beyond the Comfort Zone in Psychotherapy* (Jason Aronson Co., 2005), a book about therapeutic intimacy and change. Ms. Bridges argues that therapists must be willing to engage deeply with clients to offer new relational experience. Her approach integrates psychoanalytic thinking with the latest findings from infant research. Clinical narratives show how the therapist may forge deep emotional connection within a bounded therapeutic relationship, within a framework that helps maintain psychic equilibrium and safety during times of arousing and destabilizing affect and relational scenarios.

Nancy Bridges is a lecturer in Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School and Cambridge Health Alliance, and associate clinical professor at Smith College School for Social Work. She maintains a psychotherapy and consultation practice in the Boston area.

ABE, ProviderFiles Offer EAP Service

PROVIDERfiles, a network services company to Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), has recently joined forces with ABE to connect BCD clinicians with EAPs worldwide.

Benefits of joining the ProviderFiles network:

- Advertise your practice to hundreds of EAPs;
- Increase your referrals. Increase your bottom-line;
- You choose your hourly rate;
- No more paper. PROVIDERfiles is an online tool that looks just like your client file;
- EAPs download your data as soon as you enter it;
- Get paid more quickly. No more faxing or mailing paper to EAPs;
- 100% secure. Uses the same encryption as banks and is HIPAA compliant.

EAPs will now be able to search for BCD clinicians directly through the PROVIDERfiles system, much like they would through the current ABE OnLine Directory, with the added advantage of being able to electronically send and receive case information immediately.

Please visit www.providerfiles.com today with your BCD # to update your clinical profile and learn more about this exciting new service!

Get connected. Its Free!

Recertify On-Line

Board Certified Diplomates: if you are now recertifying (you would have received a notice from ABE if this is your recertification cycle), please consider doing so on-line, through the ABE website (www.abecsw.org), where you may enter your information and make a payment swiftly and securely.

ABE Assists Katrina Victims, Students

In the devastating wake of Hurricane Katrina last year, ABE reached out to graduate students in Louisiana. Working with Mary Ellen Kondrat, Dean at the Louisiana State University School (LSU) of Social Work, ABE identified 25 graduate students of social work as most in need of assistance, both for themselves and to assist them in continuity of care for their clients, many of them victims of the devastation.

LSU, with its main campus in Baton Rouge, was a refuge for those displaced by the

storm, including graduate students from Southern University and Tulane University, as well as LSU graduate students whose families had suffered losses. On behalf of the three schools, Dean Kondrat spoke with students and faculty and field placement liaisons to identify the 25 students who were most in need and most able to help others in need. All told, ABE made a donation of \$9,650.

ABE's gift was recognized at LSU campus-wide ceremonies; and Dean Kondrat wrote, "These funds will certainly help both financially and emotionally as (the students) begin to piece their lives back together."

Athena Software Provides Access to BCD Practitioners

Athena Software (<http://www.athenasoftware.net>) has formed a partnership with ABE to provide a list of clinical social workers in multiple disciplines for those using Penelope, a web-based, integrated case-management and counseling software. Dana Fox, Director of Business Development Athena Software (mail to: dana@athenasoftware.net) said, "We wanted to make it easy for agencies to find qualified staff with the experience they need in a specific location. ABE sets national practice standards, issues an advanced practice credential and publishes reference information about its board certified clinicians." He added, "Anyone using Athena Software will have now instant access to over 9,000 highly qualified and experienced clinical social workers."

Athena's world class case management software unites and helps make coherent and transparent every aspect of your organization's operations, fully integrating:

- worker /client scheduling
- client outcome evaluation
- clinical case and session note recording
- program service delivery details
- comprehensive reporting functions
- alerts, workflow automation tools and reminders
- client self-intake kiosk mode
- internal communications and workflow management tools
- for on-demand clients: server, backup and data protection service

Athena software is one of the world's most powerful and fully integrated case management and client information solutions designed for counseling, sociology, mental health centers and EAP providers. Athena helps its customers reduce operating costs, increase efficiency and improve customer service by integrating human resources, notes, outcome evaluation and billing into one system. Athena solutions combine decades of combined experience with the power of server-based and open-source database technology. Athena Software, an IBM Business Partner and Server Certified, is listed by the United Way of America's Outcome Measurement Resource Network (www.unitedway.org/outcomes) and supports the United Way's Standards of Excellence initiative.

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