



Mental Health Section Newsletter

Society for the Study of Social
Problems,

December 2010

Teresa L. Scheid, Section President

2011 SSSP Sessions and Call for Papers

The meetings will be held in Chicago, August 12-14. The program theme is "service sociology" - defined by Javier Trevino (SSSP President) as the "sociology of social problems to ameliorate conditions of life for those in need of assistance, ... and to inspire and promote the welfare of the community." Our sessions are as follows

I. Thematic: Mental Health Treatment and Community Care. I think this session fits well with the idea of service sociology. Papers can address new forms of treatment, medicalization of mental health care, mental health providers and patients, and local service agencies. Chicago has a good number of local service providers and researchers and I will bring some of these folks to the table to discuss long standing concerns in meeting the many needs of those with mental health problems.

II. What Kind of A Social Problem is "Mental Illness?". Theoretical and Empirical Frameworks Mental illness, psychiatric hospitalization, coercion and control, homelessness—these were the hallmarks of research in the SSSP mental health tradition. What frameworks guide our research today? To what degree do sociologists communicate with the larger public about mental illness as a social problem? What types of solutions do we propose?

III. Workshop: How and Where to Get Publish Mental Health Research. This workshop will feature editors of journals, authors who have published in diverse journals, and those who have published mental health books.

Also, please look ahead to nominations for the Best Student Paper Award and the Greenley Award. Supporting materials are due May 1 to:

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Nominations for President: DUE MAY 1

We will be holding elections for the SSSP Mental Health Section President this spring. This is a two year term, and entails organizing the sessions, ensuring a meeting is held, and Attending Division Chairperson Meetings. Its not hard, and SSSP Staff handles lots of the details. Please send nominations to either me or to Michelle Koontz. Serving as a President is a good way to meet lots of wonderful people, and shape the program in the coming years. We could definitely use some new people with new ideas, so don't be bashful!

New Journals:

There are two new journals of special interest to our members:

Society and Mental Health. This is a new journal, sponsored by the ASA Mental Health Section. *Society and Mental Health* publishes original articles that apply sociological concepts and methods to the understanding of the social origins of mental health and illness, the social consequences for persons with mental illness, and the organization and financing of mental health services and care. Its editorial policy favors manuscripts that advance the sociology of mental health and illness, stimulate further research, inform treatments and policy and reflect the diversity of interests of its readership.

Stigma Research and Action. *Stigma Research and Action* is a peer reviewed open access journal that provides a multi-disciplinary, international forum for the presentation of scholarly research pertaining to prejudice and discrimination that is caused by health conditions, disabilities, or membership in marginalized social or cultural groups. Stigma Research and Action is seeking submissions focused on stigma, human rights and social inclusion of people with disability, health conditions and marginalized social or cultural groups. Articles may include, but are not limited to, qualitative and quantitative research studies on innovative models to conceptualize, assess, and address stigma and discrimination. We welcome submissions from researchers and professionals from different disciplines, persons with stigmatized conditions, and family members.

Reflections on the 201 SSSP Meetings:

Can you remember how you felt the first few times you attended an academic conference? You may have been full of excitement and anticipation, wondering what to expect. You may have planned ahead and previewed the program to select which sessions to attend based on research interests or presenters. You may have even felt a little nervous. These are all feelings I have had over the past year as I have attended my first round of conferences as a graduate student with interests in mental health.

I arrived early to have ample time to check in and orient myself with the conference area. My first instinct was this was a manageable conference and I immediately felt relief. The first day, after I had attended a morning session, I went to the lobby to find a seat to eat my lunch and review my program, yet again. As I was sitting on the sofa, an SSSP member came and sat next to me and asked if I was enjoying the conference and how I was doing. I suppose she noticed my badge posting that not only was I a graduate student, but also that I was a first time attendee. She may not have realized it at the time, but her kindness encouraged me to be an SSSP member for life. That brief and friendly conversation prompted me to attend the planning session, which happened to be next on the schedule. Due to that experience and her kindness, I knew that I wanted to be involved with this community. At the planning session, I met other established professionals and had the opportunity to volunteer for the 2011 conference in Chicago. Attending this session also allowed me to understand how session topics were chosen and how each of the sections operated.

The most enjoyable experience I had at the conference was attending the Mental Health Reception on Friday evening. I had the opportunity to speak with other graduate students who were willing to share their experiences and talk with me about their programs. There was also the opportunity and to meet people whose work I was reading in my classes. This is a very exciting proposition when you are new to the field. Overall, the reception, and the conference in general, were a memorable experience. The next time you are at the SSSP conference, I encourage you to introduce yourself to both graduate students and first time attendees. You never know the type of impact you can make.

Megan Smith, MA Candidate in Sociology.

Thank you Megan, your experiences mirror those of my own so many
years ago! I look forward to seeing both new and old faces in Chicago in
2011!

Teresa