9th International Conference on Social Work in Health and Mental Health
University of York, UK, 22-26 July 2019
Call for abstracts

Introduction

Social workers in health and mental health settings frequently practice alongside professionals from other health disciplines. This enriches our work, which is informed by many models, frameworks and perspectives, drawn from across the social sciences, psychology and health disciplines. We have a unique contribution to make, which is to be recognised and celebrated.

In some multi-disciplinary health and mental health settings it can be difficult to distinguish social work from occupational therapy or nursing, for example, where models and forms of practice are shared across professional boundaries. This demonstrates the importance of social perspectives and illustrates the extent to which other professions draw upon our knowledge. However, the unique contribution of social work to health and mental health can sometimes be lost.

This conference explores the potential for social work practitioners, researchers and educators, alongside service users and carers, to shape the future of health and mental health care. Working with health professionals, social workers can take a lead on promoting human rights and social perspectives. This conference recognises and celebrates good practice in social work and contributes to discussions about new agendas for social work practice and research in health and mental health services.

The conference themes are necessarily broad to encompass the many domains in which social workers practice, and the issues they confront. We have divided the themes into those which are common across health and mental health care, and those which are unique or more specialised.

Cross-cutting themes

Innovation / shaping the future

We would like to explore new or emerging areas of practice or research which have the potential to take the social work profession into new directions in the future in health and mental health. Any innovative social work practice or research in health and mental health will be considered under this theme.

Human rights and legal frameworks

Social workers play an important role in preserving the human rights of people receiving health and mental health care. They also interpret and implement mental health law in many contexts. We are
interested to explore this theme in its full diversity to learn more about how human rights issues are addressed by social workers across the globe.

Social and political perspectives

Social workers are at the forefront of bringing social perspectives into health and mental health care. They also have a history of political action and alliances with service users, consumers and carers in mental health. This conference will share historical examples, good practice and new research about the multitude of ways in which social workers promote social and psycho-social perspectives, and form pragmatic political alliances with service users and other practitioners in health and mental health contexts.

Health and mental health through the lifespan

Social workers take a lifespan approach to their work with children and adults. Considering human development throughout the life course, social workers work with people undergoing transitions. In addition, social workers in health and mental health settings work with complexity, which might include issues pertaining to intersectionality; multiple and diverse support needs; interfaces with multiple agencies and services such as providers of accommodation, criminal justice agencies, addictions services; or with specialist community services for people of different ethnic groups or sexual orientation. This conference will explore how social workers connect issues across the lifespan, and consider new research in health and mental health in working with complexity.

Service user and carer perspectives

In many places, social workers are the lead profession in recognising, valuing and supporting the involvement of service users and carers in the development of health and mental health services. Sometimes, though, service user or carer-led services are not as prominent as they should be. In the context of mental health, though, Mad Studies is central to current progressive discussions and developments regarding ‘madness’ and ‘distress’ internationally. It is also particularly committed to social approaches and looking beyond bio-medicalism, which has particular resonance for social work. In addition, user-led research, and independent community grassroots support from users and survivors of mental health services is important. This conference will explore service user and carer perspectives in health and mental health care with a view to reaching a better understanding of how social workers can support pragmatic alliances with service users, carers, their organisations and communities.

Role and value of social work in health and mental health

In many countries the role and value of social work in health and mental health services is the cause for much debate. It has been de-valued in some, whilst others have clearly defined roles for social workers. It raises many questions such as the problem of gatekeeping – is it resource management or support management? Additionally, what do social workers really want to do, and what can they do in neo-liberal welfare contexts? This conference will explore with social workers across the world about how the role and value of social work in health and mental health is discussed and how issues are clarified or problematised.
Individual topics

Practice domains

Social work in health and mental health is varied and multi-faceted. This conference will explore many domains of practice and research which are currently prominent in this field:

1. Acquired brain injury
2. Cancer care
3. Renal care
4. Emergency care
5. Mental health social work
6. Disaster social work
7. Dementia care
8. Palliative care
9. Hospital social work
10. Veteran health
11. Sensory social work
12. Community social work
13. Forensic social work (including in criminal justice settings)
14. Public health
15. Social work with older people
16. Addictions social work

Global challenges

This international conference will have contributions from all corners of the globe and will address some key themes affecting social workers working in health and mental health settings across the globe:

17. Migration
18. Welfare and work
19. Trauma
20. Changing climate and environments
21. Sexual violence and human trafficking
22. Stigma, discrimination and shame
23. Ageing populations
24. Isolation and loneliness

Social determinants

Underpinning social work in health and mental health is a good understanding of the social determinants which impact on our daily work. Among these, the following themes will be explored in more depth during the conference:

25. Health inequalities
26. Income inequality
27. Sexuality
28. Gender identity issues
29. Race, racialisation and ethnic disparities in health
30. Gender and health

Social work intervention

This conference will explore new developments, good practice and new research in all forms of social work intervention in health and mental health, with a particular focus on the following themes:

31. Social intervention
32. Suicide prevention
33. Iatrogenic risks of social work intervention
34. Spirituality and mental health
35. Artificial intelligence and digital interventions in social work practice

Working with children in health and mental health care

Whole family approaches are a challenge in fragmented welfare systems. Social work with children is an important aspect of health and mental health care and this conference will focus in particular on the following themes in relation to health and mental health:

36. Child welfare and poverty
37. Child and adolescent sexual abuse and exploitation
38. Adolescence
39. Adverse childhood experiences
40. Child and adolescent mental health

Knowledge production and utilisation

Social workers in health and mental health draw upon a variety of sources of knowledge in their work. This conference will explore knowledge production, and the use of that knowledge, in:

41. Service user and survivor research
42. Indigenous and community knowledge
43. Social work education in the 21st century

Law and policy

Social workers often take a leading role in utilising law and policy in health and mental health settings. New research in law and policy relevant to social work in health and mental health will be discussed at this conference:

44. Mental health and mental capacity law
45. Welfare systems, social policy and law
Abstracts

The conference organising committee welcome the submission of abstracts which address at least one of the conference themes and one topic. You must indicate in your submission which topic the abstract addresses. The abstract needs to be clearly relevant to social work in health or mental health. Abstracts will be accepted for the following presentation modes though the committee reserves the right to request a change in preferred mode of presentation following the review of abstracts:

- **Standard Oral presentation** (20-minute paper with 10 minutes for discussion) – abstracts must be no more than 300 words

- **Work in Progress Presentation** (10-minute papers reporting studies underway with 5 minutes for discussion) – abstracts must be no more than 300 words

- **Symposium** (Three 20-minute papers or four 15-minute papers with 30 minutes discussion) – one 600-word abstract is required which provides information about each paper and how they will collectively address a conference theme and topic in the symposium

- **Workshop** (Up to three 15-minute discussion papers with at least 45 minutes workshop activities) - one 300-word abstract is required with brief information about the discussion papers and the activities which the workshop will use to engage the participants

- **Poster** (A2: 1830mm x 940mm) – abstracts must be no more than 300 words

If you are submitting a Standard Oral Presentation, Work in Progress Presentation, Workshop or Poster you will be required to enter an abstract of your paper (max 300 words).

All presentation modes except workshop and symposium must be structured using the following sections:

- Background
- Aims
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion / conclusion

Workshops do not need to be structured in the same way. For Workshops, one 300-word abstract is required with brief information about the discussion papers and the activities which the workshop will use to engage the participants. Please ensure you confirm who the lead Author is within the section, titled Authors and Affiliations. We will assume this person will be chairing your Workshop. If you are proposing an independent Chair, please notify us of this within your Workshop abstract.

Finally Symposium, one 600-word abstract is required which provides information about each paper and how they will collectively address a conference theme and topic in the session.
Deadline for submission of abstracts: Friday 28th September 2018

Notification of decision of abstract review: Friday 7th December 2018

Abstract prizes

- Student
- Submission from low/middle income country
- Service user
- Early career researcher
- Practitioner

To be considered for a prize, the lead author must be in one of these five categories. Prizes will be awarded by the organising committee for one outstanding abstract in each of these five categories. Abstracts of any presentation format will be considered and will be judged according to their original contribution to their field, innovation and potential to make a difference to social work practice in health and mental health.

The prize will be your conference registration and accommodation fees paid for at the event (not including travel). In addition there will be a award presentation on Friday 26 July 2019.

If you have any queries on your submission, please contact admin@icsw2019york.org or +00 44 01904 702165.