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## SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE OF AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS WORKING WITH TRANSGENDER CLIENTS

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SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE OF AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS  
WORKING WITH TRANSGENDER CLIENTS

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A Project  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Social Work  
in the  
School of Social Work

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by  
Edgar Camacho  
Devin Rachel Hoff  
June 2019

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## ABSTRACT

Over the past few decades, there has been an increase in literature on social work practice with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community, with a strong focus on the LGB portion of the community. Due to the lack of literature in social work practice with the transgender population, this study was designed to assess bachelor and master levels social workers' knowledge, attitudes and preparedness for working with the transgender community. This study is significant to the field of social work as it evaluates if students can provide comprehensive services to transgender clients. The study uses a quantitative survey design utilizing an adapted version of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Assessment Scale (LGBTAS). The data were analyzed by differentiating the two types of social work students to evaluate the differences in preparedness levels by asking about participants' phobias, attitudes, and cultural competence. As there has been minimal literature on the social work practice with the transgender population, the implications of this study will present the support for a transgender-inclusive approach to social work practice. Study findings suggest that when compared to one another, bachelor level students feel more prepared to advocate on behalf of transgender clients than do master level students. Furthermore, master level students felt their social work programs were not providing culturally competent coursework and field placements that prepared them to work with transgender clients, while bachelor level students did feel prepared.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Problem Formulation

It is well known that the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community is a vulnerable and disenfranchised population. This LGBT disenfranchisement has been thoroughly studied by many social behavioral fields, but by grouping the communities' experiences, an erasure of knowledge towards the transgender experience exists. With new research, a new understanding that the transgender community experiences hardships at different rates when compared to the LGB portion of their community and the United States population has emerged. This difference is primarily due to their gender identity or gender expression, in other words, living authentically, makes this community vulnerable (Austin & Goodman, 2017). The transgender community experiences mistreatment and violence, economic hardship and instability, as well as discrimination (James & Herman, 2017). As a result of the transgender experience, the community faces a higher prevalence of depression anxiety and somatization (Bockting, Miner, Romine, & Hamilton, 2013). In every social service sector, whether it be child welfare, mental health, forensics, etc. issues surrounding gender identity and expression effect clients. Social work students have an obligation to be educated in transgender studies in order to better serve

this population that has historically faced oppression and scrutiny based on their lived experience.

The systematic abuse of transgender individuals is consistently present in schools, government entities, legislation, employment, and everyday life. When discussing society as a cisnormative system, Bauer et al. (2009) describe cisnormativity as the systematic and societal thought process in which all people are considered to be cissexual. The authors of this study found a correlation between the impact cisnormativity has on the erasure of transgender individual and their experience within the healthcare system. This systematic erasure of transgender individuals creates a healthcare system that does not know how to work with individuals who do not fit the cisnormativity framework under which it functions. This framework facilitates negative experiences between transgender individuals and the health care system, which leads to their avoidance of the healthcare system. The discrepancies of transgender issues in the health care system, directly influence the cisgender frameworks in social work courses.

In an effort to educate social work students on disenfranchised communities, the National Association of Social Work (NASW), Code of Ethics obligates social workers to serve oppressed populations, seek social change, in efforts to end the marginalization of disenfranchised communities (Code of Ethics, 2017). The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the entity which accredits bachelor and master of social work programs, further instills this obligation by requiring each school to develop culturally competent curriculum to

prepare students with the knowledge and skill set needed to work with oppressed communities (Council on Social Work Education, 2015). However, when CSWE analyzed 664 accredited programs through the nation, the findings demonstrated that programs lack adequate exposure to transgender communities, issues, and field placements (Martin, Messinger, Kull, & Holmes, 2009). This lack of exposure directly impacts the competence of social work student when working with the transgender community.

The deficiency in comprehensive education is a problem for social work students who have an obligation to serve oppressed populations. Gender, being the universally accepted social construct that dictates roles and imposes values on society, impacts those who identify outside of societal norms (Callahan, 2009). The discrimination faced by transgender individuals develops an underlying fear of ostracization by health care providers that do not acknowledge the existence of gender-based oppression (Haas, Rodgers, & Herman, 2014). In order to better serve this community that does not fall within the cisgender norm, social workers and the institutions that educate them must center the transgender experience in the curriculum. Centering the population's experience allows students to learn from the people themselves by providing an understanding of the community, as well as a skill set needed to work with this and any other underrepresented community.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study was to assess bachelor and master level social work students' knowledge and attitudes about working with transgender clients. Specifically, this study assessed students that attend a University in Southern California, School of Social Work programs including full and part-time students in both the foundation and advance year practice, and generalist and title IV-E tracks.

There exists an erasure and systematic oppression of transgender individuals within society. Due to the overarching discrimination, the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) created a standard of care for social workers as well as other healthcare professionals to incorporate in practices for trans-inclusive care (Coleman et al., 2012). The WPATH standard of care suggests that social workers and other mental health providers be competent in transgender issues (Coleman et al., 2012). In order to address these issues, which the transgender community face on a daily basis, the readiness and competency to practice with transgender clients on behalf of social workers needs to be addressed.

This study surveys social work students on the phobias, attitudes, and cultural competence of the transgender population. The study provides an overview of the knowledge and attitudes social work students have on the transgender community. This study implements a reworked LGBT Assessment Scale Survey created by Logie, Bridge, and Bridge (2007). The survey was

composed of twenty-six scaling questions that allow a student to share their perception and feeling towards the transgender community.

### Significance of the Project for Social Work Practice

If social worker students, both at the bachelor and master levels, understand the underlying issues faced by the transgender population, they will be more likely to provide comprehensive services and uphold the NASW's obligation to social justice. Additionally, social worker students better impact a transgender individual's quality of life by understanding the needs of this population. This study was implemented to inform the generalist intervention process as a whole, as trans-inclusive and competent practice with clients should be incorporated throughout every phase of the process. By providing clients with a trans-inclusive approach to the generalist intervention process, there will be an impact to the practice social workers have with transgender clients.

The findings of this study on social work student's competence and perception of the transgender community could assist educators, field supervisors, as well as the overall social work field, in incorporating transgender inclusive practices and knowledge that are inclusive to all genders. The incorporation of transgender-inclusive practices and knowledge within the social work curriculum addresses the issue of informational erasure transgender individuals face. Bauer et al., (2009) identify informational erasure as detrimental to the access transgender individuals have to receive trans-inclusive social

services. As the erasure of information is present in the institution of higher education and its curriculum, a cis-normative system is further perpetuated by the educational system.

The study seeks to understand social work student's knowledge of and attitudes towards working with transgender clients. It is hypothesized that social work students have limited knowledge of the transgender community and the transgender experience due to the lack of exposure to a transgender informed education.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

This chapter incorporates an overview of the existing research on working with the LGBT population, with a focus on the transgender community within the social service sector. This chapter discusses the intersectional transgender experience within the mental health field. The chapter identifies the established educational policies, experiences provided to students by the availability of trans-inclusive practice, and perceptions within the social work field of the transgender community. The conclusion of this chapter presents queer theory and intersectionality as guiding theories that should be used to conceptualize care with the transgender population.

#### The Intersectional Transgender Experience

Transgender is a term used to classify individuals whose gender identities, masculine-feminine, or androgynous, are different from their assigned sex at birth (Trans Student Educational Resource, 2018). Due to a divergence from societal norms, in the United States, the transgender community is subject to discrimination, social stigma, harassment, physical, sexual, and psychological abuse (Hughto, Reisner, & Pachankis, 2015). As the transgender community endures stigmatization on the societal, interpersonal, and community levels,

many individual's physical and mental health are negatively impacted by these interactions (Hughto et al., 2015). The National Center for Transgender Equality, surveyed 6400 transgender individuals and found, that 69.3% of individuals reported discrimination in traditional jobs (Fitzgerald et al., 2015). The study found that those who endured discrimination were three times more likely to participate in sex work. With 18.2% of the sex workers reporting the use of drugs or alcohol as a means to cope with their experience of sex work. The information in this study identifies that their transgender experience limits the opportunity to have and obtain a harassment and bias-free work environment.

Through an analysis of a National HIV Surveillance System between the years of 2009-2014, Clark, Babu, Wiewel, Opoku, and Crepaz (2017) found that 84.0% of newly diagnosed HIV infections were among transgender individuals specifically transgender women, while 15.4% were transgender men. Furthermore, the majority of the newly diagnosed transgender women were among non-Hispanic black/African American and Hispanic or Latino transgender individuals, 50.8% and 29.3%, and of transgender men 58.4% and 15.2%, respectively.

### Education

Literature of social work education lacks the inclusion of educational content that focuses on gay and lesbian issues, with an even broader limitation on trans-specific content (Chonody, Rutledge, & Siebert, 2009; Chung, 2008). Heteronormativity and cisnormative is centralized in social work academia, by

limiting the theoretical frameworks that expose social work students to gender and sexual identity in Human Behavior in the Social Environment (HBSE) course education (Bragg, Havig, & Munoz, 2018). Queer theory, the critical framework that questions identity, gender, and sexuality, is typically not incorporated in HBSE curriculum (Austin, Craig, & McInroy, 2016; Hicks & Jeyasingham, 2016). Education on queer theory is critical for social work practice because it provides a comprehensive overview of gender and allows for a trans-inclusive environment (Austin et al. , 2016; Hartman, 2017). Levy, Leedy, and Miller (2013) implemented trans curriculum into an undergraduate cultural competence course, as well as an undergraduate research methods course. After the implementation of the transgender coursework, the authors found social work students in the focus groups subsequently knew the population and experience, along with an understanding of how to appropriately advocate for transgender individuals.

In order to provide social work students with trans-inclusive curriculum, schools of social work and their faculty should demonstrate a commitment to the inclusion of trans-affirmative studies within the classroom (Austin et al., 2016). In a national survey encompassing faculty at MSW programs in the United States and Canada, Fredriksen-Goldsen, Woodford, Luke, and Gutiérrez (2011) found a willingness to incorporate an LGBTQ inclusive curriculum on behalf of the program faculty. However, the faculty did not demonstrate consistency when discussing the inclusion of topics relating to the oppression this community faces. Furthermore, faculty demonstrated a bias towards discussing sexual orientation

and its tenants, when compared to transgender and gender non-conforming individuals and the tenants of their experience, particularly, transphobia. The incorporations of the transgender experience can be accomplished by including field placements working with the transgender community, as well as equipping social work faculty to present a trans-inclusive curriculum (Fredriksen-Goldsen et al., 2011).

### Experience

Social work literature also lacks attention to the development of trans-inclusive approaches through advocacy and experience. In 2015, CSWE conducted a survey of 258 directors of social work program and found that 86% of their programs claimed to offer field placements to work with the LGBTQ community (Martin et al., 2009). However, when social work faculty was surveyed in the study, 61% reported no knowledge of opportunities within their programs that provided students experiences with sexual orientation, gender identity/expression or LGBTQ people (Martin et al., 2009).

To better understand the readiness to practice with the LGBTQ population, Craig, Dentato, Messinger, and McInroy (2014) surveyed LGBTQ students and non-LGBTQ social work students, both at a Masters and Bachelor level, in the United States and Canada. The LGBTQ students had a minimal, self-assessed capacity to work with the LGBTQ population. The study also found that LGBTQ students surveyed perceived their non-LGBTQ peers as having a lower readiness to practice with the LGBTQ community. The study further found

both groups of social work students were even less prepared to work with the transgender population (Craig et al., 2014).

When educating social work students to trans-issues, LGBTQ-affirming field placements help students understand underlying concepts that the community faces (Austin & Goodman, 2017; Hatzenbuehler, Flores, & Gates, 2017). However, the literature presents a lack of field placements for social work students to work with the transgender community. In the field sites, there is an underlying bias for normative approach as many sites are geared to serving the heterosexual community (Hatzenbuehler et al., 2017). Transgender clients feel the repercussions of this normative approach in the prejudices social services agencies have towards serving their community (Stotzer, Silverschanz, & Wilson, 2011). The agencies themselves have a gender-identity bias and lack the cultural competence to adequately serve the trans-community (Stotzer et al., 2012). Due to the lack of first-hand experience with the trans-community, social work students do not have the opportunity to learn trans-inclusive practice under a licensed supervisor (Hatzenbuehler et al., 2017; Austin & Goodman 2017).

### Perception

In an archival study of literature on social service agencies, scholars found a prevalence of transphobia and micro aggressions towards the trans-community in social work education and practice (Stotzer et al., 2012). In social work practice, student interns are predisposed to assuming an individual's gender identity without addressing their transgender experience (Stotzer et al., 2012).

One example of this is alienating transgender clients by using incorrect pronouns throughout practice. The misgendering of individuals can create hostility and violence for a trans-client. Due to social work students limited knowledge of trans-issues, students may lack the ability to competently work with transgender clients in the field (Grant et al., 2010).

Ehrbar, Witty, Ehrbar, and Bockting (2008) identified that some social services agencies do not challenge social work student's knowledge and perception of working with transgender clients, but reiterate insensitivity toward an individual living as transgender. Students are unable to address their biases towards the trans-community because their supervisors and professors typically avoid or reiterate micro aggressions, due to their own lack of knowledge or biases with trans-clients (Collazo, Austin, & Craig, 2013). Furthermore, if students are predisposed to negative perceptions of the trans-community in their education and field practice, the underlying bias towards the trans-community will be consistent throughout their practice as social workers (Austin, 2017; Dentato et al., 2016).

In a study sampling faculty members in Bachelor of Social Work programs regarding faculty perceptions of transgender issues in the educational setting, de Jong (2015) found faculty at these institutions displayed a positive outlook towards transgender inclusive curriculum and discussion of transgender issues. Although discussions pertaining to gender variance and transgender issues in social work classrooms were encouraged by the faculty in this sample, further

implementation of trainings concerning transgender inclusivity in school settings were needed in order to create a more inclusive and trans affirming learning environment. A lack of transgender inclusive classrooms is an issue identified by the author. Providing transgender inclusive trainings regarding preferred pronouns could limit the outing of transgender individuals as transgender. Woodford, Brennan, Gutiérrez, and Luke (2013) found faculty attitudes towards the LGBT population were positive, but found the attitude of faculty of color was not as positive. The authors suggest using the findings of this study as impetus to meet the commitment the social work field has to the LGBT population and the discrimination they face.

Acker (2017) conducted a study focusing on transphobia among students of color in helping professions, which included service sector professions. The study found moderate to high levels of transphobia in 45% of the students in the survey. In the study, when compared to females, males displayed higher levels of transphobia. Furthermore, the study found a correlation between religiosity and transphobia. Although race in this study was not correlated with higher levels of transphobia, there was a correlation between the Latino ethnicity and transphobia. Social work students, when compared to students in the other helping professions included in the study, demonstrated lower levels of transphobia. Another finding of the study was that personal experience with transgender individuals was correlated with lower rates of transphobia. Acker

(2017) suggests a more trans-inclusive curriculum, as well as the incorporation of trans-focused field practicums.

### Theories Guiding Conceptualization

In reviewing literature on social worker education, the pairing of two theoretical frameworks, queer theory and intersectionality, exist as a means to help social workers understand the issues and experiences of transgender clients (Few-Demo, Humble, Curran, & Lloyd, 2016). At the center of LGBTQ needs, queer theory is used to develop a comprehensive understanding of gender minorities and individual's sexual identity (Bragg et al., 2018). The theory of intersectionality allows students to focus on the interconnectedness of sexuality, identity, race, and ethnicity as they work to help or hinder the life experience of clients (Goldberg & Allen, 2018).

Few-Demo et al. (2016), suggest that intersectionality and queer theory be guiding principles in understanding social work practice incorporation of the trans-experience and societal issues. This study used intersectionality to acknowledge the gender normative practice social work students implement in practice, and analyzes the assumptions students have of the trans-community. The NASW and CSWE assume social work students are receiving education and field practice that encourages students to understand social injustices, oppression, poverty, and stigma (CSWE, 2015). In using Intersectionality as a guiding theoretical framework, the knowledge and perceptions of social work

students will be used to identify the societal implications transgender clients faces in comparison to their oppressed gender normative counterparts.

### Summary

This study explores student reported knowledge and preparedness, or lack thereof, among bachelor and master level students of the School of Social Work in Southern California, report having in the serving the transgender community. The literature demonstrated discrepancies in social work student's education, experience with transgender clients and issues, and the underlying perceptions of transgender individuals. This study seeks to understand the existing discrepancies through a student informed survey in order to create a competent, trans-informed curriculum that could impact the social work field.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODS

#### Introduction

This study seeks to describe the attitudes and competency of social work students on serving the transgender population and additionally evaluates any underlying phobias students may have of this community. This chapter discusses how the study was conducted and reviews the study's design, sampling information, data collection, the instrument, procedures, protection of human subjects, and data analysis.

#### Study Design

The purpose of this study was to identify and evaluate the perceived knowledge social work students have of working with transgender clients in various sectors. This was a descriptive research project, as the research seeks to gain a better understanding of students. This research study examines the perceived knowledge, behavior, and attitudes of social work students, using a quantitative cross-sectional designed using a survey with predefined categories.

An advantage of using a descriptive, quantitative approach through surveys was that researchers collected data from a large number of respondents. A benefit of utilizing the survey method is that the information was collected from multiple interfaces such as in person, online, email, or mobile devices. When

gathering survey data researchers asked numerous questions, and gathered a broad range of data on different categories.

A disadvantage of implementing surveys was that participants may not have felt comfortable sharing their opinions, which could lead to data errors. Based on these data errors, participants may experience fear of judgment, and feel the need to provide answers that may match others, creating a social desirability bias. This study utilized an anonymous survey to evaluate the perceived bias, attitudes, and competency of social work students when serving the transgender population.

### Sampling

This study uses a nonprobability sampling method of convenience sampling of social work students that take courses in the School of Social Work in Southern California. The study sampled bachelor level, master level, and online students. Approval was obtained from the school social work director for both the masters and bachelor's programs. The study sample consists of n= 244 students who responded to the surveys.

### Data Collection and Instruments

Surveys were utilized to collect quantitative data during the 2019 winter quarter. Each survey had an informed consent form and a brief description of the study. The survey collected demographic information to identify participants' age,

sex, gender identity, ethnicity, and level of education. The survey also distinguished the student's educational level, their full or part-time status, and whether they were in the generalist or Title IV-E program.

The survey assessed bachelor and master's students' preparedness of working with the transgender community using an adapted version of the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Assessment Scale (LGBTAS). Researchers implemented an adapted version of the LGBTAS, which utilized twenty-six questions on a five-point Likert Scale (Logie, Bridge, & Bridge, 2007). The five-point Likert scale was as follows, "strongly agree = 5, agree = 4, neither agree nor disagree = 3, disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1" (Logie, Bridge, & Bridge, 2007). The LGBTAS helped determine consistency by utilizing certain questions in assessing phobias, attitudes, and cultural competence of participants to evaluate the perception of the student on the transgender community. The LGBTAS was originally developed as a modified scale of previously established scales focused on the lesbian and gay populations in order to include questions on the bisexual and transgender populations (Logie et al., 2007). The scale has validity, as the scale has been adjusted over time in order to maximize itself. The current adjustment implemented for this study continued to increase the validity of the scale, this time in a transgender-focused and transgender-affirming manner.

## Procedures

Researchers contacted professors of the undergraduate and graduate programs of School of Social Work to ask for permission to administer the survey to their students during class hours. Researchers scheduled one, in-classroom survey per cohort. During the allotted classroom time, the researchers introduced themselves and the study to the students. Students were provided with a packet containing a consent form, a survey, and a debriefing statement. Students were first introduced to the consent form, where their right to consent or opt out of the survey was explained. Students then had their role in the research study explained to them.

If the students did not consent to participate in the study, students returned the blank consent form and survey to the researchers and waited while their classmates completed the survey. If students consented to participate in the study, they indicated that on the consent form at the begin of the survey. Surveys took between 5-10 minutes to complete. Upon finishing the surveys, students indicated their completion to the researchers by raising their hands, at which point, the researchers collected the surveys. Once student completed the survey, researchers thanked the cohort for their time and removed themselves from the room.

For students completing their program online, researchers coordinated with the Administrative Support Assistant of the School of Social Work, in order to send a department-wide email. This email allowed an opportunity for Pathway

students to take the survey. The email included a link to a webpage that included a consent form and the survey. If students consented to participate in the study, they indicated that on the consent form and began the survey. Surveys took between 5-10 minutes to complete, after which students were thanked for their participation.

### Protection of Human Subjects

The study focused on individual people via direct questioning, student identities were kept confidential and private. Each participant was required to read and complete an informed consent form, which they then mark with an X along with the date. This was done, in order to keep student participation anonymous and confidential. Researchers recorded the data, on a password encrypted computer and shred any paper documentation after it had been filed. A separate copy of the recorded data was kept on an encrypted USB drive in a locked desk.

### Data Analysis

Researchers collected data from participant surveys then analyzed the data using descriptive analysis. As this is a quantitative study, the research study administered the LGBTAS survey which measured the preparedness of school of social work students in bachelors and masters programs. As data compared two groups of students, masters level and bachelors level the independent variable is

nominal dichotomous. As the dependent variable measured preparedness through the utilization of the LGBTAS scale, the data was measured on an interval level. Overall, to find significance or lack thereof, the researchers utilized a series of t-tests for independent samples.

### Summary

Chapter three outlined the methods used in the present study including design, sampling, and procedures for data collection. This study examined social work student's attitudes, competency and potential phobias when working with the transgender population. This was facilitated by a quantitative process that utilized an adapted LGBT Assessment Scale on a 5-point Likert Scale.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study is to discuss the perceptions and knowledge social work students have when working with the transgender population, as well as the exposure to a transgender informed education these students receive. This study compared the phobias, attitudes, and cultural competencies of social work students. The study reports the trends in response from students and identified a majority answered with neutrality. This chapter presents the demographic characteristics of study participants and the results from inferential analyses conducted.

#### Presentation of Study Findings

##### Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the study sample. As can be seen in Table 1, the study sample of n=244 had an average age of 29. The majority of the study participants were women (81.6%). Similarly, the majority of the study sample self-identified their sexual orientation as heterosexual (88.5%), with the rest of the population identifying as bisexual (5.3%), gay (2.9%), lesbian (2%). The sample was approximately two-thirds Latino (61.1%), with the second and third largest groups being White (16.4%)

and Black/African American (6.6%), respectively. The remainder of the sample was Asian/Pacific Islander (3.3%) and Native American (.8%). The sample included social work students in bachelor level programs (34%) and master level programs (65.5%). The bachelor school level (BASW) was represented in the sample by individual cohorts based on school-level and affiliation, BASW 3RD Non-IV-E (7.4%), BASW 3RD IV-E (11.9%), BASW 4TH Non-IV-E (9%), and BASW 4TH IV-E (5.7%). The master school level (MSW) was represented in the sample by individual cohorts based on school-level affiliation, MSW 1ST YEAR PT (18%), MSW 1ST YEAR FT (9%), MSW 2ND YEAR PT (20.1%), MSW 2ND YEAR FT (9.8%), MSW 3RD YEAR PT (7%), MSW 2ND YEAR PATHWAY (.8%), and MSW 3RD YEAR PATHWAY (.08%).

TABLE 1: Demographic Characteristics of Study Sample

|                       | N(%)        | M     |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------|
| Age                   |             | 29.09 |
| Gender                |             |       |
| Male                  | 42 (17.2%)  |       |
| Female                | 199(81.6%)  |       |
| Gender Non-Conforming | 2(.8%)      |       |
| Unknown               | 1(.4%)      |       |
| Sexual Orientation    |             |       |
| Heterosexual          | 216 (88.5%) |       |
| Lesbian               | 5 (2%)      |       |
| Gay                   | 7(2.9%)     |       |
| Bisexual              | 13 (5.3%)   |       |
| Other                 | 1(.4%)      |       |
| Decline to Answer     | 1(.4%)      |       |

| Table Continued                  |  | N (%)      | M |
|----------------------------------|--|------------|---|
| Ethnicity                        |  |            |   |
| Asian/Pacific Islander           |  | 8(3.3%)    |   |
| Black/African American           |  | 16(6.6%)   |   |
| Latino                           |  | 149(61.1%) |   |
| White                            |  | 40(16.4%)  |   |
| Native American                  |  | 2(.8%)     |   |
| Other                            |  | 17(7%)     |   |
| Decline to Answer                |  | 1(.4%)     |   |
| Social Work School Level         |  |            |   |
| BASW 3 <sup>RD</sup> Non IV-E    |  | 18(7.4%)   |   |
| BASW 3 <sup>RD</sup> IV-E        |  | 29 (11.9%) |   |
| BASW 4 <sup>TH</sup> Non IV-E    |  | 22 (9%)    |   |
| BASW 4 <sup>TH</sup> IV-E        |  | 14 (5.7%)  |   |
| MSW 1 <sup>ST</sup> YEAR PT      |  | 44 (18%)   |   |
| MSW 1 <sup>ST</sup> YEAR FT      |  | 22 (9%)    |   |
| MSW 2 <sup>ND</sup> YEAR PT      |  | 49 (20.1%) |   |
| MSW 2 <sup>ND</sup> YEAR FT      |  | 24 (9.8%)  |   |
| MSW 3 <sup>RD</sup> YEAR PT      |  | 17(7%)     |   |
| MSW 2 <sup>ND</sup> YEAR PATHWAY |  | 2(.8%)     |   |
| MSW 3 <sup>RD</sup> YEAR PATHWAY |  | 2(.8%)     |   |
| Decline To Answer                |  | 1(.4%)     |   |

Table 2 through 4 present the frequency of student responses to the phobias, attitudes, and cultural competency items in the survey. Items that have a positive sign (i.e. +) denote positively worded items, signifying positive perspectives of the transgender community. Items that have negative wording have a negative sign (i.e. -) . In looking at response patterns for positive phobia items (See Table 2), a great proportion of participants either agreed or strongly agreed with these statements. For Phobia 1 and Phobia 2, approximately 80% of

individuals responded positively. However, 10% chose to remain “neutral” while 1% declined to answer the question. Within the negatively worded items, related to a transgender child in one’s family, respondents largely disagreed that it was negative (78% Disagreed). Similarly, a large proportion of respondents disagreed with the statement that transgender individuals are perverted (91%). However, a notable percentage responded neutrally to the negative phobias against trans individuals (range from 6.1% -14.3%). For Phobia 5, the item pertaining to the use of restrooms by transgender individuals, about half of the respondents disagreed with the item. However, almost a third of the sample (28.7%) stated they are neutral on this issue, while about 12% agreed with the statement and one declined to answer. It is notable that in Phobia items 6 and 7 that read “transgender people are mentally ill” and “transgender people cannot change their sex”, respectively, a majority of respondents disagreed. However, for Phobia item 7 focusing on the inability to change their sex, almost 1 out of 5 respondents remained neutral (17.6%) and twelve percent either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

TABLE 2: Frequency Distribution of Student Responses to Phobia Items

| Item      | Strongly Disagree | Disagree   | Neutral    | Agree     | Strongly Agree | Decline |
|-----------|-------------------|------------|------------|-----------|----------------|---------|
|           | N (%)             | N (%)      | N (%)      | N (%)     | N (%)          | N (%)   |
| Phobia 1+ | 3(1.2)            | 3(1.2)     | 25(10.2)   | 78 (32)   | 135(55.3%)     |         |
| Phobia 2+ | 1(.4 %)           | 4(1.6 %)   | 23 (9.4 %) | 42(17.2%) | 173 (70.9%)    | 1 (.4%) |
| Phobia 3- | 138 (56.6%)       | 54 (22.1%) | 35 (14.3%) | 11 (4.5%) | 5 (2%)         | 1 (.4%) |

|                       |                |               |               |           |           |         |
|-----------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| Phobia 4 <sup>-</sup> | 188<br>(77%)   | 35<br>(14.3%) | 15 (6.1%)     | 1 (.4%)   | 3 (1.2%)  | 2 (.8%) |
| Phobia 5 <sup>-</sup> | 104<br>(42.6%) | 37<br>(15.2%) | 70<br>(28.7%) | 23 (9.4%) | 9 (3.7%)  | 1 (.4%) |
| Phobia 6 <sup>-</sup> | 185<br>(75.8%) | 35<br>(14.3%) | 16 (6.6%)     | 5 (2%)    | 1 (.4%)   | 2 (.8%) |
| Phobia 7 <sup>-</sup> | 121<br>(49.6%) | 48<br>(19.7%) | 43<br>(17.6%) | 15 (6.1%) | 15 (6.1%) | 2 (.8%) |

Note. Phobia 1: I would feel comfortable working closely with a member from the transgender population. Phobia 2: Transgender people are just as moral as heterosexuals. Phobia 3: I would feel that I had failed as a parent if I learned that my child was transgender. Phobia 4: Transgender individuals are perverted. Phobia 5: I believe transgender individuals should use restrooms that match their sex at birth. Phobia 6: Transgender people are mentally ill. Phobia 7: I do not believe that you can change your sex.

In the negatively worded attitude items (See Table 3), Attitude 1 and Attitude 4 focused on the threatening of established societal institutions and gender norms. For these two items, a large majority of respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed (80%). Close to 10% of respondents to Attitude 1 declined to answer the question, while only 1.2% declined to answer Attitude 4. The neutrality in answers for these two questions ranged between 5.7%-11.5%. For Attitude 3, only 60% of the sample answered in a manner that is affirming to a transgender identity, while 14% remained neutral. However, 1 in 5 respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement. In the survey provided, there was an additional positively worded item, Attitude 2 which was removed from the results due to its confusing wording.

Table 3: Frequency Distribution of Student Responses to Attitude Items

| Item                    | Strongly Disagree | Disagree      | Neutral       | Agree         | Strongly Agree | Decline      |
|-------------------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|
|                         | N(%)              | N(%)          | N(%)          | N(%)          | N(%)           | N(%)         |
| Attitude 1 <sup>-</sup> | 154<br>(63.1%)    | 51<br>(20.9%) | 14<br>(5.7%)  | 4<br>(1.6%)   | 1<br>(.4%)     | 20<br>(8.2%) |
| Attitude 2              | 83<br>(34.0%)     | 47<br>(19.3%) | 36<br>(14.8%) | 32<br>(13.1%) | 42<br>(17.2%)  | 4<br>(1.6%)  |
| Attitude 3 <sup>+</sup> | 37<br>(15.2%)     | 12<br>(4.9%)  | 34<br>(13.9%) | 50<br>(20.5%) | 104<br>(42.6%) | 7<br>(2.9%)  |
| Attitude 4 <sup>-</sup> | 136<br>(55.7%)    | 55<br>(22.5%) | 28<br>(11.5%) | 10<br>(4.1%)  | 12<br>(4.9%)   | 3<br>(1.2%)  |

*Note.* Attitudes 1: Transgender people threaten many of our basic social institutions. Attitude 2: If a person has feelings of being born the wrong gender, they should do everything to overcome these feelings. Attitude 3: Transgender people merely have a different sexual identity that should not be condemned. Attitudes 4: It is not possible for a person to transition to another gender.

All of the items included in the Cultural Competency (CC) scale were positively worded questions and the frequency distribution of responses to those scale items are presented in Table 4. In CC item 1 students were asked about their readiness to advocate for the transgender population; approximately 80% of the population affirmed their willingness to advocate. However, around 17% of respondents disagreed or remained neutral in their stance. CC item 2 focused on seeking educational opportunity to enhance the understanding of working with the transgender community. Of the respondents 1 in 5 remained neutral, 63% agreed and strongly agree, while 14% strongly disagreed or agreed. CC items 3 and 4 focused on how coursework and fieldwork provided by their educational institution prepares them to work with the transgender population. For both items, approximately one-third of respondents disagreed, one third remained neutral, and one third agreed. However, 3% declined to answer the question. CC items 5

and 6 of this scale focused on personal values and knowledge of the community during direct practice with the transgender population. Approximately half of the respondents (53.7%) disagreed with referring transgender clients to another worker when a conflict with their values existed. Furthermore, 1 in 5 remained neutral, and 1 in 5 agreed with the statement. It should be noted that 2.5% declined to answer the question. CC item 6 which focused on knowledge and competence in direct practice yield a 15% disagree from respondents, while one third remained neutral (28.7%) and half agreed (53.7%) with the statement.

Table 4: Frequency Distribution of Student Responses to Cultural Competency Items

| Item        | Strongly Disagree | Disagree   | Neutral    | Agree      | Strongly Agree | Decline  |
|-------------|-------------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------|----------|
|             | N(%)              | N(%)       | N(%)       | N(%)       | N(%)           | N(%)     |
| Cultural 1+ | 1 (.4%)           | 11 (4.5%)  | 30 (12.3%) | 70 (28.7%) | 130 (53.3%)    | 2 (.8%)  |
| Cultural 2+ | 5 (2%)            | 28 (11.5%) | 54 (22.1%) | 67 (27.5%) | 87 (35.7%)     | 2 (.8%)  |
| Cultural 3+ | 30 (12.3%)        | 57 (23.4%) | 71 (29.1%) | 48 (19.7%) | 36 (14.8%)     | 2 (.8%)  |
| Cultural 4+ | 26 (10.7%)        | 61 (25%)   | 80 (32.8%) | 40 (16.4%) | 29 (11.9%)     | 8 (3.3%) |
| Cultural 5+ | 70 (28.7%)        | 61 (25%)   | 51 (20.9%) | 34 (13.9%) | 21 (8.6%)      | 6 (2.5%) |
| Cultural 6+ | 9 (3.7%)          | 30 (12.3%) | 70 (28.7%) | 85 (34.8%) | 46 (18.9%)     | 4 (1.6%) |

*Note.* CC 1: As a social worker, I am prepared to advocate on behalf of a transgender client. CC 2: I seek out educational and training experiences to enhance my understanding and effectiveness in working with the transgender population. CC 3: I feel my social work coursework prepares me to work with and advocate for transgender clients. CC 4: I feel my social work field placement allows me the opportunity to work with the transgender population. CC 5: When my personal values and beliefs conflict with the gender identity of my client, I refer this client to another worker. CC 6: I am knowledgeable about the issues and challenges facing transgender people and feel competent in my ability to work effectively with this population.

### Inferential Analysis

After conducting a series of Independent Sample *t*-Tests comparing mean responses on the various scale items between BASW and MSW students, results demonstrated no statistically significant difference in responses between bachelor and master level students. However, when looking at the frequency distribution of the responses, trends emerged in the data. When comparing bachelor and master students in Table 5, bachelor students reported higher rates of strongly disagree (3.6%) when compared to master students (0%) on Phobia 1. However, master students (11.9%) have higher rates of neutrality when compared to bachelor students (7.2%). Similarly, in Phobia 2, that focuses on transgender individual being as moral as heterosexuals, bachelors reported higher rates of strongly disagree (1.2%) when compared to master students (0%). However, master students (11.3%) have higher rates of neutrality when compared to bachelor students (6.6%). Although master level students are more likely to answer neutrally, bachelor students responded to Phobia 6, which focuses on transgender people being mentally ill, with a higher rate of neutrality (24.1%) compared to master students (13.8%). In Phobia 7 bachelor students demonstrated higher rates of neutrality (24.1%) when asked if they do not believe that one can change their sex, compared to neutrality from master students (13.8%).

Table 5: Frequency Distribution of Student Responses of Phobia Items by Education Level

| Answers  | Bachelor Students |      |      |      |      | Master Students |      |      |      |      |
|----------|-------------------|------|------|------|------|-----------------|------|------|------|------|
|          | SD                | D    | N    | A    | SA   | SD              | D    | N    | A    | SA   |
| Phobia 1 | 3.6               | 1.2  | 7.2  | 30.1 | 57.8 | 0               | 1.3  | 11.9 | 33.1 | 53.8 |
| Phobia 2 | 1.2               | 1.2  | 6.6  | 13.3 | 77.1 | 0               | 1.9  | 11.3 | 19.4 | 67.5 |
| Phobia 3 | 63.9              | 15.7 | 12   | 4.8  | 3.6  | 53.1            | 25.6 | 15   | 4.4  | 1.3  |
| Phobia 4 | 83.3              | 6    | 8.4  | 0    | 0    | 73.8            | 18.1 | 5    | .6   | 1.9  |
| Phobia 5 | 44.6              | 13.3 | 30.1 | 9.6  | 1.2  | 41.9            | 16.3 | 27.5 | 9.4  | 5    |
| Phobia 6 | 79.5              | 9.6  | 6    | 1.2  | 1.2  | 73.8            | 16.9 | 6.9  | 12.5 | 0    |
| Phobia 7 | 48.2              | 16.9 | 24.1 | 3.6  | 6    | 50.6            | 21.3 | 13.8 | 7.5  | 6.3  |

When comparing bachelor and master students in Table 6 attitudes, about one-third of bachelor students agree with Attitude 1, that transgender people threaten many of our basic social institutions, compared to master students (2.5%) that agree or strongly agree. Attitude 3 assessed students views on transgender people, asking if transgender individuals merely have a different sexual identity that should not be condemned, bachelor students (22.3%) disagree or strongly disagree compared to master students (18.7%). Approximately 20% of bachelor students responded with neutrality when asked if it is not possible for a person to transition to another gender, in Attitude 4. However, one in ten master students felt neutral about the issue.

Table 6: Frequency Distribution of Student Responses of Attitude Items by Education Level

| Answers    | Bachelor Students |      |      |      |      | Master Students |      |      |      |      |
|------------|-------------------|------|------|------|------|-----------------|------|------|------|------|
|            | SD                | D    | N    | A    | SA   | SD              | D    | N    | A    | SA   |
| Attitude 1 | 67.5              | 13.3 | 7.2  | 30.1 | 0    | 61.3            | 25   | 5    | 1.9  | .6   |
| Attitude 2 | 27.7              | 19.3 | 16.9 | 12.  | 21.7 | 37.5            | 19.4 | 13.8 | 13.8 | 15.  |
| Attitude 3 | 19.3              | 3.6  | 16.9 | 14.5 | 42.2 | 13.1            | 5.6  | 12.5 | 23.8 | 41.3 |
| Attitude 4 | 54.2              | 19.3 | 18.1 | 4.8  | 2.4  | 56.9            | 24.4 | 8.1  | 3.8  | 6.3  |

When asked about social work students' cultural competence in Table 7, bachelor and masters students vary on the impact of social work advocacy practice, knowledge, coursework, and fieldwork experience. In CC 1, when questioned about their preparedness of advocating on behalf of transgender clients, bachelor students (88%) agreed or strongly agreed. However, master students (80%) reported agreement in preparedness to advocate on behalf transgender issues. When comparing students in CC 2, seeking out education to enhance understanding and effectiveness in working with the transgender community, master students (15%) disagree or strongly disagree that they seek out educational training. However, one in ten bachelor students disagree that they seek education to improve their effectiveness with transgender clients. In CC5, students were asked if personal values and beliefs conflict with the gender identity of clients, would they refer them to another worker, bachelor students have higher levels of strong disagreement (36.1%) than master students (25%). However, for master students (28.7%) have higher rates of neutrality when

compared to bachelor students (24.1%). In CC 6 ,when comparing bachelors and master students on the knowledge and competence of transgender issues, bachelor students reported higher rates of strongly agree (28.9%) when compared to master students (13.8%)

Table 7: Frequency Distribution of Student Responses of Cultural Competence Items by Education Level

| Answers    | Bachelors Students |      |      |      |      | Master's Students |      |      |      |      |
|------------|--------------------|------|------|------|------|-------------------|------|------|------|------|
|            | SD                 | D    | N    | A    | SA   | SD                | D    | N    | A    | SA   |
| Cultural 1 | 0                  | 2.4  | 9.6  | 22.9 | 65.1 | .6                | 5.6  | 13.8 | 31.9 | 47.5 |
| Cultural 2 | 0                  | 10.8 | 18.1 | 26.5 | 44.6 | 3.1               | 11.9 | 24.4 | 28.1 | 31.3 |
| Cultural 3 | 14.5               | 15.7 | 26.5 | 22.9 | 20.5 | 11.3              | 27.5 | 30.6 | 18.1 | 11.9 |
| Cultural 4 | 8.4                | 19.3 | 28.9 | 15.7 | 20.5 | 11.9              | 28.1 | 35   | 16.9 | 7.5  |
| Cultural 5 | 36.1               | 18.1 | 24.1 | 8.4  | 8.4  | 25                | 28.7 | 19.4 | 16.9 | 8.8  |
| Cultural 6 | 2.4                | 13.3 | 26.5 | 27.7 | 28.9 | 4.4               | 11.9 | 30   | 38.8 | 13.8 |

A Chi-square test for independence was utilized to test the relationships between the social work students who feel comfortable serving the transgender community to students that feel their coursework has prepared them to serve the transgender population. The Chi-square test demonstrated a significant relationship between the students that feel comfortable serving transgender clients and their perceived preparedness to work with transgender clients due to their coursework ( $\chi^2=41.15$ ,  $p<.01$ ; see Table 8).

Table 8: Relationship Between Social Work Education and Students Perceived Comfort

|               |    | Phobia 1 |   |    |    |     |       |
|---------------|----|----------|---|----|----|-----|-------|
|               |    | SD       | D | N  | A  | SA  | Total |
| Cultural<br>3 | SD | 0        | 3 | 3  | 5  | 19  | 30    |
|               | D  | 0        | 0 | 8  | 24 | 25  | 57    |
|               | N  | 2        | 0 | 9  | 21 | 39  | 71    |
|               | A  | 0        | 0 | 5  | 20 | 23  | 48    |
|               | SA | 1        | 0 | 0  | 8  | 27  | 36    |
| Total         |    | 3        | 3 | 25 | 78 | 133 | 242   |

Note.  $p$ -value= .001

Also, a second Chi-square test for independence identified a relationship between students that believe transgender individuals should use the restrooms that match their sex at birth to students that feel their coursework has prepared them was tested. The results indicated a significant relationship exists between students that believe transgender individuals should use the restroom that matches their sex at birth to students that feel their coursework has prepared them to serve the transgender population, ( $\chi^2=39.56$ ,  $p<.01$ , see Table 9).

Table 9: Relationship Between Social Work Education and Position on Transgender Restroom Use

|               |    | Phobia 5 |    |    |    |    |       |
|---------------|----|----------|----|----|----|----|-------|
|               |    | SD       | D  | N  | A  | SA | Total |
| Cultural<br>3 | SD | 17       | 4  | 4  | 4  | 1  | 30    |
|               | D  | 20       | 13 | 15 | 7  | 2  | 57    |
|               | N  | 37       | 5  | 24 | 4  | 1  | 71    |
|               | A  | 12       | 13 | 17 | 6  | 0  | 48    |
|               | SA | 17       | 2  | 9  | 2  | 5  | 35    |
| Total         |    | 103      | 37 | 69 | 23 | 9  | 241   |

Note.  $p$ -value= .001

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss findings of this research study and how it supports literature found within the social work field. This chapter will explore and discuss the limitations of this study. This section is important as it reviews the micro and macro implications the study findings have for social work education and practice. In concluding, this chapter will present final thoughts about the importance of having competent social workers serving the transgender community.

#### Discussion

The purpose of this research study was to assess bachelor and master level social work students' knowledge of and attitudes towards working with the transgender community. The study assessed students' perceived knowledge and their preparedness of serving transgender clients by asking students about their cultural competence. The findings demonstrated that bachelor students feel more prepared to advocate on behalf of transgender clients, than their master level counterparts. However, master students indicated that they feel more knowledgeable about issues and challenges that the transgender community faces, than bachelor students. Given that master students feel more

knowledgeable, it is the responsibility of coursework and field experience to give students the tools to feel adequately prepared to advocate.

The data also suggests that student feel discrepancies within social work school programs. Students within the master programs reported lower levels of culturally competent coursework and field placements when compared to bachelor students. Master students receive two years of direct experience working with clients within their field practice, and bachelor students only receive one year of field experience. As mandated by CSWE's Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) requirements, curriculum and field placements should provide students with the ability to work with disenfranchised communities as an accreditation measure for the programs. However, a large number of master students identified that they do not feel their coursework nor field practice has prepared them to serve the transgender community. In comparison, bachelor students feel better equipped to serve the transgender community because of their coursework. It is noteworthy that bachelor students only attend field practicum in their final year, but report that their field experience has or will prepare them to serve the transgender community.

Another significant result from the research was the relationship between student preparedness, due to coursework, and their comfort with working with the transgender population. This implies that coursework does affect the underlying phobias students have towards the transgender community. Over a third of bachelor and master students reported that they have not received

adequate transgender affirmative education, but feel comfortable working with the transgender community. Thus, indicating that regardless of their received education, students views towards the transgender community allow them to feel competent in providing services.

Lastly, the study findings demonstrated significance when comparing students' preparedness, due to coursework, to the comfort levels students feels with transgender members restroom use. The issue of restroom use by transgender individual has been an issue of public debate over the past few years, highlighting the need for transgender policies. Independent of their feelings of preparedness, ten percent of students report against transgender members using the restrooms that affirm their gender. Salisbury and Dentato (2016) found that micro aggressions, such as these, directly impact the services students provide to clients that have been marginalized due to their gender identity.

### Limitations

A limitation of this study is the makeup of the sample, which included only one school of social work in Southern California. For this reason, the study is not representative of all social worker students' phobias, attitudes, or cultural competencies when working with the transgender community. Another limitation of the study is the language utilized in the survey itself. Specifically, the use of "sexual identity" instead of the appropriate term "gender identity" in Attitude item

4. Based on the significant number of clarifying questions by participants, Attitude item 3 was removed from the data set based on its confusing wording. Another limitation was found within Attitude Item 1, as it reports a significant decline in answers due to the question appearing twice on the survey. For that reason, the data for one of the duplicated items was removed from the data set. Furthermore, responses to the question were marked as “declined” if a respondent answered the duplicated items differently from one another.

### Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are made to improve social work practice, policy and research in order to improve the services transgender individuals receive from social workers. To improve social workers’ effectiveness with transgender clients, on both a micro and macro level, it is recommended that social work programs incorporate trans-affirmative curriculum and field opportunities. Implementing coursework that is transgender affirming, improves social workers’ awareness of the complexities that gender identity plays within every aspect of an individual’s life (Austin, 2018).

Coursework that focuses on the implicit and explicit pressures of gender, and the emotional distress that the transgender community feels, enriches students’ knowledge of and positions towards all gender identities (Austin, 2018). It is important to develop a core understanding of the transgender population within the academic environment, as it provides this safe place for training and

supervision. Students are able to develop and strengthen their micro and macro skills before entering the workforce, which benefits the transgender community (Austin, 2018).

As the CSWE's EPAS mandate that schools of social work incorporate opportunities for students to learn about and have opportunities with diverse populations, it is recommended that schools enforce a policy that mandates gender diversity courses. Not only would this fulfill the mandates for CSWE accreditation, but it would better prepare students to work with disenfranchised communities that identify with transgender and gender nonconforming clients. This policy change would help incorporate education that affirms transgender clients. It is also recommended that social work programs implement policy that mandates the offer of trainings and field opportunities that prepares students to work client from underrepresented communities. Similarly, if social work programs were to incorporate opportunities to work with the transgender population, the cultural competency of working with transgender clients would increase for those students.

As this study focused on social work students' knowledge and attitudes towards working with transgender individuals, three future research topics are suggested. The first should be focused on social work professionals' knowledge and perception of the transgender population. Another suggestion for future research is, social work professors' perceptions of teaching a transgender inclusive curriculum. Based on the significant neutral answers to many of the

study questions, a final recommendation focusing on social work students' transphobia is recommended in order to further identify biases held.

### Conclusion

The findings of this study show the need for a transgender inclusive orientation to social work programs, both at the bachelor and master level. If the field of social work is to follow the guidelines set forth by the NASW and CSWE, the training, education, and practice social work students receive should reflect the needs of the transgender community.

APPENDIX A  
INFORMED CONSENT



Academic Affairs  
School of Social Work

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN BERNARDINO  
5500 University Parkway, San Bernardino, CA 92407  
909.537.5501 | fax: 909.537.7029  
<https://csbs.csusb.edu/social-work>

California State University, San Bernardino  
Social Work Institutional Review Board Sub-Committee  
APPROVED 1/14/20 | VOID AFTER 1/13/2020  
RB# SA11927 CHAIR *[Signature]*

### INFORMED CONSENT

The study in which you are asked to participate is designed to evaluate the perceptions and knowledge social work students have when working with the transgender population, as well as the exposure to a transgender informed education these students receive. The study is being conducted by graduate students, Edgar Camacho and Devin Hoff, under the supervision of Dr. Armando Barragán, assistant professor within the School of Social Work at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB). The study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board Social Work Sub-committee at CSUSB.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the study is to evaluate the perceptions and knowledge social work students have when working with the transgender population.

**DESCRIPTION:** Participants will be asked of a few questions on their demographics, current year of enrollment in their social work education, biases, attitudes, and competence of working with the transgender community.

**PARTICIPATION:** Your participation in the study is completely voluntary. You can refuse to participate in the study or discontinue your participation at any time without any consequences.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** Your responses will remain confidential and data will be reported in group form only.

**DURATION:** It will take 5 to 10 minutes to complete the survey.

**RISKS:** Although not anticipated, there may be some discomfort in answering some of the questions. You are not required to answer and can skip the question or end your participation.

**BENEFITS:** There will not be any direct benefits to the participants.

**CONTACT:** If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Dr. Armando Barragán at (909) 537-3501.

**RESULTS:** Results of the study can be obtained from the Pfau Library ScholarWorks database (<http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/>) at California State University, San Bernardino after July 2019.

**This is to certify that I acknowledge this information and I am accepting to participate in this study**  
Please mark with an X \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX B  
SURVEY

Adapted Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Assessment Scale

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender:

- Male
- Female
- Transgender Male
- Transgender Female
- Gender Non-Conforming
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Decline

Sexual Orientation:

- Heterosexual (Straight)
- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Decline

Ethnicity:

- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Black/African American
- Latino
- White
- Native American
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Work School Level

- BASW (Bachelor of Arts in Social Work)
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Non IV-E
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Year IV-E
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Year Non IV-E
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Year IV-E
- MSW (Master of Social Work)
  - 1st Year Full Time
  - 1st Year Part Time
  - 2nd Year Full Time
  - 2nd Year Part Time
  - 3rd Year Part Time
  - 1st Year Pathway
  - 2nd Year Pathway
  - 3rd Year Pathway

For each of the questions below circle the response that best characterizes how you feel about each statement, where: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3= Neither Agree Nor Disagree, 4=Agree, and 5= Strongly Agree

| Question   | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| <b>Phobia</b>  |                   |          |         |       |                |
| I would feel comfortable working closely with a member from the transgender population | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| Transgender people are just as moral as heterosexuals                                  | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| I would feel that I had failed as a parent if I  | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| learned that my child was transgender   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Transgender individuals are perverted   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I believe transgender individuals should used restrooms that match their sex at birth | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Transgender people are mentally ill.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I do not believe that you can change your sex.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Attitudes**

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Transgender people threaten many of our basic social institutions   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| If a person has feelings of being born the wrong gender, they should do everything to overcome these feelings | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Transgender people threaten many of our basic social institutions.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Transgender people merely have a different sexual identity that should not be condemned                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| It is not possible for a person to transition to another gender   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| <b>Cultural Competence</b>   | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| As a social worker, I am prepared to advocate on behalf of a transgender client  | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| I seek out educational and training experiences to enhance my understanding and effectiveness in working with the transgender population               | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| I feel my social work coursework prepares me to work with and advocate for transgender clients   | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| I feel my social work field placement allows me the opportunity to work with the transgender population  | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| When my personal values and beliefs conflict with the gender identity of my client, I refer this client to another worker                              | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| I am knowledgeable about the issues and challenges facing transgender people and feel competent in my ability to work effectively with this population | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |

(Logie, Bridge,& Bridge, 2007).

APPENDIX C  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN BERNARDINO**  
**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**  
*Institutional Review Board Sub-Committee*

Researcher(s) Edgar Comacho & Devin Hoff

Proposal Title Social Work Students' Knowledge of and Attitudes  
Towards Working with Transgender Clients

# 561927

Your proposal has been reviewed by the School of Social Work Sub-Committee of the Institutional Review Board. The decisions and advice of those faculty are given below.

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Proposal is:

- approved  
 to be resubmitted with revisions listed below  
 to be forwarded to the campus IRB for review

Revisions that must be made before proposal can be approved:

- faculty signature missing  
 missing informed consent  debriefing statement  
 revisions needed in informed consent  debriefing  
 data collection instruments missing  
 agency approval letter missing  
 CITI missing  
 revisions in design needed (specified below)

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Javier Chavez  
Committee Chair Signature

1/14/2019  
Date

Distribution: White-Coordinator; Yellow-Supervisor; Pink-Student

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## ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITIES

Researcher's, Edgar Camacho and Devin Hoff, have the responsibilities of working on the study in group sessions at least twice weekly. The study's researchers shared responsibilities of writing, surveying, and discussing the project. The researchers altered the document with proper acknowledgement of the other member. To sound as cohesive as possible, Camacho and Hoff wrote all documents together and conducted research surveys. Camacho and Hoff worked together to and did not encounter any issues in the completion of this manuscript.