

SPRING 2022 NEWSLETTER

MSW Certificate in Aging & Health Program

WRITTEN BY MSW AGING AND HEALTH CERTIFICATE STUDENT
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The Build Back Better Bill: What does this mean for Social Workers?

Despite the controversial Build Back Better Bill's passage in the House of Representatives, the Senate, which is equally divided between Democrats and Republicans, stalled the bill. Senator Joe Manchin, a centralist Democrat from West Virginia, recently rejected the legislation due to concerns about the cost and inflation. Although Manchin claims he is open to conversation about the proposal, delays or failure to pass Build Back Better are likely to produce a wide range of immediate and future issues. The Build Back Better framework involves investments for children, climate change, health care, and the middle class. This matters to social workers because it would significantly impact the populations that we serve. The bill would seek to reduce child poverty by offering free preschool, decreasing childcare costs, and expanding the Child Tax Credit. Regarding health care, the bill would lower the high cost of prescription drugs, minimize the Medicaid coverage gap, and add hearing benefits to Medicaid coverage. Biden hopes the bill will support the middle class by investing in affordable housing, providing free school meals, funding local projects with the new Rural Partnership program, and supporting small businesses.



While the climate change aspect of the proposal will affect all Americans, there is a focus on environmental justice in disadvantaged communities. Social workers must pay attention to this legislation as vulnerable populations, such as impoverished children and families, millions of uninsured individuals, people with disabilities, and those struggling financially, could be substantially assisted by this bill.

Isolation Protocols in Nursing Homes: A Social Work Response

Being a social work intern in a nursing home during the Covid 19 pandemic has encouraged me to consider the outcome of isolation protocols for residents. Undoubtedly, isolation helps reduce cases and exposure, but, questions surrounding self-determination, and the impacts of isolation, should also be factored in when designing these policies. For example, when an employee or resident tests positive, usually a longterm care facility will lock down for at least two weeks. When this occurs, meals are no longer in the dining hall, residents may not leave their areas of the facility, large group activities are canceled, and visitation is extremely restricted. Although necessary, isolation has been proven through research to have negative impacts on individuals of all ages (Hwang, Rabheru, Peisah, Reichman, & Ikeda, 2020; Nicholson, 2012; Urbina-Garcia, 2020).

Personally, I found it difficult to deliver the news about the need to isolate to residents for many reasons. Some residents understood, but some found it difficult to accept that they were being restricted from interacting with others because of Covid 19. It became essential to address the negative impacts of isolation in the care setting. Here are some interventions I and the social services team put in place to help support the residential community -

- Collaborated with the recreation team to plan individual and small, meaningful group activities in the resident's hall
- Provided individual check-ins with residents to help ensure connection and provide support.
- Engaged in active listening
- Created a safe environment for residents to freely communicate any needs or issues, discuss their emotions
- Invited residents to reminisce as a way to cope

As social workers, our response to the quarantine was appropriate and helped to alleviate the loneliness and boredom many residents were experiencing during that difficult time.



Media Review: All Home Care Matters Podcast

All Home Care Matters is a podcast that discuss topics related to the aging population and long-term care. They provide a variety of good information and suggestions for families and providers.

The episode, Holidays and Dementia, shared how the holiday season can be a stressful time for caregivers and people living with dementia. Typical holiday traditions and activities, such as decorating and hosting gatherings, could be overwhelming for a person living with dementia. The speakers on the podcast suggested that supporting people living with dementia is a process that can be consistently modified to meet their needs.

They offered the following suggestions for holidays and family parties that could be helpful for everyone -

- Consider ways to involve everyone in the decorating and celebrating in a way that makes sense and is comfortable
- Replace larger decorations with smaller ones that don't take up too much space and aren't overwhelming to look at
- Avoid loud or flashy stimulation
- Be attentive to behavioral or emotional changes that these activities or changes may induce for a person living with dementia
- Take the opportunity to celebrate family traditions
- Prioritize self-care strategies

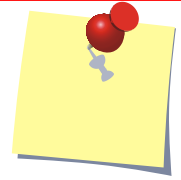
Personal Reflections: What I've Learned So Far

One of the biggest lessons I have learned so far while working in a longterm care setting is about the impacts of dementia for individuals living with it and for caregivers. Specifically, I have come to understand better how people living with dementia, or mild cognitive impairment, experience behavioral and mood changes that are at times out of their control because of the cognitive changes they are experiencing. It is so important for social workers to realize this and avoid judging or misunderstanding clients or their caregivers during tough moments. Whether I am conducting check-ins, listening to stories, transporting residents to meals, or assisting residents with crafts or bingo, I appreciate the time I spend with every resident and focus on their strengths. Although I entered the Aging and Health certificate program with a specific focus on health, my experiences with older adults showed me that I truly enjoy working with this population, especially within a long-term care setting.



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Aging & Health Certificate

Reminder!



This semester, the Aging & Health Certificate Program Speaker Series will feature professionals from the field to share their expertise with students interested in deepening their knowledge on working with older adults in the social work field.

Aging and Health Certificate Spring Speaker Series

- **2/11 12-130PM**
Supportive Housing and Aging
Patricia Hernandez and CSH

- **4/5 12-130PM - Careers in Aging Week**
Samantha Kralle LSW Bancroft Neurology

Registration and more details to come!
Please reach out to Certificate Coordinator
Dr. Lauren Snedeker at
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