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Thinking Practice: The Social Work Integral Model

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Social workers are bound by the mission, values, and ethics of the National Association of Social Workers. Yet a broad, transtheoretical model accounting for these core principles and guiding identification of clinically and ethically sound daily praxis decisions is lacking in the field's literature and practice wisdom. Such a model could aid in assuring dependably sound social worker actions; socialization of colleagues; clearer guidelines for teaching, supervision, and ethical review of peers; and accreditation of educational programs. The Social Work Integral Model (SWIM) emerged from field practice and scholarship for instructional use and addresses this conceptual gap. Further, congruence of the SWIM with Ken Wilber's model of Integral Science suggests SWIM is a theoretical, as well as a practical, advance for the field.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

- SWIM is a visual model of and for social work praxis that fosters development of a universally applicable conceptual architecture of social work practice.
- SWIM defines the threshold of competent social work as occurring upon dynamic convergence of the professional self, client, and professional values and ethics in a given context.
- Adoption of SWIM can help guide competent and procedurally just in-vivo praxis and with evaluation of the work of students and peers.

As professional social workers engaged in the field, we frequently develop a comfortable sense of our population, the practical and ethical issues we face in our practice, and the evolving standards and best practices for addressing these practical and ethical issues. Consciously or not, we create a system of thinking about the theories and tasks of doing our work. Those of us who become field instructors, change population foci, or enter the classroom as instructors of social work are confronted anew with the difficulty inherent in learning social work practice. The "comfortable sense" veteran social workers can take for granted stems from their successful development of intellectual scaffolding and conceptual architecture related to the profession. Such intellectual space houses theory, application knowledge, and skill competencies, and enables praxis (the art and science of social work practice). However, this comfortable sense belies the challenging cognitive work of constructing that conceptual space. The task of building this conceptual space can be challenging, overwhelming, and even disorienting to those learning the profession, or even those changing focus within it.

As classroom or practicum instructors talk about theory, students respond by asking, as Cameron and Keenan (2009) similarly report, "But what do I do with the client?" Students and practitioners of social work frequently struggle to understand how theories relate to one another or can translate into effective practice actions (Cameron & Keenan; Rosen, 1996). Students ask questions such as: "When is it okay to ask my client to elaborate on something?" "How do I know if it is okay to use personal disclosure?" or "What if I think my client's goal is immoral?"

These questions reveal the struggle of novices to juggle and apply the ethical and interventional principles that they are learning. These inquiries also reveal the inherent need for development of a larger, higher-order intellectual space in the competent social worker, wherein the complex multiple mandates, guidelines, and theories of practice may simultaneously coexist and be considered. This intellectual space may be built with purposeful consciousness and a standardized profession-informed schema. It may also be built less consciously through a more idiosyncratic process predicated upon assimilation of partial views derived from multiple and discrete foci, quality of mentorship, and evolution of personal practice precedence. Yet, for reasons including current professional standards and public safety, the former alternative is clearly preferable to the latter. Unfortunately, the latter is normative. As GlenMaye, Lewandowski, and Bolin (2004) articulate, "In real world practice social workers use an advanced generalist perspective, but without specification of a model" (p. 118).

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) expects accredited schools of social work to help burgeoning social workers purposefully develop such professional intellectual scaffolding by providing a "coherent and integrated professional foundation in social work" (CSWE, 2004, as cited in Cameron & Keenan, 2009, p. 346). Yet, CSWE guidelines offer elements and outcomes of such an education, rather than a formulary or directive about what constitutes such a foundation (Cameron & Keenan; CSWE, 2008). Additionally, advanced generalist practice still lacks model conceptualization (Lavitt, 2009).

Once associated with rural and frontier areas, advanced generalist MSW concentrations are now appearing in urban settings and are currently the fastest growing master-level concentration (Lavitt, 2009). Multiple social work thinkers have labored without agreement to conceptualize a uniform and generic account of social work or generalist social work practice (see Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2008; Lavitt; Salas, Sen, & Segal, 2010; Wakefield, 1996).

How ethics are included within a uniform account of social work is yet another important consideration of the completeness and utility of that account. The National Association of Social Workers (2008) clearly states that: (a) "the [*NASW*] *Code* [*of Ethics*] is relevant to all social workers and social work students, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve" ("Purpose of the NASW Code of Ethics," first paragraph) and (b) these should be revered as the primary source of ethical codes in social work practice. It is self-evident that any theoretical model of social work must actively include the profession's values and ethics. Sadly, this is not always done.

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The prevalent use of the person-in-environment (PIE) perspective is the field's current response to the need for a coherent generalist social work foundational model, although its use may be more of a hindrance than an aid in direct practice and case conceptualization (Wakefield, 1996). Others criticize the ecosystems perspective as not affirmatively critiquing historical and differential power dynamics, such that both micro- and macro-practice are dually promoted (Salas et al., 2010). The PIE perspective, while capable of accommodating micro- and macro-practice, is mute about the existence, importance, and proper use of the *NASW Code of Ethics* (NASW, 2008).

Others believe we should focus on the processes of competent social work as we seek to define and train generalist practitioners (Cameron & Keenan, 2009; Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2008; Lavitt, 2009). Having moved from practice to the classroom, I understand the need for a general, foundational model of social work, and join others in suggesting that existing conceptualizations are insufficient to the task of guiding appropriate action (Cameron & Keenan; Salas et al., 2010) and ethical orientation (Spano & Koenig, 2007).

A uniform, transtheoretical, social work foundational practice model would serve three important functions. First, it would help unify (see Salas et al., 2010) and define social work (Spano & Koenig, 2007). Second, it would help cultivate purposeful, profession-informed intellectual scaffolding, creating a more consistently constructed metacognitive mental space in which practice is considered among professional social workers. This function captures the spirit and intent of CSWE's (2008) foundational educational standards. A clear model might help focus social work education and student learning to promote greater competency (Cameron & Keenan, 2009). Third, it would provide a succinct, uniformly useful practice process and action model. A truly uniform model of social work practice must be immediately helpful to novices and yet also flexible enough to accommodate unique circumstances of advanced generalist and advanced specialized social work praxis. Such a theory would help guide clinically and ethically sound day-to-day social work practice decisions, irrespective of and complementary to use in varied specific contexts and among contextual theories.

Sadly, the current lack of a prevalent universal social work model in the professional literature and practice wisdom leaves social workers morally, ethically, and legally bound to provide that for which they have little universal guidance about how to assure. Born from practice wisdom and social work scholarship as a didactic classroom tool, the Social Work Integral Model (SWIM), first presented at the CWSE 2007 Annual Program Meeting (Garner, 2007), is an approach to filling this gap that is worthy of discussion and consideration. The purposes of this article are to introduce SWIM, locate it theoretically, and discuss implications for its use in teaching and practice.

The Social Work Integral Model

SWIM uses a Venn diagram to define the seat of competent social work praxis as the nexus of spheres containing professional values and ethics, the client, and the practitioner in a given robust context (Figure 1). SWIM complements existing theories as an overarching, transtheoretical conceptual model that's visual form facilitates practice and case conceptualization. The individually modeled components are not new to the social work field; indeed, their importance is well documented and is the basis of their inclusion in the model. However, SWIM simultaneously models these elements in a visual and relational way, thus providing an architecture for development of a social work metacognitive schema. By using this visual model, several key considerations related to appropriate social work practice may be explicated and reinforced through attention to the spheres and the domains in which they do and do not overlap.

Despite clarity of purpose (such as securing housing for a client) and skills for applying a practice framework (such as the strengths per-

Figure 1. *The Social Work Integral Model identifies four factors of practice and defines the sound social work praxis as occuring at the nexus of client, practitioner, and professional values in a given context (the "present moment").*

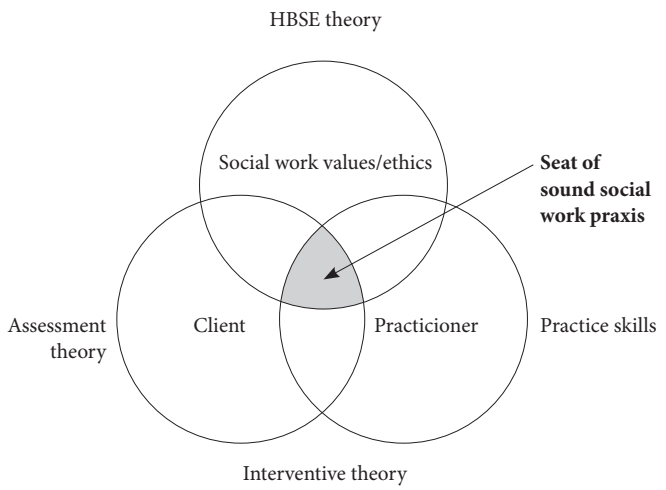
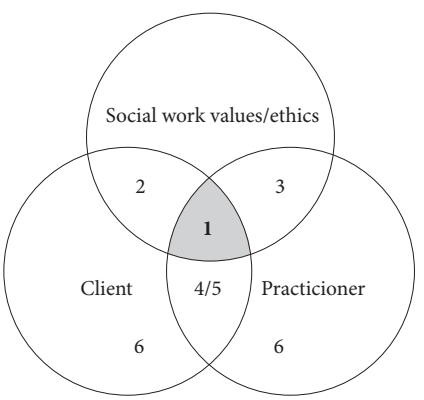


Figure 2. *The Social Work Integral Model depicts the centrality of professional values and accommodates the dual professional goals of social justice and individual level change work, while illuminating social work practice considerations and growth opportunities at the borders of spheres.*



1. **Seat of sound social work praxis:** where professional self, client, & social work values & ethics converge in context
2. Client merges social work values/ethics: consciousness raising, social change & social justice inroads, client empowerment
3. Practitioner merges social work values/ethics: professional identity, personal integration of social work values
4. Client merges practitioner: therapeutic working alliance, transference, learning & practicing new behaviors
5. Practitioner merges client: use of professional self, empathy & compassion, meeting the client where the client is, interpersonal skills
6. Intrapersonal space: reflexivity, self-awareness

spective), in vivo process and ethics decisions on three factors emerge: what to say, where to focus, and how best to serve one's client. SWIM suggests that in these moments, convergence among the following three foci in context is necessary: (a) social work values and ethics, (b) the client, and (c) the professional self. Thus, it provides architecture for a higher order, orienting intellectual schema wherein specific practice theories and ideas may be considered. Further, SWIM may be used in such instances to identify sound social work praxis by quickly evaluating whether a given option is reflective of the profession's values and ethics, is compatible with the client's interests and goals, and embodies the professional, rather than the personal, self. The nexus sets a threshold for balanced, wholly informed and sound social work praxis, which it suggests is the definition and seat of competent social work. SWIM assumes context and provider practice framework as the grounded backdrop of the model. In this way, SWIM is compatible across practice settings, practice models, and nuances of time-in-history and ecological dimensions.

Constant vigilant awareness of SWIM's three central spheres helps social workers keep their bearings. A loss of focus on any one sphere makes for an unbalanced or ill-informed practice. For example, lost focus of values sends social workers morally adrift; lost focus of client takes workers away from their client-centered mandate; and lost focus of personal awareness leaves practitioners, at best, nonreflexive, and at worst, perpetrating the harms of psychic injury or social injustices. Consistent with the social work mission, this nexus may also be taken to represent healthy, empowered individuals in a socially just environment. Conceptually, the goal is then to increase this area. However, doing so will require change at the borders where these spheres overlap so that each may better integrate with the other spheres.

In any given circumstance, there may be numerous or limited options available in the nexus seat, but any options there are offer reasonably solid choices for action. Stated another way, how client goals or professional values and ethics are prioritized within the nexus realm of competent social work will still vary using SWIM. In defining competent social work praxis as occurring only where the client's interests, professional values and ethics, and professional self converge, SWIM overtly accounts for consideration and union among these perspectives as the necessary requirement for sound social work praxis.

The social work values and ethics sphere is depicted centrally in the proposed model (Figure 2). The profession's values and ethics, rather than their current operationalization, will be enduring and orienting for professional social work amid rapidly changing social and technological conditions. Visually displaying the spheres and the areas of their independence and unique overlaps reminds social workers of the relevance of (a) the involved individuals (their strengths, culture, history, goals, priorities, etc.), (b) the need for intra- and interpersonal work (such as personal awareness, communication skills, empathy, and nonjudgmental acceptance), and (c) aspirations for integration of social work values and ethics (such as consciousness raising, social action, and social justice inroads) for both the social work professional and the client. Such a reminder of the need for personal growth as well as the clients' may help foster continued commitment to this personal work. This should subsequently enhance social worker empathy for clients' change efforts. Further, these parceled-out overlapping areas help to conceptually accommodate dual professional goals of social justice and individual-level change work.

SWIM may be used as an in vivo practice tool. Identifying considered moves or positions within the three spheres and noting where they fall either confirms the soundness of the considered action if in the seat of sound social work praxis, or illuminates where the considered action is out of balance because it fails to incorporate a sphere. SWIM thus helps the practitioner identify potential ethical or clinical issues. This same process simultaneously locates where change or inclusion in a considered action must happen in order to move forward in a balanced way (e.g., sound social work praxis).

Theoretical Positioning

Professional social workers achieve proficiency through success within four learning domains: theorizing and abstract conceptualization, concrete experience, observation, and reflection (Raschick, Maypole, & Day, 1998). Not surprisingly, academic faculty prefer theorizing and abstract conceptualization. In contrast, students and agency supervisors rely more heavily upon concrete experience as their preferred learning processes (Kruzich, Freisen, & Van Soest, 1986). This finding suggests that the majority of the rank and file in the profession might benefit from aid with the important task of conceptualizing their work. Fleming (2010a) suggests that education and learning, generally, should take advantage of individual's preferred modes of receiving and expressing information, which he conceptualizes as taking the forms of visual, aural, read/write, kinesthetic, and multimodal ("VARK"). Fleming (2010b) currently reports that across populations, among the 38,541 respondents who took the Web-based VARK by January 2010, 48.90% have some preference for visual expression (e.g., drawings, diagrams, graphs, flow charts, symbols, colors, etc.), either singularly or in combination with one or more of the other modalities.

As previously noted, the field of social work lacks, and would benefit from, a generalist's practice model. A distinction will now be made. Sheafor and Horejsi (2006) differentiate between models *for* social work and models *of* social work. Models *for* social work focus on the "how" of social work, addressing issues concerning how to create change. Many generalist social work models are examples. Models *of* social work offer the "what" of social work as they strive to define social work. These two types of theories will clearly have many similarities, but they have different aims. A model for generalist, or advanced generalist, social work practice must be a widely applicable practice framework theory. It is a broad and generic account of the "how" of social work, whereas a transtheoretical model of social work is a generic account of "what" constitutes social work. A good transtheoretical model will congruently support both generalist and highly specialized social work in its representation of the "what" of social work. As discussed, the profession struggles for uniform accounts for and of social work. Contemporary contributions toward a generalist model and toward transtheoretical models are slowly being made.

Lavitt (2009) progresses conceptualization of the advanced generalist and posits the affirmative need for a generalist model. To this end, she contributes written arguments for the centrality of processes of problem formulation, innovation based on reflective leadership, and ethical advocacy above intervention policy or methodology. Kirst-Ashman and Hull (2008) also contribute work toward a social work generalist model. Like Lavitt, they actively include ethics and assert that the "emphasis of and adherence to a core of professional values" (p. 6) is one of five defining characteristics of the profession. They offer a social work generalist intervention model and provide lists and flow charts of it, some of which include ethics (p. 35). Both Lavitt's and Kirst-Ashman and Hull's quality, contemporary works are premised on the idea that social workers must be active, critical

thinkers who are fluid in their responses. Their foci is in the personal and process characteristics correlated with this ever-evolving and responsive worker.

By contrast, the focus of transtheoretical models *of* social work is less upon the practitioner and more upon characteristics of the work of social work. Cameron and Keenan (2009, 2010) argue the need for a transtheoretical process model of social work and respond with the helpful common factor model (CFM). CFM is built upon empirical studies that identified "active ingredients" across psychotherapy approaches. Their model might arguably be considered a generalist model *for* social work, as differentiated above, but its focus is more about generic assessment and helping processes *of* social work than about the worker and how to accomplish the work. Cameron and Keenan's work offers a progressive system of conceptualizing social work but does not explicitly include ethical considerations and is not visual. Spano and Koenig (2007) also address the work *of* social work. They visually model and define social work, and address ethical considerations, but only within the narrow scope of conflicts between a practitioner's personal values and professional ethics. The Spano and Koenig conceptualization does not make pedagogical use of the rest of the modeled elements. In fact, their model is two-dimensional in that their four elements (client, agency, worker, and profession) are precluded from possible independent overlap with all of the other elements. Thus their model falls short of capturing more fully the salient aspects of social work practice that SWIM includes and models, using context as a third-dimension ground element.

SWIM is a model *of* and *for* social work praxis, as Sheafor and Horejsi (2006) differentiate, both as a definitional and pragmatic practice tool for the field. SWIM is congruent or complimentary with the thrust of the generalist and transtheoretical models described above, and SWIM provides a transtheoretical model *of* social work that defines criteria *for* sound social work (which include the professions' values and ethics) and visually depicts these criteria. While SWIM does not introduce novel components to social work, it introduces a novel, systematic way to view them. It provides conceptual architecture that may be capable of fostering a profession-informed metacognitive space among social work professionals. It also articulates visually and in writing that competent praxis is derived only through the dynamic and simultaneous convergence of the professional self, client, and professional values and ethics in a given context. In doing so, a threshold of competent social work is defined.

With wide uptake and acceptance, this concept could provide a procedural justice standard for daily practice. Daniels (2001), building on Rawls' (1971) notion of justice as fairness, has argued from a public health perspective that while social justice is the preferred goal, procedural justice is a reasonable, desirable, and attainable goal for the field given the elusiveness of social justice. In the absence of consensus about parameters of just outcomes, the field should retreat to an agreeably just process (Daniels). Use of SWIM can both assure a sound threshold for social work endeavors and provide the flexibility for reasonable disagreement or variance upon particular points or priorities, thus providing social work an acceptable procedural justice akin to what Daniels has promoted in public health.

The threshold of competent work would be evidence of actions within SWIM's nexus (of the realms central to the profession), with differences in practice decisions expected and acceptable within this nexus. Use of this threshold could mitigate some of the day-to-day intra- and interindividual struggles over rank-ordering among sequential values, goods, or goals during practice decisions. Debates and challenges to ranking and operationalization of the profession's values could become a more focused, academic, or disciplinary subspecialty that takes place outside of, but ultimately shapes, day-to-day praxis, teaching, supervision, and ethical review board reviews of peer behavior.

Social work has long been at the forefront of the modern versus postmodern debate (Martinez-Brawley, 1999). SWIM's spheres include intellectual space for the consideration of multiple perspectives. For example, the clear depiction of the professional, the client, and their respective areas of overlap can support and visually model contemporary practice work predicated on "thirdness," or empathy and ethics based upon the interaction of the client and professional as subjective actors (Arnd-Caddigan & Pozzuto, 2009). SWIM is premised only on the assumption that current context, professional values and ethics, the client, and the professional self must be accounted for and converge to reach the threshold of sound social work praxis. Various and evolving systems of ethical reasoning such as relativistic, care, and other postmodern approaches can be employed with SWIM, just as can more rigid, deontological approaches, such as "do not have dual relationships with your clients."

SWIM's relational framing goes further than applicability with positivist and postmodern practice conception. Wilber (2000) has posited that humans' quest for knowledge historically falls within a four-quadrant, two-by-two matrix (singular–plural by subjective–objective). Each of these cells is unique in epistolary, methods, and privileged perspective (Figure 3). Wilber suggests that the "big three" approaches to knowledge (art, morals, and science) are located within different quadrants; the next leap for intellectual advancement will be the development of integral application models in which all quadrants, and their unique attributes, are of equal preference and representation. While a full discussion of Wilber's complex work and its implications for the social work profession is beyond the scope of this article, Wilber's overall integral framework is germane and suggestive of SWIM's theoretical importance. SWIM is congruent with Wilber's integrative model: SWIM's elements of social work practitioner maps to quadrant one, professional values and ethics to quadrant two, the client to quadrant three, and the context to quadrant four. In this way, subjective, intersubjective, and objective elements are not only included in SWIM but are modeled such that sound social work praxis is their nexus. Thus SWIM simultaneously defines and can be functionally used to prescribe integral social work praxis.

Figure 3. *The Social Work Integral Model (shown in italics) within Wilber's conceptualization of integral theory which includes the 2x2 matrix of methods and perspectives related to art, moral, and science approaches to the quest for knowledge.*

1 **I:** Self & consciousness subjective (interior-individual) **Art:** "the Beautiful" *Practicioner*	**3** **It:** Brain & organism objective (exterior-individual) **Science:** "the True" *Client*
2 **We:** Culture & worldview intersubjective (cultural; interior-collective) **Morals:** "the Good" *Social Work Values/Ethics*	**4** **Its:** Social systems & environment interobjective (social; exterior-collective) **Science:** "the True" *Context*

Source: "From A Theory of Everything," by Ken Wilber, © 2000 by Ken Wilber. Reprinted by arrangement with Shambhala Publications, Boston, MA. www.shambhala.com.

Implications for Practice

SWIM is proposed as a transtheoretical model *of* and *for* social work praxis. Learning the art and science of social work involves several domains of competency and requires development of a metacognitive-level intellectual space within which competing theories and strategies may be held and assessed for use in a given situation. Uptake and use of SWIM in the classroom, practicum, and the practice field could help foster more purposeful and uniform development of a profession-informed intellectual schema that serves this function. Presentation of this model in visual and written representation is powerful, making it likely to be more easily understood and remembered by practitioners. Teaching that function follows form, the visual diagram can easily serve as a memory cue. The spheres' areas of independence and overlap remind students and practitioners of practice considerations on the road to competent work choices.

As a transtheoretical definitional model *of* competent social work, SWIM prescribes that competent social work praxis is possible only at the nexus of the profession's values and ethics, the client, and the practitioner's professional self in a context. Establishment of such a process threshold (convergent representation of needed elements) for sound social work may quell some of the contentious intra- and interpersonal struggles among colleagues to order these interests hierarchically. Indeed, debates about legitimacy and supremacy among the interests of practitioners, clients, and the profession arise in agencies and the literature as sources of conflict (see Spano & Koenig, 2007). Such conflicts can consume resources, distract from work, divide workers, and create substantive inconsistencies in providing services to clients. When people cannot count on equal treatment for given issues, such inconsistencies can create potential problems of public distrust, policy or public health issues, and professional or legal sanctions (Sheafor & Horejsi, 2006). Although equal outcomes may never be assured, equal process may be possible. The field would clearly benefit from a prevalent definitional model of competent professional social work that is equally applicable across settings, populations, and eco-levels of practice. There are clear implications for teaching, mentoring, supervision, and peer evaluation of practice related to this possible use of SWIM.

As a practice theory *for* social work, SWIM is a tool to operationalize the goal of equally prioritizing and representing client interests, professional values, and the social work professional in a systematic way. The conceptual model of their relational importance and moment-to-moment salience to discerning sound social work praxis is promoted here. Given a context, the structures of the spheres and their overlaps help cue fuller thinking about a situation for quick in vivo choices as well as thoughtful case conceptualization for ongoing work.

The centrality of ethics to social work cannot be overstated (Reamer, 1998, 2005). SWIM does not replace or preclude other frameworks for ethical decision making; indeed, it reminds the practitioner of the responsibility to consider the profession's values and ethics during praxis at all times. Most practitioners and social work students are aware that if they identify ethical issues, there are standards advanced within the profession to guide them, such as consulting colleagues, and identifying and analyzing the values, stakeholders, and likely outcomes of options (Dolgoff, Loewenberg, & Harrington, 2005). However, such action is predicated upon recognition of an ethical issue. Use of SWIM's spheres and areas of successful or failed overlap can help a practitioner in vivo to identify potential ethical and clinical issues. Once identified, a practitioner can include ethical consideration and proactively use some formal form of ethical reasoning to make decisions among the profession's ethics within the nexus of sound social work practice.

I introduced SWIM in class along with practice skills and discussion of professional ethics, and students report that it is accessible and helpful to them. Pedagogically, its use gives students a concrete way to approach conceptualization of their practice and how they will determine next steps with clients. It also assures a natural opportunity, prior to field placement, for concrete and abstract discussion of important issues of conflicts between personal and professional values, cultural sensitivity, and antioppression and advocacy roles.

For example, a student once asked me in class if it is appropriate to ask a client about his involvement in a white supremacy group, following the client's disclosure of this association in the context of an individual substance abuse case management session. Using SWIM, we considered: would asking about this now be congruent with the client's best interests, the profession's values and ethics, and the student's professional self? In this particular instance, the student essentially admitted that her proposed inquiry was prompted by personal curiosity rather than a relevant and clearly conceptualized clinical purpose. This purpose is not congruent with the nexus of SWIM. This admission gave rise to class discussion of personal self and professional self.

We considered the overlap between the practitioner and professional values and ethics, and discussed professional roles and boundaries; we highlighted how personal values, when not in alignment with goals of social justice and wellness for all, effectively contribute to the status quo (Spencer, 2008). We considered the overlap of the practitioner and the client and discussed the need to be empathetic and use interpersonal skills to work with the client on setting and meeting a session agenda that is centered on the client's best interests. We considered the independent part of the practitioner sphere and discussed the importance of examining assumptions, practicing self-care, and being ongoing learners as supports for being clear and present with clients. We then considered the client sphere and discussed circumstances when an inquiry about white supremacy membership could be appropriate. These ranged from individual-level goals to opportunities for consciousness raising about oppression. We discussed what this membership might mean to the client and what disclosure of it to the practitioner might mean about the therapeutic relationship from the client's view. We discussed what contextual elements in the environment or discussion, and what interpersonal cues, such as tone and tenor of voice, might help us hypothesize about these meanings.

While I have mostly used SWIM pedagogically in direct practice classes, the validity and versatility of the model hold true for mezzo and macro practice as well. For instance, I have been using SWIM as a participant observer in a city's community building project. With funds from the United Way, the city is building upon an existing interfaith group to create a community-wide coalition to address community needs. Using the visual form of SWIM as a guide, I work on case conceptualization by considering each sphere and how they might overlap in this situation (in a process similar to that detailed in the micro practice example above). This process helps me consider the personal, individual, and group adaptations that could foster a more empowered, civil, just, and healthy community and individuals.

There are some dedicated community members participating alongside city representatives working to envision how the city community can be made better. As you might expect, problems arise over differences in opinion among individual participant's priorities, vision, and willingness to support others' goals. I consider the city population my

client and use SWIM to help me navigate scope of focus, inclusiveness of language for targeted service providers and recipients, decision making processes, and other issues that arise. As we work, peer participants say things like: "I think we should house this at my church," "I think 'community-wide' can replace 'multicultural' in our mission statement," or "homelessness is the only issue we should focus on."

As I weigh my thoughts, I consider: does this assertion align with the interests of the community at large, social work values and ethics, and what I know and can contribute regarding community social work (my professional self)? When, as in each of these cases, it does not, I use the area in which the assertion does not fall to guide my goals and response to the assertion. I will use as an example the first statement—"I think we should house this at my church."

A number of religions, not all Christian, are represented in my city. My analytical conclusion that this assertion did not clearly overlap with the community client and the profession's values led me to respond: "It is great that you and your church are willing to help so much. Because we are trying to establish a multifaith and secular coalition, I think we should either rotate the service site or put it in a more neutral location so that we don't tacitly appear to support just one faith." This was a consciousness-raising response for the group, as evidenced by the discussion that followed. Had I been invested in this particular church, this same original assertion might also have challenged me to differentiate between my personal and professional self, to assure that I was working from the latter.

I also think about the implications for community members as a whole (the client) if services supported by a purportedly multifaith and secular coalition were housed in one church facility. I realize there are implications for target consumers' comfort, privacy, autonomy, and potential for dual relationships. Some populations are known to prefer to seek services from those within their community (Stanhope, Solomon, Pernell-Arnold, Sands, & Bourjolly, 2005), yet others prefer anonymity when receiving certain services (Hellman & House, 2006). Because all potential providers and clients are members of the same geographic area, it seems that rotating the site of services produces the most flexibility for potential clients to seek services among those they know or do not know, per their individual preference.

On the other hand, one might still reasonably argue that a single neutral location might provide the best client service for proximity, confidentiality (fewer total people involved with service provision), consistency, efficiency, convenience, or some other reason. SWIM suggests that it is the active consideration of the context, professional values and ethics, client's interests, and professional self that assure procedural justice and sound social work praxis. Conclusions drawn and decisions made in this case may be very different based on the particulars of the context and active agents (practitioner and client). To extend this point, in a community with less diversity or a known strong preference for how, where, and from whom they seek services, a different resolution might have best reflected the SWIM nexus regarding the selection of the optimal site for services. The intra- and intersubjectivity, situation, and one's particular approach to ethical reasoning will necessarily influence conclusions drawn from SWIM, but so long as all elements are included the practice is fully informed praxis.

SWIM has value and utility for teaching, mentoring, and assessing others' work independent of the possibility that it becomes widely embraced within the discipline as a tool for procedural justice (an admittedly ambitious possibility). Praxis, in a way consistent with the social work profession's core knowledge, values, and skills, is of such importance and concern that CSWE (2008) has made this a primary focus in educational program accreditation. SWIM may have considerable pedagogical value as an instructional tool and, subsequently, a competency assessment tool. As described above, the articulated elements of SWIM can be systematically used to identify and include the professional self, NASW values and ethics, and places for advancement of justice and rights, among other stated core competencies included in the new "Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards." Students might be asked to employ all or part of SWIM to a case study and discuss implications in class or as assignments. Thus, SWIM can be a basis for measurement of student competency. Adoption of SWIM could help clarify guidelines for social work teaching, supervision, and ethical review of others' social work practices. Further, the face validity and theoretical contribution of the simultaneous relational inclusion of the elements of SWIM proposed here are strengthened in light of the work of Ken Wilber (2000).

Conclusion

SWIM has notable implications for teaching, mentoring, and assessment of others' work competency. Informed by practice experience and scholarly work, SWIM emerged as a helpful didactic classroom tool. It appears to fill a relative void in social work professional knowledge and practice bases—a void that causes great intra- and interpersonal struggle when fulfilling the social work mission. Lavitt (2009) suggests that social work vitally needs to produce leaders at this time who "can act according to professional values, while staying mindful of the needs of colleagues and clients" (p. 468). SWIM identifies the domains for which proximal awareness is necessary for discernment of competent social work praxis. SWIM seems to provide a foundational framework that may aid new practitioners or those amid changing practice landscapes to identify and maintain a centered practice while applying evolving theories of assessment, causation, intervention, and ethics across practice settings and populations. While neither the profession's new competency standards (CSWE, 2008) nor Wilber's (2000) call for broad and integral disciplinary frameworks is the genesis of SWIM, the model is fully compatible with both.

If adopted into use, SWIM's greatest utility to the profession may derive from providing a transtheoretical model *of* sound social work praxis. The relational and definitional visual model *of* sound social work can serve as a memory cue and intellectual architecture for a practitioner's metacognitive practice schema. Alternatively, SWIM's greatest utility to the profession may stem from pragmatic application of the model *for* social work that helps assure a process that results in a predictably comprehensive, inclusive, and respectful praxis. Ultimately, utility can be derived only if the practice and scholarly social work communities engage in consideration, trial, and critique of SWIM and ideas presented here. The thrust of this article is to encourage and spur such exploration.

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