THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Course Number: SW 333 Instructor: Lori Holleran Steiker, Ph.D, ACSW

Unique Number: 62395 E-mails: lorikay@mail.utexas.edu;

Semester: Spring, 2012 **Phone:** (512) 232-9330

Meeting Time: Tues. / Thurs. **Office Room:** 2.240 (come to student info desk)

11:00-12:30

Meeting Place: SSW 2.116 **Office Hours:** Tuesday or Thursday 10:00-11:00

(or by appointment)

TA: Andrea Krajewski, Ph.D student andreaek@utexas.edu or (810)305-0691

SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH GROUPS

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course in the practice sequence focuses on developing group leaders who possess both an understanding of group dynamics and effective leadership skills. The foundation of the course is social work values and the ethical decision making process, as illuminated by the NASW Code of Ethics. The content encompasses both task and treatment groups utilizing an ecosystems developmental framework. The course emphasizes understanding, affirming, and respecting groups with diverse backgrounds, including (but not limited to) race, ethnicity, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical or mental ability, age, and national origin. Social work group facilitation is taught utilizing empirically-based theories and interventions to achieve client goals. Students will know how to evaluate the effectiveness of group interventions.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

- 1. Demonstrate an understanding of social group work and practice related to the strengths, capacities and resources of individuals within groups. (PB 11, 35, 38)
- 2. Develop leadership skills with groups in order to help alleviate critical social problems and enhance group well-being. (PB 1, 2, 3, 4, 38)
- 3. Develop skills in identifying group members' issues, problems, needs, resources, and assets within a framework of group processes, dynamics, and developmental stages. (PB 11, 12, 13)
- 4. Understand and apply basic concepts of task-oriented group work, including recruiting and selecting members, leadership, group decision-making and problem solving, running an effective meeting, and evaluation of task groups. (PB 29, 30, 31)

- 5. Understand and apply basic concepts of treatment groups, including group formation, facilitation, and termination (assessment, intervention, and evaluation). (PB 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, and 40)
- 6. Develop skills in identifying, analyzing and implementing empirically-based group interventions and evaluating group effectiveness. (PB 5, 11, 12, 36, 37, 38, 39, and 40)
- 7. Develop tools and techniques for understanding, affirming, and respecting group members from diverse backgrounds, distinguished by characteristics including (but not limited to) race, ethnicity, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical or mental ability, age, and national origin (PB 11, 30)
- 8. Explore what is involved in making real-life ethical choices, establishing a professional self, applying social work values and utilizing the ethical decision making process, as illuminated by the NASW Code of Ethics, to social work with groups. (PB 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10)
- 9. Demonstrate an understanding of the pursuit of social and economic justice including group/community strategies to combat discrimination, oppression, and economic deprivation for individuals and families. (PB 1, 29, 30)

III. TEACHING METHODS

This course is designed to include a variety of experiences intended to achieve the student educational outcome of mastering knowledge and skill in this area. Included will be lectures, readings, discussions, speakers, videos and experiential experiences. The professor will model group work principles and strategies. The class will be organized as an experiential skill laboratory, utilizing the small group context and role play for development of skill in leading treatment groups.

IV. REQUIRED READINGS

Required Texts (available at University bookstore)

Toseland, R. W., & Rivas, R. F. (2012). *An introduction to group work practice* (7th ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Required Article (to be provided by professor)

Pollio, D. E. (2002). The Evidence-Based Group Worker. <u>Social Work with Groups</u>, 25(4), 57-70.

V. **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** Contract of Expectations

[It is the students' responsibility to read the syllabus carefully for information]

1. Students are expected to attend class sessions promptly and regularly. The professor utilizes a "parallel process" model and will have expectations similar to those that you will experience when working as a social worker in the "real world." Therefore, lateness or other forms of inappropriate behavior will result in consequences to final grades. Members will participate in an interactive framework between collegiate students and professor. The

- cohesion and bonds of the class are critical and therefore, absence or lateness is disruptive, not only to your learning, but to your classmates.
- 2. Students are expected to <u>complete the readings prior to class</u>, and should be well prepared to participate in discussions and experiential learning assignments. We will begin every class with study inquiries each student is expected to hand in, at the beginning of Tuesday classes, a question or reflection on the reading(s) on an index card. A full point will be deducted from participation grades for failing to hand in a question or reflection (a half point will be deducted if it is handed in late, but by Thursday class).
- 3. Failure to regularly attend the class and demonstrate through discussions that one has comprehended the readings will be considered in assigning the final grade. Students will be allowed no more than **two unexcused absences**.
- 4. In cases where a student missed more than the allotted two absences, the professor reserves the right to lower that student's final grade. In extenuating circumstances of absence, students are to notify the professor as soon as possible and discuss options and alternatives. Students are responsible for any material missed due to absences do NOT ask the professor or TA for missed materials; you must get them from your classmates.
- 5. Except in the case of extreme emergencies, and then only with the permission of the professor, late assignments will not be accepted without penalty. Students are expected to turn in all required assignments on the agreed upon due date at the beginning of class. Assignments turned in after class starts will be considered late. If accepted, late assignments will be assessed point penalties at the rate of 5 points each day late. If the due date is a problem, then the student should see the professor and negotiate another due date well in advance
- 6. Regardless of the reason, even if excused, students that miss taking a quiz on the scheduled date as outlined below in the course outline will take a make-up exam that will be essay in nature. The essay make-up exam will be taken by the student as soon as possible following the administration of the regularly scheduled quiz. The reason for this is that once the multiple-choice quiz has been administered to the class, the integrity of that quiz is then jeopardized.
- 7. Students are expected to both learn and demonstrate knowledge of groupwork intervention theories and skills. This requires searches of the literature in a defined area (as part of the researched group role play) in order to develop specialized knowledge concerning the use of groupwork as treatment of a specific problem area for a specific population. In addition, students will demonstrate their level of applied knowledge of groupwork interventions and skills on quizzes.
- 8. If students are concerned about their class performance, the professor is amenable to working with students to help them improve their course grades prior to the end of the semester. FINAL GRADES ASSIGNED IN THE COURSE ARE NOT NEGOTIABLE.
- 9. Small groups are expected to resolve challenges within their group context. The professor is willing to serve as a consultant if group members are unable to resolve their differences.
- 10. Group work can raise emotional issues. The professor and students have the ethical responsibility to their colleagues to see that the class environment is

- maintained as a respectful and confidential setting. Student feedback is welcome. All NASW Code of Ethics values will be upheld.
- 11. A mid-semester course evaluation will be conducted and input considered for course adjustments. Students are encouraged to provide feedback during office hours and by appointment if they desire.

Special Accommodations for Students with a Disability

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259; 471-4641 TTY. Please notify the professor of any special accommodations that you may need prior to the end of the second week of class.

Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty

Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, the student may refer to the Web Site of the Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students (http://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs).

Safety

As part of professional social work education, students may have assignments that involve working in agency settings and/or the community. As such, these assignments may present some risks. Sound choices and caution may lower risks inherent to the profession. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to policies and practice related to agency and/or community safety. Students should also notify instructors regarding any safety concerns.

Religious holy days

A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor as far in advance of the absence as possible, so that arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence. A student who is absent from a class or examination for the observance of a religious holy day may complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence, if proper notice has been given. Notice must be given *at least fourteen days prior* to the classes scheduled on dates the student will be absent. For religious holy days that fall within the first two weeks of the semester, notice should be given on the first day of the semester.

VI. COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Class Attendance and Contribution

Due to the format and content of this course, both attendance and contribution are imperative. The other students in your small group are dependent on you for a quality learning experience; if too many students are absent in any one small group, that group suffers. Thus, students are expected to be in class, or in extenuating circumstances, to notify the professor and at least one other group member that they will be absent. Attendance and quality of contribution as demonstrated by student preparation level will determine grades. Students will be allowed **two (2) unexcused absences**. Role will be taken at the beginning of each class period. In cases where a student misses more than the allotted two absences, the professor reserves the right to lower that student's final grade by one point for each class missed beyond the two allotted.

Quizzes:

There will be four (4) quizzes, for a cumulative worth of 25% of final grade. The quizzes will be based on readings, discussions, presentations, videos, experiential exercises, and lecture material. The quizzes will be objective in nature, and may consist of multiple choice, true/false, fill in the blank, or short essay questions. Make up exams will not be given unless there are unusual extenuating circumstances. The professor reserves the right of final approval of what an unusual extenuating circumstance might comprise.

Group Observation Assignment:

Students will locate a service agency with group work services or support group. When the agency is chosen, permission must be given by an agency administrator or group leader for group observation. In past years, some students have had difficulty finding a group to observe. It is recommended that you be creative and start looking for opportunities early. Psycho-educational groups are more likely to be open to observers. A second option is to attend THREE 12-step program meetings and writing a paper about self-help groups. More will be presented about these options. In any case, confidentiality must be insured. Observe the group, taking notes while you observe or immediately after the group experience if note-taking would be too disruptive to process (unless the facilitator allows audio taping of the session, in which case notes can be taken after the group). Once you return home and reflect on your experience, create a group profile and reaction paper including the following information:

- a) The purpose of the group
- b) Group composition and structure
- c) The facilitators leadership techniques and style
- d) Specific dynamics noted re: interactions between members
- e) The stage of group development
- f) An overall assessment of the strengths of the group and areas that you feel need improvement.
- g) Plan what you would do if you were facilitating this group

The paper should be no less than 5 pages and no more than 10 pages, typed, double spaced. It is okay to write from a "first person" perspective. No references are required.

Researched Group Role Play

Students will be formed into small groups of no more than 6 members. Each group will role play a treatment group in front of class utilizing specific theoretical frameworks. Students will alternate in the leadership role to demonstrate their practice behaviors. The first facilitator will orchestrate the beginning of the group; successive facilitators will conduct program activities appropriate to the theoretical frame and population; and the final facilitator will conduct closure activities. Each group will reflect adherence to social work values and ethics, and application to a specific (child, adolescent, adult, elderly or family group) population. The groups should target a population which is diverse, at-risk, and/or disadvantaged. The session should demonstrate techniques appropriate to the "middle" group developmental stage and the developmental life cycle of the treatment population. This assignment will be worth 25% of the total course grade. Evaluation components will include:

- Evidence of preparation and creativity
- Theoretical coherence demonstrated
- Group developmental stage ("middle") represented appropriately
- Intervention modeling associated with "middle" stage of group development demonstrated
- Social work perspective evident in context of role play
- Demonstration of client developmental level (life cycle) taken into account

Additionally, each group is hand out to the class a summary (couple of pages) of their role play and relevant research conducted that should include, but is not limited to:

- Type of group (brief description addressing purpose, location, number of sessions, open-ended versus closed-ended, etc.)
- Theoretical framework(s) being implemented
- Member characteristics (general description)
- Description for each group member's <u>character</u> (student's real name with corresponding name adopted for role play; age; ethnicity; individual goal for group; developmental stage in the life cycle; relevant life and environmental circumstances; role within the group, such as monopolizer, scapegoat, and so on; etc.)

A list of references that your group used to prepare the role play so that others interested have a starting list of resources *

VII. Explanation of Accreditation Standards

The School of Social Work has been continuously accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) since 1952. In order to maintain our accreditation status, we engage in ongoing curriculum assessment to demonstrate compliance with CSWE's Education Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). Several required courses in our

curriculum are part of this ongoing assessment, including this course. Below is a list of the specific Educational Policies (EP) and Practice Behaviors (PB) that are assessed in this course. The complete EPAS can be optioned from your Student Handbook.

Competency 2.1.1

Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly. Social workers serve as representatives of the profession, its mission, and its core values. They know the profession's history. Social workers commit themselves to the profession's enhancement and to their own professional conduct and growth.

PB1 Advocate for client access to the services of social work

Objectives: 2, 8, and 9

Assignment: Group observation and quiz

PB2 Practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional

development

Objectives: 2 and 8

Assignment: Researched Group Role Play PB3 Attend to professional roles and boundaries

Objectives: 2 and 8

Assignment: Researched Group Role Play and quiz

PB4 Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication

Objectives: 2 and 8

Assignment: Researched Group Role Play and quiz

PB5 Engage in career-long learning

Objectives: 6 and 8

Assignment: Group Observation Assignment

PB6 Use supervision and consultation

Objectives: 8

Assignment: Researched Group Role Play

Competency 2.1.2

Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice. Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards, and relevant law.

PB7 Recognize and manage personal values to allow professional values to guide practice

Objectives: 8

Assignments: Researched Group Role Play and quiz

PB8 Make ethical decisions by applying NASW Code of Ethics and, as applicable,

IFSW/IASSW ethical principles

Objectives: 8

Assignments: Researched Group Role Play and quiz PB9 Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts

Objectives: 8

Assignments: Researched Group Role Play and quiz

PB10 Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions

Objectives: 8

Assignments: Researched Group Role Play and quiz

Competency 2.1.3 Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments: Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information.

PB11 Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom

Objectives: 1, 3, 6, and 7

Assignment: Group Observation, Researched Group Role Play and quizzes

PB12 Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation

Objectives: 3 and 6

Assignment: Group Observation and quizzes

PB13 Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues

Objectives: 3

Assignment: Group Observation and quiz

Competency 2.1.10a: Engagement

PB29 Substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

Objectives: 4, 5, and 9

Assignments: Researched Group Role Play and Quizzes

PB30 Use empathy and other interpersonal skills

Objectives: 4, 5, 7, and 9

Assignments: Researched Group Role Play and Quizzes

PB31 Develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes

Objectives: 4 and 5

Assignments: Group Observation, Researched Group Role Play and guizzes

Competency 2.1.10b Assessment

PB32 Collect, organize, and interpret client data

Objectives: 5

Assignments: Group Observation and quiz PB33 Assess client strengths and limitations

Objectives: 5

Assignments: Group Observation and quiz

PB34 Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objective

Objectives: 5

Assignments: Researched Group Role Play and quiz PB35 Select appropriate intervention strategies

Objectives: 1 and 5

Assignments: Group Observation, Researched Group Role Play and quizzes

Competency 2.1.10c Interventions

PB36 Initiate actions to achieve organizational goals

Objectives: 5 and 6

Assignments: Group Observation

PB37 Implement prevention intervention that enhances client capacities

Objectives: 5 and 6

Assignments: Researched Group Role Play

PB38 Help clients resolve problems

Objectives: 1, 2, 5, and 6

Assignments: Group Observation, Researched Group Role Play and quizzes

PB39 Negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients

Objectives: 5 and 6

Assignments: Researched Group Role Play and quizzes

PB40 Facilitate transitions and endings

Objectives: 5 and 6

Assignments: Researched Group Role Play and quizzes

Course Requirements

Quizzes: (PB 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 38, 39, and 40) There will be four (4) quizzes. Each quiz will be worth 25 points (for a cumulative worth of 25% of final grade). The quizzes will be based on readings, discussions, presentations, videos, experiential exercises, and lecture material. The quizzes will be objective in nature, and may consist of multiple choice, exact choice, true/false, fill in the blank, or short essay questions.

Group Observation Assignment: (PB 1, 5, 6, 12, 13, 32, 33, and 35)

Students will locate a service agency with group work services or support group. If an agency is chosen, permission must be given by an agency administrator for group observation. In past years, some students have had difficulty finding a group to observe. It is recommended that you be creative and start looking for opportunities early. Psycheducational groups are more likely to be open to observers. If a group cannot be located, you can consider attending THREE 12-step program meetings as an option and writing a paper about self-help groups. More will be presented about these options. In any case, confidentiality must be insured. Observe the group, taking notes while you observe or immediately after the group experience if note-taking would be too disruptive to process (unless the facilitator allows audio taping of the session, in which case notes can be taken after the group). Then, create a group profile and reaction paper including the following information:

- a) The purpose of the group
- b) Group composition and structure
- c) The facilitators' leadership techniques and style
- d) Specific dynamics noted re: interactions between members
- e) The stage of group development
- f) An overall assessment of the strengths of the group and areas that you feel need improvement.
- g) Plan what you would do if you were facilitating this group The paper should be no less than 5 pages and no more than 10 pages, typed, double spaced. It is okay to write from a "first person" perspective. No references are required.

Researched Group Role Play (PB 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 29, 30, 31, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, and 40)

In addition to weekly experiential practice role plays, students will each conduct an extensive researched group role play. Students will be assigned to small groups of no more than 6 members. Students will alternate in leadership roles. Each group will role play 1 treatment session in front of class utilizing a specific theoretical framework(s). Each group will reflect adherence to social work values and ethics, and application to a specific (child, adolescent, adult, elderly or family group) context. The groups should target a population which is diverse, at-risk, or disadvantaged. The session should demonstrate techniques appropriate to the "middle" group developmental stage and the developmental life cycle of the treatment population. This assignment will be worth 25% of the total course grade. Evaluation components will include:

- Evidence of preparation and creativity
- Theoretical coherence demonstrated
- Group developmental stage ("middle") represented appropriately
- Intervention modeling associated with "middle" stage of group development demonstrated
- Social work perspective evident in context of role play
- Demonstration of client developmental level (life cycle) taken into account Additionally, each group is hand out to the class a summary (couple of pages) of their role play and relevant research conducted that should include, but is not limited to:
- Type of group (brief description addressing purpose, location, number of sessions, open-ended versus closed-ended, etc.)
- Theoretical framework(s) being implemented
- Member characteristics (general description)
- Description for each group member's character (student's real name with corresponding name adopted for role play; age; ethnicity; individual goal for group; developmental stage in the life cycle; relevant life and environmental circumstances; role within the group, such as monopolizer, scapegoat, and so on; etc.)

After the role plays, all students will be given the chance to critique their own practice demonstration and those of their peers. Students will also receive feedback in the form of supervision/consultation from the professor.

VII. COURSE GRADING CRITERIA Student Performance Evaluation

Course Requirement	% of grade	
Quizzes (4 @ 25 points each)	25%	
Group Observation Summary	25%	
Researched Group Role Play	25%	
Participation	25%	
TOTAL	100%	

Grading Scale

100-94=A

93-90= A-

89-87=B+

86-84=B

83-80=B-

79-77=C+ 76-74=C 73-70=C-69-67=D+ 66-64=D 63-60=D-59 and below=F

Grading of all written assignments will take into account the quality of the writing as well as the content. The American Psychological Association $(APA) - 4^{th}$ edition format should be used. Written material should be carefully proofread and errors (punctuation, typographical, spelling) corrected.

*Citations must be recent (unless classic citation or only research conducted, utilize resources from 2000-present) and accurate. Research MUST include primarily journal articles, not books and web-based resources. Remember to be critical of web information and consider the source. Consult with the professor or TA if you have questions about this.

VIII. COURSE OUTLINE

This schedule is intended as a guide – the professor reserves the right to shift sessions based on the learning needs of the class. The students should complete the readings as they are outlined. This is especially important since the quizzes will cover the required readings for that period of time. The student is responsible for all readings whether the material is covered as lecture material or not. In fact, since this is an experiential course, the professor will assume that the readings are understood unless questions are raised.

SW333 Social Work Practice with Groups

Spring, 2006 Course Schedule

Date	Description	Text / Readings
		"read by date shown"
1/17	Getting Acquainted and Overview of Course	Syllabus
1/19	Introduction to Groupwork: Clinician critique	T & R – Ch. 1 – Introduction
1/24	Historical and Theoretical Overview – handout	T & R – Ch. 2 – Historical Developments

1/26	First experiential	Recommended: Middleman, R. & Wood, G. (1990). Reviewing the past and present of group work and the challenges of the future. Social Work with Groups 13(3), 3-20.
1/31	Group Dynamics and Stages of Development	T & R – Ch. 3 – Understanding Group Dynamics
2/2	Group Leadership – Experiential with Noel Pompa	T & R – Ch. 4 – Leadership
2/7	Social Group Work Values and Ethics	T & R – Appendix A Reccomended: Northen, H. (1998). Ethical dilemmas in Social Work with Groups. Social Work with Groups, 21(1/2). Haworth Press, Inc.
2/9	Review of Leadership & Process Content Exercise	
2/14	Group Leadership Planning and Composing Groups	T & R – Ch. 5 – Leadership and Diversity T & R – Ch. 6 – Planning the Group T & R – Ch. 7 – The Group Begins
2/16	Quiz 1: Chapters 1-4	

2/21	Group Work and Diversity Beginning Groups	Bilides, D. G. (1991). Race, color, ethnicity, and class: Issues of biculturalism in school-based adolescent counseling groups. Social Work with Groups, 13(4), 43-58.
2/23	Children's Groups: Guest presenter, Katie Milosovich, LCSW, Eanes Independent School District	Be sure to be working on your Group Observation Assignment
2/28	Assessment	T & R – Ch. 8 – Assessment
3/1	Experiential	Be sure to be working on your Group Observation Assignment
3/6	Quiz 2 (covering Chapters 5-8)	
3/8	The Advanced Treatment Group: Speaker	
3/12-3/16	SPRING BREAK	
3/20	Advanced Treatment Group	T & R – Ch. 9 & 10 –Treatment Groups: Foundation and Specialized Methods Marsiglia, F.F., Cross, S., Mitchell-Enos, V. (1998). Culturally Grounded Group Work with Adolescent American Indian Students. Social Work with Groups, 21(1/2), 89-102.

3/22	Task Groups	T & R – Ch. 11 – Task Groups: Foundation Methods
3/27	Quiz 3 (covering Chapters 9 & 10)	
3/29	Evaluation and Research: Is what we are doing working?	T & R – Ch. 13 – Evaluation
	Group Observation Paper Due	
4/3	Group Work - Specific Populations and Settings	Researched articles for group role plays.
4/5	Researched Group Role Plays	Researched articles for group role plays.
4/10	Researched Group Role Plays	Researched articles for group role plays.
4/12	Researched Group Role Plays	Researched articles for group role plays.
4/17	Researched Group Role Plays	Researched articles for group role plays.
4/19	Researched Group Role Plays	Researched articles for group role plays.
4/24	Researched Group Role Plays	Researched articles for group role plays.
4/26	Termination	T & R – Ch. 14 – Ending the Group's Work
5/1	Quiz 4 (covering chapters 11, 13, 14, with a few questions from group presentations)	
5/3	Class wrap-up and closure and Class evaluations	

References

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Social Work with Groups Newsletter – Association for the Advancement of Social Work with Groups, Inc., Akron, OH: c/o The School of Social Work, University of Akron. [Tri-annual.]

Tell-A-Group Hotline Newsletter – Ann Arbor, MI: School of Social Work, Univ. of Michigan. *Youth and Society* – Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Youth Today: The Newspaper on Youth Work – Washington, DC: American Youth Work Center. [Bimonthly.] Free.