



SOCIAL WORK THEORY & PRACTICE

LESLEY DEACON & STEPHEN J. MACDONALD



MASTERING Social Work Practice



This new series from Learning Matters is for qualifying students and newly-qualified social workers looking to **MASTER** the core skills and knowledge at the heart of effective social work practice. By asking students to think critically about the nature of social work, books in this series focus on readying students for practice by showing how key theoretical principles, professional values and skills relate to the everyday situations in which Social Workers operate.

Key feature of the series include:

- ★ Case studies
- ★ Research summaries
- ★ Discussions on up-to-date policy & law
- ★ Links to the Key Professional Standards & Assessed & Supported Year in Employment

Understanding how theory informs social work practice is a crucial part of a social worker's role and this book has been specifically designed to help you get to grips with key theories and how they might impact and inform your practice.

The book commences by briefly setting the context, introducing you to the importance of social work theory and its development over the years, before moving on to look at different types of theory across 20 tightly-structured chapters. These chapters cover a range of theories, including psychological theories, sociological theories, ethics and moral philosophies, political theories and ideologies, and organisational theories.

Complete with case studies, activities and a discussion of key debates, this book is essential reading for all social work students and newly-qualified social workers looking to **MASTER** key theories that help us understand an individual's experiences and behaviour in the course of social work today. It should be also viewed as a toolkit to refer back to, to remind social work practitioners about the importance of embedding different theoretical perspectives within their practice.

LESLEY DEACON is a Senior Lecturer in Applied Social Studies and Social Work, University of Sunderland.
STEPHEN J. MACDONALD is a Reader in Social Science, University of Sunderland.

 **SAGE**


LearningMatters

www.uk.sagepub.com/learningmatters

ISBN: 978-1-4739-5870-8



9 781473 958708

SEXUAL HARASSMENT THEORY & PRACTICE

DEACON

• MACDONALD



SOCIAL WORK THEORY & PRACTICE

LESLEY DEACON & STEPHEN J. MACDONALD

MASTERING Social Work Practice

 SAGE

 LearningMatters



Learning Matters
An imprint of SAGE Publications Ltd
1 Oliver's Yard
55 City Road
London EC1Y 1SP

SAGE Publications Inc.
2455 Teller Road
Thousand Oaks, California 91320

SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd
B 1/I 1 Mohan Cooperative Industrial Area
Mathura Road
New Delhi 110 044

SAGE Publications Asia-Pacific Pte Ltd
3 Church Street
#10-04 Samsung Hub
Singapore 049483

Editor: Kate Wharton
Development editor: Lauren Simpson
Production controller: Chris Marke
Project management: Deer Park Productions
Marketing manager: Camille Richmond
Cover design: Wendy Scott
Typeset by: C&M Digitals (P) Ltd, Chennai, India
Printed by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

© Lesley Deacon and Stephen J Macdonald 2017

First edition published in 2017 by Learning Matters Ltd, an imprint of SAGE

Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of research or private study, or criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, this publication may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form, or by any means, only with the prior permission in writing of the publishers, or in the case of reprographic reproduction, in accordance with the terms of licences issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside those terms should be sent to the publishers.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016954952

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-4739-5869-2
ISBN 978-1-4739-5870-8 (pbk)

At SAGE we take sustainability seriously. Most of our products are printed in the UK using FSC papers and boards. When we print overseas we ensure sustainable papers are used as measured by the PREPS grading system. We undertake an annual audit to monitor our sustainability.

SOCIAL WORK THEORY & PRACTICE

Sara Miller McCune founded SAGE Publishing in 1965 to support the dissemination of usable knowledge and educate a global community. SAGE publishes more than 1000 journals and over 800 new books each year, spanning a wide range of subject areas. Our growing selection of library products includes archives, data, case studies and video. SAGE remains majority owned by our founder and after her lifetime will become owned by a charitable trust that secures the company's continued independence.

Los Angeles | London | New Delhi | Singapore | Washington DC | Melbourne

About the authors

Dr Lesley Deacon is a Senior Lecturer in Applied Social Studies and Social Work, and Faculty Disability Tutor at the University of Sunderland (which she joined in 2011). Prior to this she was a practising social worker within safeguarding children with a particular interest in parents with learning disabilities. She teaches theory, research and practice across the BA and MA Social Work programmes and the BSc Health and Social Care. She is also programme leader for the Foundation Degree in Health and Social Care. Her research is primarily focused on how generic health and social care services respond to people who have more specialised needs. In her current research she is co-researcher with Dr Stephen J Macdonald researching the relationship between dyslexia, homelessness and substance use; as well as missed opportunities for intervention. The final part of the research will focus on health and social care practitioners in order to understand how they respond to adult service users who may have particular needs in relation to their dyslexia.

Dr Stephen J Macdonald is a Reader in Social Science. He joined the University of Sunderland in 2005 and is now the strand leader for the Centre for Applied Social Sciences. He teaches undergraduates and postgraduates in sociology, criminology, education, social work and social care. Stephen has published broadly in the areas of dyslexia and social exclusion, including issues concerning diagnosis, educational disengagement, digital inclusion, crime, victimisation and homelessness. His work is underpinned by the social model of disability. Stephen is also the associate editor for *Insights on Learning Disabilities (ILD)*, an international journal. He is also a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. In his present research, he is investigating the relationship between dyslexia and homelessness and disability and hate crime.

Professor Catherine Donovan is a Professor in Social Relations and Head of the Centre for Applied Social Sciences at the University of Sunderland. She is part of the Sociology programme team, teaching the sociology of family, gender and sexuality as well as the sociology of health and gendered violence. Catherine has spent nearly 30 years researching the intimate and family lives of lesbians, gay and, more recently, bisexual and trans-people. Her recent co-authored book, *Domestic Violence and Sexuality: What's love got to do with it?* reports on the first study comparing love and violence in heterosexual and same sex relationships with a focus on how love is implicated in violent and abusive relationships. Catherine led the Coral Project, an ESRC collaborative project focusing for the first time on the abusive behaviours of LGBT people in their intimate relationships. She is also involved with a collaborative project on hate incidents; a survey of victimisation and perpetration in student populations;

and is developing a Bystander Intervention Programme. Catherine is also working in collaboration with colleagues at Huddersfield, Sheffield Hallam and an independent research organisation to develop projects on child sexual exploitation and sex and relationship education for young LGB and/or T people.

Jane Tunmore is a Principal Lecturer and team leader of Applied Social Studies at the University of Sunderland. She is responsible for the BA (Hons) Social Work, MA Social Work and BA (Hons) Youth and Community Work. She has taught across all areas of the curriculum in Social Work with a particular interest in social policy, law, social work practice skills and sociological theory in social work practice. She is a qualified social worker with experience working in mental health and safeguarding children.

Alan Marshall is a Lecturer in Social Work at the University of Sunderland where he has been teaching for the past three years. His responsibilities include being the admissions tutor for the BA (Hons) Social Work, supporting learners, teaching and module development. He runs the mental health teaching and teaches around social work theories, social policy, law and ADP. He has experience in working with people with mental health difficulties, practice education and working with street homeless adults. As a social worker he worked in integrated CMHTs in central London for ten years and West Yorkshire for two years. Alan completed his initial degree at the University of Hull in 1991. Before formally becoming a social worker Alan had also worked in care homes supporting adults with mental health difficulties to manage the transition from long-stay hospital environments to community living. Alan is trained as an AMHP and a stage 2 Practice Educator. His academic interests are identity, anti-discriminatory practice, mental health and risk assessments.

Mark Bradley is a Social Work Practitioner currently practising in a front-line Child Protection Team in the North East of England. Coming from a military and law enforcement background, Mark became a qualified social worker in 2014 after gaining a first class award for his BA (Hons) Social Work at the University of Sunderland. Mark has a keen interest in research and recently began the pursuit of his PhD in 2015; he is particularly interested in researching the sexual abuse of children with learning disabilities. In practice, Mark is fascinated with the concept of the reflexive-practitioner (which, of course, he considers himself to be) and is taking his theoretical knowledge of this first-hand into social work practice.

Acknowledgements

Lesley Deacon would like to thank the following people at the University of Sunderland: Stephen J Maconald, her research mentor, for working with her on this project; all the authors who contributed to this book; and Jane Tunmore, her line manager, for supporting her. At SAGE, she is grateful to Kate Wharton for being so supportive of the proposal; and all the staff for their excellent work on the book. Finally, she would particularly like to Matt and Jake Deacon for their huge encouragement, support and unofficial work on this book! She would like to dedicate this book to David Staward.

Stephen J Macdonald would like to dedicate this book to Jude, Jamie and Claire Macdonald.

Contents

About the authors	vii
Acknowledgements	ix
Introduction	1
1 Introduction to social work theory	5
Part One Psychological theories	11
2 Psychoanalysis, psychodynamics and social work practice: the conflicted 'self'	13
3 Behaviourism and the science of control	25
4 Cognitive psychology and social work: A brave new world	36
5 Humanistic psychology: A stairway to Athena	48
6 Human growth and development	58
Part Two Sociological theories	69
7 Social constructionism and social work	71
8 General systems and ecological theories	81
9 Feminism and social work	93
10 Reflexivity	103
Part Three Ethics and moral philosophies	113
11 Deontology	115
12 Utilitarianism	124
13 Virtue ethics	133
14 Ethics of care	142
15 Radical ethics	153

Part Four Political theories and ideologies	163
16 Radical social work	165
17 Five models of disability	174
18 Anti-discriminatory practice	187
Part Five Organisational theories	197
19 Classical and modern management theories	199
20 Organisational culture	210
Conclusion	222
References	224
Index	237

Introduction

Lesley Deacon

The intention of this book is to introduce students and social work practitioners to key theories in understanding individuals' experiences and behaviour in the course of social work practice today. The theories covered are not meant to be an exhaustive list but to give a flavour of some of the key areas of theory that students and practitioners alike need to consider in order to understand service users and carers that they encounter in practice. Chapter 1 sets out the theoretical paradigm applied to this book, which is also applied to the way in which social work theory is taught at the University of Sunderland, where all the authors and contributors teach and research.

It is important to note that the way in which this book is written is to try and explain the theories in clear language in order to remove some of the barriers students and social work practitioners feel exist between them, their practice – and their understanding of theory. Certain theoretical terminology is necessary but where this is used explanations are given. The intention of this is to equip the reader with the knowledge and understanding of theory in order for them to research further.

Each chapter sets out the key principles of the theory concerned and demonstrates to the reader how they may be applied to practice through debates, activities and case study examples. Throughout this book you are likely to encounter the phrase 'core social work values'. In order to explain exactly what this means would actually require another book(!) – however, what we refer to here is the ethics and values that underpin social work practice. According to BASW (2012) *Social work grew out of humanitarian and democratic ideals, and its values are based on respect for the equality, worth, and dignity of all people* (p5) and it is to these that we refer. What is significant about case study application is the use of a real situation through a Serious Case Review (SCR). The SCR concerned is from Manchester Safeguarding Children's Board, Child Z in September 2013 (www.manchesterscb.org.uk/prof-scr.asp). This is a public document which can be accessed online. Each chapter addresses an aspect of this case and demonstrates how the theoretical perspective

considered can be applied in order to help understanding of the service users and carers concerned – either their behaviour or experiences. It is important to note that these applications are not meant to question or criticise the SCR or anyone involved but to raise questions to facilitate understanding. It is the authors' understanding that this is a unique idea in order to help students and practitioners understand applied theory in social work – by seeing the same case study (which is real) considered throughout the book.

The way in which the chapters are written are based on lectures given by the authors on both the BA and MA Social Work programmes at the University of Sunderland. The intention is, therefore, to explain the key principles of the theories and then illustrate understanding of them with examples and explanation. It is anticipated that this will make the theories (and theory in general) more accessible and understandable to students and social work practitioners.

The book is divided into five main theoretical realms: Psychological, Sociological, Ethics and Moral Philosophies, Political Theories and Ideologies, and Organisational Theories. Each Part consists of a brief introduction to the focus of that Part as well as a brief summary of each chapter within.

Focusing on psychological theories first (Part One) does not determine their theoretical authority in social work practice but simply the theoretical origins of the profession. The Casework principle of the first social work professionals was based in psychological thinking so it is not possible to consider essential social work theoretical perspectives today without considering their foundations. Stephen J Macdonald sets out the key schools of thought: Psychoanalysis, Behaviourist, Cognitive and Humanist – these are all key ways of thinking in order to understand human behaviour in different ways. Attachment theory is often a key theory referred to in social work practice. However, while it is relevant it is by no means the only psychological theory that can help to understand people and their relationships to others. This section is completed by Lesley Deacon who summarises key theories in Human Growth and Development, specifically the work of Erik Erikson which is relevant and helpful to social work practice today.

Part Two focuses in on some sociological theories that have influenced theoretical understanding in social work practice from their origins around the mid-twentieth century onwards. Jane Tunmore sets out Social Constructionism in order to help the reader begin to think sociologically. She then addresses the General Systems and Ecological Theories, which are often the go-to theories used in social work practice as they are evident in the assessment model. This chapter specifically focuses on the underpinning theories as students and practitioners often go to the framework first, i.e. the model *that set{s} out a clear sequence of actions to take when we are faced with a particular situation* (Payne, 2014, p8). In considering and applying

theory into practice it is imperative that the underpinning theory is understood in order to understand how and in what way people and their behaviours and experiences are being viewed. Catherine Donovan introduces students and social work practitioners to the key developments in feminist theories and how these are applied to social work practice. She raises questions regarding the assumptions made concerning gender identity which happen in social work practice and specifically focuses on the issue of domestic violence from the SCR. Finally, in this part, Mark Bradley who is a practising social worker considers the sociological theory of Reflexivity – framing the concept of Reflection in Action into a theoretical basis.

Part Three introduces Ethics and Moral Philosophies – each of the chapters in this section is written by Lesley Deacon. A problem in ethical thinking in social work practice today is that there is too much focus on rule-following (i.e. legislation, policy and organisational procedures) and not enough time spent on the fundamental principles that underpin social work practice (i.e. the concern for other people). Lesley Deacon therefore focuses on the Moral Philosophies of Deontology, Utilitarianism, Virtue Ethics, Ethics of Care and Radical Ethics in order to stimulate a different way of thinking about the relationship between the service user and the social work practitioner.

Part Four concerns some key developments in political theory that are intrinsic to social work practice today. Lesley Deacon sets out the historical development of Radical Social Work and its increasing relevance to social work practice today. Stephen J Macdonald then highlights the key models to understand disability of which, he argues, there are five. Although these identifications may not be acknowledged by others, this can be helpful for student social workers and practitioners in order to understand more fully the key principles of the different perspectives. Finally, Alan Marshall presents an understanding of the theoretical basis of Anti-Discriminatory and Anti-Oppressive Practice using the concept of racism to present applied understanding. At the time of writing this book the issue of racism has become more prominent again due to the outcome of the Brexit vote (2016) and the demonstrations concerning #blackmatters (2016).

Finally, Part Five covers Organisational Theories, written by Lesley Deacon. Readers may initially wonder at the relevance of this Part to social work practice. While the theories set out do not specifically concern the behaviour and/or experiences of service users and carers, they do concern the experiences of students and social work practitioners in practice environments; and therefore have an indirect impact on the experiences of service users and carers. Lesley Deacon sets out these chapters initially considering management theory and then organisational theory. Management theories are relevant not just to managers but also to those who are

managed and how they work with their manager and colleagues. Charles Handy's work *Organisational Culture* is used as the basis for Chapter 20 as it is still as relevant today as it was at the time of writing.

To conclude, Lesley Deacon and Stephen J Macdonald draw the book together at the end with some concluding remarks about social work theory and practice and its future development.