

Third Edition

SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE & PEOPLE OF COLOR

A PROCESS-STAGE APPROACH



Doman Lum

THIRD EDITION

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A PROCESS-STAGE APPROACH

DOMAN LUM

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO



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CIP



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**SOCIAL WORK
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To the teachers who have influenced my academic and professional development:

MERRIL F. HEISER,
who developed and encouraged my love of English literature and writing.

HOWARD J. CLINEBELL, JR.,
who served as a role model of a classroom teacher par excellence, a friend to
students, and a diligent and insightful scholar/writer.

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who guided me as a clinical intern and assisted me with difficult cases and was
instrumental in my development of crisis intervention theory.

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welfare planning and policy analysis, articulated with humor and insight.

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who gave me a model for aspiration to administration in higher education
with a driving, hardworking, and highly personal lifestyle.

and

to multicultural social work educators and practitioners, with the hope that
they will contribute to the field of culturally diverse social work practice.

FOREWORD

Writing more than 90 years ago, W. E. B. DuBois noted prophetically that the major issue of this century would be the “problem of the color line.” Few predictions by social scientists have proven to be so accurate.

At a time when the relative condition of most people of color in the U.S. has deteriorated and when stereotyping, stigmatizing, and scapegoating of certain population groupings has reached new levels, one should hail the publication of the third edition of Doman Lum’s highly successful volume *Social Work Practice and People of Color*. When the first edition of this book appeared almost a decade ago, there was a serious dearth of literature in this area. Thanks in considerable part to the impetus provided by Professor Lum, we now have several other books on minorities, multiculturalism, race relations, and people of color. Yet, in the social work literature on multicultural practice, Doman Lum’s book has earned a very special niche.

This book covers a broad array of topics that include human diversity, race, ethnicity, power, powerlessness, empowerment, oppression, libera-

tion, stratification, assimilation, acculturation, ethnic family structure, minority-majority dilemmas, values, and value conflicts. Professor Lum enunciates and carefully develops a process model of social work practice. He then systematically outlines the various stages in this model. Starting with the contact stage between the worker and client, he proceeds to discuss the principles and methods of problem identification, assessment, intervention, and termination.

The third edition retains the excellent features of the first and second editions, incorporates the insights and findings from recent literature on social work practice, adds a section on women of color, and offers many illuminating cultural case studies. Throughout the volume Professor Lum stresses cultural competence and cultural proficiency as the sine qua non for effective social work practice. He insists that the worker recognize and affirm the capacities and resources of the clients and not dwell unduly on their deficits and handicaps. He points out the inadequacy of an individualistic orientation to social work practice with people of color and emphasizes, instead, the key

role of such environmental factors as the cultural heritage, the ethnic community, and the family networks in assessing and treating the client's presenting problems. He endorses an ecological rather than a mental health approach to the social work client.

Professor Lum celebrates cultural identity and distinctiveness but has no patience for sectarianism or ethnocentrism. His book is remarkably free from rancor or recrimination. He writes with conviction but without dogmatism or orthodoxy. His is a master teacher's guide for practice from beginning to termination.

Given the success of the previous editions and the thorough and painstaking revisions in this new edition, one can predict with reasonable assurance that, before long, there will appear a fourth edition of this well-received book. One can predict also that, as social workers become more active and adept in evaluative research and in large systems interventions, the future editions of this exceedingly useful book will include content on evaluation of social work practice, on ethnic conflict, on intraminority tensions, and will have a more extended discussion of macro level social work practice.

As we stand on the threshold of the 21st century, there is little hope that the problem of color line that DuBois wrote about will soon fade away, evaporate, or disappear. While by no means confined to the United States, issues deriving from the politics and economics of color are especially salient in our heterogeneous society. Unlike the immigrants 100 years ago, the bulk of whom were of

European descent, the newcomers to America in the last decade have been preponderantly of a darker hue. Their presence and visible concentration in our urban areas has evoked a great deal of anxiety, resentment, and hostility on the part of many of our fellow citizens. The changing demographic profile of the nation seems to have reawakened the nativist strain in some politicians who are engaging in an increasingly xenophobic and jingoistic rhetoric against the new immigrants.

By most criteria, the people of color in the United States are a disadvantaged people. Despite some progress, this condition remains inferior to the majority community on key indices of social and economic development. The economic gap between them and the rest of the population as measured through income and asset distribution has widened. The tolerance toward immigrants has declined. Incredible as it may sound, affirmative action itself is being labeled as unfair and unjust. Increasingly open and vicious attacks are being launched on organizations and programs that promote multiculturalism. Thus, for a profession whose primary mission is to serve the most vulnerable and powerless members of a society, the appearance of a revised and updated edition of a scholarly yet practical book on social work practice with people of color is a welcome event indeed.

Shanti K. Khinduka
Dean, George Warren Brown School of Social
Work
Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri

PREFACE

Since the publication of this book's second edition, there have been many major contributions on social work and people of color—for example, on working with children and adolescents, women of color, Asian Americans, and Native Americans. These are healthy signs of development and maturity and confirm many of the notions about how to help people of color that I formulated as I struggled to write the first edition of this book over ten years ago. I am enthusiastic and thrilled at the creative and systematic efforts to develop and integrate content on multiculturalism and diversity in social work classroom teaching, paper presentations and workshops, journal articles, and textbooks. I am grateful to have made a contribution to a growing body of social work literature, and I hope that new horizons in this field will be reached by social work educators and practitioners who are working with people of color and developing new concepts.

ABOUT THE BOOK

The structural design of *Social Work Practice and People of Color: A Process-Stage Approach* is still intact: a generalist social work practice-process framework that delineates culture-common and culture-specific social work principles for African, Latino, Asian, and Native Americans. The present literature overwhelmingly makes a case for such unique characteristics of people of color as a collective family hierarchy, interdependence between the individual and family and/or extended family, spirituality, and ethnic identity. The extent that a person of color has acculturated and assimilated into American society determines the influence of these factors in his or her life. However, I have found that residual elements remain even in the most Americanized. Cultural factors are a powerful influence in a person's life.

Among the themes of the book that have remained important for social work practice with

people of color are: multicultural service delivery; relationship protocols; professional self-disclosure; reframing the problem as an unsatisfied want or an unfulfilled need; and socioenvironmental impacts and psychoindividual reactions. I have found these to be valuable teaching themes that strike a responsive chord with students.

ABOUT THE CHANGES

The third edition has added new features that reflect recent trends in social work practice and social science materials regarding culture and ethnicity. In the 1990s, the themes of multiculturalism and human diversity have replaced the ethnic minority designation of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. The book focuses on multicultural social work and culturally diverse social work practice, with relevant discussions of people of color. The relationship between generalist practice, human diversity, and culturally diverse practice is explored by means of the latest materials in social work and related disciplines. Three practice frameworks dealing with cross-cultural social work, children and adolescents, and women of color have been added, so that the reader is now exposed to eight frameworks in Chapter 3. This edition also includes extensive new sections on women of color, and cultural strengths.

The chapter on assessment has been reworked, with separate consideration of biological, psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual assessment; the section on spiritual assessment is completely new. The chapter on intervention features a number of approaches that may be useful in multicultural practice: empowerment, problem-solving/task-centered, crisis-intervention, family-therapy, and existential strategies.

A number of existing sections are fine-tuned, with additions on refugee demographics, the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1987, the emic/etic distinction, the cultural story, and termination. Finally 25 new cultural studies have been integrated into the text, bringing the total to 62; these

case studies illustrate the practice principles outlined in the book.

ABOUT THE POLITICAL CLIMATE

Social reform movements have occurred every 30 years in American political, economic, and social life. Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the New Deal of the 1930s and Lyndon Baines Johnson and the Great Society of the 1960s are prototypes for William Jefferson Clinton and his social reform agenda for the 1990s. However, the Republican-dominated Congress created by the 1994 election presents an interesting challenge for a reform-oriented President.

Political economic, and social gains have been enacted in legislation on the budget deficit, the hemispheric trade agreement, family leave, crime, and world trade. Health-care and welfare reform legislation await action by Congress and the President. As recipients of service, people of color will be affected by these bills. However, support for civil rights, affirmative action, and other social legislation benefitting groups that have historically been oppressed on account of race, gender, or sexual orientation is waning.

It will be crucial to monitor positive legislation for people of color as we move toward the close of the second millenium and the beginning of the 21st century. Perhaps by then the United States will have elected its first African American president. I plan to wait and see, as I continue to advocate for the culturally diverse.

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I wish to particularly thank the staff at Brooks/Cole, who have maintained a positive, thoughtful relationship with me during the first, second, and third editions of this book: to Claire Verduin, publisher, who invited me to work on a third edition; to Lisa Gebo, social work editor, who has

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I am most grateful to the manuscript reviewers, who helped shape and refine this edition: Edward

R. Canda, University of Kansas; Cynthia Franklin, University of Texas at Austin; James Leigh; James Mason, Portland State University; Janice Matthews Rasheed, Loyola University of Chicago; Rita Takahashi; and Lou Jeanne Walton, Valparaiso University.

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