

National Association of Deans and
Directors Schools of Social Work

Task Force Findings in Response
to the Tragic Events in
Ferguson, Missouri

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

October 15, 2014

In August of 2014 forty-one members of NADD volunteered to participate in a task force focused on NADD's response to the events taking place in Ferguson, Missouri surrounding the shooting of an unarmed teenager, Michael Brown, and the national public outcry that followed. Two co-chairs organized the volunteers. As much as possible, task force members were placed into five groups based on geographic location. Each group had a volunteer leader who was responsible for organizing conference calls with group members. Conference calls took place during September and early October. A list of volunteers is provided at the end of this document. Groups were charged with the following two questions:

- 1) *What are the top four action items that NADD should pursue in response to this issue?*
- 2) *What should be our approach in collaborating with NASW, CSWE, SSWR, BPD, GADE and other professional social work organizations?*

Synthesized findings from each group's conference call are listed in this document. Some statements are taken directly from group findings.

PROMOTE A GREATER FOCUS ON COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION AND MACRO PRACTICE:

- Promote learning of community organization principles and community development strategies and skills for advocacy among social work students and practitioners.
- Work with CSWE in promoting the need for social work education programs to ensure that all students understand social development and capacity building as functions of macro practice.
- Address the challenge of a bifurcated Social Work curriculum between macro and micro practice.
- Work with CSWE to reduce the lack of attention by Social Work education programs in producing strong macro social workers or micro social workers with heightened sensitivity to the person in environment.

CREATE AN ACTIVE PUBLIC VOICE FOR NADD:

- One group's comments captured the thread of response in this area:

Be prepared to respond to national "teaching moments" in a very public national context, for students, our profession, and the country.

Develop a public "voice" for NADD.

Identify faculty who speak out publicly as well.

Make ourselves available for dialogue, for training (e.g. re-training police).
- Employ speakers who can highlight research methods and teaching strategies for ameliorating structural inequalities and institutional racism.
- Initiate and collaborate with other social work organizations in the development of public forums highlighting the need to address social injustice for disadvantaged minority communities.
- Develop a White Paper that is distributed to others stating NADD's position and the suggestion for collaboration through existing social work leadership forums.
- Identify areas in which NADD will work to deliver its response to the Ferguson issue and the larger issue of policing and criminal justice in the United States.
- Share ideas, resources, and public statements among NADD membership. Organize a central repository (example: <https://sites.google.com/a/umich.edu/nadd-resources-for-teaching-on-inequality/>). Please note that the example is very incomplete but designed to illustrate a structure (primarily under the "resources" tab) for making available the wealth of contributions that come from the NADD membership.

TAKE A PUBLIC STANCE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE & SOCIAL INJUSTICE:

- Draw on our professional values: Social justice, NASW Code of Ethics and NASW Policy Statements.
- Rekindle the muted position on social justice for the social work profession.

- Take action steps to employ recommendations from the 2007 NASW publication *Institutional Racism & The Social Work Profession: A Call To Action*.
- Determine ways to increase awareness and recognition of social justice in the classroom.
- Work with CSWE on how to frame social justice issues and include action steps.
- NADD should take a public position on social justice issues in the form of press releases, policy statements, newspaper editorials, and initiatives aimed at creating a public voice and response to social justice issues.
- Develop and make public a position on racial injustice and public responsibility.
- Strategically develop plans to take part in collaborative efforts in the reduction of social justice.

HIGHLIGHT THE INTERSECTIONALITY OF STRUCTURAL INEQUALITIES:

- Stress the intersection of class, race, income inequality, housing, employment opportunities, community representation and the criminal justice system—institutional racism.
- Highlight the increasing militarization of local police units and police protocols around individual use of force, and deadly force against unarmed citizens.
- Promote social work's role in creating a workforce to address institutional racism and empowerment of underserved groups.

FOCUS GRAND CHALLENGES TO ADDRESS SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES IN DISENFRANCHISED COMMUNITIES:

- Create demonstration projects aimed at specific disenfranchised communities.
- Promote the development of work with local police units to conduct sensitivity training.
- Place an emphasis social development.
- Focus on capacity building for leadership of disenfranchised ethnic minority communities.

COLLABORATE WITH OTHER SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS:

- Collaborate through the existing Social work Leadership Forum (e.g., NADD, NASW, CSWE, SSWR, BPD), but also include groups such as the National Association of Black Social Workers, other ethnic social work group organizations, and the Association for Community Organization and Social Administration (ACOSA).
- Promote collaboration with other social work organizations in focusing on the broader picture of structural inequalities experienced by minority groups. Work with CSWE to place greater efforts on ensuring that students have quality macro practice experiences in social work education programs.
- NADD Leadership should work with CSWE to develop a sustained focus for the social work profession to highlight and confront structural inequalities and institutional racism.
- Exchange projects going on across schools of social work and among other organizations that bring into focus the problems in Ferguson and other communities characterized by structural inequality.

SCHEDULE LEADERS FORUMS:

- Hold a special session during the spring 2015 NADD meeting.
- Schedule regular discussions on social justice issues at NADD, with the format for these to be determined by the NADD leadership.
- Hold collaborative conferences with other social work organizations on the topic.
- Promote conferences and regional forums highlighting the broader issues surrounding the Ferguson killing of Michael Brown.
- Continue to place the challenge of institutional racism at the forefront of NADD's agenda.

List of Volunteers on NADD Task Force

Last Name	First Name	School
Anderson	Steve	Michigan State University
Bailey	Darlyne	Bryn Mawr College
Brisbane	Frances	State University of New York at Stony Brook
Broussard	Anne	University of New Hampshire
Cain	Daphne	University of Mississippi
Cole	Charnetta	Alabama A & M University
Crewe	Sandra	Howard University
Diaz	Hector Luis	Western Michigan University
Godenzi	Alberto	Boston College
Green-Smith	Dianne	Grand Valley State University
Hendricks	Carmen	Yeshiva University
Jackson	John	University of Pennsylvania
Jenkins	David	Texas Christian University
Lawlor	Edward	Washington University in St. Louis
Leibowitz	George	University of Vermont
Lein	Laura	University of Michigan
Linhorst	Don	Saint Louis University
Mazza	Carl	Lehman College, City University of New York
Messinger	Lori	University of North Carolina Wilmington
Meyer-Adams	Nancy	California State University, Long Beach
Mishna	Faye	University of Toronto
Nissen	Laura	Portland State University
Pearlmutter	Sue	Rhode Island College
Potter	Cathryn	Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Ryan	Scott	University of Texas at Arlington
Sable	Marjorie	University of Missouri - Columbia
Scheyett	Anna	University of South Carolina
Shillington	Audrey	Colorado State University
Smith	Carrie J.	Syracuse University
Smyth	Nancy	University at Buffalo
Sowers	Karen M.	University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Steketee	Gail	Boston University
Straughan	Hope	Wheelock College
Teasley	Martell	The University of Texas at San Antonio
Terrell	Billie	University of Saint Francis
Tunney	Kathleen	Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
Waites	Cheryl	Wayne State University
Wheeler	Darrell	Loyola University of Chicago