

**The Social Work Profession in the 21st Century:  
Reflecting the Rich Diversity of Metro Nashville**  
MSS Roundtable • September 14, 2006  
SUMMARY

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Background

In response to proposed state Social Work Protection Legislation, Metro Social Services (MSS) hosted a roundtable in February of 2006 to explore the implications for people who performed as social workers but who did not have a social work (SW) degree, and other anticipated effects of the legislation. At that time, nine (9) MSS “social workers” did not hold a social work degree.

*Note:* In July 2006, social work title protection legislation went into effect in Tennessee: Unless an individual holds a degree or has a certificate or license in social work, the title “social worker” cannot be used in a professional setting.

At that Roundtable, participants identified five major issues:

1. Needs of non-traditional students not addressed by higher education
2. Lack of diversity (racial/ethnic, age, cultural) in SW and degree programs
3. Lack of public awareness & professional understanding of legislation
4. Impact of legislation on job titles, job requirements, and salaries
5. Impact of legislation on service field as current workers leave the profession (due to the legislation) and the broader social worker workforce ages and retires.

Among other responses, MSS offered to host a second roundtable, a summary of which is presented here, to specifically explore issues of racial/ethnic/cultural diversity in the social work profession and academic degree programs.

Attendance

The announcement was sent to individuals and various associations and list-serves. Thirty-six people attended. Charts 1 & 2 give characteristics of attendees.

Chart 1

AGENCY	#	%
Metro (not MSS)	4	23%
MSS	10	20%
Non-profit	2	16%
College/University	9	14%
Metro Schools	7	14%
State	3	9%
Citizen	1	5%
Subtotal	36	100%

Chart 2

AREA	#	%
Social Services	16	36%
College/University	9	16%
Education	7	16%
Health	2	16%
Advocacy	2	5%
Financial aid	0	5%
Housing	0	5%
Mental Health	0	2%

## Participant Roundtable Evaluations

Participants indicated that we more than met the expected outcomes of the Roundtable.

### **How Well Did We Meet the Expected Outcomes of the Roundtable?**

**1 = Did not meet outcome 2 = Met outcome 3 = Exceeded outcome**

Make participants aware of racial/ethnic diversity issues in the field of social work & social work degree programs	<b>2.5</b>
Sensitize people to the need to increase racial/ethnic minority social workers	<b>2.5</b>
Inform participants about current academic efforts to increase diversity in social work degree programs	<b>2.6</b>
Develop reasonable action steps to address identified issues/barriers	<b>2.5</b>

Participants felt that the data presentations and speakers were very useful.

### **Rate the Usefulness of the following Roundtable components:**

**1 = Not useful 2 = Limited 3 = Useful 4 = Very useful 5 = Exceptionally useful**

Data presentations (NASW & MSS)	<b>4.1</b>
Speakers	<b>4.3</b>

Participants felt that the location, food and Roundtable overall were very good. They rated parking and publicity as good. The event flyer did not include a map indicating the free parking lot, and several participants were not aware of it.

### **Rate the quality of the following Roundtable components:**

**1 = Poor 2 = Fair 3 = Good 4 = Very good 5 = Excellent**

Location	<b>4.2</b>
Food	<b>4.0</b>
Parking	<b>3.8</b>
Publicity/Announcements	<b>3.9</b>
Overall Rating of Roundtable	<b>4.1</b>

## Participant Comments

Comments are recorded as written – blank responses are excluded. Note that all evaluation forms were numbered before data entry so individual comments may be matched with other evaluation responses if desired.

### **Comments: Most Effective Part of the Roundtable**

- 2 Large number of related topics covered - moving along agenda
- 3 Learning about all cultures
- 5 Presentations from faculty members at institutions represented
- 6 It was a good roundtable; it'll be interesting to see if there will be "action" taken to address the issues
- 7 Presentation by Sharon Shaw McEwen
- 8 Dr. Sharon Shaw-McEwen presentation
- 9 The diversity of various agencies represented. Provided a wealth of perspectives.
- 10 Academic efforts available
- 11 Dr. McEwen was inspiring and Ms. Franklin was informative
- 12 Dr. Shaw-McEwen
- 13 Building Organizational Capacity-actual experiences Dr. Salome Raheim.  
Inspiration & Empowerment Dr. Shaw-McEwen
- 14 Great workshop. Dynamic and informative speakers
- 16 Awareness of new initiatives/statistics
- 18 Organizational elements need to be in place to implement cultural competency
- 19 Info regarding recruitment/incentives for continued ed. In the field [of Social Work]
- 20 Dr. Chappell's info & Dr. McEwen's & Dr. Peters info.
- 21 MTSU speaker's presentation
- 22 Dr. Shaw-McEwen; Excellent presentations
- 23 All of it

### **Comments: Least Effective Part of Roundtable**

- 2 n/a
- 3 n/a
- 5 Much of the data presented by Dr. Chappell was confusing
- 9 The least effective part still rated a 9 on a 1 - 10 scale, so it's not worth mentioning!
- 10 None  
The action steps had nothing to do w/cultural competence and neither did the biased
- 11 data provided by MSS on the title protection legislation
- 12 n/a
- 13 All other presentations were useful, too
- 16 Great roundtable
- 21 Class room set up not conducive to discussion

## **Other Comments**

- 3** Thank you for the training
- 4** Great roundtable overall
- 7** Status of Nashville roundtables re: demographics & services
- 9** I appreciate the opportunity to participate. Thank you  
There was an active Social Service Club that met monthly or quarterly - at Richland
- 10** Village? This would be a good way to communicate
- 13** Thanks  
Invite more organizations/Provide more practical techniques & interventions to
- 19** increase cultural competencies, I.e. examples of action plans/proposals
- 20** The workshop was very good! Enjoyed
- 22** Consider establishing an on- line list-serve for interested agencies/individuals
- 23** This was a wonderful experience

## Action Steps Discussion

Follow-up on the question of “How do we look at accountability for the overall system of serving consumers in need?” For example, what is the accountability of community-based or faith-based small efforts such as substance abuse counseling, church meals programs, store-front domestic violence prevention programs, *etc.*, and who pays attention to this?

There is a lack of inter-agency real dialogue. We need additional informal networking opportunities. It was suggested that MSS host quarterly “State of Nashville” meetings, perhaps with a theme for each, which organizations can attend to stay informed about new programs, demographic trends, needs, best practices and collaboration opportunities. It was suggested that college representatives and employers also be invited to these meetings.

Someone suggested an information-sharing tree: This would be a listing of associations or list-serves and the organizations to which they could be relied upon to send information. Each initial entity would have one contact person.

It was also suggested that email announcements 1) include the topic or announcement clearly in the subject line and 2) be simple, brief and clear in the text.

There was an expressed need for shared data, *e.g.* number of information and assistance calls to each agency for specific services.

## Lessons Learned

1. Again we heard that organizations want some entity to take the lead in community coordination and overall planning. This has already been incorporated into the Planning & Coordination (P&C) Strategic Plans. Also, P&C is compiling a single list/calendar of proposed meetings, summits and Roundtables and their inter-related themes.

2. We should reduce the time of events – People cannot or will not stay for a whole day. Perhaps it is too much to expect participants to listen to a lot of information and then be energetic enough to do effective planning late in the afternoon.

We should plan for 2 – 4 speakers at most, from 9am – Noon. Work groups or action planning discussion should take place during a working lunch from Noon – 1pm. If more time is needed, a follow-up event should be planned.