



Letter From the Editors: Major Impact

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Welcome to the first issue of 2024. With the new year half past, the realities of academic publishing are not lost on even the most progressive of journals. One of my (*David's*) first academic mentors while judging my frustration at the speed of PhD program application responses bestowed a great wisdom upon me. "The wheels of the academy turn slowly," he said. The words of Dr. Howard M. Turney remain in my mind and my appreciation that this was not the lesson he thought me, stays in my heart. None of us would be where we are without the mentors who have guided our paths, and this is a season to be thankful for those who have invested in us.

Many of those deserving of meritorious recognition for their mentorship were recently gathered at the National Organization of Forensic Social Work annual conference in New Orleans. Dr. Stacey Hardy-Chandler was presented with the Sol Gothard Lifetime Achievement Award for her contributions to forensic social work, the organization, and the profession. The conference was well attended with an assortment of presenters from around the globe. This signaled a long-awaited step for the organization, the opportunity to return to in-person conferences every year. On behalf of the board, we are proud to report we will be returning to another in person conference next Summer, and we look forward to seeing you there to celebrate future achievements.

While the academy runs slowly, readership for the *Journal of Forensic Social Work* most certainly does not. By every metric the journal has become reinvigorated in the consciousness of its readership and its impact has been felt throughout the field. In the calendar year of 2023, alone, JoFSW had 13,318 article downloads from articles in the current cycles as well as the back catalogue. Since the JoFSW relaunch as an open access publication, in February 2022 and as of July 15th, 2024, the journal has had 30,251 article downloads. This number,

while impressive on its own becomes even more powerful when put into the context of social justice and research access. Easily accessible information from the Duke University Libraries (2018) identifies fees associated with article access from paywalled journals to exceed an average of \$30 per article download.

If this information is correct and if every article being accessed on the JoFSW site over the past year was from a person or group which did not have government or university access to these paywalled academic journals, then the potential two-year financial impact of JoFSW would be about \$900,000. Let's just say, for the purpose of an exploratory thought experiment, that this extrapolated total is overreaching. Let's say the estimation twice as high as it should be. If it is avoidable, should we ask the forensic social work community to spend almost a half million dollars per year to have access to research? Of course, the resounding rhetorical answer is, *you've got to be kidding, right?* JoFSW was brought into the open access space with a clear and cohesive objective. We aim to bring high quality research on topics related to forensic social work, straight to those who need it most. We will not hold this information hostage, available only to those away from the front lines or with resources exceeding the vast majority.

At the recent NOFSW conference there was a plenary exploring the spaces between reform and abolition. While much more is to come from that initiated conversation (hint: be on the lookout in JoFSW), one of the more intriguing findings from the panel conversation focused on the overlap between the two. I have spoken for years of being *tactically radical*. How might we move ourselves and our mission forward in ways that are sustainable, inclusive, and smart, with maximum impact coming from minimal energy expenditure and risk. Sharing our information with each other, freely, is in this author's opinion, a fantastic place to start.

In this issue we have articles on training, courts, and unique populations. I feel confident our readership will find great use in this most recent delivery. As for the 2023 year many articles received significant attention. Of considerable note, was the article *Collateral Consequences: The Impact of Incarceration on African American Fathers and Their Sons* by Dr. Precious Skinner-Osei and Dhiny Mercedes. However, one article rose to the top and has been identified as the Article of the Year. Dr. Frederic Reamer's *Ethical Challenges in Forensic Social Work* received the highest honor due to its extensive access metrics. Congratulations Dr. Reamer. We encourage all to celebrate Dr. Reamer and all our authors on their contributions to the profession. We also call on our readership to consider submission of your own scholarship to JoFSW. Thank you to all our readers, reviewers, and authors who continue to contribute to this journal. We would like to also identify our peer reviewer of the year, Lonny Webb, LCSW, for going above and beyond during the peer review process and providing constructive and descriptive feedback to authors on their manuscripts. We look forward to sharing more and joining you all in navigating the uniqueness of the profession.

References

Duke University Libraries. (2018, September 5). *Paywalls and information costs*.
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