

Transcript of Advancing Social Work Practice & Leadership, Episode 4 with Cat Patteson Poehling

Title card displays with Tulane University School of Social Work logo. Another title card displays “Advancing Social Work Practice and Leadership.”

My name is Cat Patteson Poehling. I’m a recent graduate of the Doctor of Social Work program at Tulane and I’m a licensed clinical social worker.

Title card displays “Advanced Practice Project: Each Doctorate of Social Work Candidate completes an APP as part of the program.”

For my Advanced Practice Project, I did two different manuscripts. Both of them are based in reproductive health and reproductive justice.

Title card displays “Activities: What type of activities were done in support of these manuscripts?”

I started my research projects before COVID, and I was planning to do a series of focus groups with case managers that work with the Black Mamas Bail Out on reproductive health needs and barriers for formerly incarcerated individuals. COVID threw a little bit of a wrench in that, and so we switched over to a systematic review and literature review for reproductive health needs and barriers for formerly incarcerated individuals as well as a program that I’ve been working for some time, which is community-based emergency contraception distribution.

Title card displays “Post-COVID Interest: Will you return to the focus groups or look into something else?”

I may go back to the focus groups, but for now I’m actually working on a new research project, along with Dr. Downey on faculty at Tulane. We’re working together on a systematic review for long-acting reversible contraceptives and social determinants of health.

Title card displays “Purpose: Why did you want to pursue this area of interest?”

My journey in reproductive health and justice work is pretty long. It started when I was in undergraduate when I was working. Gosh so long ago. I wasn’t expecting to think about that. After I finished my undergraduate school at the University of North Carolina Greensboro, my first job after college was working in a Planned Parenthood clinic, and I worked there for several years. And, not only was I sort of the go to person in my friend group and in my community about all kinds of reproductive health questions, but I just saw how many barriers, myths, and misconceptions there were. And so, that really energized me to reverse some of these barriers and dispel some of the myths that are really commonplace in the community. And, it opened my eyes a lot to some of those systematic problems that there are, which is something that’s sort of guided a lot of my work and my interest in research along the way.

Title card displays “Faculty: How did you engage with TSSW faculty on this project?”

I was getting support from a lot of different faculty members. All of the DSW faculty were so supportive and helped us kind of think through questions in class. But, in particular, it was kind of just an obvious choice for my faculty advisor of Dr. Nubian Sun. She’s been a reproductive justice advocate for a very long time, and she’s very well known in the community. So, when it came to choosing an advisor, I immediately knew that I wanted to continue to investigate reproductive health and justice issues, and that she would be the perfect choice. She really has a strong connection to the community and a really great respect for the values and ethics that are not so commonplace within the greater community.

Title card displays “Community: How did you interact with the broader community?”

So the research manuscripts I ended up producing for my advanced clinical project were really research-based. It was sort of me and Dr. Sun in front of a computer typing back and forth on Zoom meetings. But, I think even beyond that my work within the community over the last 15 years has informed everything that I did. So, my work with the Reproductive Justice Action Collective here in New Orleans really guided my understanding and my knowledge of what is going on in the community, what are some of these barriers and limitations that people are facing when they’re trying to access services.

Title card displays “Social Work: How do you hope your research impacts the social work profession?”

My hope for the social work profession is that this research helps inform social workers and the social work community about policy changes that are needed so that we can help right and advocate for policy changes that are going to help support the programs and resources that are needed. And, then I hope that social workers can help implement some of these programs and policies like free emergency contraception distribution programs and educating program staff, and the third point would be funders. So, my hope would be that social workers can assist with applying for and distributing grant funding and government-based funding for these programs and services.

Title card displays “Empowerment: How do you hope your research will empower individuals, families, and communities?”

Community members can work alongside social workers. I think that that is something that has to go hand-in-hand because social workers don’t do this work in a silo without the community. Their voices are the ones that are the experts and what they need, and the community members should be guiding all of this work. Then, the hope is when the programs and services, when the funding is liberated, all of these services can allow people to self-determine what’s best for them what kind of reproductive health services and what kind of reproductive health procedures work best for them.

Title card displays “We appreciate Cat Patteson Poehling for her commitment to this research and congratulate her on completing the Doctorate of Social Work program at the Tulane University School of Social Work.”

Along with Dr. Nubian Sun, Dr. Patteson Poehling has submitted two manuscripts for publication as follows:

- Submission of “A systematic review and a call for access to emergency contraception to promote positive reproductive health care outcomes” to *Contraception X* is under review as of June 11, 2021
- Submission of “Promoting reproductive health care access for individuals who are incarcerated by the US correctional system” to *Journal of Correctional Healthcare* is under review as of June 11, 2021.