

practice is changing; research is now an integral part of practice. The need for practitioners to be able to engage in research is becoming more important both for clients, organisations and communities. We should assume that research and practice are not mutually exclusive and that as practitioners, committed to social justice and human rights; we are also social researchers who embrace these same commitments. This paper explores the link

between socially just practice, research and ethics; and highlights the political nature of not only knowledge creation but also the relationship between researcher and researched. The paper concludes that our commitment to our clients and their communities is strengthened not only by an evidence base but also ethical research practice that embodies and manifests the principles of human rights and social justice.

1. Course Co-ordinator and Senior Lecturer, Department of Social Work, James Cook University, Douglas, Townsville QLD 4811, Australia.

ARE WE ON A TREADMILL WITHOUT A STOP BUTTON? EXAMINING THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION IN MENTAL HEALTH

Dr. Abraham P. Francis¹

Knowledge about mental health and the necessary skills to effectively work with clients are basic to contemporary social work practice. Social workers are considered to be an important part of the multidisciplinary team in the western countries. They are involved in a variety of settings and activities. Some of the activities are intake assessments, conducting bio-psycho-social assessments, providing therapeutic interventions, case managements and rehabilitation work etc. Even in the western countries, the role of social workers is critiqued often with a question being paused as to "what is the unique contribution

of social workers in the mental health field?. While it is still an ongoing debate and argument, in this presentation the author intends to explore this aspect in detail with a special focus on knowledge base for mental health practice, changes to the policies, workforce issues, practice issues and educating and training of social workers in an Indian context. Hence one would ask is it time for us to revisit the practice and professional standards? The examining of this aspect would leave us with only a few choices which are either we speed up, stop and re start or find a new treadmill.

1. Lecturer, Department of Social Work and Human service, James Cook University, Douglas, Townsville QLD 4811, Australia.