



SOCIAL WORK
— HEALTH FUTURES LAB —

FINAL REPORT



**A National Project of the Robert Wood
Johnson Foundation**

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Prepared by Laura Nissen, Ph.D., MSW
Professor and Former Dean, School of Social Work
Portland State University
Presidential Futures Fellow, 2019-2022, PSU
Research Fellow, Institute for the Future

TABLE OF CONTENTS



- 1 Intro and background
- 2 Framing, charge and aspirations for lab
- 3 Establishment of core team, selection and orientation of Fellows
- 4 Activities
- 5 Larger role of COVID-19
- 6 Evaluation and reflections
- 7 Impacts and spread
- 8 Limitations and lessons learned
- 9 Next steps and evolution
- 10 Leadership team, Fellows, and National Advisory Group
- 11 Appendices



1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND




Social work is a growing profession in the US and addresses a wide range of social issues across the lifespan at a variety of levels (individual, family, neighborhood, organizational, community, institutional, and governmental. Any of these locations could include social policy and/or social movements focusing on justice and well-being).

By profession, social workers are the largest group of professionals providing mental health care in the US and are active in virtually any and all spaces where the traditional “social determinants of health” and health equity are considered and addressed. Social workers who work directly in health care are also a significant segment of our 800K+ workforce nationally.

In recent years, the nature of social issues, change, complexity and volatility has increased - straining the social work profession to adapt to these accelerations. Due to social work’s efforts to rigorously “professionalize,” the nature of adaptation of innovations, and few spaces for discourse beyond traditional “disciplinary regimes,” it has been observed that social work does not have an abundance of encouraging spaces to consider “what’s next” in the profession or the world, nor intentionally develop evolving practice frameworks to meet and/or shape them. Social work has a rigorous array of “traditional” focal areas (child welfare, poverty, mental health, increasing focus on equity in later years, and others). Explicit efforts to look at issues such as the intersection of climate change, the proliferation of technology and platform economics, or a tsunami of misinformation in the information ecology and/or disaster work as specialty areas (if recognized at all) rather than a fundamental change in the ecosystem that will impact all areas of practice as well as potentially give rise to new ones. Accelerations and mutations of structural violence towards traditionally minoritized persons and groups are approached from a “do more of what we’ve done” approach rather than encouraging deeper and more reflexive examination of social work’s historical complicity in such structures and novel or emergent new ways of interrupting and transforming the structures and society of the future.

Looking to the future in a meaningful and courageous way - balancing grounded hope (without toxic positivity) in partnership with communities of diverse cultures, identities and locations, with a clear eyed assessment of risks, challenges and threats ahead - especially to persistently and newly vulnerable people is an essential “next step” for the profession. This is why and where social foresight matters.



1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND CONT.



What is foresight?

Foresight practice is the intentional, focused and social process of exploring possible futures with the goal of cultivating shared imagination, agility and agency among groups. For more than 50 years, foresight has been practiced and researched by people in the private and public sectors all over the world. Increasingly it is practiced by governments and NGO's in an effort to democratize the shaping of the future. This is based on growing recognition that major decisions about the future are too important to be left to elites in private, non-democratic spaces.

It is based on the global, transdisciplinary field of futures studies. Futures studies has an extensive historical family tree but of most interest to social work are those branches that include both critical (including dynamic and iterative power analysis) and participatory (including voices of communities in active shaping – including both co-creating and resisting – the future) elements.

Foresight and futures studies are composed of an evolving body of knowledge and scope of practice that includes qualitative and quantitative approaches, traditional scientific and liberal arts elements, inclusion of both utopias and dystopias (and their mutant intersections), and a variety of methods to scan and analyze trends and weak signals of change, games and activities to help people identify and push through assumptions and identify new possibilities for action, and cultivating new ideas for taking positive, purposeful actions with regard to the future. Foresight identifies and resists what is known as “official futures” which are those versions of the projected future most often dictated by powerful entities in favor of those informed by a more wide and transparent set of variables, and includes the needs of interests of a more diverse set of constituents. Following critiques from within and beyond the field, futures studies and foresight is increasingly expanding to include global voices and perspectives, from persons and groups explicitly associated with social justice/equity movements and from sectors and groups that do not represent the dominant and/or colonial world.

Foresight and futures studies assume that change will continue, that it will be continuous, non-linear, and will include both anticipated and unanticipated elements. It assumes that through dedicated and skillful practice, foresight can be an empowering and useful set of ideas and tools, but only if practiced with an open, equity-centered and democratized set of ethics.

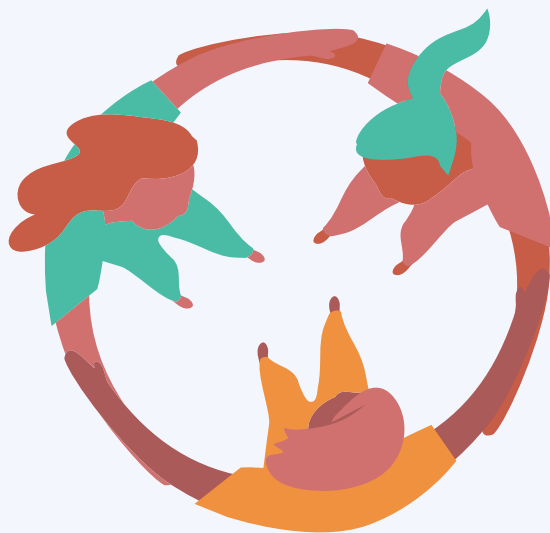


2. FRAMING, CHARGE AND ASPIRATIONS FOR LAB



There has never been a multi-year collective approach to exploring the future and utilizing foresight techniques among practicing social workers. This is a first of its kind effort.

Twenty-five people were selected from a national call for membership to engage in a 1.5-year fellowship in “The Social Work Health Futures Lab.” The role of “Fellows” was to a) commit to the experience, b) engage in foresight training, c) attend regular fellowship meetings to explore topics across the field in a more indepth way, learn directly from futurists working at the intersections of many issues we deemed important, and create a community of practice to apply foresight principles, tools and methods to our shared work as social workers.



Centrally, our charge was to “explore” in a meaningful way “what might foresight have to do with the social work profession - particularly as related to health/social determinants of health,” this includes anticipating possible future scenarios, and engaging in the development of new social innovations to respond to or prevent future challenges. In latter phases of the lab, there was additional development of implications for the field and how to broaden access to the lessons and resources of our lab. During our time together, we explored a wide range of evolving issues which we strongly believed social workers of the future will be dealing with. A summary of these can be found at this [link](#) (Appendix 1).



3. ESTABLISHMENT OF CORE TEAM, SELECTION AND ORIENTATION OF FELLOWS



PI of the project, Dr. Laura Nissen, Professor of SW at Portland State University has been doing extensive work in this space for many years. She was the originator of the project. She was joined by Dr. Jake Dunagan, Director of the Governance Futures Lab at the Institute for the Future, bringing his extensive experience regarding public sector foresight efforts globally and in the United States. They served as the primary leadership for the effort. MSW/MPH Student Mackenzie Barron joined as our student worker and due to her interest in the topic, also participated as a Fellow of the initiative.

A national advisory group comprised of forward-thinking social work leaders from around the United States, advised on a call for engagement, and ultimately, selection of the final fellows.

Our orientation to foresight launched with a multi-day distance meeting in which initial community-building occurred, introductory foresight concepts were shared and a general overview of our charge and our opportunity was presented.

Ultimately our “output” for the lab was up to us - we had almost unlimited opportunity to explore, evolve and produce work individually or collectively that spoke to our core question(s):

- What is foresight and how might it be relevant to social workers focused on health and the social determinants of health?
- What are the ethical, political and practical dimensions and dynamics of applying foresight to issues we care about as social workers?
- How might foresight change/enhance social work and vice versa? (What are the unique features of social work that might be especially important, useful or relevant in foresight work?)
- What are issues regarding the future of health, health equity and community well-being that are most urgent for social work to explore, be knowledgeable about, shape, resist and prepare for?
- In what ways or in what circumstances might foresight not be helpful or ethically advisable in social work practice?



4. ACTIVITIES



Built community among Fellows (both in social terms - getting to know one another better even through Zoom) AND forming organic groups of shared interest including use of photo voice in foresight work, climate/environmental justice group, climate and grief group and others

Constructed a statement of shared values (Appendix 2) and built a logic model (Appendix 3). Also clarified a general overview of possible and planned activities in a shifting context (Appendix 4). Finally, clarified our focus and “location” within the family tree of foresight as situated in “critical and participatory foresight” which is both defined and illustrated via levels of practice/foci here.

Completed foresight training through the Institute for the Future and Coursera

Learned from guest futurists and studied the work of other influential futurists (Appendix 5, 6)

Produced a blog with regular creative posts based on selected futures topics explored

Played a variety of foresight games, applied foresight tools, and engaged in cross-sectoral explorations to futures topics we were interested in, for example, a foresight-based analysis of the NASW Code of Ethics (Appendix 7)

Used the lab as a sounding board for emerging health social work projects under development by Fellows



4. ACTIVITIES CONT.



Completed a variety of projects and public talks:

- Presentations at NJ State SW Conference, NASW and CSWE national meetings
- Wrote a chapter of a forthcoming book on anti-racism in social work re; the future(s) of antiracism work in the profession
- Wrote an article on an ethical tool for social workers to use when considering integration of tech in their practice
- Wrote an article on Afrofuturism as an emerging lens for the social work profession
- PI secured book contract with Oxford University Press re: social work futures
- Collective agreement to create second book proposal with Oxford University Press re: Edited volume on social work health futures and the lessons of the lab. Not yet complete but Oxford has agreed to review/consider

Did outreach to the social work community re: futures thinking/practice and what we were learning - presentations for numerous national and state conferences, conferring with various social work leadership groups and were invited to meet with the Social Work Leadership Roundtable (leaders from all primary social work organizations in the U.S. to present our findings and make recommendations to the field)

Conducted rigorous self-reflection and shaping of foresight principles to best fit with ethics of social work practice

Were able to have one in-person meeting in Palo Alto, CA

Envisioned a next step for expanding the community of practice



5. LARGER ROLE OF COVID-19




Covid-19 evolved very quickly. The proposal was conceptualized and written before Covid-19 appeared, and was awarded just as it became a reality. Within weeks of starting, lockdowns had occurred and the entirety of what had been thought of as an “in person” effort had to be completely refashioned to an online format.

As has been described elsewhere in the popular press and academic literature, Covid-19 “took up space” in the lives of all of the members of the lab in multiple, overlapping and synergistic ways. These included increased family demands (child care or other caregiving, at home school juggling), personal challenges (personal isolation, personal or close family Covid-19 - and in some cases navigating family/friend deaths and/or long-covid or other health issues/crisis), and increased generalized personal stress/exhaustion, professional challenges (increased stress and demands due to Covid-19 work adaptations, staffing shortages and additional work related to this, zoom and distance functioning burnout). During the “time of covid” additional episodes of racialized state violence occurred even as clear indications of how much more dramatically Covid-19 was impacting Communities of Color in the U.S. and the rest of the world. We discussed the “syndemic” of multiple pandemics occurring simultaneously and used our imaginations to consider utopias, dystopias and everything in between as possible spaces to move beyond our current set of tragedies and tender resiliencies.

Additional challenges included the “work slow down” of almost any/all institutional supports for the project due to covid-19 staffing shortages.

The opportunity to “view, consider and understand” covid-19 as very much a “futures issue” was meaningful to all involved in the lab. We were able to discuss the VUCA (“volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous”) nature of global pandemics and the experience of living through them - using a foresight lens which aided in sensemaking. In the words of Ziaddun Sardar (2010), we had arrived (so it seems) in “post-normal” times which he defines as “an in-between period where old orthodoxies are dying, new ones have yet to be born, and very few things seem to make sense.” It is important to note that this didn’t make it easier (almost all noted big lessons about “the future of exhaustion”), however it helped us think about our lived and shared reality in a new way.



6. EVALUATION AND REFLECTIONS

We have had an external evaluator throughout the life of the lab. Two evaluation reports have been completed based on interviews/surveys. The first is a [Pre-Fellowship Survey Summary of Responses](#), and the second is an [Interim Fellowship Survey Summary of Responses](#). A third and final evaluation is underway now. Results have been positive though adjustments to shift towards practicing/applying foresight tools to real world social work challenges was encouraged mid-way through the project and was made.

67%

learned new futures
thinking concepts

58%

used new perspectives

60%

think futures should be built
into Social Work curricula

7. IMPACTS AND SPREAD



At our final culminating meeting together in August 2022 in Palo Alto, we did an iterative exercise about “what happened in this lab?” and “what did it mean?”. We landed on these four words together. We were attempting to synthesize and summarize the totality of our experience as a community (this is in addition to synthesizing the activities and outputs mentioned in Section 6 above).

These words seemed to “percolate” up from our larger brainstorming and sorting sessions. Everyone really felt they “fit” together like puzzle pieces and somehow accurately summed up what happened and who we are (becoming) together as a result of the experience of the lab and speak to some of the most important implications of how foresight might be used in the future for the profession.

7. IMPACTS AND SPREAD CONT.



RELATE

Connecting with each other and building these relationships among members of the lab was not a small part of our experience. We (mostly) didn't know each other before this, we were living through Covid-19, we were all overwhelmed at various times during the last 18 months. Gently we kept going, we checked on and encouraged each other. These relationships are part of the "secret sauce" that make the learning and growing possible. It was not just "the information" or the "tools." Even the few people who started but didn't finish with the lab were important contributors - and all are grateful for the stretching, challenging and growing that we helped each other do. We assert that foresight is simply "better" in the context of relationships and we will all carry that forward.

NAVIGATE

As we learned, and because we are social workers, the idea of "what should we be doing with this" was never far from our consciousness. We were very aware of the degree to which we are "the first" social workers to be using these tools and frameworks...so "what should we do" with them and what we've learned was important to us. Thinking about how to apply and use them in social work education, practice (at micro, meso and macro levels) in addition to participating in the larger global community of foresight and bringing our social work sensibilities into these spaces - all felt really clear and open. We realize that we belong in these spaces - we can both learn AND contribute and we don't necessarily need to know how to do all of that right this moment...we have learned how to navigate and are excited to do more

CREATE

We invested in imagination in all kinds of ways in this lab. Stretching our ways of thinking was risky, intense, uncomfortable at times. Bumping up into our own thinking patterns and limitations was tricky. But through continuing to reach for some expanded space and capacity individually and collectively - we did experience some kind of "breaking through" together which really caused us to realize how much we'd grown in our "creative capacities." This was expressed as a joyful and welcome reflection of our work together, which included creating artifacts, playing futures games, exploring issues in small groups and brainstorming spaces.

COMPLICATE

As much as we collectively and individually love and can find inspiration in foresight, we also see that white supremacy, colonialism, capitalism, racism and power asymmetries can so easily find their ways into futures conversations, frameworks and economies. Foresight to advance western, extractive, racial capitalism is not something we are interested in participating in or contributing to. Foresight in community to advance social justice, equity and new horizons of well-being for humans and the planet is more appealing and where our commitments lay. We acknowledge the intersections and trap doors of doing work in these spaces and we commit to a praxis that rigorously attends to this tension. We see a need to keep complicating foresight regarding many of these embedded power issues - and challenge ourselves and foresight writ large to continue growing with regard to these issues. We see the value of complicating all "official futures" in partnership with communities too often on the receiving end of them with limited ability to assert their own needs or aspirations. As a result of our work together, we commit to use these tools to even more deeply democratize these practices and perspectives so that the future can be co-created by the many rather than the few. This ability to challenge AND stay engaged may be among our greatest contributions as social workers.



7. IMPACTS AND SPREAD CONT.



Though those that completed the fellowship found foresight to be of great value, almost all would suggest that even after almost two years together and an intention to continue the work together and in our home settings, we are very much still at the beginning of our journeys. We have more to learn and experiment with. Foresight as an emerging transdisciplinary profession is deep, wide and complex and still changing quickly itself with new elements, frames and tools appearing regularly (including a new movement within the foresight field to decolonize). We see a collective role for social work to participate, contribute and shape foresight's evolution. Among our most important lessons is the realization that just as social work manages "tensions" between conservative and progressive dynamics within our profession - so does foresight (illustrated [here](#)). We believe it is a strength that we can bring to the table.

Spread and Dissemination

All engaged in the project feel that it is essential and urgent to continue our work together in some form.

We have collectively submitted an additional RWJF grant to produce a conference based on our experiences and to invite the profession of social work as a whole to participate in some imagination, foresight and strategy work about the future of the profession (summary [here](#)). If funded, this conference will be an opportunity for us to creatively engage and widen the circle of social workers around the United States into this community.

Additionally, we've elected to move ahead with a "new chapter" of the lab itself - to remain a "lab" structure but evolve into a non-hierarchical community of practice with social workers welcome to participate from around the continent (and beyond). We have developed an evolving set of "[practice principles](#)" (not yet finalized - these are still in final draft form) and intend to make "future membership" of the lab contingent on participant willingness to sign on to these values (Appendix 8). We will form a modestly-sized (4-6 people) national leadership team, we will host up to 4 meetings per year that might consist of (in equal parts): foresight training modules, signal sharing and deep dives on foresight projects in motion within the profession (or in related areas).



8. LIMITATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED



This was an experimental project - truly exploring a new model in a new way. As such, what we have learned is the result of the core membership that found this framework useful and generative. We are confident about what we have learned, however we are respectful that this is based on our own experiences and insights - and that this will change and evolve as more social workers get involved.

A few of our members (3-4) dropped out of the lab for personal reasons (new jobs or work demands, personal or family health reasons).

As is the case with social work writ large - not everyone in the group agreed or felt "at home" in foresight studies/experimentation. A few of our members (2) withdrew the lab due to their concerns that the foresight field in general was not consciously and reliably committed to transformational social justice values/practices and they simply wished to invest their own time in places that were. We respect this point of view and learned from/took seriously their concerns. (Foresight is in fact practiced by private corporations, militaries and governments around the world - in addition to NGO's, activists, social theorists and change workers.) This perspective was not generally shared among the core group (though dialogue about keeping our principles, ethics and political commitments clear as we navigate the foresight world was extremely generative, formative and important to our process). Our resulting membership is committed to justice-anchored foresight work - and acknowledge that this will not happen by accident or by default - and that this very commitment may be a defining contribution of social work to the foresight field. Additional development, critique and praxis remains warranted and important.

Even those who stepped away from the lab made significant contributions and are appreciated for their creative insights and guiding remarks.






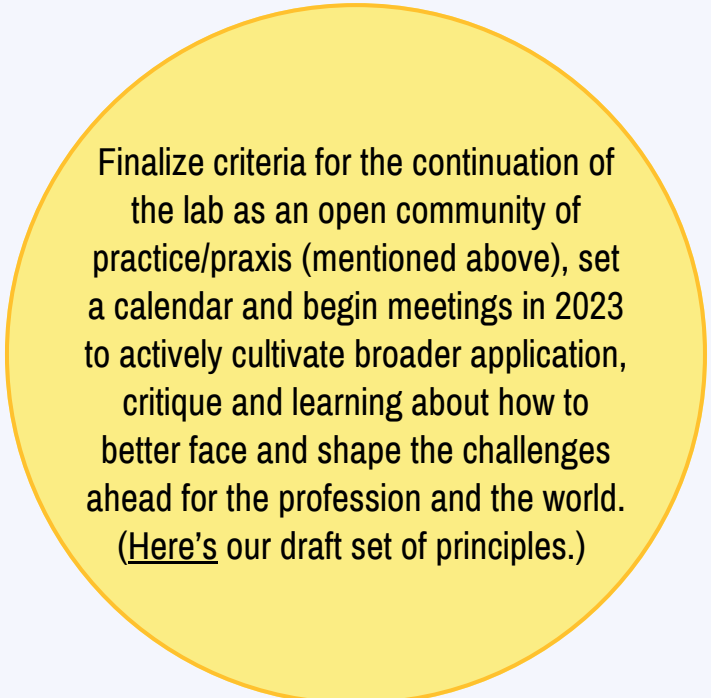
9. NEXT STEPS AND EVOLUTION

At this point, we have through our efforts, spoken directly to several hundred additional social workers around the U.S. and interacted with others internationally. We have received numerous requests for “ways to get more involved” to learn more about and participate in a community of practice to exercise skills in foresight.


We plan to:



Host a national conference for social workers about foresight with some creative and engaging state of the art approaches sometime in the next year, pending communication from RWJF about funding. (Draft of our working proposal language [here](#).)



Finalize criteria for the continuation of the lab as an open community of practice/praxis (mentioned above), set a calendar and begin meetings in 2023 to actively cultivate broader application, critique and learning about how to better face and shape the challenges ahead for the profession and the world. ([Here's](#) our draft set of principles.)



10. LEADERSHIP TEAM, FELLOWS, AND NATIONAL ADVISORY GROUP



Social Work Health Futures Lab Leadership Team

Laura Nissen, Ph.D, MSW - PI
Professor, Portland State University

Jake Dunagan, Ph.D. - Foresight Coach
Director, Governance Futures Lab - Institute for the Future

Mackenzie Barron - MSW/MPH Student Worker and Fellow
Portland State University, Oregon Health and Science University

Social Work Health Futures Lab National Advisory Group

Heidi Allen, Ph.D., MSW
Associate Professor, School of Social Work
Columbia University

Darla Spence Coffey, Ph.D., MSW
President, CEO - Council on Social Work Education

Jose Coll, Ph.D., MSW
Dean and Professor
School of Social Work
Portland State University

Mit Joyner, DPS, LCSW
President, National Association of Social Workers

Goutham Menon, Ph.D.
Former Dean and Professor
School of Social Work
Loyola University

Deb McPhee, Ph.D.
Dean and Professor
Graduate School of Social Services
Fordham University

Desmond Patton, Ph.D.
Brian and Randi Schwartz University Professor, Director SafeLab
School of Social Policy & Practice/Annenberg School for
Communications
University of Pennsylvania

Nancy J. Smyth, Ph.D., LCSW
Former Dean and Professor
School of Social Work
University of Buffalo

Martell Teasley, Ph.D., MSW
Dean, College of Social Work
University of Utah

Edwina Uehara, Ph.D.
Dean, School of Social Work
University of Washington





Social Work Health Futures Lab Fellows

Mary Dallas Allen, Ph.D, MSW

Professor and MSW Program Director
University of Alaska Anchorage School of Social
Work

Nicole Alston, MSW

Center for Complicated Grief
Columbia University School of Social Work

Lillian Beaudoin MSW

Private Consultant

Finn McLafferty Bell, Ph.D.,MSW

Assistant Professor
University of Michigan Dearborn
School of Social Work

Tonya Bibbs, Ph.D., LCSW

Senior Research Associate
James Bell Associates

Samuel Lewis Bradley, Jr., DSW

Assistant Professor
Boston College of Social Work

Lakeya Cherry, DSW

Executive Leadership Coach

Rachael Dietkus, LSCW

Design Committed to Trauma-Responsive
Practice

Margaret Evans, MSW

Program Officer of U.S. Committee for Refugees
and Immigrants

Alexis Glennon, DSW Candidate

University of Buffalo School of Social Work

Lauri Goldkind, Ph.D., MSW

Associate Professor
Graduate School of Social Service
Fordham University

**Danielle Maude Littman, Ph.D. Candidate,
LCSW**

University of Denver
Graduate School of Social Work

Julie Muñoz-Najar, MSW, LSW

Clinical Assistant Professor, Field Education
School of Social Work
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign





Social Work Health Futures Lab Fellows

Leah Prussia, DSW, LICSW

Associate Professor
Social Work
College of St. Scholastica

Jenna Rines, MSW, RSW

Research Coordinator
University of Toronto

Juan Rios, DSW, MSW, CSOTS

Assistant Professor of Social Work
Seton Hall University
Department of Sociology, Anthropology, Social
Work and Criminal Justice

Sophia Sarantakos, Ph.D., MSW, LCSW

Assistant Professor
University of Denver Graduate School of Social
Work

Hannah Szlyk, Ph.D., LCSW

Assistant Professor
Rutgers School of Social Work

Meredith Tetloff, Ph.D., MSW

Associate Professor
University of Montevallo School of Social Work

Jelena Todić, Ph.D., MSW

Assistant Professor, School of Social Work
University of Texas at San Antonio

Anderson Beckmann Al Wazni, Ph.D.

Candidate

MSW Adjunct Professor
Smith School of Social Work

Anjanette Wells, MSW, LCSW

Associate Professor
University of Cincinnati

**Samantha Wolfe-Taylor, Ph.D. Candidate,
MSW, LCSW, CTMH**

Associate Director of the Office of e-Social Work
Education and Practice
Indiana University School of Social Work

Jaehee Yi, Ph.D, MSW

Associate Professor, School of Social Work
University of Victoria

James “Jimmy” Young, Ph.D., MSW., MPA

Associate Professor of Social Work
California State University San Marcos



APPENDIX 1: TOP SOCIAL/POLITICAL ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION



Top Social/Political Issues for Consideration of Social Work Futures:

(Note: Racism and other forms of discrimination inclusion are pervasive throughout this list and serve as a primary complicating dynamic throughout. All of these should be considered re their impact on everyone but especially those considered to be part of vulnerable and/or already marginalized groups)

- Mental health and mental health equity (includes access to basic mental health needs as well as emerging mental health breakthroughs)
- Health and health equity (includes access to basic health needs as well as emerging health tech/biotech breakthroughs)
- Economic justice and growing generational wealth disparities
- Future of social care (traditionally vulnerable populations - children, people with disabilities, elders)
- Future of alternative care systems re: mutual aid
- Climate change and gentrification (See here for range of issues considered.)
- Tech proliferation without open ethics commitments, tech misuse, tech exploitation of society, loss of privacy and control of personal information on the secondary and “dark” data markets (See here for range of issues considered.)
- Overreach, proliferation and intensification of carceral systems of social control and surveillance (police, child welfare, school safety, facial recognition tech, predictive algorithms present in many common spaces of community life, and other forms of community surveillance)
- Future of work and equitable jobs
- Political extremism and xenophobia
- Future of migration
- Increasing disasters (heat, water)
- Backlash about expanding ideas of identity
- Increasing migration (and politicization)
- Disinformation re life sustaining issues
- Future of underground economies
- Increasing lethality re militarization/blurring between community and warfare
- Lack of legal/political structure for scientific advances (e.g. biotech)
- Increasing hate crimes
- Increasing political extremism
- Instability of democratic institutions/right to vote
- Increasing control/surveillance of free speech/organizing/social action
- Decreasing sense of belonging and civic spaces to facilitate/encourage positive community engagement
- Lack of investment in cultivating community vision, strengths and solutions to all of the above
- The role of the changing nature of professions and social work’s own decisions about it’s future structures, foci, education and research
- Social work strengths - Equity lens throughout, issues across lifespan, levels of action: micro (individual level interventions), meso (family, group, neighborhood-level interventions), macro (organizational, policy, community-level interventions).





Social Work Health Futures Lab Guiding Principles and Shared Commitments

- Center equity and anti-racist principles and practices in how we move through foresight work
- Question and eliminate dichotomies/binary thinking
- Hold multiple truths
- Intentionally centering the futures of Black, Brown, Indigenous, Asian, and other People of Color, women, LGBTQ+, disabled folks.(a willingness to interrogate the language/acronyms that we use)
- Intentionally consider scholarship from outside of social work literature (interprofessional curiosity?)
- Collaborate with the groups that we don't usually work with, such as the rich, the powerful.
- How to be attached to process and not outcome
- Accessibility of language - how to break down Futures language (outside of our common language)? Academic terms, etc.
- Discuss and reach consensus on philosophical foundation for social work. Do we have one? That one has consensus among social workers?
- We should eradicate mental blocks about talking about money, technology, etc. that sw traditionally are allergic to:) or don't engage in tackling
- Seek out surprise and new perspectives
- Pursue action, actual action in addition to dialogue
- Create a culture of accountability
- Commit to authentic inclusion of community voices, specifically those most marginalized, on any key topic we explore (and if it isn't there...commit to seek it out)
- Create an environment in which we remain aware of how our work will impact external communities, organizations, and individuals with respect to unintended and intended consequences of the work we create, implement, and evaluate
- Seek transformation but balance with respect for authentic and well-formulated reforms when possible (both part of contemporary social work)
- Shared responsibilities to complicate and "trouble" narratives and encourage deeper praxis and reflexivity
- Commit to shared learning and ethos of community among our group, hospitality and generosity - each member both gives and receives



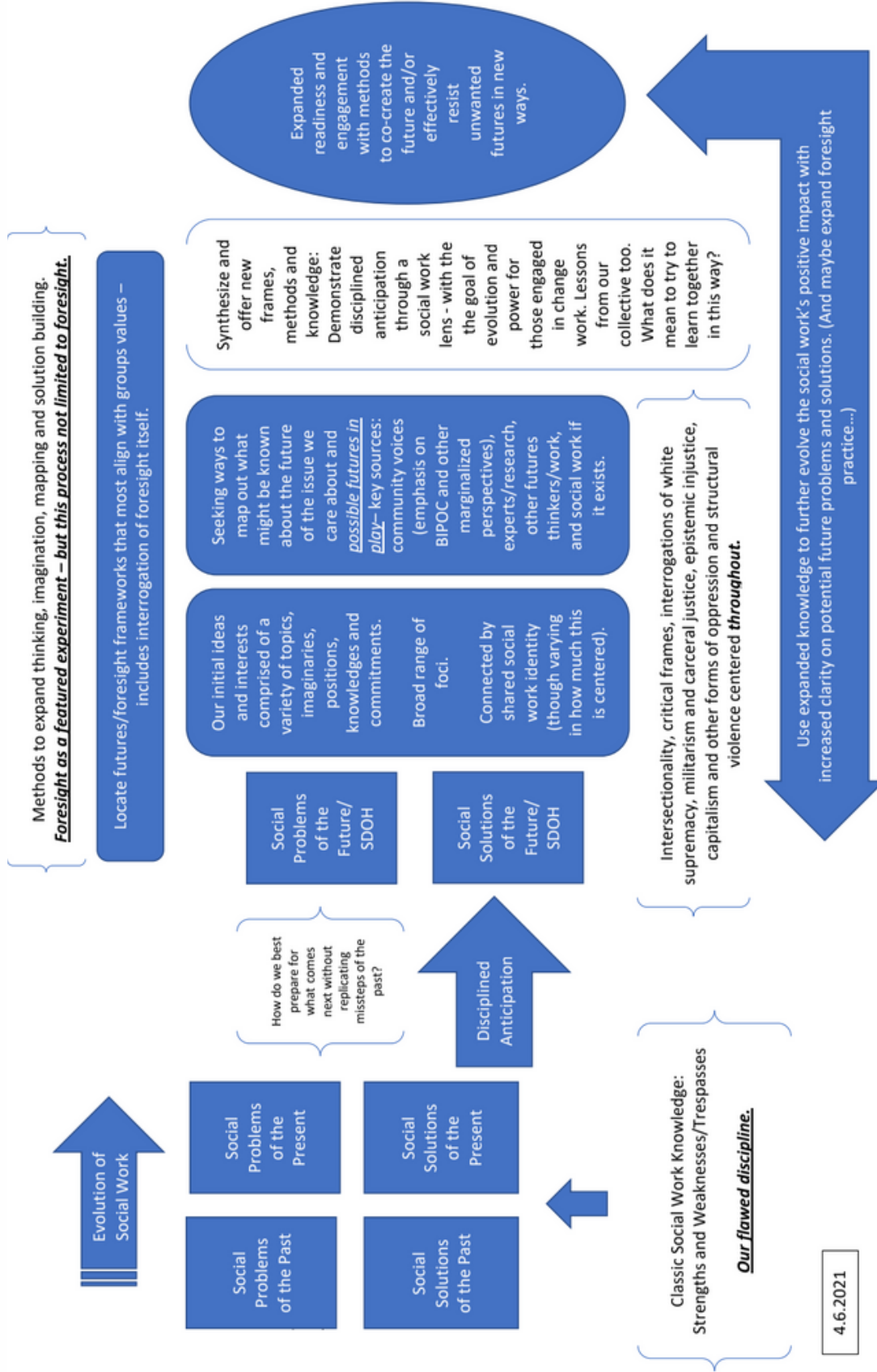
APPENDIX 2: GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND SHARED COMMITMENTS



- Challenge dominant narratives - within and beyond the profession of social work
- Rigorously co-assess and develop what a “foresight lens” means for social work in theory and as applied in research and practice
- Abandon racial capitalism, and commit to a future where all people come before profits
- Approach the work with an abundance mentality
- Remember that how “we are at the small scale is how we are at the large scale.” (a. brown, emergent strategy). The lab is a place to practice the future we want to see. We are a signal.
- Commitment to divergent, non-binary thinking and embrace cognitive flexibility
- Strong opinions, weakly held
- Approach social problems from the perspective of moral imagination and moral rebellion
- Centering the futures of BIPOC, women, LGBTQ, and disabled folks
- A learning space that welcomes non-judgment, trust, and safety; and extending this openness to community
- Decentering the promulgation of the profession of social work, and centering the work itself; this includes a more inclusive view of who does the work (how does the history of the social work profession impact our present and our future looking back and looking forward)
- Being emotionally aware of the disparate impacts of topics based on our and others’ social locations
- Teaching others about foresight and future thinking- sharing with social work and other communities, disciplines, etc.
- Cultivating a safe, authentic, free, joyful, fun, playful environment that embodies non-judgment space that is healing in order to recharge the body and the soul (?)
- Prioritizing self care in our group norms: okay to turn off camera, take care of bodily needs, care for elders, etc...
- Don’t let the perfect be the enemy of the good / fail fast to learn fast
- Consider power with versus power over
- Leave evidence. Not only evidence in academia, but evidence in larger society that lasts beyond the 18 months we are together and touches the lives of people and communities.
- Ask ourselves repeatedly, as we do our work, how we will avoid becoming an echo chamber - and ask how we are sharing our work and with whom




APPENDIX 3: LOGIC MODEL



APPENDIX 4: GAME BOARD OF POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES



<p>Learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IFTF Foresight Trg./Course - Selected design futures activities - Invited futurists from a variety of topics - From each other - From notable social workers doing esp. future-facing work 	<p>Connect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - World Future Society - Association of Professional Futurists - IFTF Foresight Studio Alumni Group - Design Justice Network - PRIMER community - Connect with RWJF community 	<p>Discover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Curated foresight literature broken down into easy-to-use-categories - Curated futures topics esp. of interest to the group - Will ever grow/change
<p>Shared Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shared signals practice - Participate in regular learning and/or sharing sessions - Present to each other and give constructive feedback - Bring resources to the group - Mapping where social work is active in futures topics 		<p>Individual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cultivate individual foresight practice framework - Deepen knowledge – reading, exploring - Share with others – seek input from personal practice community (including consumers) - Apply (to practice, teaching or research) - Creative communication reinforcements and stretching
<p>Multipliers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop and deliver best ways of sharing our learning in the larger field. - Recommendations to social work education - Community facing talks, conference, published works - Partnerships with other fellowships/labs - The SWHFL website - Use of social media and other creative tools 	<p>Innovate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social work “invention” – what we might develop individually or collectively to meet emerging needs (leave loose right now...) - Creative works 	<p>Wild Card:</p> <p>(Leaving space for emergent and other as yet to be identified opportunities and ideas!)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">December 2020</p>



APPENDIX 5: GUEST FUTURISTS



Speaker Name	Topic
<u>Jake Dunagan, Ph.D.</u>	The future of government and design futures
<u>Vanessa Mason, MPH</u>	The future of belonging
Kathi Vian, Ph.D.	The art of foresight-anchored scenarios.
<u>Aarathi Krishnan</u>	Decolonizing foresight
<u>Shalini Kantayya, MFA</u>	Coded Bias film and the dangers of “computational racism”
Lori Melichar, Ph.D.	RWJF overview and the future
<u>Trista Harris, MPP</u>	Futures thinking inside foundations
Nandini Ranganathan, Ph.D.	Using futures thinking in local context: Getting facial recognition software eliminated in Portland, Oregon
Danica Love Brown, Ph.D.	Anarchism and abolition from an Indigenous and futures lens
<u>Stuart Candy, Ph.D.</u>	Experiential futures
<u>George Aye</u>	Design futures
<u>Lonny Brooks, Ph.D.</u>	Afrofuturism 1
Nicole Rogers, MA	The future of families



APPENDIX 5: GUEST FUTURISTS



<u>Ben Gansky, Ph.D.</u>	Data economies below the surface of the internet ecosystem
<u>Shushma Raman, MPA</u>	The future of human rights
Jamais Cascio, Ph.D.	Ethics in foresight
<u>Jose Ramos, Ph.D.</u>	Mutant futures and the inner work of foresight
Grace Dillon, Ph.D.	Indigenous futurisms
Lisa Reyes Mason, Ph.D.	Climate social work
Amy Krings, Ph.D.	Climate social work
Smitha Rao, Ph.D.	Climate social work
Reynaldo Anderson, Ph.D.	Afrofuturism 2
<u>Ytasha Womack</u>	Afrofuturism 3
Courtney Cogburn, Ph.D.	Social work, tech and racism - VR applications and lessons
Desmond Patton, Ph.D.	Social work, tech and racism - doing research using Twitter on youth well-being
<u>Cynthia Selin, Ph.D.</u>	Engaging people in foresight in creative ways
<u>Sam Woolley, Ph.D.</u>	The future of disinformation



APPENDIX 6: INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE, GROUPS, AND RESOURCES



Organizations	Games & Other Online Resources
<p> <u>Soul Fire Farm</u> <u>Speculative Futures Slack channel</u> <u>Design Justice (and Slack channel)</u> <u>Nesta (org)</u> <u>Interrupting Criminalization and 'Do No Harm' principles</u> <u>Protopia Futures</u> <u>Algorithmic Justice League</u> <u>Solarpunk (Broadly)</u> <u>All Tech is Human, particularly their Responsible Tech Guide & Co-Creating a Better Tech Future report</u> <u>upEND movement</u> <u>The Things We Did Next</u> <u>Feed Black Futures</u> <u>Healing Justice</u> <u>Participatory Canada</u> <u>U.S. Office of Strategic Foresight/GAO</u> <u>Doughnut Economics</u> <u>UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change</u> <u>Institute for the Future - IFTF</u> <u>Wakanda Dream Lab</u> <u>Center for Artistic Activism</u> </p>	<p>Games:</p> <p> <u>Thing from the Future</u> <u>Oracle for Transfeminist Technologies</u> <u>AfroRithms from the Future</u> <u>Building Utopia: A Radical Futuring Toolkit</u> <u>The Futures Bazaar Toolkit</u> <u>Superstruct (additional link here and here)</u> </p> <p>Other online resources:</p> <p> UN – <u>Foresight and Futures Resources</u> UN – <u>Foresight Manual</u> UN – <u>Social Development Goals</u> Laura Nissen’s website: <u>www.socialworkfutures.com</u> </p> <p>Deloitte – <u>What is work? and Future of Behavioral Health</u></p>



APPENDIX 6: INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE, GROUPS, AND RESOURCES



People

- Marina Gorbis - IFTF Executive Director, [After the Pandemic: The Deeper Disease Scenarios](#).
- [Jane McGonigal](#) - IFTF, Director of Game Research and Development, Multiple books and resources including [Imaginable](#); [SuperBetter](#) and; [Reality is Broken](#).
- Alice Wong - [Disability Visibility Project](#).
- Leah Zaidi - [Multiverse Design](#).
- [Kishonna Gray](#) - Author, Scholar, Researcher. [Work Gaming: Digital Challenges to Oppression and Social Injustice](#).
- Harsha Walia - Author, Community Activist, Abolitionist. [Undoing Border Imperialism](#).
- [adrienne maree brown](#) - Activist, Author. [Grievers](#); [Emergent Strategy](#); [Pleasure Activism](#) and; [Octavia's Brood](#).
- [Mariame Kaba](#) - Author, Activist, Abolitionist. [We Do This 'Til We Free Us](#).
- [Deepa Iyer](#), Author, Activist. [Social Change Now: A Guide for Reflection and Connection](#).
- [Robin Wall Kimmerer](#) - Writer, Activist. [Braiding Sweetgrass](#).
- [Derecka Purnell](#) - Author, Activist, Abolitionist. [Becoming Abolitionists](#).
- Kim Stanley Robinson, Author. [The Ministry for the Future](#).
- Elizabeth Sawin - [Multisolving Institute](#).
- Daniel Kraft – Exponential Medicine, [How Covid-19 Transformed the Future of Medicine](#).
- Amy Webb - Director, Future Today Institute, Multiple books and resources including [the Genesis Machine](#); [The Big Nine](#) and; [The Signals are Talking](#). Amy's group also publishes the annual [Tech Trends Report](#).
- [Autumn Asher BlackDeer](#) - Decolonial IndigiQueer Scholar.
- Warren Ellis - Author. [Normal](#) (short novel about burned out futurists at a treatment center).
- [Ruha Benjamin](#) - Scholar and researcher on the intersection of race and technology. Books include [Race After Technology](#); [Viral Justice](#) and; [Captivating Technology](#).
- [Cennydd Bowles](#) - [Future Ethics](#).
- [Michael Tubbs](#) - Activist, [Poverty is not Inevitable](#).
- [Sonya Renee Taylor](#) - Poet, Activist, Writer. [The Body is not an Apology](#)
- [Rachel Cargle](#) - Activist, Writer. [Founder of the Great Unlearn](#).
- [Richie Reseda](#) - [Founder of Abolition X](#) podcast, and [Question Culture](#).
- [Nicole Hanna Jones](#) - Writer, Scholar. [The 1619 Project](#).
- [Sasha Costanza-Chock](#) - Writer, Scholar. [Design Justice](#).
- Daniel and Richard Susskind - Authors. [The Future of the Professions](#).
- [Sohail Inayatullah](#) - [Foresight Scholar](#).
- [Shoshana Zuboff](#) - Author. [The Age of Surveillance Capitalism](#).
- Jamie Susskind - Author. [Future Politics](#).
- [Kyle Whyte](#) - Scholar. [Environmental Justice](#).
- [Kate Crawford](#) - Writer, Scholar. [Atlas of AI](#).
- [Ziaddun Sardar](#) - [Foresight Scholar](#), Author. [Rescuing All Our Futures: The Future of Futures Studies](#).
- [Douglas Rushkoff](#) - Writer. [Team Human](#) book and podcast.
- [Bryan Alexander](#) - Writer, Scholar, Author of [Academia Next](#) and founder of the [Future Trends Forum](#) (focused on the future of higher education).



APPENDIX 7: FUTURES PERSPECTIVE ON SOCIAL WORK ETHICS



NASW Ethical Principles*

A futures perspective in relation to these principles

Value: Service

Ethical principle: Social Workers' primary goal is to help people in need and address social problems.

A futures lens would explore emerging social problems, as well as possibilities for those that might form after the emergent. The purpose of these explorations would be to prevent, mitigate or prepare for issues that interact with existing and possible future challenges. It would assert the need for individual and communities to be the chief architects of their own futures – and to address inherent inequities preventing and/or complicating this. This could mean that social workers assist in co-designing/co-building new kinds of solutions in partnership with community leaders. It would require social workers to attend to the emergent in a disciplined, supportive and creative way.

Value: Social justice

Ethical principle: Social workers challenge social injustice.

A futures lens would assume that social injustice is not a static phenomenon...that it grows, morphs and changes directions with the passage of time. A futures lens would assume that social injustices of tomorrow will be simultaneously like and unlike what they are now with both familiar and novel dimensions – so that “challenging it” requires a kind of anticipatory capacity and the cultivation of collective readiness for divergent possibilities.

Value: Dignity and worth of the person

Ethical principle: Social Workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.

A futures lens would imagine how the drivers influencing the inherent dignity and worth of people are evolving, changing and challenging efforts to assure human rights for all. It would require social workers to continually assess those features of modern life that interrupt inherent dignity and value of personhood and complicate, resist or intervene appropriately.

Value: Integrity

Ethical principles: Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.

A futures lens would acknowledge that the nature of trust is changing – and that lack of/erosion trust in institutions, professions and systems is an increasingly serious problem that impacts individual and collective well-being. This requires that social workers do more in the future to assess where and how trust may be breaking down and attend to it in a consistent, transparent and clear manner. It also requires social workers to more clearly acknowledge the challenges of transparency of risks an increasingly neoliberalized, colonial, racist, homophobic/transphobic and climate-change accelerating ecosystem and actively seek to build trust through pushing effectively against and through these challenges (both within and beyond the profession) in concert with collectives seeking to do the same.

Value: Competence

Ethical principles: Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise.

A futures lens requires social workers to think of their “competence” as a quickly evolving ability to not only apply practical knowledge but to actively refresh their knowledge with emerging information from trusted sources: Both formal and informal. A futures lens requires social workers to enter their practice with humility about their “expertise” and acknowledge that it has historically been limited and sometimes harmful. A futures perspective realizes that competence is the ability to learn, relearn and unlearn fluidly as the world, the identity and needs of our profession, and the aspirations of communities for wellness and justice evolve.





Social Work Futures Lab 2.0

Draft Principles

- We believe the future is an open space, full of possibility and a space that belongs to everyone.
- We align with both critical and participatory foresight philosophy and methods – to both invest in constant power analysis among various futures being considered – and – to consistently engage community voice in an active and dedicated effort to be inclusive (especially with regard to voices too often excluded from future agenda setting) and to democratize the power inherent in future-making.
- As social workers and members of a profession, we believe that we have a moral and ethical obligation to hone skills of foresight that help us to imagine more expansively, and to analyze risk more productively so that we minimize the time spent reacting unproductively due to an under-investment of imagining possible futures.
- We believe that carcerality, coloniality, heteropatriarchy, racism and other interlocking forms of oppression seek to renew claims on the future in new forms and that intentional work must be done to interrupt, redirect and dismantle this.
- We believe that the future a community most wants and sees for itself is sacred and should guide all other activities.
- We share foresight frameworks and tools actively and seek to facilitate rather than be viewed as experts on the future.
- We do not predict the future – rather we subscribe to the idea that futures thinking and foresight practice can a) assist communities in expanding their imaginations about possible futures, b) explore unintended consequences, c) marshal the power that comes with understanding the distinction between “official” and “emergent” futures, and d) lead to more robust actions and more carefully considered decisions about various courses of action.



FELLOWSHIP PHOTOS

