

HUMAN BEHAVIOR THEORY AND SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH MARGINALIZED OPPRESSED POPULATIONS

ROBERTA R. GREENE, MICHAEL WRIGHT,
MELVIN HERRING, NICOLE DUBUS, and TAUNYA WRIGHT



Human Behavior Theory and Social Work Practice with Marginalized Oppressed Populations

Human Behavior Theory and Social Work Practice with Marginalized Oppressed Populations addresses what social workers can do to combat the increasingly complex social concerns that face the profession, and explores how to incorporate the celebration of diversity and the protection of human rights into social work curricula and the helping process. The authors combine human behavior theories with a narrative, postmodern practice methodology that deals with both the client's or constituencies' presenting problem and equity issues, and, as a result, the book is both theoretical and applied. Two major integrating themes throughout are at the forefront of the book—the celebration of diversity and the equality of human rights. The goal is to strengthen diversity and human rights components of the social work curriculum and to provide more practice guidelines for cross-cultural practice.

Roberta R. Greene has numerous publications (17 books) on human behavior and gerontology, including risk and resilience, such as Greene and Schriver's *Handbook on Human Behavior* (2016, Transaction Press), and an article on resilience in the *Encyclopedia of Social Work* (2008, NASW Press). She served on the Council on Social Work Education's Educational Policy Commission, which mandates curriculum competencies.

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Taunya Wright, a registered nurse with 24 years of experience, is the Health Literacy Director for MawMedia group, a consulting firm. She is a coach and author of *The Brady Boe* series (2018).

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and Taunya Wright**

First published 2019
by Routledge
52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017

and by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Greene, Roberta R. (Roberta Rubin), 1940– author.

Title: Human behavior theory and social work practice with marginalized oppressed populations / Roberta R. Greene, Michael Wright, Melvin Herring, Nicole Dubus, and Taunya Wright.

Description: 1 Edition. | New York : Routledge, 2019. |

Includes bibliographical references and index. |

Identifiers: LCCN 2018058263 (print) | LCCN 2019012035 (ebook) |

ISBN 9780429489198 (Master Ebook) | ISBN 9780429951176 (Web pdf) |

ISBN 9780429951152 (Mobipocket) | ISBN 9780429951169 (ePub) |

ISBN 9781138593862 (hardback) | ISBN 9781138593909 (pbk.) |

ISBN 9780429489198 (ebk)

Subjects: LCSH: Social service. | Social work with minorities. |

Human behavior. Classification: LCC HV40 (ebook) |

LCC HV40 .G7443 2019 (print) | DDC 361.3/2–dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2018058263>

ISBN: 978-1-138-59386-2 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-138-59390-9 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-0-429-48919-8 (ebk)

Typeset in Bembo
by Newgen Publishing UK

Visit the companion website: <http://mawmedia.com/mawgroup/webfolder/MainPage.html>

Contents

<i>Index of Tables, Figures, and Companion Website Content</i>	ix
<i>Foreword</i>	xiv
<i>Preface: A Call to Action</i>	xvii
<i>The preface is a call to action to social work educators and students to use human behavior and the social environment to further support cross-cultural practice among marginalized populations.</i>	
1 The RESM: A Culturally Sensitive Model of Social Work Practice	1
<i>This chapter describes the purpose of the book and how it connects to social work's dual mission of fostering individual and societal well-being. It then presents an overview of the resilience-enhancing stress model (RESM). An account of Ruby Bridges and her family, a story about school integration in New Orleans, as well as an account of a social worker's personal quest for culturally inclusive human behavior theory and practice show how the model elements can be applied in resilience-enhancing cross-cultural social work practice.</i>	
2 Narrative Theory, the Culturally Sensitive RESM Interview, and the Helping Process	11
<i>This chapter discusses the use of narrative theory to conduct cross-cultural interviews. In this process, social workers address the presenting problem and help clients gain more equal access to goods, resources, and services. A case study and excerpts from interviews are presented.</i>	
3 Risk and Resilience Theory: An Outcome Approach	22
<i>This chapter describes risk and resilience theory, drawing readers' attention to the evolution of resilience as a process and as a functional outcome. It explains how the theory's terms and assumptions can be applied to reduce risks, enhance protective factors, and promote resilience.</i>	

Moreover, the chapter addresses the requirement that “social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities” (Council on Social Work Education, 2015, p. 7). The mandate to apply evidence-based theory is met through a summary of risk and resilience research.

4 RESM Assessment and Intervention: Ecological and Systems Theory 31

This chapter discusses assumptions of ecological systems theory chosen for their suitability as tools for working with marginalized populations. By using the tools offered by the RESM theory base, readers can learn how to engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate the helping process with oppressed, stigmatized client populations and constituencies.

5 Social Work and Social Justice: Groups, Organizations, and Social Movements 50

This chapter discusses RESM theory and practice for social work practice with groups, organizations, and social movements. The characteristics and functions of systems at various levels are defined, and ways in which social workers can mobilize these interlocking social systems to contribute to people's resilience are described. This discussion provides a picture of social workers' possible scope of work from micro- to macro-practice, enacting the axiom “the person is political.”

6 A Presenting Problem, a Family, and a Marginalized Community: Applying the RESM 61

This chapter discusses the case of Rosa, a woman with diabetes who lives with her family in a Texas barrio. Readers learn how biopsychosocial and spiritual factors influence well-being. They also learn about interventions that address Rosa's medical regime, her family, and her community, including social justice issues in the barrio.

7 The RESM: An African American Client with Dementia and His Caregivers 72

WITH GUEST AUTHOR NANCY GREENE

This chapter discusses challenges facing African American clients with dementia and their caregivers. The emphasis is on combating stigma and accessing environmental supports. Suggestions for courses on caregiving are provided.

- 8 Educational Resilience, School Stressors, and the RESM of School Social Work Practice 82

WITH GUEST AUTHORS YOUJUNG LEE AND REBEKAH JAMISON

This chapter suggests that educational resilience can be fostered through interventions that enhance children's learning, develop their talents and competencies, and protect or buffer them against environmental adversities (such as school bullying). The roles of school social workers and the school as a societal institution are described.

- 9 Resettling as a Forced Migrant: Applying the RESM 92

NICOLE DUBUS

Many refugees face fear and persecution before seeking refuge in the United States. Consequently, social workers in the field of resettlement require knowledge, attitudes, and skills to work across cultures and to foster their constituencies' resilience. This chapter discusses RESM practice strategies that support this effort. It also examines how a country receiving refugees can deal with the conceptions of diversity, inclusion, social welfare, and social purpose.

- 10 Improving Police–Community Relations: Creating a Third Space for Cultural Inclusion 101

MELVIN HERRING WITH GUEST AUTHOR SHUNTAY Z. TARVER

Given the recent strife around race in the United States, it may be said that the struggle to serve diverse clients and constituencies has yet to be resolved. Social work professionals can be mobilized to meet this challenge; to combat discrimination; and to advance social, economic, and environmental justice. This chapter about culturally inclusive police training contributes to this effort.

- 11 Chronic Stress in U.S. Indigenous Communities: The RESM and the Relational–Self Approach 111

WITH GUEST AUTHOR JAMES FREEMAN

This chapter uses the RESM to examine chronic stress and the effects of race/ethnicity among indigenous populations. The idea that chronic stress and political inequities can lead to historical trauma is discussed. Unique social, cultural, and political experiences are explored, including the history of the National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA). Interventions discussed include strengthening constituencies' local control of social services and helping clients learn about their cultural roots.

12 Grand Narratives: Building Community and Global Resilience	121
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This chapter describes techniques that help communities become more resilient. It explores how social workers can bring stakeholders together to create a collective narrative, to develop strategies to combat human rights abuses, as well as to conduct community activities to improve a city's social capital and infrastructure. The city of Pittsburgh (a member of the 100 Resilient Cities project) is used as a case example.

<i>Epilogue: The Ecology of Lake Hula</i>	130
<i>About the Contributors</i>	132
<i>Bibliography</i>	133
<i>Index</i>	147

Index of Tables, Figures, and Companion Website Content

All Tables	Text Figures	Web Content
Preface: A Call to Action		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• W. E. B. Dubois: The dual perspective origins• Human behavior in the social environment (HBSE) classics<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delores Norton• Leon Chestang• Elaine Pinderhughes• Barbara Solomon
Chapter 1: The RESM: A Culturally Sensitive Model of Social Work Practice		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Table 1.1. Universality: Questions to Explore• Table 1.1W. CSWE Competencies• Table 1.2. Principles of the RESM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Figure 1.1. RESM: Four Stages of a Resilient Path	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Table 1.1W. CSWE Competencies• Color-coded Dictionary of RESM Elements• Discussion: Overview of the four phases of the RESM• Figure 1.1W. RESM Four Stages of a Resilient Path Original to Text Model

All Tables	Text Figures	Web Content
Chapter 2: Narrative Theory, the Culturally Sensitive RESM Interview, and the Helping Process		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Table 2.1. Assumptions about Human Behavior from Narrative Theory• Table 2.1W. Contrasting Paradigms: Modern and Postmodern• Table 2.2. Features of the Narrative Interview• Table 2.2W. Contrasting Methodology• Table 2.3W. NASW Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion of paradigms• Table 2.1W. Contrasting Paradigms: Modern and Postmodern• Table 2.2W. Contrasting Methodology• Table 2.3W. NASW Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice

Chapter 3: Risk and Resilience Theory: An Outcome Approach

- Discussion: Research on resilience

Chapter 4: RESM Assessment and Intervention: Ecological and Systems Theory

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Table 4.1. Ecological Assumptions• Table 4.2. Systems Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Figure 4.1. An Ecological Model of Human Development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)• Figure 4.2. Tool Personal Application of the Ecological Diagram• Figure 4.3. Flow of Stress through the Family (Carter & McGoldrick, 2005)• Figure 4.4. Ecomap (adapted from Mattaini & Meyer, 1988)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Web figure bank tools• Figure 4.1 W. An Ecological Model of Human Development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; from Garbarino, 1982, p. 648)• Figure 4.2 W. Personal Application of the Ecological Diagram• Figure 4.3W. Flow of Stress Through the Family (from Carter & McGoldrick, 2005, p. 27)
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

All Tables	Text Figures	Web Content
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Figure 4.5. Bronfenbrenner's Chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) • Figure 4.6. Life Course Timeline (Frank, Kurland, & Goldman, 1978, p. 13) • Figure 4.7. Arnold's Timeline • Figure 4.8. Blank Timeline • Figure 4.9. Application of a Timeline from a Narrative (Kolar, Ahmed, Chan, & Erickson, 2015) • Figure 4.10. The Developmental Resilient Path 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Figure 4.4W. Ecomap (Person–Environment Fit) (adapted from Mattaini & Meyer, 1988, p. 16) • Figure 4.5W. Bronfenbrenner's Chronosystem: Sociocultural, Political, and Historical Changes Over Time • Figure 4.6W. Life Course Timeline Example (from Frank, Kurland, & Goldman, 1978, p. 13) • Figure 4.7W. Example of Arnold's Life Course Timeline • Figure 4.8W. Blank Life Course Timeline • Figure 4.9W. Application of a Timeline From a Research Narrative (Kolar, Ahmed, Chan, & Erickson, 2015) • Figure 4.10W. Developmental Resilient Path Original to Text
Chapter 5: Social Work and Social Justice: Groups, Organizations, and Social Movements		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table 5.1. Belief Systems Reflected in Organizational Codes and Missions • Table 5.2. Groups' and Organizations' Contributions to Arnold's and His Family's Person–Environment Fit 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Figure 5.1W. Blank Ecomap • Figure 5.2W. Application: Hantman & Laird's Ecomap of Arnold's Systems Interactions

All Tables	Text Figures	Web Content
Chapter 6: A Presenting Problem, a Family, and a Marginalized Community: Applying the RESM		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Table 6.1. Family Resilience: Systems Change 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion: Exploring health inequities and food deserts Figure 6.1W. Pathways of Helping (Lewis, 1980) Figure 6.2W. Help-Seeking Behaviors (Green, 1978/1998)
Chapter 7: The RESM: An African American Client with Dementia and His Caregivers		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linkages on caregiver burden Course descriptions for caregivers
Chapter 8: Educational Resilience, School Stressors, and the RESM of School Social Work Practice		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Table 8.1W. School Systemic Risk Factors 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Table 8.1W. School Systemic Risk Factors
Chapter 9: Resettling as a Forced Migrant: Applying the RESM		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Table 9.1W. Fowler's Faith Stages 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Figure 9.1W. Hartman and Laird's Sample Genogram Table 9.1W. Fowler's Faith Stages Discussion of the CHOICE Evaluation
Chapter 10: Improving Police–Community Relations: Creating a Third Space for Cultural Inclusion		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Table 10.1W. Timeline Community–Police Relations Table 10.2W. Timeline of Personal Experiences 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Table 10.1W. Timeline Community–Police Relations Table 10.2W. Timeline of Personal Experiences

All Tables	Text Figures	Web Content
Chapter 11: Chronic Stress in U.S. Indigenous Communities: The RESM and the Relational-Self Approach		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Table 11.1. Links: The Dakota Access Pipeline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Figure 11.1.A Relational Worldview Model (adapted from Cross, 1998, pp. 143–158) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Figure 11.1W.A Relational Worldview Model (adapted from Cross, 1998, pp. 143–158) Figure 11.2W. Assessment Example
Chapter 12: Grand Narratives: Building Community and Global Resilience		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Table 12.1W. Community Resilience: Systems Process Stages 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Table 12.1W. Community Resilience: Systems Process Stages
Appendix		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workbook of the RESM Tests Master Glossary References

Note: Companion website: <http://mawmedia.com/mawgroup/webfolder/MainPage.html>

Foreword

I admit that when I was first asked to review this text by the authors, I had preconceived notions that it would be similar to previously published textbooks on human behavior in the social environment (HBSE). HBSE texts basically provide readers with a litany of theories prevalent in examining HBSE and preparing social work students with knowledge for practice. Moreover, many revised editions merely rehash old theories; only occasionally are new theories introduced. By and large, the texts have remained the same for decades. My main concern about the texts I used when I was a student and now those I use as a professor is that they do not take into consideration the uniqueness of the client. Sure, there are sections on practicing with people from diverse backgrounds, but the majority of texts do not incorporate a true intersectional approach, and very few address the protection of human rights.

HBSE is a course taught in every accredited social work program. Consequently, the current curriculum had to be revised to conform to the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) 2015 *Educational policy and accreditation standards* (EPAS), which accredit baccalaureate- and master's-level social work programs. The educational policy, which details the new social work competencies for the 2015 EPAS, was developed by the Commission on Educational Policy and approved by the CSWE board of directors on March 20, 2015. This much-needed change prompted many social work programs to revamp their curricula to conform with the new educational policy.

I can recall attending social work faculty meetings at two different universities that were revising curricula to meet the 2015 EPAS. This was a daunting task, as we had to review each required course and incorporate the Commission on Educational Policy competencies in time for the next reaffirmation. I am sure faculty in all accredited social work programs have had or will have similar experiences.

This process also required us to revisit the textbooks currently being used. The subcommittee I was assigned to work on revisited the HBSE course, and we spent many weeks reviewing various HBSE texts that could be used to cover the required competencies. What we would have given to

have had a text like this one! Roberta R. Greene, Michael Wright, Melvin Herring, Nicole Dubus, and Taunya Wright have breathed new life into the HBSE textbook market with their text *Human Behavior Theory and Social Work Practice with Marginalized Oppressed Populations*. This highly engaging textbook provides an innovative way of examining new and emerging social concerns while celebrating diversity and the protection of human rights.

The overarching purpose of this text is to link human behavior theory to effective social work practice with diverse populations. This design is congruent with CSWE's mandate that social work practice necessitates the application of knowledge of HBSE and multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks, and interventions with clients and constituencies (CSWE, 2015). The authors have selected a metatheory, the resilience-enhancing stress model (RESM), as a thread that runs through the fabric of this text, providing the foundation necessary to develop a theory-based practice approach to working with diverse clients navigating multiple systems.

This text has been constructed methodically to guide social workers through all phases of client contact using the RESM as a frame. The authors critique the theories used and provide easy-to-read tables and case studies that reinforce what is covered in each chapter. In addition, a companion website furthers the learning process by providing students with current online resources. Finally, an added bonus for social work faculty is that the authors take the time to discuss how this text integrates the 2015 EPAS competencies. Greene, Wright, Herring, Dubus, and Wright have taken a true intersectional approach to HBSE in *Human Behavior Theory and Social Work Practice with Marginalized Oppressed Populations*, and I highly recommend adopting this text.

—Michael A. Robinson



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Preface

A Call to Action

The paradigms and concepts developed by social scientists to describe human behavior have traditionally been “inordinately influenced by ... white persons of European descent” (Schriver, 2001, p. 10). Theories can be criticized as being “based on [the] observation[s] of white, middle-class, heterosexual individuals and intact families” (Goldstein, 1984, p. 175), as being “culture-bound” (Trader, 1977, p. 10), or simply for “not giving sufficient attention to difference and diversity” (Greene & Schriver, 2016, p. 5).

Both the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) have standards for practice with diverse constituencies. However, the advocacy and community-building arms of the social work profession that promote equitable resource allocation and just societies are not as active as they were during the 1970s and 1980s (Specht & Courtney, 1994). We believe that the time has come again for social workers to be more engaged in social change, and we hope that this book and its companion website (<http://mawmedia.com/mawgroup/webfolder/MainPage.html>) contribute to that effort.

Chapter 1 provides narratives to introduce the resilience-enhancing stress model (RESM) and its components. Chapter 2 explains narrative theory methodology, emphasizing the coconstruction of interviews and the need for social workers to listen for and uncover themes of oppression and resilience in clients’ and constituencies’ storied events. Chapter 3 explicates how risk and resilience theory acts as a central framework for understanding how people maintain well-being despite adversity, examining how people retain competence in their (possibly hostile) environments over time. Chapter 4 explores select concepts from ecological systems theory that allow social workers to carry out the process of engagement (relationship formation), assessment (coconstruction of client narratives), intervention (deconstruction and reconstruction of client narratives), and evaluation of the helping process (appraisal of the client as a causal agent). Chapter 5 emphasizes macrolevel resilience interventions, and Chapters 6–12 illustrate the application of the RESM with individuals, families, organizations, and communities.