

INSIGHT & *action*

A Newsletter of the Office of Research and Training at the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences

Nationally recognized expert in violence research joins Mandel School to lead Begun Center

—by Paul M. Kubek

Daniel Flannery, PhD, the new director of The Dr. Semi J. and Ruth W. Begun Center for Violence Prevention, Research & Education, has developed a national reputation over the past 25 years as a leading scholar in the study of violence and exposure to violence. Dr. Flannery, who takes a multidisciplinary and multi-systemic approach to his work, currently has over \$6 million in funded research, evaluation, and training projects. He joins the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences this summer as the Dr. Semi J. and Ruth W. Begun Professor.

Sources of funding for Dr. Flannery's current projects include federal agencies such as the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and the U.S. Department of Justice, as well as the Ohio Department of Mental Health (ODMH), county agencies, and local foundations.

A PRACTICAL APPROACH

Flannery brings to the Mandel School a multidisciplinary team of 23 researchers, evaluators, consultants, and trainers who have master's- and doctoral-level training in social work, anthropology, education, sociology, psychology, law, nursing, and criminal justice. He explains that this multidisciplinary team developed naturally over the years as he sought the best methods for addressing such complex social problems as violence and exposure to violence.

"There are many biological, psychological, and social consequences for children, adolescents, adults, families, and communities," says Flannery, a licensed clinical child psychologist. "The study of violence and the development of prevention and intervention programs

often involve multiple social systems, such as schools, job and family services, local and federal law enforcement, adult and juvenile courts, public health, mental health, and substance-abuse services."

For the past 12 years, Flannery has been a professor of criminal justice and social and behavioral sciences at Kent State University, where he has also directed a violence research and prevention center. He is the author or co-author of seven books and monographs and over 90 book chapters and articles. He currently serves on an advisory panel for the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools and review panels for the U.S. Department of Education's Institute for Education Science and the National Institutes of Health's Research on Children Exposed to Violence. He will continue these appointments when he joins the Mandel School, where he will also teach courses in the master's and doctoral programs. Students will have opportunities to contribute to his projects.

THE BEGUN CENTER

The Begun Center for Violence Prevention, Research & Education at the Mandel School is a natural fit for Flannery and his team, because it is a research and technical-assistance organization that is dedicated to the multidisciplinary study of violence and the development and dissemination of scientifically based violence-prevention policies and programs.



Daniel Flannery, PhD, joins the Mandel School faculty on July 1 as the Dr. Semi J. and Ruth W. Begun Professor and Director of The Begun Center for Violence Prevention, Research & Education.

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MANDEL SCHOOL OF
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New chair of doctoral program brings insight from research on aging, federal funding to the job

—by Paul M. Kubek

Associate Professor of Social Work Aloen Townsend, PhD, has been nationally recognized for her studies of the well-being of older adults and their families over the past 30 years, and many of her research projects have been funded by federal agencies such as the



Aloen Townsend, PhD, Associate Professor of Social Work and Chair of the Doctoral Program

National Institute on Aging (NIA). The projects have often been multidisciplinary collaborations with nursing and medicine and with community-based service organizations. She is the author of almost 70 peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters.

Townsend's experiences are informing her new role as Chair of the Doctoral Program at the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, which offers a PhD in Social Welfare. It is one of the oldest doctoral social-work pro-

grams of its kind in the country and consistently ranks among the top programs. It prepares students to be leaders in research, scholarship, and teaching.

DEVELOPING LEADERS

To help students develop leadership skills, the course of study provides them with opportunities to work on faculty research projects, co-author and publish articles in academic journals, and teach in the master's program. Students are assigned faculty advisors who are research and teaching mentors. In addition, students participate in research colloquia and research methods workshops, which are sponsored by the Mandel School's Office of Research and Training. These programs feature faculty scholars from the School, from other departments at Case Western Reserve University, and from other universities as well.

Students also receive travel stipends to present their research at national conferences. This past January, nine doctoral students participated in the annual meeting of the Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR).

Townsend is not new to doctoral studies in social work. She has been at the Mandel School since 2001 and has served on the executive and admissions committees of the Doctoral Program. She has also been a doctoral dissertation advisor and committee member.

"It has been a great partnership to work with doctoral students over the years," Townsend says. "It's been gratifying to see them learn new knowledge and skills and watch them apply it to their own research interests and projects and go out and establish their own independent careers."

FUTURE OF THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM

Townsend notes that she is currently working with the School's faculty and students to generate a plan to enhance the Doctoral Program. One idea is to find ways to help students develop more of the multidisciplinary skills and experiences necessary to acquire federal or foundation research funding.

Over the years, Townsend has had an insider's view of the national trend to fund multidisciplinary projects. She has served on several federal grant-review panels and has also been involved with NIA's Institute on Aging and Social Work, which brings together faculty from social work schools throughout the country to teach them about federal proposals.

"I've observed what these professionals did not get in their training," Townsend says. "It has inspired me to think about how we can better prepare our doctoral students."

CHRONIC ILLNESS IN AN AGING POPULATION

As Chair of the Doctoral Program, Townsend will continue her own research. She is currently principal investigator of a study of the health trajectories of aging married cancer survivors and their spouses. The project builds upon two previous studies and will enable her to submit an RO1 proposal to the National Institutes of Health.

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Townsend explains that in the United States the population of older adults is increasing as baby boomers age. In addition, the survival rates among people with serious illnesses like cancer are also increasing as medical interventions improve. As a result, there will be a growing number of older adults who survive life-threatening illnesses.

She explains that this good news comes with its challenges. Data from her previous research has revealed that female survivors of cancer have more continuing health problems than females of a similar age who do not have cancer. The survivors have more pain, fatigue, and co-occurring conditions such as arthritis, heart disease, and hypertension. As a result, the women need ongoing screening and assessment. They also need appropriate interventions. For this to happen effectively, there needs to be more research to inform systems of care and insurance providers about the needs of older adults and their family caregivers.



Finding the answers is important, Townsend adds, because if family caregivers are under a lot of financial, physical, or emotional stress, the chances of them becoming sick will likely increase, creating more stress and burden for the family and for systems of care. ■

Nationally recognized expert, *continued from cover*

Among Flannery's current projects is the continuation of Project Tapestry, a system-of-care demonstration and research project in Cuyahoga County funded by SAMHSA. This project is examining the facilitators and barriers of intersystem collaboration and how violence prevention and intervention services might influence changes in youth and family behavior over time. Flannery's team is providing the evaluation.

Another project is the Fugitive Safe Surrender Program, initially funded by the United States Marshall Services (USMS). Flannery helped start the program in northeast Ohio in 2005. It has been replicated in 21 different cities throughout the United States with over 35,000 people having surrendered non-violently nationwide. Flannery's team develops and administers surveys at these events and provides evaluation of the data.

CHRONIC EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE

Ask Flannery what he has learned about violence and violence prevention over the past 25 years, and he will take that opportunity to talk about the impact of exposure to violence, the kind that occurs every day among children, adolescents, and adults who are victims of and witnesses to assaults within their own homes and neighborhoods and exposed to violence frequently at their jobs or through the media and video games.

Being a victim of or a witness to violence, Flannery explains, impacts physical health, mental health, and social functioning. The more obvious consequences are physical trauma and medical conditions. Yet, the not-so-obvious consequences are the *psychosocial* conditions. For example, threats and acts of violence activate the survival instinct, causing the brain and body to release a flood of hormones like adrenalin and cortisol, which suppress the immune system and activate intense, emotionally charged fight, flight, or freeze responses. This process also suppresses higher-level brain functions that would otherwise transform impulses into observation, reflection, and language. In other words, the survival instinct increases hyper-vigilance and hyper-reactivity and decreases opportunities for constructive social interactions and learning that occur with verbal communication and negotiation.

"You cannot discount the impact of everyday events over time on physical health, mental health, and well-being," Flannery says. "Chronic exposure to violence impacts brain development, brain functioning, temperament, mood, and coping skills." ■

Spring 2011 Research Colloquia & Methods Workshop

The following are highlights of our most recent presentations. PowerPoint slides from the presenters may be obtained online: <http://msass.case.edu/research/workshops.html>



For more information about the Research and Training activities at the Mandel School, please contact David E. Biegel, PhD, Associate Dean for Research & Training (david.biegel@case.edu) or Richard Cole, MA, Manager of Research and Training (richard.cole@case.edu).

COLLOQUIA

Wednesday, March 23, 2011

Methodological Issues In Neighborhood Research

Presented by Claudia Coulton, PhD, Lillian F. Harris Professor of Urban Research & Social Change

Wednesday February 9, 2011

The Challenges to Estimating the Independent, Causal Effect of Neighborhoods on Child Development Outcomes: Potential Responses Using Evidence from a Natural Experiment in Denver

Presented by Anna Maria Santiago, PhD, Leona Bevis/Marguerite Haynam Professor of Community Development

WORKSHOP

Tuesday, May 10th, 2011

Community-Based Participatory Research Methodology

Presented by Richard Lichtenstein, MPH, PhD, School of Public Health, University of Michigan, and, Ricardo Guzman, MSW, MPH, Community Health & Social Services Center, Detroit, Michigan

The Mandel School was founded in 1915 as the first professional graduate school of social work at a university in the United States. It consistently ranks among the top-ten schools in the nation.

Selected New Faculty Grants

David Biegel

Strengthening the Social Networks and Family Support of Clubhouse Members

Cleveland Foundation and Woodruff Foundation
\$56,236

Claudia Coulton

Cleveland Promise Neighborhood – Data Analysis for Promise Neighborhood Implementation

Sisters of Charity Foundation

\$190,000

Daniel Flannery & Mark Singer

Consortium on Youth Violence
NIH-National Institute of Child Health and Human Development

\$90,000

Fugitive Safe Surrender

Samuel H. and Maria Miller Foundation

\$100,000

MyCom Data and Information Coordination Services

The Cleveland Foundation
\$169,968

Lenore Kola

Automation of Collection and Reporting of the Consumer Outcomes Monitoring Tool

Alcohol, Drug Addiction & Mental Health Services Board of Cuyahoga County
\$50,000

Jung Won Lim

Communication in Asian-American Families with Breast Cancer Survivors

NIH – National Cancer Institute
\$89,861

Gerald Mahoney

Randomized Control Study of Relationship Focused Intervention with Young Children with ASD

NIH – National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
\$139,887

Amy Blank Wilson

Medicaid Enrollment Volatility among People with Serious Mental Illness

Ohio Department of Mental Health
\$44,716

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