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Editorial

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Editorial

Welcome to the first issue of 2018. You will immediately notice the new publishing format we have adopted. The changes include a more readable font, a shaded box for the abstract, and the positioning of the author's contact details on the first page of the article. The online version adds colour to headings, and to in-text references, which are hyperlinked to the reference list. We hope that you will find that the changes enhance the journal's appeal and ease of navigation.

The papers in this general issue span a wide range of topics, and several have a strong emphasis on theory. The first two papers present equine-assisted therapy, in surprisingly different ways. Hannah Burgon, Di Gammage and Jenny Hebden offer an ethically sensitive and theoretically rich paper about a Therapeutic Horsemanship centre in the UK attended by young people. Strikingly, the horses' innate character as a species and their individual psychosocial needs are attended to as carefully as those of the young people. Both group and individual experiences, and the natural sociability of horses and humans are described. This is a moving paper that illustrates the power of theoretically-informed emotional wisdom. The second equine paper is from Sweden, with somewhat older young people involved in short weekly sessions with horses. Catharina Carlsson reports her carefully designed research study. Here the young person and horse meet as individuals, under the guidance of a therapeutically-trained worker, and interestingly the paper draws on video-recordings of the sessions as well as interviews with the young people and staff. The focus is on the humans' experience, rather than on the shared wellbeing of humans and horses, and Carlsson bravely describes how some of the young people misinterpret instructions to take charge of the horse by hitting the animal. This makes for unsettling reading.

The next paper addresses social work leadership, and the absence of teaching about leadership on social work programmes. S. Colby Peters makes a compelling argument for the inappropriateness of the leadership paradigms on which much managerial practice is based. Business and military models make a poor fit, she says, with the values and conceptual bases of social work, and its locus of practice. Her systematic review is a clarion call for a better contextualised understanding of leadership in social work. Julia Jude's paper on systemic reflexivity is also focused on the profession. A conceptual paper, it draws on a wide ranging literature including neuroscientific understandings and the role of compassion.

The final three papers are all concerned with families. Kylie Agliias' paper addresses an under-explored feature of family life: estrangement of adult children from their parents. This beautifully-written paper based on in-depth interviews describes the complex emotions and social sequelae of estrangement. Carla Caringi Barron and Suzanne Brown also brush against the subject of estrangement in their case study of a young mother with whom 'infant mental health' work was undertaken to improve the mother-child relationship. Thoroughly grounded in theoretical models familiar to readers of this journal, this is a tender and joyful account of the enactment of theoretical models in the interpersonal relationship between social worker and mother, resulting in an entirely new experience of motherhood for this young woman. The final paper describes a 'digital toolkit' for adoptive parents. Given the burgeoning role of digital media in all our lives, this is a timely paper, and shows how information and resources can be made available to adoptive parents at the time and in the place of their choosing. A significant

investment has been made in the creation of the toolkit, and this paper reports findings from focus groups with social workers about its value.

This general issue illustrates the variety and creativity of social workers, social work researchers, and social work theorists. The significance of relational connection, even in its absence, is a connecting thread that runs through all the papers. Only connect, as they say.

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