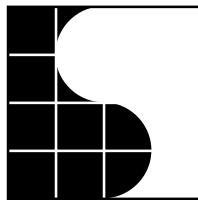
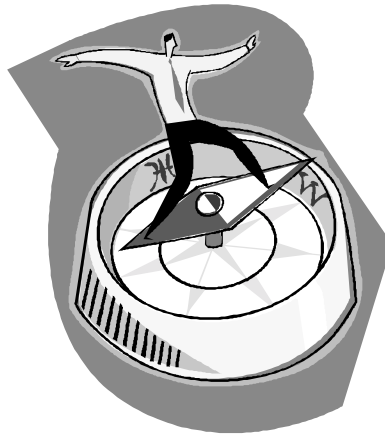


Careers in Clinical Sociology

First Edition



AMERICAN
SOCIOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

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Preface

This booklet is the first edition of *Careers in Clinical Sociology*. It is part of a series of American Sociological Association publications intended to aid undergraduate and graduate students in their professional development from academic training to career entry. On behalf of the Sociological Practice Association I want to thank the staff at ASA for their ongoing support of sociological practice – applied and clinical - by promoting such resources. I look forward to many more editions of this booklet.

Within this booklet, undergraduate and graduate students will be introduced to the field of sociological practice and the specialization in clinical sociology. They also will be introduced to the interventionist work of clinical sociologists. It is hoped that these “profiles in social action” will provide one more resource in making smart career choices. I want students to realize how “relevant” clinical sociology is in the 21st Century, a century already marked by dramatic global changes; uncertainty about the future, and hope for a just peace.

Every project has many contributors. This one is no different. I want to thank those practitioners who contributed to this booklet. I was amazed at how their work cut across many social settings, dealt with a variety of clients, and involved a range of methodological skills. I think students will be equally impressed. I also want to thank Jan Marie Fritz for reviewing, editing, and contributing to this booklet. As a clinical sociologist and a colleague she has no match.

Melodye Lehnerer, PhD., C.S.P.
Sociological Practice Association, President (1999-2003)
Southwest Missouri State University



CAREERS IN CLINICAL SOCIOLOGY

A World of Opportunities

This booklet is intended to supplement, *Careers in Sociology*, an American Sociological Association publication that poses and answers such questions as:

- What can I do with a BA in sociology?
- What can I do with a MA or PhD degree in sociology?
- How should I plan my graduate training in sociology?
- What are typical career openings for those with MAs or PhDs in sociology?

The focus of this booklet will be to introduce undergraduate and graduate students to sociological practice and particularly to the specialization in clinical sociology. This booklet will help you assess your interest in clinical sociology and provide you with the beginnings of a “game plan” in pursuing this interest.

The sections that follow will give answers to the following questions:

- What is sociological practice?
- What is clinical sociology?
- How should I prepare for a career in clinical sociology?
- Are there programs (BA, MA, PhD) in sociological practice?
- What is an accredited practice program?
- What careers are open to clinical sociologists?
- What is certification?
- Do sociological practitioners belong to professional associations?
- Where can I get more information about the field of sociological practice, applied and clinical?

This booklet also features profiles of clinical sociologists including their background, interventionist work, and personal statements in regard to the benefits of sociology as a discipline and a profession. Ultimately, this booklet will be a resource for the student motivated to put sociological training to use.

- **SOCIOLOGICAL PRACTICE: Clinical and Applied**

“What is sociological practice?” The application of sociological knowledge, including theory, methods, and skills, has been identified as sociological practice. Within the field of sociological practice there are two distinct types of practice - *clinical* and *applied*. Applied sociology refers to methodology and “includes the research model of problem solving, the research model of formulating and testing options, and the research model of evaluation” (Mauksch, 1983). The applied sociologist is a research specialist who produces information that is useful in resolving problems in government, industry and other practice settings (Clark and Fritz 1986). In contrast, clinical sociology is the application of the sociological perspective to facilitate change. The clinical sociologist is primarily a change agent who is immersed in the client’s social world. The two approaches, clinical sociology and applied sociology, may be seen as complementary (Clark and Fritz 1986).

- **CLINICAL SOCIOLOGY: The Interventionist Approach**

“What is clinical sociology?” Clinical sociology is a humanistic, multidisciplinary specialization that seeks to improve the quality of people’s lives. Clinical sociologists assess situations and reduce problems through analysis and intervention. Clinical analysis is the critical assessment of beliefs, policies and/or practices with an interest in improving the situation. Intervention, the creation of new systems as well as the change of existing systems, is based on continuing analysis (Fritz 2001).

“What areas of expertise do clinical sociologists cover?” Clinical sociologists have different areas of expertise – such as health promotion, sustainable communities, social conflict or cultural competence – and work in many capacities. They are, for example, community organizers, sociotherapists, mediators, focus group facilitators, social policy implementers, action researchers and administrators. Many clinical

sociologists are full-time or part-time university professors, and these clinical sociologists undertake intervention work in addition to their teaching and research (Fritz 2001).

“What level of intervention does the clinical sociologist focus upon?” The role of the clinical sociologist can be at one or more levels of focus from the individual to the inter-societal. Even though the clinical sociologist specializes in one or two levels of intervention (e.g., marriage counseling, community consulting), the practitioner will move among a number of levels (e.g., individual, organization, community) in order to analyze and/or intervene (Fritz 2001).

- **CAREER PREPARATION: The Long and Short Of It**

“As an undergraduate how should I assess my liberal arts education?”

Part of career planning is to assess your knowledge base and its fit with your career plans. As a sociology major you have the advantage of a liberal arts foundation. This foundation provides you with a broad understanding of history, culture, the arts, science and technology. It also provides you with such skills as writing, oral communication, and interpersonal relations.

“What are the benefits of a practice-oriented sociology program?” If your major is practice-oriented, it provides you with a theoretical understanding of “society and social life,” critical thinking skills, and an appreciation of the dynamic nature of social interaction. The culmination of this body of knowledge is the ability to integrate theory, methods, and skills to assess situations and engage in social action at the micro (e.g. individual), meso (e.g. organizational) and/or macro (e. g. societal) levels. This action is change oriented and interventionist. Practice-oriented sociology also provides you with an ability to compare and contrast a variety of methodological approaches (qualitative and quantitative) that can aid in the social change process. In addition, practice-oriented sociology requires that you move out of the classroom and into society through the practical experience.

“Why should I, as part of my education, have a practice experience?” The practice experience (internship, practicum, service learning, work - both volunteer and paid) is your opportunity to apply sociological theories, methods, skills, professional orientations, and ethics to a real world social

experience. At a site (such as a small business, service agency, or government office) you will be supervised by a professional in the field and evaluated by a scholar-practitioner from the university. You will be evaluated in terms of your ability to exercise your “sociological imagination.” This experience is important for a variety of reasons. First, the practice experience will help you decide on a future career. You will be able to see how your sociological knowledge can be put to use. Second, the practice experience often leads to an entry-level position and the establishment of a personal network. Lastly, the practice experience could begin your journey as a scholar and a practitioner.

“Will I need to pursue a higher degree in sociology?” The career profiles featured in this booklet are of individuals who have a master’s degree or higher in sociology. This fact does not mean that you cannot start your career in clinical sociology at the bachelor’s level of educational achievement. It does mean that pursuing a higher degree may be a part of your long-term career plan. It also means that if you go directly into a career with a BS/BA that you should seek a particular kind of position. Specifically, you should choose an entry-level career (or practice experience) that will allow you to be, or prepare to be, a social change agent. For example, an organization that provides services to battered women will, by definition, encourage advocacy and intervention. As you acquire experience in such a setting, you also accumulate a “grounded” knowledge of working with clients in a social system. When you are ready to return to school, this grounded knowledge will be a valuable resource. Specifically, it can be the basis upon which you will choose a program that will clearly provide you with an opportunity to pursue a master’s level degree or higher in sociological practice.



PRACTICE PROGRAMS: Putting Sociology To Use

“What is a practice program in sociology?” Although you may not be able to enroll in a clearly defined sociological practice program, the key is to know what will prepare you for a career in sociological practice and seek out learning opportunities that optimize your achieving this goal. In this section

you are introduced to a sample of practice programs. This list is not intended to be definitive but rather illustrative. A more comprehensive resource is the ASA publication, *Guide to Graduate Departments in Sociology* (2003). By comparing and contrasting the mission statements of these programs, you will get a sense of the variety of programs from which you can choose. As you look more closely at these programs by visiting their websites and contacting key individuals, you also will know what courses you should be taking and what practice experiences you should seek. You also can use this information to assess the program you may currently be attending. Whether practice-oriented or not, most sociology programs have one or more individuals who are both academics and practitioners. Find them!

► Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne
(<http://www.ipfw.edu/academics>)
Sociology/Anthropology Department
2101 E. Coliseum Blvd.
Fort Wayne, IN 46805
Phone: (260) 481-6842

The Master of Arts in Sociological Practice at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne is designed to prepare students to be skilled practitioners of sociology. As a discipline, sociology examines the structures and dynamics of human life in groups. The goal of this program is to educate students to apply the sociological perspective to research, analysis, and intervention in the function of social institutions, organizations, and groups.

► Our Lady of the Lake University (<http://education.ollusa.edu/soci/>)
Sociology Department
411 SW 24th Street
San Antonio, Texas 78207
Phone: (210) 434-6711

The Department of Sociology offers a BA and MA in Sociology with emphasis in Sociological Practice. The BA program is an accredited program in Sociological Practice. The Center for Sociological Practice was established at Our Lady of the Lake University in 1999 to provide faculty and students with an institutional means for doing sociological work in the San Antonio community that would improve the local quality of life. The Center is housed in the Department of Sociology.

► St. Cloud State University (<http://www.stcloudstate.edu/~soc/index.html>)
Sociology/Anthropology Department
720 4th Avenue, Stewart Hall
St. Cloud, Minnesota 56301-4498
Phone: (320) 255-2294

The mission of the Sociology program is to transmit, create and apply knowledge about social reality. Course work provides enlightenment in the tradition of the liberal arts as well as substantive knowledge of the discipline. The integration of knowledge along with the application and creative use of knowledge is emphasized. This program helps students develop such skills as oral and written communication, critical thinking, and an understanding and application of values. The Commission on Applied and Clinical Sociology accredits this program.

• Southwest Texas State University (<http://www.soci.swt.edu>)
Sociology Department
601 University Drive
San Marcos, Texas 78666
Phone: (512) 245-2113

The Applied Sociology Major prepares students for careers in state and federal government agencies, large and small businesses and non-profit organizations. Graduates of this program have the skills and knowledge necessary to compete in a rapidly changing job market. Students in the program are expected to master the techniques of both qualitative and quantitative research, general statistical analysis, impact analysis, and demographic analysis. Students also understand the major theoretical perspectives of sociology and are able to apply them to “real-world” situations.

► SUNY Institute of Technology at Utica/Rome
(<http://www.sunyit.edu/academics/schools>)
Sociology Department
P.O. Box 3050
Utica, NY 13504-3050
Phone: 315-792-7333

The BA degree emphasizes the application of sociological and anthropological knowledge in the search for innovative solutions to pressing

individual and community problems. Effective consideration of these issues requires a thorough grounding in social theory and training in quantitative and qualitative research methods. The department offers two specializations in applied sociology: criminology and social services.

•Valdosta State University (<http://www.valdosta.edu/soc/index.htm>)
Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice Department
1500 N. Patterson Street
Valdosta, Georgia 31698
Phone: (229) 333-5943

The sociology program at Valdosta State University offers a BA with a concentration in applied and clinical sociology. The sociology concentration gives students the skills that employers are looking for such as the ability to communicate – both orally and in writing. Students will develop computer skills; interpersonal and group skills; organizational skills including the ability to adapt to a variety of organizational cultures. The Commission on Applied and Clinical Sociology accredits this program.

“What is an accredited practice program?” The Commission on Applied and Clinical Sociology (CACCS) accredits three of the programs listed above – those at Our Lady of the Lake, St. Cloud State, and Valdosta State. The Commission was formed in 1995 by the Sociological Practice Association and the Society for Applied Sociology. The Commission accredits practice programs at both the Bachelor and Master’s level. The Commission’s priorities are to: (1) accredit clinical and applied sociological practice programs in post-secondary sociology departments; (2) register graduates who have successfully completed accredited programs in clinical and applied sociology; (3) advocate for sociology in the areas of occupational licensing and certification; and (4) disseminate program models and resources to departments interested in developing applied and clinical programs.

The accreditation process reviews the learning outcomes of programs, the ways in which programs integrate sociological theory, knowledge, methods, skills, professional orientation and ethics. A major feature of integration is a meaningful practice experience, such as an internship. Practice experience can be the gateway to excellent career opportunities for students.

It is recommended that you access the website of the Commission on Applied and Clinical Sociology (<http://www.sociologycommission.org>) and review

the Standards for Bachelor and Master's Degree Programs in Sociological Practice. These Standards, especially the Section on Learning Objectives, will give you an additional assessment tool to evaluate the program you wish to enter or the one you are attending.



SELECTED CAREERS IN CLINICAL SOCIOLOGY: Sociologists in Action

The diversity of clinical sociology is best characterized by a three dimensional matrix of clients, settings, and activities (Rebach and Bruhn 1991). The term *clients* refers to those persons on whose behalf intervention is conducted. The term *settings* refers to the various social and physical settings in which clinical practice takes place. Finally, the term *activities* refers to actions taken by clinical sociologists. Clinical sociologists fill many roles when actively involved in social change. The role descriptions that follow were developed (or are excerpts of those developed) by Rebach and Bruhn (1991:10-14). Each role description is followed by a personal profile of a clinical sociologist.

- **Counselor/Sociotherapist (micro)**

The clinical sociologist introduces a sociological perspective into the traditional understanding of counseling. Therefore, the counseling that takes place deals more with interpersonal relationships or with the relationship that the person has with the social world than it does with the internal working of the psyche (Vising and Kallen 1991). The clinical sociologist in effect practices “sociotherapy” that is allowing “the problems, their explanations, and the strategies and techniques for treatment to emerge. . . [from] a process of interaction in which disclosure and discovery lead to an understanding of the social context out of which the problems emerged” (Swan 1988). Counseling/sociotherapy takes place in many social settings: hospitals, mental health clinics, halfway houses, and private practice. Clients can range

from those with physical and/or mental health problems to those experiencing life course crises/family disruption, to those with criminal behavior problems.

Rand Kannenberg is a Licensed Addiction Counselor, a Certified Case Manager, and a Certified Clinical Sociologist in Small Group Therapy. He has a Master's degree in Sociology.

Interventionist Work: I am a small group therapist for adult criminal offenders (such as jail and prison inmates, parolees, probationers, and halfway house residents). I work with clients with Antisocial Personality Disorder and a Substance Use Disorder (alcohol and/or other drug abuse and/or dependence). As a clinical sociologist, I designed a curriculum based on the sociological concepts of socialization, resocialization and positive social change. I use sociological counseling or sociotherapy techniques such as sociometry, sociodrama and social goal setting. I have a private practice in Lakewood, Colorado and am an independent contract therapist with two Denver area correctional facilities. I am also an approved trainer by the National Board for Certified Counselors and the National Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors and have conducted sociotherapy training throughout the U.S. and other countries. For additional information, I can be reached at Criminal Justice Addiction Services, <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/criminaljustice> or rthkannenberg@juno.com.

Personal Statement: Sociology can be effectively applied in a criminal justice setting and application can invigorate the classroom as well as the research laboratory. Application ultimately tests theory and techniques to make certain positive social changes is occurring.

Related Reading: *Sociotherapy for Sociopaths* by Rand Kannenberg. Eau Claire, WI: PESI HealthCare LLC, Publisher (2002).

- **Group Facilitator (micro)**

The clinical sociologist is a master teacher of group relations and group dynamics. Issues surrounding roles, status, power, and leadership are

common in all groups and are usually key in unraveling the bases for group conflict as well as understanding group cohesion. Family therapy is an example where a clinical sociologist can assist family members in understanding their relationship to each other as a step toward solving whatever issues keep them from functioning as an effective family.

Michael Capece is an Associate Professor in the accredited clinical/applied program in sociology at Valdosta State. He holds counseling licenses in Georgia (Licensed Professional Counselor) and Florida (Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and Licensed Mental Health Counselor) and has a private practice in Valdosta. Dr. Capece is a marital, family, substance abuse, and adolescent counselor.

Interventionist work: Before coming to Valdosta State University, I lived in the Tampa/St. Petersburg, Florida area. During my time in Florida, I worked in the social services/substance abuse fields and eventually entered private practice. I also taught courses in sociology and criminology at the University of South Florida and St. Leo College.

I earned my PhD from the University of Florida. My areas of teaching/practice interest are sociological practice, mental health, substance abuse, and criminology/deviance. I have published in the areas of sociological practice, employee assistance programs, and family sociology. I am currently working with the faculty in Criminology and Law at the University of Florida researching drinking behavior of college students and testing Ronald Akers' social structure/social learning theory of criminal and deviant behavior.

Personal Statement: Over the years I have benefited from the flexibility of my degree in sociology. It prepared me for employment in the social services and as a clinical practitioner, supervisor, teacher, and applied researcher. I would be happy to discuss the career opportunities that a degree in sociology affords students. Feel free to contact me at mcapece@valdosta.edu.

Related Reading: *Intentional Interviewing And Counseling: Facilitating Client Development In A Multicultural Society* by Allen E. Ivey and Mary Bradford Ivey. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publisher (2003).

- **Teacher/Trainer (micro/meso)**

Clinical sociologists enact teaching roles as a way of facilitating social change in communities, organizations, and individuals. Providing people with action-usable information and training can be an important way of empowering people to be able to solve their own problems as well as become change agents themselves.

Sarah Brabant is a Professor Emeritus of Sociology at the University of Louisiana - Lafayette. She is a Certified Sociological Practitioner (C.S.P.) She has a Certification in Thanatology (CT): Death, Dying, and Bereavement from the Association of Death Education and Counseling, and is certified as a family educator (CFLE) by the National Council on Family Relations. She has a PhD in sociology with a minor in anthropology.

Interventionist Work: I describe my practice work as “grief education.” My intervention is primarily at the micro (individual or small group) level. I intervene in death/bereavement related issues with both those in life threatening situations and those who have experienced the death of someone close to them. I also conduct workshops for persons who are responsible for caring for/counseling those facing their own death or the death of someone close to them, e.g., nurses, teachers, and chaplains. Both dying and grieving take place within cultural and social milieus and I feel that my sociological/anthropological background prepares me uniquely to walk with (not work with) these individuals and to help them explore both the social and cultural impacts on their responses to their own death or another's as well as the consequences.

Personal Statement: My basic reward is to watch an individual begin to recognize that the norms, values and beliefs of his or her particular social/cultural milieu may both enhance his/her dying/grief journey as well as encumber it. As people learn to recognize their social/cultural milieu as well as the consequences of both adhering to or disregarding its norms, values, and/or beliefs, they become better able to make the choices that will allow them to move through the pain, free of guilt and /or shame.

Related Reading: Mending the Torn Fabric: For Those Who Grieve and Those Who Want to Help Them by Sarah Brabant. Amityville, NY: Baywood Publishing Company (1996).

•Mitigation Expert (micro/meso)

Throughout the United States, the trial of a first-degree murder case is separated into two proceedings. The first proceeding is to determine the guilt or innocence of the defendant; if found guilty, the second proceeding is to determine whether the defendant will be given a sentence of death or life without parole. The role of the clinical sociologist as a mitigation expert is to “present in an orderly fashion an entire history of the defendant and his family or other relevant social conditions affecting behavior” (Forsyth 1995). This expert testimony focuses on mitigating factors that are legally relevant to the case.

Ann Charvat is certified by the Sociological Practice Association for her work in death penalty mitigation, and by the Tennessee Supreme Court as a Rule 31 Family Mediator. She has a PhD in sociology with concentrations in criminology, family sociology, theory, and quantitative methods.

Interventionist Work: I began my clinical practice in death penalty mitigation in 1989. Since that time, I have provided assessment, investigation, or conclusions on more than 70 capital cases in Kentucky, Indiana, and Tennessee. I work extensively with the families and loved ones of many facing death sentences on both trial and appeal levels. Viewing the family as the unit of analysis, I am able to collect data that provides the defense lawyer with mitigating factors. I introduce these factors in court as part of my expert testimony. My testimony impacts sentencing decisions throughout the process.

In addition to being a mitigation expert, I am also a family mediator. The field of family mediation is relatively new in the state of Tennessee having been established by statute in 1996. My eligibility for this role

was based on my past work with the court system and my certification as a clinical sociologist. Referred by juvenile and divorce court judges, I currently am working with divorcing and never-married parents.

In 2000, I founded a small business, InService Inc. (<http://www.InServiceinc.net>) specializing in conflict resolution classes and mediation. Building upon a background of teaching, mediation, and what has become known as sentencing advocacy, I conceptualized my business as providing an option to litigation and court involvement. My work is focused on family and civil cases. I have proposed and implemented programs to local government, school systems, and community organizations.

Personal Statement. Putting theory into practice has been my life's work. I am proud of being involved in such community and professional organizations as the National Association of Sentencing Advocates, Tennesseans for a Moratorium on Executions, and Metro Nashville Community Education Program.

Related Reading. "The Sociologist As Mitigation Expert In First Degree Murder Cases" by Craig J. Forsyth (1995). *Clinical Sociology Review* 13:134-144.

- **Organizational Consultant (meso)**

When working with organizations, clinical sociologists focus their interventions on roles, relationships, organizational structure, and the environments in which the organization functions (Glass 1994). As intervention agents, clinical sociologists applying sociological methods, theory and knowledge can supply research and policy recommendations to solve problems related to such issues as power and authority, communication, and resource distribution and use.

John G. Bruhn is an adjunct professor of sociology, Northern Arizona University and adjunct professor of health sciences, New Mexico State University. He is a Certified Clinical Sociologist, and a Certified Counselor. In addition, he is an Associate with Leadership

Strategies, a Phoenix-based organizational consulting practice. He has a PhD in medical sociology.

Interventionist Work: My work with organizations stems from nearly thirty years of experience as an Associate Dean, Dean, Vice President, and Provost at three universities. These positions provided me with opportunities to learn firsthand the requirements for leadership and management in complex organizations during periods of growth, downsizing, and restructuring. I have had particular experience with mergers, establishing cooperative educational partnerships between U.S. organizations, and developing international linkages with U.S. organizations. My expertise is in organizational ethics and in using trust as a tool to maintain healthy organizations through teamwork and delegation.

Personal Statement: Sociology has provided an excellent base for my work as a practitioner. While I completed my PhD in a medical sociology program, it has been possible to branch out to other interests as well as to specialize within sociology. I have retained my contacts with colleagues in sociology and teach sociology courses. My research and writing is in sociology. My theoretical and practical understanding of organizations has made it possible to consult with a variety of public and private organizations at different points in their lifecycles. I take my consulting and research experiences to the classroom and that illustrates for students the variety of career directions in the field. I believe sociology is a critical field for the 21st century as almost all of our problems are sociological in nature. It is important for students interested in sociological practice to identify a mentor or two to help direct their educational paths, as the career of a practitioner does not follow a linear path.

Related Reading: “Understanding Organizations and the Workplace” by John F. Glass Pp. 163-197 in *Using Sociology: An Introduction from the Applied and Clinical Perspectives, Third Edition*, Roger A. Straus, ed. Lanham, MD: Roman and Littlefield (2002).

Program Evaluator (meso)

Clinical sociologists are involved in the development and evaluation of various programs designed to solve human problems and better meet people’s needs. They use their research and analytic skills to help organizations assess

the effectiveness of their programs. Whether working for the organization (in-house) or as an outside evaluator, a clinical sociologist is especially well suited to conduct program evaluation. With a strong background in research methods and an interest in helping organizations understand the impact of their programs, a good program evaluator develops an understanding of the project, assesses how well the program met its goals, and communicates those findings in a way that is meaningful to the variety of program managers, funding sources, regulatory agencies and clients involved with the organization.

Joan Vitek Hiller is a partner in Social Research Associates, Inc., in Minnetonka, Minnesota. She holds a PhD in Sociology from Northwestern University, is a Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE) recognized by the Association of Fundraising Professionals, and a Licensed Independent Social Worker (LISW) in the state of Minnesota.

Interventionist Work: With over 20 years of experience working with state agencies, small businesses and nonprofit organizations, I have increased the effective and efficient use of resources through organizational development, fund raising, and independent program evaluation. I currently work as a turnaround specialist for struggling businesses and nonprofit agencies in crisis.

I have consulted with a wide range of organizations in the educational, medical, social service, and fine arts fields. I have conducted organizational audits, reshaped business plans, facilitated strategic planning, created funding and financing plans, and written grants for organizations in all stages of growth and restructuring. During my tenure with the Minnesota Department of Human Services, I was recognized for outstanding work in program evaluation, program development and federal grants management. I have testified before the U.S. House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation regarding my evaluation of Minnesota's implementation of the Adolescent Living Initiative.

Personal Statement: According to our clients, two of the most valued traits we bring to our work is our ability to put the client's performance in a larger context and our ability to "translate" evaluation lingo into terms and concepts our clients understand.

My sociological training has given me a wealth of tools to do that. I enjoy the variety of clients with whom I work and find it refreshing to connect with fellow sociologists at Sociological Practice Association (SPA) and Society for Applied Sociology (SAS) meetings.

Related Reading: “Program Evaluation and Clinical Sociology” by Adrienne Bank Pp. 65-80 in the *Handbook of Clinical Sociology* eds. Howard Rebach and John Bruhn. New York: Plenum Press (1991).

• **Community Consultant (meso/macro)**

The clinical sociologist in the role of community consultant undertakes assessment and, when desired, intervention; focuses on a social system rather than an individual; and facilitates for a client or offers advice (O’Neill and Trickett 1982). The clinical sociologist who works as a community consultant is a resource and may work as a consultant within an organization or be an external consultant with no permanent role in the system (Fritz 1994).

Mary Cay Sengstock is a Certified Clinical Sociologist. She has a PhD in sociology from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. She is a Professor of Sociology at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan.

Interventionist Work: I have been involved with a wide variety of community groups. Three examples will illustrate the range of activities. The major underlying theme is the focus on community consultation. First, a community-planning agency in the Detroit Area undertook a project to develop services from economic assistance and job training to counseling and legal assistance for abused wives. I served as a consultant to this agency, providing information about the needs of abuse victims as well as techniques for working with various segments of the community to obtain their cooperation.

Second, I spent several years researching the needs of elderly abuse victims, analyzing their needs, and consulting with personnel in the health and social service agencies to develop the needed services. We developed mechanisms for identifying abused elders and helped

develop needed services. We then developed and provided training for doctors, nurses, social workers, and other professionals on these topics.

Third, I have assisted Chaldean (Iraqi-Americans living in the Detroit area) community leaders in resolving community problems. Most significantly, I worked to help Chaldeans negotiate with the U.S. Census Bureau to be classified as an "ethnic group." This classification would allow them to obtain census data on community size and characteristics. I also have consulted on needed services for Chaldean elderly and negotiated with local health and social agencies to obtain these services.

Personal Statement. A sociologist brings together numerous skills to work in community settings. Knowledge of social research techniques is critical, including the use of social research as a means to determining community members' opinions about community needs as well as obtaining their commitment to any resulting program plans. Also critical is knowledge of community structure and power, and mechanisms for getting groups to work together. Sociology provides the knowledge and techniques required to achieve these goals through the development of local committees and task forces.

Related Reading. *Chaldean-Americans: Changing Conceptions of Ethnic Identity, Second Edition* by MaryCay Sengstock. New York: Center for Migration Studies (1999).

- **Mediator (micro/meso/macro)**

Some clinical sociologists have become involved in mediation and conflict resolution. Mediation is the semi-structured process in which an impartial third party helps disputants identify their individual and mutual interests and perhaps reduce or solve their differences (Fritz 2003). Mediation is also referred to as "facilitated negotiation." Clinical sociologists, with their humanistic approach to improving programs and people's lives, bring the following to mediation – multi-level system intervention, cultural competency, empowerment, and redefining the situation (Fritz 2003).

Jan Marie Fritz, PhD, is an Associate Professor of Planning and Health Policy in the School of Planning at the University of Cincinnati. She is a professional mediator and a Certified Clinical Sociologist.

Interventionist Work: I am a member of the Association for Conflict Resolution and have been mediating disputes for about twenty years. I began by receiving mediation training at a court and then mediated disputes in small claims court for a year. Most of my mediation work is now with organizations. These mediations often involve representatives and observers in addition to the parties. Mediation between a manager or owner and a worker generally takes four or five hours.

I am also a member of the International Association of Facilitators and have been facilitating meetings for many years. My first training in this area came from consulting organizations. I use facilitation skills in running meetings but I also will “periodically” accept facilitation assignments. For instance, I recently facilitated a public policy discussion that was intended to improve the record of a large public school system in hiring minority contractors and subcontractors. The discussion included leaders of labor unions, civic associations and business organizations and took place over two months.

Personal Statement: Sociology and sociological practice have been excellent backgrounds for my work as a practitioner. Sociology fostered critical thinking, the integration of theoretical frameworks and the development of subject matter expertise. My training in sociological practice required that I integrate relevant disciplinary approaches and focus my attention on the interplay between social theory and practice.

Related Reading: “A Conflict Resolution Model Amenable to Sociological Practice” by Philip D. Robinette and Robert A. Harris (1989). *Clinical Sociology Review* 7:127-140.

- **Advocate (micro/meso/macro)**

Advocacy requires that clinical sociologists “take a position” and make their values and beliefs known to others. Advocacy may be an uncomfortable role initially and be seen as antithetical to a sociologist’s training. However, a clinical sociologist can offer ideas, observations, and advice that may

facilitate changes that are not readily apparent to the non-sociologist. Advocacy can be a positive role, but it involves risk taking and taking a position of leadership.

Arthur B. Shostak is a professor of sociology at Drexel University. He is a board member of Green Power, a multimillion dollar mutual fund pioneering in bringing “green power” [financial resources] to bear in labor-management relations. He has a PhD in sociology.

Interventionist Work: Immediately after my college graduation, I held the last of my summer college student jobs. It was probably the most consequential of them all, as it helped free me of one lingering career alternative I had to dismiss before I could seriously consider the option of a career in clinical sociology. I worked at this time for a labor union located in mid-Manhattan, eager to organize workers anywhere in the Greater New York region. By the summer's end I had decided not to pursue a career as a union staffer. I understood the harsh pressures with which my union staff friends wrestled, but I realized I lacked the ability to give unquestioning loyalty to incumbent office-holders, favoring as I did something called "union democracy."

Unlike some sociologists who shy from taking a position, believing it the prerogative only of the client, I champion a lot of options in my consulting work, and I urge them, where appropriate, on my union clients. Some of these reforms are far less controversial than others. Typical is my urging the client to survey the ideas of the membership whenever possible, and explain much of the rationale for a decision once taken by union power-holders. I operate here from a foundation of basic respect for the rank-and-file.

Most recently, I am busy advocating a fresh approach to ‘Informatics’, the heart of the computerization process, which I regard as the single greatest opportunity for union renewal to come along in decades. For example, I urge unions to create interactive, rather than static websites, and thereby invite prospective members to send via e-mail tough questions that the union can answer in public for all to read. I urge unions to create on their websites a section of typical contract clauses, the better to advertise concretely what organizing can help workers secure.

Personal Statement: First Rule of Consulting - The client's definition of the problem is part of the problem. Accordingly, I try never to take what my union friends (or their management counterparts) say as the gospel. I thereby help them and me struggle towards still-finer insights and more honesty about the matter.

Related Reading: *CyberUnion: Empowering Labor Through Computer Technology* by Arthur Shostak. Philadelphia: M. E. Sharpe (1999).

► Certified Sociological Practitioner

“What Is Certification?” Several of those individuals featured above have identified themselves as Certified Sociological Practitioners (CSP) or Certified Clinical Sociologists (CCS). Certification is a process developed in 1983 by the Clinical Sociology Association, forerunner of the Sociological Practice Association, to recognize the practice skills of its members. Prior to 2000, individuals were certified as Clinical Sociologists (CCS); now individuals are certified as Sociological Practitioners (CSP). This certification process is for both applied and clinical sociologists.

Just as achievement of a graduate degree is evidence of research and theoretical skills, the CSP authenticates the holder's practice expertise. Members of the Sociological Practice Association, who hold either a MA, or PhD, may apply for certification. Applicants must exhibit a comprehensive background in sociological theory, principles, and methods, as well as the ability to apply this knowledge in applied or clinical settings.

“How do I become certified?” The certification process has many stages and is intended to validate competency as a practitioner. Briefly, the applicant is required to describe his/her educational qualifications, showing evidence of knowledge of sociological principles. Also required is evidence of substantial experience in the actual practice of sociology, as well as a description of sociological methods used in practice. Appropriate evidence may include documentation of employment, courses taken, recommendations from internship supervisors, and so on. Applicants who successfully fulfill these requirements are then scheduled for a certification demonstration before an examining committee composed of Certified Sociological Practitioners.

Demonstrations are usually held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Sociological Practice Association. Following the demonstration, the examining committee presents its recommendations to the Certification Committee that makes the final decision based on a cumulative evaluation of the candidate's qualifications. Individuals who wish to be considered for certification can obtain an application form and requirement information from the Association website: <http://www.socpractice.org>.

“What are the benefits of being certified?” There are at least four benefits connected to certification:

- Certification illustrates to a potential employer/client that you have problem-solving skills that include the ability to analyze, evaluate, and implement solutions to a real world challenge.
- Certification illustrates to a potential employer/client that you identify yourself as a professional.
- Certification contributes to your credibility when working with other professionals such as medical doctors, lawyers, or social workers.
- Certification gives you confidence and a social network that supports your work as a sociological practitioner.



PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS: Bringing Together Practice-Oriented Sociologists

Professional organizations provide students, at all levels of academic achievement, an opportunity to interact with professionals in their chosen field of interest. The associations listed below are some of the better recognized among those sociological practitioners who want to bring about positive social change.

American Sociological Association <http://www.asanet.org>

The American Sociological Association (ASA), founded in 1905, is a non-profit membership association dedicated to advancing sociology as a scientific discipline and profession serving the public good. The approximately 13,000 members ASA include faculty members at colleges and universities, researchers, practitioners, students and professionals who both teach and practice. About 20 percent of the members work in government, business, or non-profit organizations.

American Sociological Association: Sociological Practice Section
<http://www.asanet.org/sections/socpractice.html>

ASA has 40 sections within the Association composed of people who share a common interest in a particular area of sociology. The purpose of the Section on Sociological Practice is to provide a forum for sociologists working in diverse applied settings, e.g., industry, government, higher education, voluntary associations or as solo practitioners; and to increase understanding of the relationship between sociological practice and sociological knowledge.

Association for Humanist Sociology <http://www.humanistsoc.org>

Founded in 1976, the AHS emerged from a realization that conventional mainstream sociology was unresponsive to people, their needs, concerns and values. The members of AHS came together not out of shared politics or similar "schools" of sociology, but out of a common concern for the real life problems of equality, peace and social justice. Members share a commitment to address all facets of the human condition in their scholarship and in their practice. They want to make sociology more relevant to human needs.

International Sociological Association (ISA) <http://www.ucm.es/info/isa>

The International Sociological Association (ISA) is a non-profit association for scientific purposes in the field of sociology and social sciences. The ISA was founded in 1949 under the auspices of UNESCO. The goal of the ISA is to represent sociologists everywhere, regardless of their school of thought, scientific approaches, or ideological opinion, and to advance sociological knowledge throughout the world. Its members come from 109 countries. This Association provides information about the clinical sociology and sociotechnics/sociological practice research committees. The on-going scientific activities of the ISA are decentralized in Research Committees, Working Groups and Thematic Groups, each deal with a well-recognized

specialty in sociology. These groups bring together scholars who wish to pursue comparative research on a transnational basis and they constitute basic networks of scientific research, intellectual debate and professional exchange.

International Sociological Association's Research Committee on Clinical Sociology (RC46) <http://www.ucm.es/info/isa/rc46.htm>

The aims of Research Committee 46, founded in 1992, are to: (1) advance knowledge in all areas of clinical sociology throughout the world; (2) provide a common meeting ground for clinical sociologists and others interested in clinical sociological knowledge; (3) encourage international cooperation in clinical sociology research; (4) promote training and educational opportunities to further the development of clinical sociology; and, (5) develop bonds with other disciplines and other specializations in sociology. The predominant language of this group is currently French.

International Sociological Association's Research Committee on Sociotechnics - Sociological Practice (RC26)

<http://www.ucm.es/info/isa/rc26.htm>

The objectives of Research Committee 26 are to: (1) open up a broader range of opportunities for the participation in the field of sociotechnics; (2) secure and develop personal contacts between interested scholars and practitioners; (3) encourage the international dissemination and exchange of information on significant developments in sociotechnics and related areas, and, (4) promote the development of scientific activities in this field throughout the world.

This group is composed of clinical and applied sociologists and the working language is English.

Society for the Study of Social Problems <http://www.sssp1.org>

Founded in 1951, the Society for the Study of Social Problems promotes research on, and serious examination of, problems of social life. The SSSP works to solve these problems and to develop informed social policy.

Members, peers and colleagues, work together to develop and apply research that makes a difference. The membership is composed of an interdisciplinary community of scholars, practitioners, advocates, and students interested in the application of critical, scientific, and humanistic perspectives to the study of vital social problems.

Sociological Practice Association <http://socpractice.org>

The Sociological Practice Association (SPA), formerly the Clinical Sociology Association, was founded in 1978. It is a professional organization of clinical and applied sociologists. Its mission is to promote the application of sociological knowledge to intervention for individual and social change. This association certifies clinical and applied sociologists. The certification process is composed of several steps beginning with evidence of educational qualifications (MA/MS or PhD in sociology or related field) and moving towards a demonstration of one's intervention skills before a panel of certified sociological practitioners.

Society for Applied Sociology (SAS) <http://www.appliedsoc.org>

The Society for Applied Sociology (SAS) was founded in 1982. It is a professional organization for sociological practitioners. It provides a forum for sociologists and others interested in applying sociological knowledge. It enhances understanding of the interrelationship between sociological knowledge and sociological practice and increases the effectiveness of applied sociological research and training.



CLINICAL SOCIOLOGY: Is This Career for Me?

In closing, you are provided with a checklist that will help you decide if you would like to pursue a career in clinical sociology. This checklist identifies the distinctive characteristics that clinical sociologists would claim as part of their professional identity (Freedman 1982). Specifically, the clinical sociologist:

- ✓ Is practice-oriented
- ✓ Focuses on case studies
- ✓ Works with individuals, groups, organizations, and communities
- ✓ Is diagnostic
- ✓ Is change oriented (interested in behavior change and/or growth)

- ✓ Is humanistic
- ✓ Tries to comprehend the societal factors that restrict the individual from being effective
- ✓ Can move beyond the client's formulations of the problem to consider other factors that affect functioning, especially broad social trends
- ✓ Uses insights derived from immersion in the critical sociological tradition.

Are you interested in improving the quality of our lives by becoming a humanistic agent for change? If you are prepared to take the challenge, welcome to the field of clinical sociology!



Recommended Readings

The readings listed below have been chosen to give you some additional information about the field of sociological practice and, specifically, clinical sociology. This list is not exhaustive. You will note that several articles listed are from the *Clinical Sociology Review*. This journal, now entitled *Sociological Practice: A Journal of Clinical and Applied Sociology*, is an excellent resource in regard to the work done by sociological practitioners. For more information, go to the website of the Sociological Practice Association (<http://socpractice.org>).

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