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# THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL WORK:

**In Our Own Words**

USC College of Social Work Faculty



UNIVERSITY OF  
**South Carolina**

# The Impact of Social Work: In Our Own Words



**Teri Browne**  
PhD, MSW  
Dean / Professor  
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“ The diverse faculty at the University of South Carolina College of Social Work bring outstanding scholarship, community engagement and a wealth of experience to share with the students they teach.

Each member of our faculty lends a unique voice to a cohesive curriculum that allows our students opportunities for individual exploration into the realms of social work that influence our world and benefit our community.

I have the privilege of working with these remarkable individuals and I want to give you the opportunity to hear from them, in their own words, as they share their impact on the field of social work and its impact on them. Whether it is through research, teaching or administration, we all have something to share.

For example, the research that I do explores psychosocial barriers to health outcomes and the role of social workers in leading interventions that promote well-being and health. Grounded in my social work clinical experience, much of my research and service is in kidney disease and focuses on addressing barriers to kidney transplant parity in the Southeastern United States.

I encourage you to take a few minutes and get to know the USC College of Social Work faculty, use this book to contact us and maybe even lend your voice to our chorus to advance the field of social work.





**Brandi Anderson**  
PhD, LICSW, SSW, CFSW, RYT  
Director of the I. DeQuincey  
Newman Institute and  
Director of Innovative  
ACCESS (Access, Culture,  
Community Engagement,  
and Student Success)  
bbrisker@email.sc.edu

“ I make a difference by being unforgettable. Unforgettably grateful for where I am in life, humbled to have the opportunity to impart wisdom upon the next generation of scholars, and thankful to be among the amazing faculty, students, and staff at USC. I make a difference by encouraging each of my students to be unforgettably, unapologetically, who they are... flaws and all. ”



**Jennifer Bosio-McArdle**  
MSW  
Lecturer  
bosio@mailbox.sc.edu

“ I make an impact by facilitating the integration of classroom-based and practicum learning. By leveraging my practical experience and expertise in practicum-based learning I implement experiential learning experiences that cultivate students' critical thinking skills, reflective capacity, and ability to synthesize knowledge and core competencies, empowering them to confidently navigate the diverse and complex landscape of social work practice. ”

## Serving SC Proudly

We're assisting South Carolina residents with a world-class education as 75% of our students hail from SC.



**Nathaniel Bell**  
PhD  
Associate Professor  
nathaniel@sc.edu

“ My work incorporates geographic information systems as well as linked administrative and medical claims databases. These resources are beneficial for community needs assessments, analyzing service provision catchments, as well as showing where services are having the greatest impact. ”



**Lana Cook**  
LMSW  
Director of Assessment & Compliance  
lanac@mailbox.sc.edu

“ I make an impact through leading competency-based assessment activities for the BSW and MSW programs and other work related to our college's pursuit of re-affirmation of accreditation. Our accrediting body emphasizes the importance of a program's learning environment, and because of this I am dedicated to promoting wellness and community as a USC Wellness Ambassador and Chair of our college's Wellness & Social Planning Committee. Throughout my work, I prioritize establishing and nurturing collaborative, safe and meaningful relationships with members of our college community. ”

## Big School, Small Classes

Small class sizes allow the feel of a private school while students have the opportunities of a large flagship university.



**Rhonda DiNovo**  
LMSW  
Coordinator, Drug and  
Addiction Studies Certificate  
dinovo@mailbox.sc.edu

“ I make an impact through teaching social work principles and evidence based practices in the interdisciplinary areas of mental and behavioral health. Other work I love to do involves supervising students in advanced practicum at the West Columbia Outreach Program, a police social work outreach service offered through the West Columbia Police Department that provides brief screening, assessment and referral to treatment services and community resources to those in mental health and substance use crisis. ”



**Scott Fairweather**  
MSW, LISW-CP, LCSW, MAC  
Lecturer  
fairweat@mailbox.sc.edu

“ The work that I do focuses on the implementation of evidence based practices to treat conditions including: suicide and self harm behaviors, PTSD, OCD, and substance use disorders. I hope my years of experience in clinical practice will be a resource to the students in the College of Social Work. ”

## Community Outreach

The West Columbia Police Department engaged trained MSW students to assist with 245 emergency calls last year.



**John Doering-White**  
PhD, MSW  
Assistant Professor, College  
of Social Work, Department  
of Anthropology  
doeringj@mailbox.sc.edu

“ My research primarily focuses on Central American migration to the United States, with a particular focus on humanitarian organizations that provide humanitarian aid to people migrating through Mexico. I am an ethnographer who works in collaboration with organizations to understand and help address the complex needs of vulnerable immigrant communities. ”



**Naomi Farber**  
PhD, MSW, ACSW  
Associate Professor  
naomif@mailbox.sc.edu

“ My work as a scholar and teacher contributes to our profession's vital future through examining and passing on the rich traditions that can inform our ideas and practices in contemporary contexts. ”

## Grads Stay in-State

Our programs produce the largest number of social workers in SC and include classroom sites in Charleston, Columbia and Greenville.





**Maryah Stella Fram**  
PhD, MSW  
Associate Professor  
fram@mailbox.sc.edu

“ I make an impact through scholarship focused on the wellbeing of children and families, especially in the contexts of poverty, food insecurity, and other material hardships. I also work to improve wellbeing on our campus through initiatives to promote food security, access to fresh fruits and vegetables, and other student basic needs. Finally, I am deeply committed to advancing the social work profession through teaching that empowers students to integrate critical thinking, core professional knowledge, self-awareness, and an openness to the diverse viewpoints that reflect our complex social world. ”



**Breanne (Bre) Grace**  
PhD  
Associate Professor /  
Faculty Principal  
breanneg@mailbox.  
sc.edu

“ I make an impact through my research on forced migration and refugee rights. I have presented my research findings at the United Nations, to the government of Tanzania, and to US congressional staffers. My research analyzes current migration policies and refugees' experiences of these policies. I also make an impact through my role as Faculty Principal at Maxcy and Thornwell Colleges as I connect students with interests in global affairs with campus, community, and global resources to facilitate global learning. ”

## Feeding our Students

We distributed several hundred FoodShareSC boxes in Hamilton College to USC students via Maryah Fram's research interest in food insecurity.



**E. Ann Gowdy**  
PhD, LISW-CP, MSW  
Lecturer  
egowdy@mailbox.sc.edu

“ Through my focus on cross-sector collaboration I work to create seamless systems to prevent and end youth and young adult homelessness through advocacy, education, and policy (or policy, program development, and systems processes). I work to educate future social work trail blazers who will break down barriers and lead system wide change. ”



**Robert Hock**  
PhD, LMSW  
Associate Professor  
roberth@mailbox.sc.edu

“ My work helps families of young children find healing and growth. I teach social work students that awareness and knowledge of themselves are critical to helping others heal. In partnership with communities, I create family interventions that impact parenting skills and confidence, family relationships, and access to services for young children with autism spectrum disorder. ”

## First-Gen Impact

With a strong presence of first-generation students, we create new pathways for future social workers.



**Stephanie Hunter**  
DSW, LMSW  
Assistant Professor  
stephanieghunter@yahoo.com

“ Experience is a form of knowledge. We all learn from each other based on experience, and everyone’s experience is valuable. That means we all have value regardless of where we come from, what we look like, and how we think. Teaching and learning are collaborative efforts, and I seek to create a space where everyone in the classroom serves as both the teacher and the learner. This fosters personal growth and a deeper understanding of the world and people around us. Humans are complex and because of that, all interactions are faced with curiosity and compassion. In addition to being a social work educator, my career has been dedicated to forensic social work within the area of criminal indigent defense. My research interests include the intersection of neuroscience, social science, and the criminal legal system. ”

## Autism Assistance

Over 215 South Carolina parents/caregivers have received help and support for their child with Autism Spectrum Disorder in professor Rob Hock’s research studies.



**Aidyn Iachini**  
PhD, MSW, LSW  
Professor / Associate Dean for Research and Faculty  
iachini@mailbox.sc.edu

“ Through my research and teaching, I hope to make an impact in how social workers are trained and prepared 1) to provide mental and behavioral health services to youth in school and community-based settings and 2) to evaluate the effectiveness of their work. And, ultimately, as a result, I hope that my work makes a difference in the lives of children and families who receive these services. ”

## Changing Maternal Health

Institute for Family Studies researchers Ana López-de Fede and Kathy Mayfield are changing the ways in which SC looks at maternal health through their cutting-edge databases on pregnancy and childbirth.



**Sue Levkoff**  
ScD, MSW, SM  
Professor / SmartHOME  
Endowed Chair  
slevkoff@mailbox.sc.edu

“ I am a social gerontologist, making an impact through my research, which focuses on the development and evaluation of behavioral and technology-enabled interventions to improve the ability of older adults to age in place in their homes and communities. I also would like to think that I make an impact through the mentoring of COSW doctoral students and junior faculty. I am also passionate about providing research education in aging to HBCU undergraduates, with the goal of developing a research workforce that will effectively address the challenges facing our increasingly diverse aging society. ”



**Ana López-De Fede**  
PhD, MA, M.Ed.  
Professor / Associate  
Director, Institute for Families in Society  
adefede@mailbox.sc.edu

“ As a research faculty member in the College of Social Work, I contribute knowledge on health outcomes linked to public health insurance (Medicaid, Medicare, and Dual -eligible), with an emphasis on minority and immigrant low-resource communities. My research addresses health disparities and equity to improve maternal and health outcomes. It focuses on individuals with public health insurance or uninsured to achieve the best health outcomes driven by respectful and comprehensive policies and interventions. ”



**Parthenia Luke**

PhD

Lecturer / Bridge to Faculty Fellow

lukep@email.sc.edu

“ I prioritize the human right to be and to belong in my research, in my teaching, and in my practice. I believe that people have a right to not only exist in space, place, and time, but to also have their presence valued. I have high expectations for the future of social work and look for opportunities to be on the vanguard of social change. ”



**Candice Morgan**

PhD, MSW, LMSW

Site Coordinator, Greenville

MSW Program

morgancr@email.sc.edu

“ I make an impact through teaching in the classroom and as a field educator. By teaching social work values and principals to future social workers, my reach into vulnerable and historically oppressed communities extends far beyond what one person is capable of doing. ”

Supporting the Educational Journey

Over \$150,000 in annual scholarships empower our students to become the next generation of social workers.



**Michael Ottone**

LISW-CP, CPM

Senior Instructor / Coordinator of Continuing Education and Combination Degrees

ottone@mailbox.sc.edu

“ As a professional/clinical faculty, I primarily impact our students in the classroom by helping them to develop their 'social worker' perspectives and practices. Helping them integrate their learning into their practicum and prepare to transition to the professional world is a fulfilling and collaborative experience! ”

One and Only Ph.D.

While we're the only social work PhD program in the state, our graduates have a proven track record of great scholarship and classroom teaching experience.



**Shaun Owens**

PhD, MPH

Associate Professor

owenso@mailbox.sc.edu

“ Through my research and service, I develop and evaluate innovative technology-based interventions to help people make the best health decisions and support their ability to age in their homes. My work translates into practice through my partnerships with statewide community organizations that have the capacity to sustainably implement these evidence-based interventions. My teaching engages students in diverse, interactive, pedagogical experiences that challenge them to think critically and creatively about appraising and transforming social systems to create health equity. ”



**Patrice Penney**  
MSW, LISW-CP-S  
Coordinator, Trauma  
Informed Certificate  
Assistant Professor  
patricep@mailbox.sc.edu

“ The world we live in is fraught with traumatic experiences: childhood abuse and neglect, domestic violence, communities reeling from mass shootings, natural, or environmental disaster, the effects of war. We have an urgent need to understand trauma and respond with healing, not further harm. As an experienced trauma-informed practitioner, I make an impact through engaging, teaching, and training students, organizations, and systems of care in trauma-informed and sensitive practice, both in the Southeast, as well as in African contexts. Social workers are at the forefront of addressing trauma, but across myriad contexts—child welfare, schools, communities, health, mental health, and substance use care, criminal justice, military and veteran services, and others—we must work together to support healing and recovery.”



**Melania Popa Mabe**  
PhD  
Assistant Professor  
melania@mailbox.sc.edu

“ I make an impact through teaching social work principles and evidence based practices in the interdisciplinary areas of mental and behavioral health. Other work I love to do involves supervising students in advanced practicum at the West Columbia Outreach Program, a police social work outreach service offered through the West Columbia Police Department that provides brief screening, assessment and referral to treatment services and community resources to those in mental health and substance use crisis.”

## A Positive Choice

Field placement choices number over 275, meaning students have an abundance of opportunities to follow their chosen path to serving others.



**Ben Roth**  
PhD, MSW  
Associate Dean for Curriculum  
Associate Professor  
rothbj@sc.edu

“ My research on immigration makes an impact by focusing on how policy matters for individuals, families and communities. In addition to scholarly articles, I intentionally publish research reports and white papers that have a wider circulation. I bring this work into the classroom, challenging students to examine assumptions, consider evidence, and ask difficult questions.”

## Improving South Carolina's Workforce

A \$1.7 million US Health and Human Services faculty grant is training SC's healthcare workforce to combat healthcare worker burnout.



**Kristen Seay**  
PhD, MSW  
PhD Program Director  
Assistant Professor  
kdseay@mailbox.sc.edu

“ My scholarship aims to decrease child maltreatment, enhance parenting, and improve the health and well-being of vulnerable children and families.”





**Cheri Shapiro**  
PhD  
Associate Professor / Director,  
Institute for Families in Society  
cshapiro@mailbox.sc.edu

“ My work focuses on implementing evidence-based parenting and mental health interventions in real life settings to improve child, youth and family well-being. The defining feature of my research and scholarship is that it must have practical implications for families, providers and/or policy-makers. Leading the Institute for Families in Society, a research unit affiliated with COSW, has allowed me to reach and further my translational research goals. ”



**Terry Wolfer**  
PhD, MSW  
Associate Professor  
terry.wolfer@sc.edu

“ I promote the case method of teaching among social work educators through faculty development workshops, case writing, and research. My current case writing projects—on interprofessional collaboration to address interpersonal violence, religion and spirituality in social work practice, and international social work with refugees—will provide resources for classroom use. I'm consulting with and providing training about use of decision cases for a statewide child welfare project in Florida. I'm also writing about the use of case method to navigate contentious issues, build constructive conflict skills, and foster critical thinking for professional practice. ”

## Helping SC's High School Students

Improving the mental health of high school students in Midlands schools is the focus of a Blue Cross million dollar grant through professor Cheri Shapiro's research.



**Betty Wilson**  
PhD, MSW  
Assistant Professor  
wilso479@email.sc.edu

“ I make an impact through my research on structural police violence and psychological trauma in historically marginalized communities. As an activist scholar, I focus on justice-informed efforts to address policing disparities as well as the development and implementation of culturally-specific interventions to mitigate adverse health outcomes associated with police violence exposure. ”



**Bongki Woo**  
PhD  
Assistant Professor  
woob@mailbox.sc.edu

“ I focus on the health and social consequences of inequality in society, with a specific interest in the experiences of people of color. My work examines social sources of stress and cultural contexts that determine the health and well-being of people of color. ”

## Wellness at the Top

A prayer and meditation room, lactation room, lending library and a new student lounge are just a few aspects of the student wellness experience at Hamilton.



**Nikki Wooten**  
PhD, LISW-CP  
Coordinator, Graduate Certificate  
in Social and Behavioral  
Health with Military Members,  
Veterans, and Military Families  
Associate Professor  
nwooten@sc.edu

“ Using US Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs data, I make an impact by conducting research on mental health, substance use, and service utilization among military service members, veterans, and military families. The work that I do has implications for military and veteran health policy, and military social work education and practice. With over three decades of military service, my research, teaching, and service are an extension of my personal commitment to military service members and veterans. ”

## Fifty-five Years

With over 9,000 living alumni since 1969, we transform lives, strengthen our communities and promote a more just and inclusive society.



**Margriet de Zeeuw Wright**  
PhD, MSW  
Associate Professor  
Site Coordinator, Charleston  
MSW program  
margriet@mailbox.sc.edu

“ I make an impact by cultivating a love for lifelong learning in our students. My goals in teaching are to help our students find their strengths, be curious about why things are the way they are, and gain skills for creating change. ”

## Prolific Faculty

Our faculty annually generate numerous publications in high level journals as leading scholars in their fields.



**Yanfeng Xu**  
PhD, MSW  
Assistant Professor  
yanfeng@mailbox.sc.edu

“ I make an impact through conducting intervention and observational research to improve kinship caregivers' capacity and kinship children's well-being. My research also increases foster children's access to mental health services in South Carolina and beyond. ”



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Scan to learn more about the  
USC College of Social Work faculty

[sc.edu/socialwork](https://sc.edu/socialwork)