



Rights-based Community Practice Network: Moving from Academic Origins to a Government Sustained Program

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Abstract

This presentation will focus on women's roles in the development of an academically linked, volunteer-driven, rights-based community practice (RBCP) network with disenfranchised communities in the southern region of Israel. The RBCP network works with local communities to promote social rights through mobilization, advocacy, community empowerment and policy change. Throughout the last decade the network has served thousands of community members as they learn about their rights and how to advocate for them. Communities have organized to promote public transportation, affordable housing, changes in national insurance policy and access to medical care. Now in its second decade of operation the network, originally established outside of government mandated social service institutions, is being embedded in six Jewish and Arab-Bedouin social service organizations. Social work professionals, former students trained by the female academic who initiated the network, have promoted the inclusion of the rights-based community practice model in their agencies, creating unique developments in academic-professional and community links. Unlike other rights practice models developed in Israel, all of which have closed over the last five years, this is the only initiative that has successfully shifted from academic origins to a government sustained program. The presentation will examine the unique contributions that have made this possible.

Keywords: women; leadership; transformation; relationship; commitment