



Contemporary Social Work Issues & Practice

SESSION 1



WHAT TO KNOW...

- This course is about your **entire social work career**
Not about 1 assignment and 1 exam
- We will all be **sharing and learning**
- This class is our circle of **safety**
- The four sessions can go by excruciatingly slowly or like a breeze – you/we have the **power** to influence that
- **Always be aware of:**
 - Stories we tell ourselves
 - Stories we tell others
 - Stories others tell us, and
 - Whose stories are not being heard

+ “Speaking your mind”

Power

Privilege

Racism

Sexism

Classism

Nationalism

Heterosexism

Ageism

Intersectionality



+ Session 1

- **Origins of Social Work**
- **Cultural Identity Development:**
 - Individual, **Group**, Universal
 - **Ethnocentric Monoculturalism**
 - **Power & Privilege; Marginalization & Oppression**
- **Key Concepts in Contemporary Social Work**
 - : Ecological & Strengths Perspective
 - : ***Critical Social Work***
 - : ***Social Justice***
 - : ***Intersectionality***
- **Culturally Competent Practice**
 - : Awareness of values, bias and assumptions about human behaviour
 - : Understanding world views of culturally diverse clients
 - : Appropriate Intervention Strategies
 - : Organization & Institutional forces than enhanced / diminishes cultural competence
- **Multidimensional Model of Cultural Competence (Sue, 2016).**
- **Anti-Oppressive Practice**



Racial / Cultural Identity Development Model

Atkinson, Morten and Sue, 1998 (cited in Sue, 2006)

+ Cultural Identity Development

- Activity: Who Am I?

Option 1: A Poem: #whereiamfrom

I am from _____ (Traditions that remind you of home), from _____ (brands, labels used growing up).

I am from _____ (food you ate growing up and holidays you grew up celebrating).

I am from _____ (favorite childhood activities, books you remember, toys you collected and family names of people who took care of you).

I am from _____ (plants/gardens that grew inside/outside your home), from _____ (sounds, touch, scents that remind you of home)

I am from _____ (names of places your parents are from, and names of places you've lived in)

I am from _____ (phrases you have grown up listening to and superstitions/traditions/oddities your parents/guardians always used)

I am from _____ (activities, adjectives, descriptions that best describes your interest growing up)

I am from _____ (faith, traditions, faith journey, spiritual discoveries), from _____ (doubts, struggle with faith)

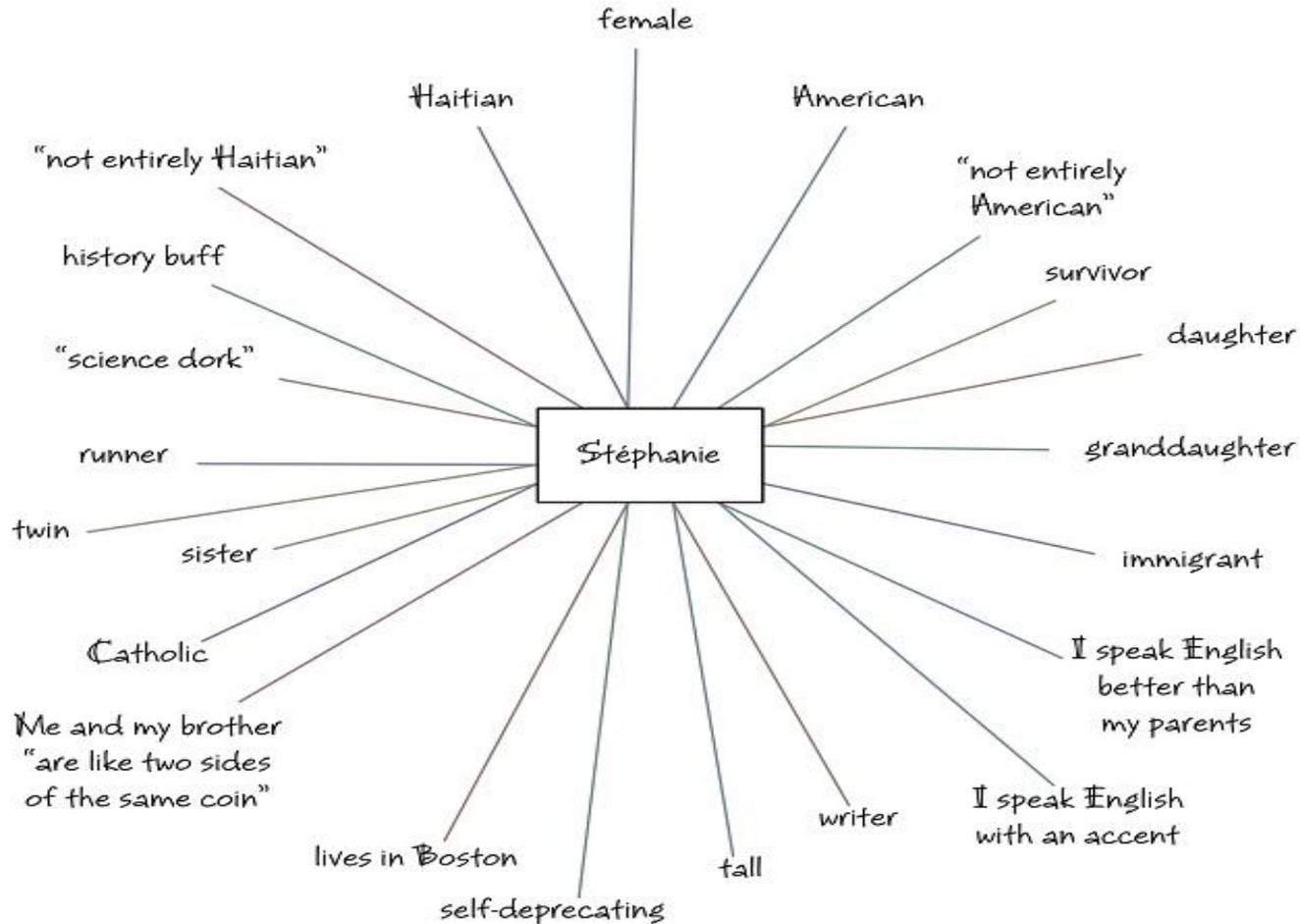
I am from _____ (phrases, words that remind you of a significant struggle you went through), from _____ (phrases or words that remind you of great joys in life)

I am from _____ (favorite quotes, mottos you hold dear)

I am _____ (your name)

+ Cultural Identity Development

- Activity: Who Am I?
Option 2



+ Identity Development

Individual, Group, Universal Identities (Sue, 2016)

- Identity
 - Individual Level: Each person is unique in genetic makeup, personality characteristics, personal experiences.
 - Group Level: Focuses on similarities and differences among individuals. Society divides us into groups based on various demographic characteristics.
 - Universal Level: Characteristics we share as humans beings such as biological and physical similarities.

+ Identity Development

Individual, Group, Universal Identities

- **Membership in groups** shapes the way we see ourselves, others in our group, and others outside our group
- Membership in some groups is **valued over membership in others**
e.g.: Educated versus uneducated? White versus Asians? Rich versus Poor?
- Perceived group membership exerts a powerful influence over both how **society views groups** and **how group members view themselves and others** (e.g.: what is normal, what is considered abnormal)



Break

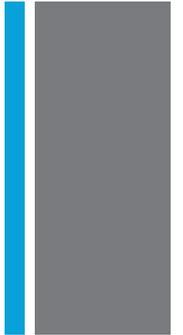
+ **Privilege Walk**



Instructions:

1. This is an activity by choice.
2. Step out and step in anytime.
3. Participating by the side

+ **Privilege Walk**



Privilege Walk

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2hvibGdg4w>

\$100 to the winner of the race

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vwx5lvypC5Q>

Privilege, inequality and oppression

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LTDikx-maoM>

+ **Privilege Walk Debrief**

1. What are some immediate responses?
2. What surprised you?
3. What was within your expectations?





Racial / Cultural Identity Development Model (cont.)

Atkinson, Morten and Sue, 1998 (cited in Sue, 2006)

+ Identity development

Working Racial/Cultural Identity Development (R/CID) Model

■ 5 Stages :



- Key differences along: Attitude toward Self, Others of the Same Minority, Others of a Different Minority & toward Dominant Group

*Atkinson, Morten and Sue,
1998 (cited in Sue, 2006)*

Stages of Minority Development Model	Attitude toward SELF	Attitude toward Others of SAME MINORITY	Attitude toward Others of OTHER MINORITY	Attitude toward DOMINANT GROUP
1- Conformity	Self-depreciating or neutral due to low race salience	Group-depreciating or neutral	Discriminatory or neutral	Group-appreciating
2- Dissonance & Appreciating	Conflict between self-depreciating & group appreciating	Conflict between group-depreciating views or minority hierarchy & feelings of shared experience	Conflict between dominant-held & group appreciating	Conflict between group-appreciating & group-depreciating
3- Resistance & Immersion	Self-appreciating	Group-appreciating experiences & feelings of culturocentrism	Conflict between feelings of empathy for other minority	Group-depreciating
4- Introspection	Concern with basis of self-appreciation	Concern with nature of unequivocal appreciation	Concern with ethnocentric basis for judging others	Concern with the basis of group appreciation
5- Integrative Awareness	Self-appreciating	Group-appreciating	Group-appreciating	Selective appreciation

+ Identity development

“White” (Majority) identity development

- Conformity – no sense of self as a racial being and a strong belief in the universality of values and norms governing behaviour
- Dissonance – more personal experiences leading to realization that one is biased and community is oppressive
- Resistance and immersion- major questioning of one’s own racism and that of others – feelings of guilt, shame and anger
- Introspection – acceptance of whiteness (Chinese-ness)
- Integrative – being more committed to eradicating oppression

+ Identity development

Question:

How does clients's and social worker's stage of identity development affect the social work helping relationship?

+ Case study – War on diabetes



War on diabetes: Changing eating habits of Malay, Indian communities an uphill task

By **WONG PEI TING, TOH EE MING**

Published 9:15 PM, AUGUST 25, 2017

Updated 7:49 PM, August 26, 2017

SINGAPORE — For Malay food vendor Aida Manapi, 50, the tastiest ayam penyet (smashed fried chicken) must be crispy and glistening, and there is only one way to cook it — “deep fried”.

And when it comes to roti prata, no one serves it by being stingy on ghee (clarified butter), said stall vendor Senthilvel Vedachalam, 43.

+ A conversation around race

- **Issue of cultural framing : stigmatised as cultural deficit when something affects minority group**
- Dangers of cultural deficit focus:
 - (1) An unwillingness to recognise how systemic disadvantages, discrimination, etc lead to greater vulnerability and poorer outcomes across multiple indices
 - (2) **writing from a eurocentric/sinocentric perspective whereby the cultures, lived experiences, family and kinship structures, values, history, heritage and traditions of minority groups are seen as alien, backward and dangerous/detrimental.**
- Who judges? What frame is used to judge?



+ A conversation Around race

(Dr Robin DiAngelo, Good Men Project, 2015)

Why it's hard to talk about race as a racial majority

- **Segregation & Separation**: Reduced interaction and segregation over the years. Society does not teach us to see this as a loss. Losing value of cross-race relationships.
- **Good/Bad Binary**: The most effective adaptation of racism over time is the idea that racism is conscious bias held by mean people. Person is either racist or not racist; if a person is racist, that person is bad; if a person is not racist, that person is good. Although racism does of course occur in individual acts, these acts are part of a larger system that we all participate in. The focus on individual incidences prevents the analysis that is necessary in order to challenge this larger system.

Why it's hard to talk about race as a racial majority

- **We are not like "them"**
- **Entitlement to racial comfort**
- **Racial belonging** (deep, internalized, largely unconscious sense of belonging)
- **Psychic freedom** (minority races bear the burden of race)

+ A conversation around race

- What can/should we do:
 - Being willing to tolerate the discomfort associated with an honest appraisal and discussion of our internalized superiority and racial privilege.
 - Challenging our own racial reality that can limit our perspective on race.
 - Attempting to understand the racial realities of minority races through authentic interaction rather than through the media or unequal relationships.
 - Taking action to address our own racism, the racism of other whites, and the racism embedded in our institutions—e.g., get educated and act.



Lunch



Concepts of Contemporary Social Work



The Danger of a Single Story

Ethnocentric Monoculturalism

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9Ihs241zeg>



"The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story."

-Chimamanda Adichie

Think about:

1. Which group(s) were "superior" in Chimamanda's story?
2. Which group(s) were "inferior" in her story?
3. Who decided the superiority and inferiority?

+ Ethnocentric Monoculturalism

(Sue, 2016)

- **Superiority**

- When a group's norm is seen as “more advance” and “more civilised”.
- Some members of group may possess conscious / unconscious feelings that their way of doing things is the “best way”
- Favourable physical / cultural / linguistic characteristics → perceived favourably → afforded easier access to privileges and rewards of society

- **Inferiority**

- When a group's norm is seen as “less developed”
- Studies have consistently revealed that individuals who are physically different, who speak with an accent, adhere to different cultural beliefs and practices are more likely to be evaluated negatively

- **Power to impose standards:** The ability of a powerful group to impose standards on other groups, and willingness of less powerful groups to adopt consciously/unconsciously to the “best way” of doing things.

+ Ethnocentric Monoculturalism (Sue, 2016)

- **Manifestations in Institutions**

- Ethnocentric (Positive feelings about their cultural heritage and way of life), and power to impose standards in programs, policies, practices, structures and institutions of society.
- “Because most systems are monocultural and demand compliance... policies, priorities and accepted normative patterns designed to oppress individuals and groups and to cause them to be dependent on larger society” – Sue, 2016

- **Invisible Veil**

- Humans as products of social conditioning, where values and beliefs exist outside conscious awareness. As a result, people assume universality... that everyone understands and shares the same nature of reality and truth.

+ EMERGING / NECESSARY SHIFTS

Social justice

Always defining what is “just” in specific practice situations

Rights as inherent, universal and indivisible (rights to freedom, security & a decent standard of living)

Interests in challenging negative discrimination; recognizing diversity; distributing resources equitably; challenging unjust policies and practices and working to address unjust social conditions

Competencies

- Be intentional about having a diverse group membership – avoid tokenization of members.
- Separate psychological issues from socially constructed biases that may appear as psychological problems.
- Facilitate consciousness raising and creating an awareness of social justice by processing issues of oppression as they come up in group.
- Use structured programme activities to discuss issues of privilege and oppression.

Anti-Racist (Bonilla Silva)

Colour blindness as new racism

- Abstract liberalism
- Naturalisation
- Cultural racism
- Minimisation of racism

Racism as a primary social structure of oppression > process of othering

Racism as endemic; race as a social construct, history according to the narratives of those in power

Intersectionality

Individuals live in multiple social worlds

Identities converge to create life experiences marked by oppression, marginalization and alienation



Culturally Competent Practice

+ Culturally Competent Practice

Culturally competence:

The process by which individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions and other diversity factors in a manner that recognises, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each.

Four components:

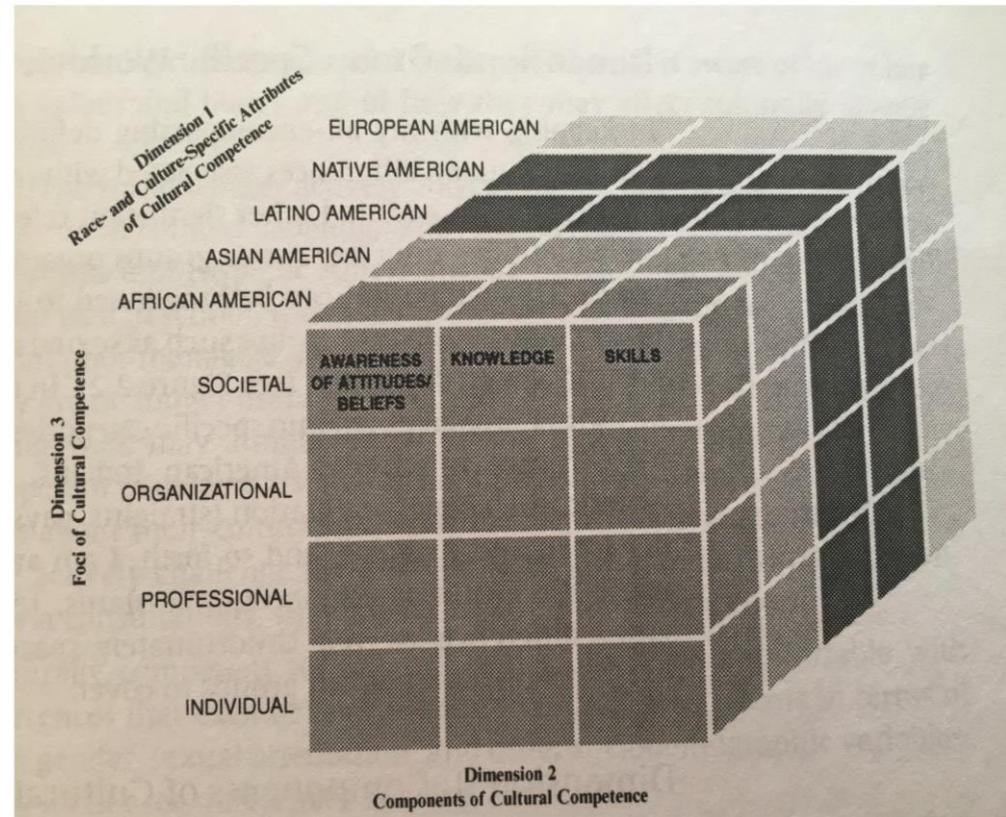
1. Awareness of own values, biases and assumptions about human behaviour
2. Understanding the worldviews of culturally diverse clients
3. Developing appropriate intervention strategies and techniques
4. Understanding organisational and institutional forces that enhance or diminish cultural competence

Culturally Competent Practice

Multidimensional Model of Cultural Competence (Sue, 2001)

Integrates 3 important features:

- 1) Need to consider specific cultural worldviews
 - 2) Components of cultural competence (awareness, knowledge and skills)
- 1) Foci of cultural competence



+ Culturally Competent Practice

Dimension 1: Group specific worldviews

- Interested in human differences associated with race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical ability, age and other reference groups

Dimension 2:

Awareness:

- Examine own cultural background and identity
- Identify how absence of knowledge, fears and “isms” influence
- Apply strategies to change detrimental beliefs
- Use strategies to enrich self awareness
- Liking “in spite” of differences

+ CULTURALLY COMPETENT practice

Dimension 2:

Knowledge:

- Expand cultural knowledge
- Demonstrate knowledge of power relationships
- Identify limitations of theoretical practice
- Recognize diversity
- Understand privilege

Skills:

- Interact with persons from a wide range of cultures
- Have proficiency to discuss cultural difference
- Assess cultural strengths and limitations
- Advocate for interpreters
- Employ clients' natural support system

Dimension 3:

- Focus on
 - Individual
 - Professional
 - Organizational
 - Societal

+ CULTURALLY COMPETENT practice

- Helping role and process
- Consistent with life experiences and cultural values of clients
- Sees client identities as including individual, group and universal dimensions
- Advocates universal and culture specific strategies
- Balances individualism and collectivism



Break



- **Phase 1: The Era of Moral Reform**
- **Phase 2: The Era of Social Reform**
- **Phase 3: The Era of Applied Social Science**

Constantly asking:

- 1) Who needs help?
- 2) Who deserves help?
- 3) Whose responsibility is it to help?

+ EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL WORK

Phase 1: The Era of Moral Reform

The Era of Moral Reform – Pre-1890

Private charities

An early approach to social work that involved private individuals and religious organizations that provided material relief to the poor.

Poor Relief

The Poor Laws signaled an important progression from private charity to public welfare, where the care and supervision of the poor was the responsibility of each town, village, or hamlet.

+ EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL WORK

Phase 1: The Era of Moral Reform

The Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601

- Was considered the first piece of legislation providing consistent public support for needy people through local taxes.
- Eligible recipients included:

Dependent children – without relatives to support were placed in service under whatever citizen placed the lowest bid.

Impotent poor (worthy) – those physically or mentally unable to work. Were given “indoor relief” placed in almshouses or offered “outdoor relief” receive help outside of the institution.

Able-bodied poor (unworthy)– considered undeserving of help because they should be able to take care of themselves. Forced to work or suffer jail.

+ EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL WORK

Phase 1: The Era of Moral Reform

The Settlement House Movement

Settlement houses in poor neighborhoods offered food, shelter, and other basics in the form of charity on part of wealthy donors, the residents of the city, and the scholars who volunteered their services.

Charity Organization Society

In Britain, the Charity Organization Society advanced the concept of self help and limited government intervention to deal with the effects of poverty.

The organization claimed to use “scientific principles to root out scroungers and target relief where it was most needed.”

+ EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL WORK

Phase 2: The Era of Social Reform

The Era of Social Reform – 1891-1940

Scientific Philanthropy

An early approach to social work that rejected moral judgments and encouraged a “scientific” assessment of human behavior and approach to finding solutions.

Social Casework

- Modern casework – systematic methods of investigation, assessment and decision making – was strongly influenced by **Mary Richmond**
- Mary Richmond wrote a 1917 text, *Social Diagnosis*, which was used in the training of workers

+ EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL WORK

Phase 2: The Era of Social Reform

Social Diagnosis – “The Social Work Process”

1. Collection of social evidence, data on family history, and data pertaining to the problem at hand;
2. Critical examination of the material leading to diagnosis: and;
3. Development of a case plan with the involvement of the client

Psychology and Social Work

- Theories of **Sigmund Freud** played an important role
- Freud provided insight into the inner workings of the individual
- Social work shifted from a concern with the societal context to a concern with a person’s psychological make-up
- Social work moved from an active role to a more passive role for the worker

+ EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL WORK

Phase 2: The Era of Social Reform

Social Gospel, Social Work, and Social Action

- During this period of social reform, the **social gospel movement** had an influence on western social work
- Movements for a more socially oriented church began to appear
- 1920s: More scientific perspective, distancing itself from a moral base

Social Work and the Great Depression

- 1930s period of mass unemployment
- 1933, nearly one-quarter of labor force unemployed
- Unemployment requires national response rather than local charity response
- Depression shattered idea that market forces should be left unregulated

+ EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL WORK

Phase 3: The Era of Applied Social Science

The Era of Applied Social Science – 1941 and Beyond

- Social Services are not a luxury
- Social Services are vital to a functioning economy
- Legitimization and increase of government intervention in economy
- Career opportunities and education for social workers opened up
- Social work opportunities shift to government departments and agencies

Diagnostic Approach

- Emphasizes an understanding of an individual's problem by reference to causal events in his or her early life

Functional Approach

- Based on the belief in the potential of individuals to determine their own direction

+ EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL WORK

Phase 3: The Era of Applied Social Science

The Expansion of Social Services and Social Work

- Demands on private relief organizations grow
- Amendments to the Social Security Act – public assistance broadened to those with temporary and permanent disabilities, and benefits provided to primary caregivers of dependent children.
- End of School Segregation: Brown v. Board of Education (1954) – “separate but equal”, declared racial segregation unconstitutional.

The 1960s and the War on Poverty in America

- The Public Welfare Amendments of 1962 – Kennedy, supportive social services would enhance welfare recipients’ ability to get back on their feet.
- The “Great Society” – Lyndon Johnson, “War on Poverty”, Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (VISTA, Head Start, Job Corps, etc.)
- Food Stamp Act 1964 – needy families could receive coupons in exchange for food.
- The Community Mental Health Centers Act – funding for community mental health centers was established.
- The Older Americans Act of 1965 – established the Administration on Aging (AOA), which provided a variety of services to seniors based on age, not income. Those services include: transportation, meals delivered, home care, resource referral, etc.

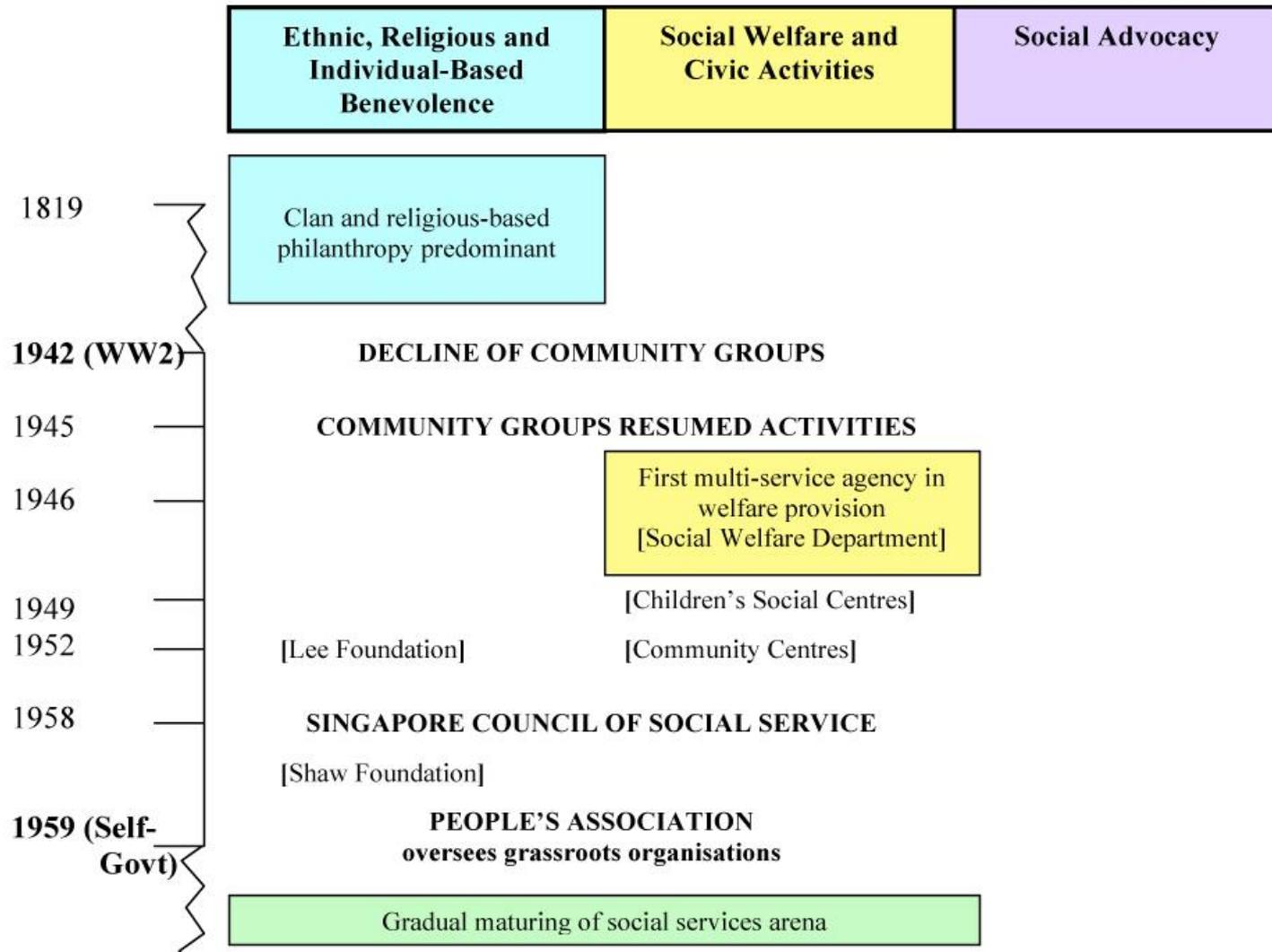
+ EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL WORK

Phase 3: The Era of Applied Social Science

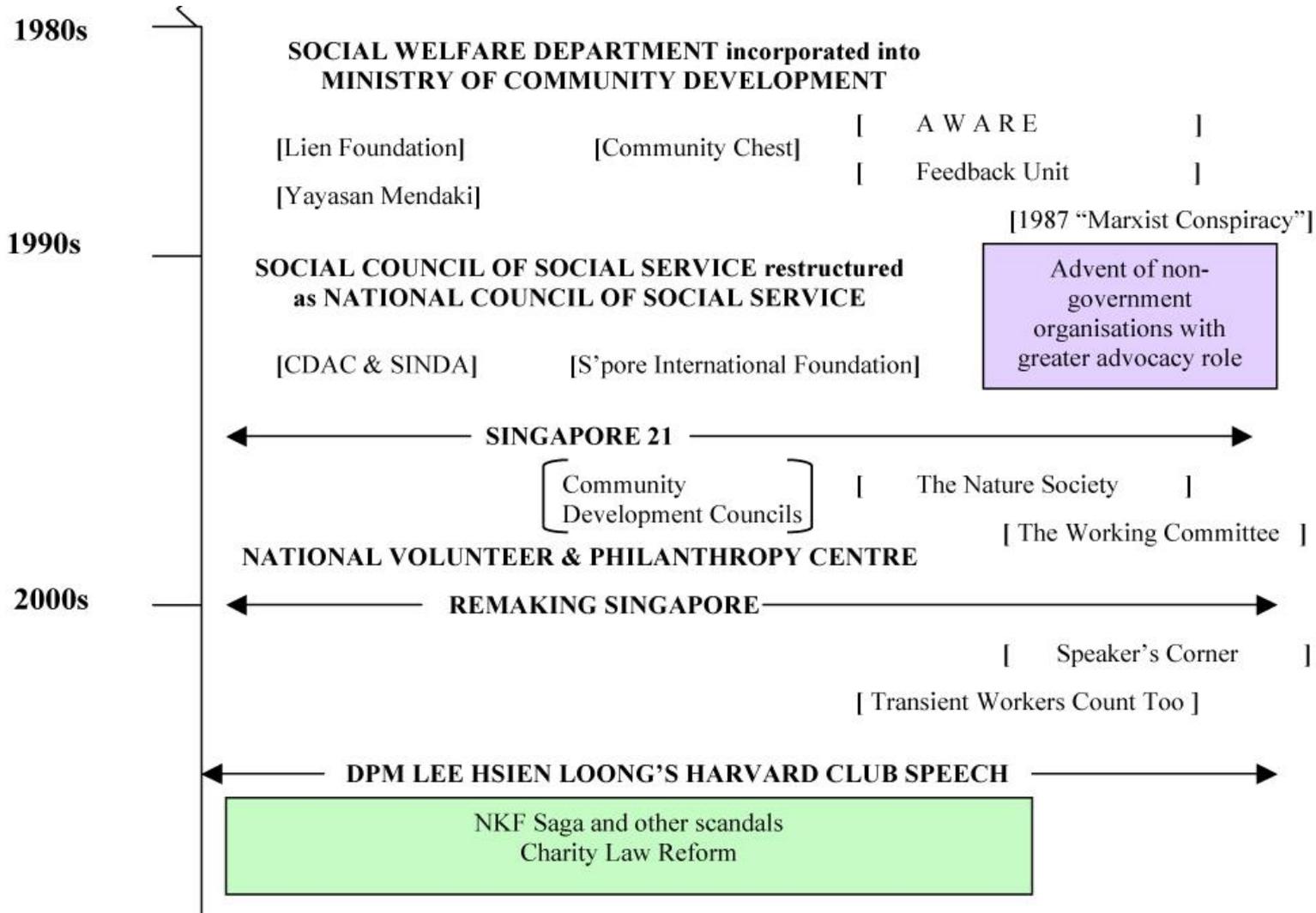
Other Strategies to End Poverty

- Earned income tax credits—acceptable because rewards workers
- Treatment for substance abuse and mental disorders needed
- Need for more, better paying jobs
- Kensington Welfare Rights Union—New Freedom Bus Ride, UN Declaration

+ SOCIAL WORK IN SINGAPORE



+ SOCIAL WORK IN SINGAPORE



+ SOCIAL WORK IN SINGAPORE

Post 2000s

- Growth of Family Service Centres, private, quasi-government and VWOs
- NGOs catering to welfare and advocacy needs grow
- Focus on allied education and health services
- Focus on eldercare services
- Creation of Social Service Offices



DISCUSSION

What similarities do you observe between modern day social work in Singapore and the various phases of social work history?