

FORMULATING A PROBLEM STATEMENT

Social Work Research

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CLASS AGENDA

- Check-in: how's everyone doing?
- Hunter librarian presentation
- Facilitated discussion
- Overview of key concepts
- Next steps...



Image by Austin Oswald

HOW ARE YOU?

**ANY ISSUES, CONCERNS,
CELEBRATIONS, QUESTIONS,
PROVOCATIONS, DESIRES THAT
WE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT?**

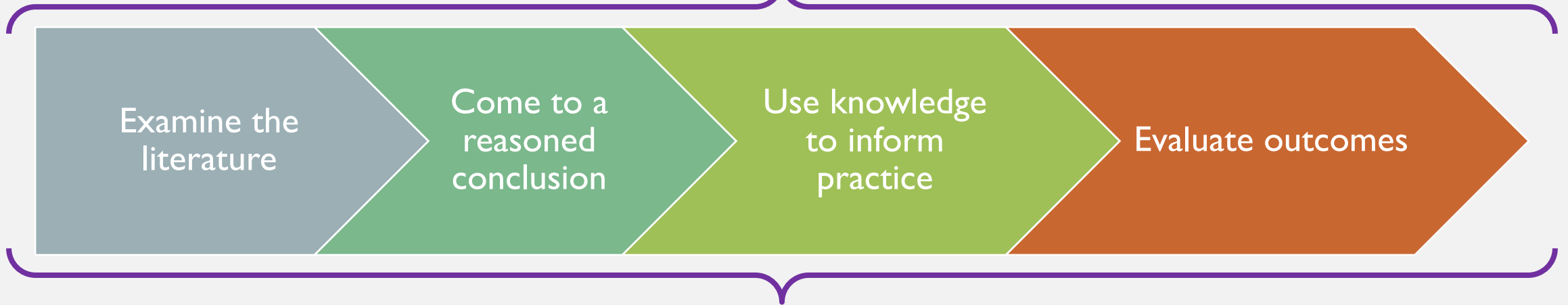
FACILITATED DISCUSSION



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EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE

Reflection



Practice Wisdom

EBP involves making decisions on how to help clients based on the best available evidence using critical thinking to examine the literature, client, self, and context to inform interventions.

Table 3.1 Questions worth asking while reading research reports

Report section	Questions worth asking
Abstract	What are the key findings? How were those findings reached? What framework does the researcher employ?
Acknowledgments	Who are this study's major stakeholders? Who provided feedback? Who provided support in the form of funding or other resources?
Problem statement (introduction)	How does the author frame their research focus? What other possible ways of framing the problem exist? Why might the author have chosen this particular way of framing the problem?
Literature review (introduction)	How selective does the researcher appear to have been in identifying relevant literature to discuss? Does the review of literature appear appropriately extensive? Does the researcher provide a critical review?
Sample (methods)	Where was the data collected? Did the researcher collect their own data or use someone else's data? What population is the study trying to make claims about, and does the sample represent that population well? What are the sample's major strengths and major weaknesses?
Data collection (methods)	How were the data collected? What do you know about the relative strengths and weaknesses of the method employed? What other methods of data collection might have been employed, and why was this particular method employed? What do you know about the data collection strategy and instruments (e.g., questions asked, locations observed)? What <i>don't</i> you know about the data collection strategy and instruments?
Data analysis (methods)	How were the data analyzed? Is there enough information provided for you to feel confident that the proper analytic procedures were employed accurately?
Results	What are the study's major findings? Are findings linked back to previously described research questions, objectives, hypotheses, and literature? Are sufficient amounts of data (e.g., quotes and observations in qualitative work, statistics in quantitative work) provided in order to support conclusions drawn? Are tables readable?
Discussion/conclusion	Does the author generalize to some population beyond her/his/their sample? How are these claims presented? Are claims made supported by data provided in the results section (e.g., supporting quotes, statistical significance)? Have limitations of the study been fully disclosed and adequately addressed? Are implications sufficiently explored?

ANATOMY OF A
RESEARCH ARTICLE

CRAFTING A PROBLEM STATEMENT



Context: Where does it occur? Who does it affect? What attempts have been made to solve the problem?



Relevance (so what?): What will happen if the problem is not solved? Who will feel the consequences? Does the problem have wider relevance in other contexts? Implication for Social Work?



Objectives: State the aims/objectives and methods

PURPOSE STATEMENT

Indicate why you want to do the study and what you intend to accomplish in a sentence or two

Use words like “purpose,” “intent,” or “objective”

State the methodology and research design

Include information about the central phenomenon, participants, research site, and independent/dependent variables (if quant)

NEXT WEEK

Session	Date	Topic	Assignments Due
5	10/4	Literature Review: How to collect, analyze, and write up a review of the relevant literature	
6	10/18	Ethics, power & privilege of human subjects	CITI training