

# Fusing Empiricism and Activism: The Role of Social Work Research in Fueling Social Change

SSWR Research Capacity Development Committee  
Roots & Wings Roundtable Series  
SSWR 2019

## ■ WHY

### RCDC Roots & Wings Sessions

#### ■ 2017

Roots: Mentoring

Wings: Alternative dissertations

#### ■ 2018

Roots: GADE Guidelines

Wings: Communicating across media/audiences

#### ■ 2019

Roots: Comprehensive examinations

Wings: Fusing activism and research

- WHY

- HOW

Roundtable Discussions

- WHY
- HOW
- WHO

Spontaneous Participants

- WHY
- HOW
- WHO

- Laina Bay-Cheng, University at Buffalo

## Featured Participants



- WHY
- HOW
- WHO

Laina Bay-Cheng, University at Buffalo

- Amy Castro Baker, University of Pennsylvania

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Laina Bay-Cheng, University at Buffalo

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- [Daria Mueller, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee](#)

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Laina Bay-Cheng, University at Buffalo  
Amy Castro Baker, University of Pennsylvania  
Daria Mueller, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee  
• Michael Reisch, University of Maryland

## Featured Participants





- WHY
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- WHO

Laina Bay-Cheng, University at Buffalo  
Amy Castro Baker, University of Pennsylvania  
Daria Mueller, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee  
Michael Reisch, University of Maryland

- Sheila Vakharia, Drug Policy Alliance

## Featured Participants



- WHY
- HOW
- WHO
- WHAT...

- Featured participants:

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- **What is the appropriate relation between empiricism and activism?**

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*How do you identify as a researcher and/or activist?*

- What is the appropriate relation between empiricism and activism?
- What are the prospects - for dimmer or for brighter – of social work research for change?
- What ought SW programs and established researchers do to enable PhD student & early career activist-researchers?

# Tips for Generating Evidence for Justice

[Fine, 2012]

[publicscienceproject.org](http://publicscienceproject.org)

1. Design research in solidarity with activist organizations.
2. Dismantle the hierarchy of expertise, challenge presumptions of objectivity, honor the expertise/wisdom of experience through participatory action research.
3. Challenge scientific dissociation by documenting the full landscape, not just the damaged sector, of structural injustice.
4. Contextualize and supplement traditional indicators.
5. Document the cost–benefit of not providing social safety nets.
6. Sketch a life.
7. Publish multiple interpretations of the data.
8. Produce provocative products from your research.
9. Assess your impact validity [Massey & Barreras, 2013].
10. Educate your graduate students and the public about “banal accountability.”