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FLOURISHING IN SOCIAL WORK ORGANIZATIONS

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0. Introduction

In this paper, we will explore how flourishing is possible under the difficult and sometimes adverse circumstances in social work organizations. We will examine which virtues are especially vital to attain, and what sorts of exercises can promote flourishing.

1. The nature of flourishing in social work

According to Aristotle, it is characteristic for humans to strive towards three goals, i.e. to attain knowledge, to attain a good and, since we are social beings, to seek to live with others in a just community. The highest good in life is happiness, i.e. to live in accord with reason (cf. Aristotle, 2011, Nicomachean Ethics, 1098a 4-18). According to Aristotle the virtues are part of the good and are done for their own sake and not for the sake of any further good. Whatever humans do, they do to attain what they consider their good, what they think contributes to living well. No one purposefully seeks to do something that s/he thinks is contrary to her/his overall good. Living in accord with what one views as one's good, whether or not it in fact incorporates reason, constitutes what we would call subjective wellbeing.[1]

The subjective conception of one's own wellbeing, even though it is important, captures flourishing only partially.[2] According to an Aristotelian understanding of flourishing, there is always an objective side to it, connected to what is essential to human nature, i.e. what Aristotle refers to as the "function of human beings", which he understands as acting in accord with virtue. (ibid., 1097b 24-28). This includes, for example, what human beings are good at, the kinds of activities that reflect their capacities and inner make-up and rational deliberation. This objective understanding accounts for the possibility that one can actually be mistaken about the good s/he aims for. For example, if the good one strives for does not take into account the social dimension and justice, then it is questionable whether a person flourishes.[3] It is likewise doubtful if a person does not employ her/his capacity for rational thinking (for instance, in reflecting on her/his own preferences and the nature of a good life).

Turning to social work, both subjective and objective sides of flourishing are important—for social workers as well as for clients. The subjective side is important, because it is crucial that a person's conception of their own wellbeing is taken seriously. It is a central Aristotelian point that each person has to live his/ her life and is the author of his/ her own actions and decisions (ibid., 1113a15-1113b1, 1114). S/he decides (and *has* to decide!) what s/he wants to pursue, what s/he values in life, and what her unique contribution can be. This also reflects a fundamental disposition that social workers ought to exhibit towards their clients.
The objective side of flourishing, however, can be perhaps most easily understood in social work by its contrast with "adaptive preferences", an idea explored by Nussbaum and Sen (cf. Nussbaum 2001). Shortly stated, clients and social workers can get used to circumstances (even

[1] Aristotle acknowledges that there are individual goods subordinate to happiness (for example, the good of medicine is health) but believes these are goods only if they accord with practical reason and virtue (cf. Aristotle 1097a 19-27; 1097b 1-7).
[2] This is why we do not follow the concept of subjective well-being (SWB) by Diener (1984), which is, however, a concept widely used in research about social workers' well-being.
[3] Social justice is no doubt an essentially contested concept and we do not live in the sort of homogeneous community of free citizens, which excluded slaves and women, that Aristotle had in mind. This complicates considerations of justice. We assume here the International Code of Ethics description of social justice including equality for all, non-discrimination based on race, class, religion or sexual preference.

when these are damaging to them) and think that this is just the way it should be, since it has always been that way and/or since it is not clear how or if it could be changed. It is expressive of a kind of fatalistic acceptance of existing circumstances, accepting one's current position and whatever goods one can access. An idea of objective flourishing is central to social work and it is tied in with virtues—our dispositions to act in the right ways for the right reasons, in the right situations. We have to develop these dispositions through practice.

For clients, an idea of objective flourishing can serve as the critical concept for confronting broader existing injustices as well as behavior that damages them, including self-damaging behavior. An objective notion can help to unveil unacceptable practices and structures. It can provide a starting point for conceiving of possible changes without thereby suggesting that the objective notion of flourishing should be forced upon any client, since that would violate a basic value of the profession.[4]

For social workers (our focus in this paper), a notion of objective flourishing can be crucial to confront objectionable practice circumstances as well as disagreements about the central goals, principles and values of the profession, its core, about which there can be different interpretations. (cf. IFSW 2014). Aside from the professional good, they of course also have to figure out how to manage a balance between their professional role and other roles they inhabit in their lives (e.g. spouse, friend, neighbor, student, parent, etc.). Balancing these constitutes flourishing as a whole.[5]

Further below we will suggest with three examples how self-reflections and a dialogue among peers can be stimulated to deepen the understanding of the profession and the cultivation of virtues. Here we focus especially on the organizational context. We will explore exercises that foster the critical examination of one's organization, i.e. its strengths and weaknesses. Just as social work is a most demanding profession, so is cultivating virtues to navigate through it. We are not suggesting (this is often a point of criticism, also stated by Zacka, 2017) that cultivating virtues is an all-or-nothing project. We don't think that either one is virtuous or not. Rather, virtue development should be conceptualized as a continuum and the life-long project is to find the best way to respond to a situation. One is better able to do so as time goes by and one is more experienced. This allows for mistakes and failure, which is a realistic assessment, given our frailty as human beings.

In social work, we place special importance on honesty, compassion, humility, fairness, responsiveness, and courage.[6] Cultivating these virtues implies that one shares a certain normative understanding of the profession and engages in a conscious reflection of the profession's core goals and values and their many dimensions in practice: disposition towards clients, ability to address different actors in a community, the role organizations play in society, and the social work role in the organization.[7] Coming to terms with these aspects of professional reality is an important part of the practice wisdom social workers need to develop.

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[4] Forcing another person, even in the name of their own good, is problematic since it violates the principle of honoring the capacity for autonomous decision making (cf. IFSW statement of ethical principles).

[5] We do not think that a person's life can be compartmentalized and that virtues can be developed in one area of one's life, but will be lacking or non-existent in another. So, when we speak of social work virtues, we do not mean to imply that honesty in social work is of a different nature than honesty shown as a family member. We agree with Annas (2011) that virtues are cultivated as a whole and will be enacted situation-sensitive in different life contexts. We will not, however, further explore this issue here.

[6] We add courage to those Zacka mentions, as it is central to confronting bureaucratic obstacles.

[7] Virtue: a committed disposition to act in a certain way for certain reasons; in social work being committed to act upon social work values and principles, because one understands this is the best way to work towards the key professional goals, i.e. social justice and to further client autonomy.

In accord with an Aristotelian understanding, we would like to emphasize that cultivating virtues is not an individualistic task, even though each person needs to find a way to accomplish it. Rather, it is deeply embedded in the community in which one lives and acts. Since our focus is on social work, one key community in which the cultivation of virtues takes place is one's organization. Organizations can enable or disable virtue cultivation and it will be our main interest in this paper to explore what fosters and what inhibits the virtue development necessary to flourishing in organizations.

2. The problem of flourishing in social work organizations: Zacka's perspective and our critique

Social work organizations—often large bureaucracies—pose challenging problems for social workers. As a number of publications show, for social workers, just as for professionals from other caring professions, turnover is high and burnout is common (cf. Balloch et al. 2008; Fabricant and Burkhardt, 1992; Kim & Stoner 2008; O'Donnell et al. 2008; Wieclaw 2006; Wooten et al. 2011). This results from numerous factors. It can be due to an unsatisfying work environment, caused by policies that affect and often restrict funding, staffing and the overall direction of an organization. In some organizations, social workers can be confronted with non-optimal supervision, non-supportive team structures, an organizational/team culture that does not welcome reflection, work overload, excessive paperwork, insufficient possibilities for further education or being asked to continually make choices that one considers wrong, often leading to moral distress (cf. Weinberg 2009; Lynch & Forde 2016).[8] In effect, social workers are often unable in these situations to respond virtuously in the ways demanded by the profession.

Zacka, in his work in a human service agency, vividly captures why social workers often feel they cannot meet the demands of their agency, given their high caseloads and limited resources.[9] As he describes the work, social workers are expected to act towards clients with compassion, honesty, responsiveness, respect and fairness, while doing so efficiently. Zacka argues that social workers cannot meet all these demands for all their clients, and so they respond to the dissonance this creates in ways he calls "pathological"—becoming what he calls a caregiver, enforcer or indifferent. All three are "pathological" because they focus on some ethical goals (and virtues) at the expense of others. The "caregiver" will flourish by treating with compassion and responsiveness a certain number of his clients, but only by neglecting others. The "enforcer" flourishes by focusing on fairness and devoting most of her time and effort to making sure at least some clients don't cheat, but this will be at the expense of empathy and fairness to all. The "indifferent" worker simply follows the rules in a perfunctory way, doing only what must be done in a minimal way. So the workers find a way to try to resolve the conflicts and to flourish but it is a distorted sort of flourishing.

Zacka backs up his categorizations of these "pathologies" with many examples from his field work, and he argues from these examples that virtues are not helpful, not possible to achieve in this sort of bureaucratic setting, and do not enable flourishing of workers. Although his analysis is based on one agency setting, the problems he describes are familiar to most social workers

[8] Obstacles are further to be found in the fact that the nature of the work can be full of hardships by what clients deal with and it confronts social workers with difficult ethical problems they need to try to solve; finding the right path in working with clients can be difficult even with ideal practice circumstances (cf. Banks 2016).
[9] Zacka (2017), particularly Chapter 3.

within human service bureaucracies. His analysis poses a challenge to those of us who believe that the social work virtues are central to good social work practice and flourishing. By contrast, Zacka argues that social workers should not aim primarily at cultivating virtues but instead opt for more modest goals of avoiding the worst harms through cultivation of what he calls "gymnastics of the self."

Zacka's criticisms of virtue theory as a guide to bureaucratic action derive from two sources: his acceptance of situationist moral psychology, with its emphasis on how small changes in the environment can have profound effects on a person's behavior and his belief that virtues, once formed, must be unchanging and impervious to outside influences. From these assumptions he argues that virtues are unreliable as a way to resolve bureaucratic tensions. Let us examine the reasoning in more detail.

Situationist moral psychology has shown from empirical studies that small changes in environmental factors can disrupt ethical responses (cf. Milgram, 1963; Darly and Batson, 1973)[10]. For example, in one study, theology students who attended a lecture on helping others and were deliberately kept late were unlikely to stop to help a man (a plant for the experiment), who was slumped against a wall and moaning loudly (cf. Darley and Batson, 1973). In situations in which they were not rushed, they helped. This was not true of all the students but was for many. Zacka, on the basis of this kind of study (and there are many in social psychology), argues that if such small changes can have this sort of effect, then we cannot have confidence that virtuous behavior will be stable and remain in difficult circumstances such as those bureaucracies often present. He argues further that the rigorous habituation that virtues seem to require might result in the sort of rigid or incomplete acquisition of them that could lead to focusing on one virtue to the exclusion of others or to insensitive appraisal of what the situation requires. And finally he argues that when it seems that people are acting from virtue it may be rather that environmental factors are favorable to reinforcing their virtuous behavior and we should focus on the environmental factors instead. Virtues, he suggests, cannot be viewed as impervious to outside factors, though they are often viewed in those terms.

In response, we would argue that while it has been demonstrated that small changes in environmental factors can disrupt virtuous behavior, most of the studies thus far have been of quickly-made responses in often trivial situations (answers on questionnaires, responses on the way to a class, etc.) and do not demonstrate that virtuous behavior would be so disrupted were the decision one that presumably was being given much consideration. When we have time and understand that our response matters, we are apt to consider a wide variety of factors and arguments, unlike the situations described in these studies. We do not deny the importance of environmental factors, but do not believe they warrant the large conclusions about moral decision-making sometimes made on their behalf. In addition, we would argue that once one knows how easily behavior can be influenced, one can be alert to this possibility and it can become part of one's deliberations. Virtue theorists in their writings exhibit awareness of how environmental factors can undermine virtues and have developed exercises and regimes to counter them (Stoics) or have stressed how much attention one must pay to the actions one takes (Plato.) Many of Plato's early dialogues exhibit how often we make important decisions without carefully considering them and therefore how much attention we must pay to them (cf. Plato, 1961).

[10] See Flanagan, 1993, for more examples.

Second, and related to this, it is not clear that acquiring virtues is any more or less difficult than responding ethically on the basis of some other set of requirements such as utilitarian ones or a gymnastics of self. Complex ethical situations are difficult to navigate. Those who go into social work are apt to have dispositions such as compassion and fairness, as they are choosing a profession aimed at helping others and creating a more just society. Developing these dispositions more fully is part of what social work school and continuing education aim to do. It will always be an on-going process. Our virtues are not fixed in some sort of solidity, as Zacka sometimes seems to suggest. That is a mischaracterization of virtue. Take for example compassion. For any social worker it will be easier to feel compassion for some than for others, and one will have to develop ways to expand one's compassion and to act on it in ways appropriate to one's professional role. It is also the case that none of us achieve compassion, or any other virtue, completely. As we age, we try to develop these dispositions more fully. Zacka in fact later, in arguing for the importance of divergent viewpoints, suggests the role that dialogue and criticism among workers can play in encouraging virtuous behavior. The task in never complete.

Third, we would agree with Zacka that environmental factors play an important role and that to whatever extent possible, we should try to create an environment that supports ethical responses and promotes virtues. Plato, Aristotle and more recent virtue theorists such as Hadot view political activity as part of virtue. The virtues are pursued in a community that one aims to make just. Part of responding ethically in a bureaucracy should entail recommendations for change and ways to encourage disagreement and criticism. We will return to this point later in the paper. We would also agree with Zacka that virtues are not impervious to environmental factors. In fact, we develop virtues through our responses to a particular situation; that is what practical reason demands, and through the actions we take we develop practical wisdom. Much has been written about the role that moral luck can play in how we act and how we are viewed and view ourselves (cf. Nussbaum, 1986; Williams, 1981; Wolf, 2001). Virtues can be undermined or prove more fragile than we thought, given extraordinary circumstances or even in normal circumstances. However, the same can be said for moral principles or moral stands of any sort.

Zacka proposes a way to encourage flourishing in a human bureaucracy, a way he considers different from the focus on virtues. He calls it "gymnastics of the self," after Foucault and draws inspiration from both Foucault and Hadot. He views it as a way for individuals to develop their own moral dispositions, using "… a range of everyday exercises (in self-examination, moral imagination, recollection, etc.) (Zacka, 2017, 136). The exercises would draw on resources in the practitioner's environment and be part of a community of practice. Moral practices become more important than moral theory, on Zacka's account, and require an interdependence of action, cognition, memory and emotion to alter one's moral dispositions. Zacka views them as more flexible, changeable and modest than virtues and therefore a better source of moral practice in bureaucracies In his words, he believes his practices "[…] address different kind of problem than virtues; they offer a different kind of solution; and they are more modest in aspiration." (ibid., 138)

Zacka argues that while a virtue approach might be appropriate in addressing ways that institutions and practices can be undermined by external goods such as money or promotions, a virtue account is not appropriate for the kinds of conflicts that social workers most often confront—that is, conflicts among two courses of action each of which seems desirable or undesirable. Zacka believes that since social workers cannot meet all the demands, trying to act virtuously is apt to result in the sorts of pathologies he describes, that is practicing one virtue

to the exclusion of other relevant ones (compassion over fairness, for example.) For example, if a worker has too many cases to provide service to all clients. She may focus on good service to a few, favoring compassion over fairness. He views his gymnastics of the self as offering a broader outlook that is more apt to result in acting upon all or most of the pertinent considerations. However, we would argue that that is precisely the task of practical reason. The cultivation of virtues is never seen as the cultivation of one virtue over others but as the ability, through practical reason, to distinguish which values and virtues are relevant, to select the appropriate one for a situation and to act in accord with it. Sometimes the decision is between two equally compelling alternatives that require deciding how to navigate conflicts among virtues. That is part of the deliberation and why virtues are needed. When she has too many cases (a common problem), she must find a way to provide service or confront the bureaucracy, as we will describe later.

Zacka also argues that his approach is better, because it is more modest. While practitioners may not always get matters right, they will avoid the worse mistakes. How will they do so? They are not trying to practice virtues but rather to respond to the particular situation in improvised ways, based on the mechanisms of the self that they have practiced. These ways of acting have developed in response to and are tied to specific situations, not traits that survive a change in situation or can be transferred to different situations. This approach puts emphasis on manipulations of the environment to enable appropriate responses.

What we find odd, in this account, is that so much of what he says can be said for virtues as well. In many versions, virtue theorists focus more on moral practice than on theory, and focus, as Zacka puts it, on an interdependence of action, cognition, memory and emotion, a description which could in effect be a description of practical wisdom, which requires picking out the relevant moral values and knowing the right way to put them into practice in a particular situation.[11] Many of Zacka's "gymnastics of the self" can be and have been viewed as ways to develop virtues more fully, as we will elaborate in the next section of the paper. Some of his exercises connect to standard aspects of social work training, such as understanding of appropriate professional boundaries, so as not to become overly involved or under-involved. Zacka at one point suggests his account might be viewed as a friendly amendment to a virtue approach, though his criticisms suggest a stronger disagreement.

3. Flourishing in Bureaucratic Organizations

What we find most challenging in Zacka's account is the question of whether human service professionals can ever be said to flourish morally in a bureaucracy, given its conflicting demands. Zacka vividly portrays the frustrated voices of workers, their sense of failure, their resignation. It is why Zacka argues for his self-mechanisms rather than for the pursuit of virtues. We will argue in the remainder of this article that flourishing is possible through incorporating aspects of Zacka's mechanisms and ones we have developed over years of teaching social work

[11] The Stoic philosophers, in particular, stressed virtue theory as philosophy in practice. For a summary, see Hadot (2002). And Aristotle stated: "the end is not knowing things but doing them" (NE, 1095a 5-6; "for the way we learn the things we should do, knowing how to do them, is by doing them" (NE, 1103a 33-34) and further on this: 1103b15-20; 1105b12-18.

students. Moral flourishing will be demanding and will require diligence, dialogue and resistance in enacting the virtues. What, after all, we would argue, is the alternative? The alternative is to give up on our social work promise of compassion, fairness, responsiveness and honesty. We hope to show, instead, how the practices we have developed can result in virtuous practices in full recognition of the difficulties and burdens that this role and position entails, including the imperfect circumstances in which decisions have to be taken.

Crucial to our argument, however, is the role that dialogue, diligence, political activity and community must play in this process. Borrowing from Hadot, the process has to be one that through exercises both concentrates and expands the self, requiring self-reflection and connection to others and to society (Hadot, 2002, 189). Let us elaborate.
One central point here is that social workers can only attain flourishing when they notice and address the bureaucratic conflicts and not, for instance, by ignoring them or playing them down. These factors *can* significantly affect the individual social worker (e.g. his/her self-perception, including the sense of personal failure, of not being able to meet professional goals.) Social workers must find a way to confront and deal with these issues.

When we educate social workers, it is hence important to raise awareness of these issues to help them prepare to address them. One strategy could of course be to quit talking about the ideals of the profession as a stable normative reference point and instead to educate social workers to develop more "realistic" and less demanding expectations of practice, as Zacka suggests. To us this is no option, since it would radically change the nature of the profession. By compromising the core goals and values of the profession, it would change altogether and no longer be the practice we think it is at its heart. What is more, in our experience, the greater number of social work students (and of practitioners) have been drawn to this profession exactly because they place such great value on these ideals. They are interested in social justice, in empowering clients, in working against discriminatory and/or racist practices and structures, etc. For them, it would be no alternative to give up on these ideals, since that would change the profession so radically that assumingly they would no longer want to practice in it.

Also crucial to our argument is the fact that social workers generally have training (a BA or Master's in social work) and opportunities for continued education. Through such trainings, social workers address ongoing ethical issues such as establishing good boundaries with clients and tackling new issues such as reproductive technologies.

It is no easy task, however, to navigate the bureaucratic hurdles and ever-increasing demand of many social work organizations. The organizations often are focused on narrow mandates of efficiency, have limited funds and limited concern about client complaints. Social workers will become discouraged and fail to flourish unless they remain vigilant to the ways the bureaucracy functions and diligent in pursuing what they believe to be right. It also necessitates self-reflection about one's role and one's limits and the ability to enlist others in discussion of the issues. At times one must be able to brainstorm how to change the minds of the administrators or in some cases "simply" to say no. One needs to work with others to develop mechanisms for addressing inequities and other complaints. To highlight the ways that social workers can further cultivate the virtues and respond to difficult organizational issues, we suggest three sorts of strategies: individual reflections, reflections in dialogue with others and institutional changes.

Social workers need ways on their own to develop and sustain self-reflection in order to cultivate the virtues and to flourish. The stoic philosophers, Zacka and others have suggested

many techniques for developing the kind of self-reflection that encourages virtuous action.[12] Before suggesting exercises we have used in working with social workers and social work students, we will briefly point to some measures that can help to stimulate self-reflections and address the structural set-up:

Keeping a journal of one's thoughts and actions can encourage self-reflection. The Stoic philosophers sometimes used aphorisms that they memorized (Zacka mentions putting aphorisms on one's desk) to remind them of their focus on virtue. Meditation is another technique to regain perspective. Dialogue with others in the profession is also a crucial aspect of developing the virtues and responding in bureaucracies. Through dialogue, social workers encounter different viewpoints and are able to gain a fuller understanding of their own actions and sometimes a critique of them. Social work educators and workplaces sometimes ask social workers to do in-depth case write-ups, of everything in a session, to allow for fuller discussion and feedback on a social worker's responses. Role plays can encourage workers to rethink how they respond in particular situations. Peer groups can address difficult dilemmas. I know of social workers in the Boston area who have developed their own peer evaluation groups, because their agencies did not provide enough guidance. Informal exchange with colleagues can also encourage self-reflection, through understanding different approaches or sharing strategies for difficult situations. Client evaluations is another source of information about how social workers are perceived by those they are trying to help.

Social workers also need to consider ways they can modify the bureaucracy to enable them to act on the virtues and thrive. For example, an ombudsman can be a useful addition to any social work organization; it can serve as a way to both get and give feedback to the organization. Ethics Committees within social work organizations can also be places where difficult case issues can be addressed. Many hospitals in the US now have such committees in place. They bring together professionals from different disciplines which increases the opportunity to include and hear diverse views. Social workers should also look to their professional organization for help, either in addressing legislative needs or in addressing particular issues. For example, in Massachusetts, the Mass National Association of Social Workers established an ethics committee to address difficult cases and established a hotline that social workers can call to consult on difficult dilemmas.

Most of these methods involve dialogue. Listening to others' viewpoints is essential to refining one's ability to act virtuously. All of these ways enable a social worker to examine her own views and actions through self-reflection and to broaden her outlook, to look beyond her own particular cases to enlist others and consider the broader goals. Both are critical: self-understanding and connection to the larger community—concentrating and expanding the self. Through both a social worker can flourish, even in the demanding circumstances they encounter.

In our work with social workers, we have developed a number of exercises to increase self-reflection and the ability to act on the virtues central to the profession. In the following, we will focus on three exercises.

4. Specific exercises to strengthen the virtues and flourishing

These exercises stand exemplary for others we have developed. We find them especially helpful for stimulating reflections in each social worker about themselves within an organizational

[12] Zacka calls these gymnastics of the self.

setting. It is important that these exercises not only aim at getting each individual social worker into a process of reflection about their work within a bureaucracy. They also invite an exchange among peers and colleagues and reflection about their responsibility to society. Ideally, these exercises can help to cultivate a habit of sharing thoughts with colleagues. When it comes to demanding situations, there can be a fear to openly articulate that one has doubts, that one is not certain of what to do. There is sometimes also reluctance to question courses of action that are required but seem ethically dubious. There is a significant amount of pressure exerted in organizations to act in ways that do not invite open criticism and exchange.[13] Articulating that one has doubts concerning organizational practices requires great courage and goes against the tendency to group think and group conformity. This is why we emphasize that there should always be room for an exchange with others beyond supervision—not mandatory of course. Engaging in these reflections and having the chance to exchange one's thoughts with others are central to attaining flourishing in social work. Flourishing of social workers is not to be mistaken as the neat resolution of all potential conflicts and obstacles. In fact, flourishing in social work might be "burdened"[14] in that there is inevitably a sadness in not being able to do more. However, unlike Tessmann, we would not argue that cultivating virtues in social work is detached from the social worker's well-being. The sadness that might be part of practice is something social workers will have to address and balance with other aspects of their professional lives to flourish as a whole.

i. Ethical analysis of your organization[15]

The following exercise has been used working with social workers in their first year of practice as well as with social work students after they have gained some practice experience (e.g. internship). The exercise is intended to start a reflection process on their organization. In our experience participants often notice that so far they have not consciously addressed the different aspects of their organization, for example their own role and status, the structure, hierarchies within it, the different professions that are part of the team, the relationships among colleagues, and with supervisors. Of particular importance to consider is the culture of communication and of openness to ethical concerns in their organization, which can either invite open and critical discussion or inhibit it. All of these factors influence flourishing of social workers.
To do the exercise, participants are asked to split up in pairs and interview each other, following the questions below. The participants are told that they do not have to answer all of the questions. They can choose what they would like to focus on in case they run out of time.

I. Create a chart of your organization
   1) How is it structured?
   2) Where exactly are you in this structure and what role do you take in it?
   3) How would you characterize the relations with your colleagues, supervisor, manager, etc.?

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[13] Organizations of course differ in their openness to criticism. However, the time and financial constraints, combined with the hierarchical organization in many social work organizations can result in workers being reluctant to voice doubts or criticism. That has been our experience and that of many in social services. See Fabricant and Burkhardt, 1992, Ch. 3 and 4.
[14] Cf. Tessman (2005).
[15] This format and these questions connect to Rhodes (1991).

II. Reflect on your organization

1) Does the organization have a mission statement? What values/ moral principles are in this statement and/ or in the main goals of the organization?
2) Are the stated goals of the organization different from what it actually does? (For example, it might state that its main goal is to stabilize mentally ill persons, when in fact it focuses primarily on closing cases quickly.)
3) What kinds of situations make you uncomfortable in your organization? Do these reflect ethical conflicts or problems?
4) Do you have sufficient room to reflect on these issues for yourself and also with colleagues? In your organization, do you have an established (formal) way in which you can think about these questions? For example:
    a) Are there case conferences and/ or supervision to address these issues?
    b) Do you ever refer to and discuss the professional code of ethics?
    c) Are there any other opportunities (perhaps also more informal) for exchange?
    d) Do you have the chance to receive further training to address ethical issues?
    e) What do you need to be better able to address ethical issues in your organization? If you could make a wish, what would you ask for?
    f) Do you have the sense that you may ask any question in your team and organization? Do you feel you may openly voice criticism? Do you feel you may approach your colleagues when you feel unsure of something in your practice or when you are not sure why colleagues have acted in a certain way?
    g) If you mishandle a situation, is there support for admitting it and getting help to address it?
5) Which issues are especially important to you? Do your colleagues agree? Or do they have other priorities? What are the reasons for possible differences?
6) Concerning your clients: What are their main concerns? Do they differ greatly from your own and from those of your colleagues, your supervisor? How do you and how does your team deal with these differences (e.g. when client expectations are not met)? Is there room for you and your colleagues to address awkward and perhaps aggravating feelings which may arise when client expectations are disappointed?

III. On the basis of these questions and the answers you provided, consider the following:

1) What changes would you like to see made in your organization to make it more ethical (its structure, goals, implementation, staff, etc.)
2) Which of these changes would you view as most important to propose to your organization (to your team, your supervisor)?
3) How would you suggest these changes and to whom? E.g. your supervisor, the team as a whole?

4) Who could support you in voicing these suggestions and how could they support you best?

ii. Questions to stimulate self-reflections on the three dispositions[16]

The following exercise has been used working with social workers in their first year of practice as well as with social work students after they have gained some practice experience (e.g. internship). The exercise helps to focus on working in an organizational context, which is what most practitioners will do in their careers. It helps them to become sensitized to how their colleagues work and to their own dispositions. They can find out what their ideal is and what it would take them to realize it and/or to become aware of the limits of what they can accomplish due to organizational and/or personal constraints. It can help them achieve a balance that avoids the "pathologies" that Zacka highlights. Each participant is asked to reflect for her-/himself and then to share with others.

1. When you consider the three dispositions described by Zacka (i.e. indifferent, caring, enforcing), can you think of a colleague with whom you have been working in this past year (these past weeks) who exhibits one of these dispositions? Is it dysfunctional in the way Zacka suggests? Why or why not?
2. When you think about yourself, do you see traces of these dispositions in yourself? Are you perhaps drawn towards one of these dispositions more strongly? In what ways specifically do your own behavior, feelings, thoughts etc. exhibit one of these dispositions?
3. Do you have a tendency **not** to exhibit one of these three dispositions? Do you perhaps disapprove of one of them? Which one? Do you have an idea why you do not wish to cultivate that disposition and what it is specifically that makes it so difficult for you to cultivate and exhibit that disposition?
4. Would you like to cultivate and exhibit one of these dispositions more strongly? Which one? Why? What would you need to do to accomplish that? What and/or who could be of support to you to help cultivate that disposition?
5. Do you think that you balance the three dispositions so as to enact the virtues of compassion, fairness and responsiveness to all your clients? What would help you better to enact all three virtues?
6. How do you handle situations where you have to choose among the dispositions? How do you decide what to do?

iii. "War stories"[17]

The following exercise has been used working with social workers in their first year of practice. Remembering a situation or issue that has been especially demanding for the practitioner and that continues to involve and shape her/him as a professional can be very helpful in the process of moral sensitization. It helps to open the moral antenna of the person, i.e. what triggers her/him especially and how s/he responds to it. Our experience shows that many issues come up concerning organizational structures, hierarchies and demands. First year practitioners often

[16] Connects to Zacka (2017)

[17] Connects to Zacka, B. (2017), pp.73-74/ 148-49

say that it is quite a shock to them to see their ideals conflict with everyday demands. This exercise is meant to stimulate self-reflection and also to open an exchange with others. It can support each individual social worker to see that others encounter similar issues and perhaps new ideas develop about how to deal with difficult and critical situations. They are first asked to reflect for themselves and then, for those who want to, they are given time to share their thoughts with others in small groups.

1. What situation/issue in my organization has impacted me greatly during the past months? (positive or negative)?
2. What situation has created a crisis between my ideals and the demands of the organization? What have I learned from this?
3. What proves to be especially difficult for me as a social worker working in this organization? What could I do to deal with it? Who/ what could be of support to achieve that?
4. What am I good at in my organization, which is at the same time in accord with professional values and goals?

5. Conclusion

In human service organizations, it is easy after a time for social workers to become worn down by the pace of work and constant demands and inured to dubious ethical practices. This can result in dissatisfaction and cynicism about one's work. We believe that social workers can flourish within bureaucracies but it requires regular attention to the ethical aspects of one's work. We believe flourishing can best be achieved through opportunities for questioning, reflection and exchange with colleagues. To enable social workers' flourishing, human service organizations need to build into practice, not just supervision (as is currently done), but also peer evaluation and exchange, case conferences focused on ethics, workshops and other educational opportunities that put ethics at the center. There should also be on-going ways for social workers to inform the directors of their organizations of ethical problems and concerns. In these ways, social workers can continue to develop the virtues necessary to good social work practice and to flourishing in their organizations.

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