

**GOALS AND SCOPE OF THE *INTERNATIONAL
JOURNAL OF SELF HELP & SELF CARE***

A new journal or magazine devoted to a topic is a sign that the topic has achieved a critical mass of interested parties that can support a formal means of communicating ideas, news, and perspectives. For this reason, we view the inauguration of the *International Journal of Self Help & Self Care (IJSHSC)* as a good sign not just for its readers, but for the self-help movement as a whole, which seems to be growing in size and visibility with each passing year. *IJSHSC* will hopefully illuminate, support, and evaluate the movement as its influence is more broadly felt.

The need for this *Journal* was first expressed at a conference in Chicago that was intended to follow up on Surgeon General Koop's 1981 self-help workshop. The scope of the *Journal* was determined based on a survey of 100 interested self-help group members, clearinghouse staff researchers, and our own perceptions of what is timely and relevant to the self-help/mutual aid movement. All of these sources of data led us to plan for a journal that does not fit neatly into the categories of "academic research journal" or "magazine for a popular readership," but rather combines the virtues of each type.

Specifically, *IJSHSC* will be a source first of information on current developments, activities, and innovations in self-help groups and organizations around the world. Such information would include descriptions of specific organizations, the status and activities of self-help clearinghouses, laws and policies relevant to self-help, as well as announcements of upcoming conferences and other events related to self-help. Second, the *Journal* will present an opportunity for the presentation and debate of viewpoints and opinions on issues that have not been resolved, such as the appropriate role of self-help vis-à-vis the health care system. Third, the *Journal* will devote some space in each issue to the presentation of high quality, peer-reviewed research on self-help and self-care. Fourth, the *Journal* will review articles, books, videos, cassettes, films, and World Wide Web sites that are or have been useful to people in the self-help field. Finally, the *Journal* will occasionally reprint past materials that deserve a second look and/or a wider audience.

In selecting articles for publication, we will seek to represent diverse viewpoints on controversial issues in self-help thinking and practices. Among such issues are: Criteria for defining self-help and self-care activities, roles of professionals relating to mutual aid activities, ethnic and minority participation in self-help, the role of government agencies in promoting and subsidizing self-help, ways of incorporating self-help knowledge and experience in professional training curricula, if and how self-help groups can survive without outside financial help, the role of self-help in the industrial and occupational scene, how groups can maintain confidentiality, the challenges of doing research on groups, the prohibition of political stances by many 12-step organizations, the role of spirituality in groups, the use of computers and Web-sites for self-help, overcoming burnout by group leaders, and the meaning of “empowerment” in the self-help setting. Concrete subjects such as housing, employment, welfare, and health will be discussed.

Such topics may be dealt with individually in separate issues, or may be the main theme for an entire issue of the *Journal*. We welcome suggestions for special issue themes from readers, self-help group members, and the Editorial and Advisory Boards. We are particularly interested in topics on which there is not a consensual agreement, but that would benefit from discussion. The next two issues of *IJSHSC* are tentatively planned to focus on minority participation in groups and on relationships of groups to professionals.

We are pleased to have an experienced and diverse editorial board and will seek review and evaluations from them for all submitted materials. In addition to the editorial board, we are also fortunate in having a prestigious international advisory board of some dozen prominent people. The chair of this board is Dr. Carlos Martini, former Vice-President of the American Medical Association for Patient Education. Dr. Martini has studied, practiced, and taught in Argentina, England, and the United States and has been a great supporter of self-help and self-care over the years. You will probably also recognize and be familiar with the work of other advisory board members.

In addition to thanking our board members, we wish to express our personal appreciation to Mr. Stuart Cohen, the President of Baywood Publishing, for his continuous support, flexibility, and understanding of our objectives for *IJSHSC*. We hope we can repay him with a product that is stimulating, up-to-date, and successful.

Despite the mythology, editors have only very limited control of the quality and contents of journals. Good journals, like good self-help groups, require active involvement and participation from a variety of people. We therefore hope you will support *IJSHSC* through your readership, constructive criticism, and submission of materials. As the self-help and self-care movements continue to move forward, new issues and controversies will surely arise in keeping with political, social, and economic changes that will occur. We expect self-help and

self-care to continue to be a dynamic force, a field where a lot is happening and must be thought through.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR AUTHORS

Any article on self-help within the above broadly defined scope of the *Journal* is appropriate for submission. In addition, comments on previously published articles and letters to the editor are encouraged. All manuscripts should be submitted in triplicate in English. All material should be double-spaced in dark and clear type. Submissions must include a cover letter stating that the article is not previously published or under review elsewhere. The cover letter should also include the author's mailing address, phone number, fax number, and electronic mail address if available. The 4th edition of the American Psychological Association (1994) publication manual should be consulted for guidelines on style and reference format.

Reports of empirical research should be a maximum of 3500 words including a 100-150 word abstract. Research reports that have clear, *practical relevance* to implementing, improving, or evaluating self-help and self-care activities are particularly welcome. Research reports should be directed to Keith Humphreys, Ph.D., Associate Editor, VA Palo Alto Health Care System (152-MPD), 795 Willow Road, Menlo Park, CA 94025 USA.

All other submissions, such as program descriptions, news items, letters, reviews, and essays should be directed to Dr. Alfred Katz, Editor, UCLA School of Public Policy, Room 5214, Los Angeles, CA 90095 USA. Letters and reviews should be no more than 400 words long. Submissions of news items should be 1000-1500 words long.

Alfred Katz
Keith Humphreys