

ALISON B. WETMUR, DSW, LCSW

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RESEARCH PROFILE

Social work scholar and clinician whose research examines how the profession's foundational frameworks fail disabled and Deaf people, and what should replace them. The work grows out of more than fifteen years of trauma-focused clinical practice in a bilingual English and ASL setting, and runs along three lines: language deprivation, identity formation, and social-emotional development among people who grow up deaf in hearing families; behavioral health service access for Deaf, DeafDisabled, and hard-of-hearing communities, approached as a systems problem rather than an interpreter problem; and Disability Justice critique of social work's theoretical inheritance, including development of the Embodiment-Identity-Access (EIA) assessment as a clinical alternative to deficit documentation. Recipient of the 2026 Council on Social Work Education Disability Manuscript Award and inaugural Chair of the NASW National Committee on Disabilities. Teaching spans fifteen distinct courses (36 sections) across the BASW, MSW, and DSW curricula.

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Language deprivation as developmental trauma; identity formation and social-emotional development among d/Deaf people raised in hearing families
- Behavioral health service access for Deaf, DeafDisabled, and hard-of-hearing communities
- Disability Justice critiques of social work theory, ethics, assessment, and education, including ableism in social work education
- Trauma-informed clinical practice and clinical supervision; qualitative and phenomenological methods

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Visiting Lecturer 2023–Present

University of Kentucky, College of Social Work

- Full instructional load across the BASW, MSW, and DSW curricula
- Course coordinator for multi-section courses, with oversight of 10+ instructors
- Faculty reviewer, MSW and DSW admissions; departmental and college governance

Lecturer II, Social Work (Non-Tenure Track) 2021–2022

Gallaudet University. Taught in the BSW program, including quantitative and qualitative research methods and macro and micro practice.

Adjunct Faculty, Sign Language & Disability Studies 2020–2023

Connecticut College. Built the ASL curriculum for the College's pilot program, now a permanent offering.

Adjunct Faculty, Sign Language & Human Services 2012–2023

Manchester Community College. Developed ASL and disability studies curricula across seven courses.

EDUCATION

Doctor of Social Work (DSW) 2022

Rutgers University, School of Social Work

Master of Social Work (MSW) 2009

Rutgers University, School of Social Work

Certificate in American Sign Language 2006

Ocean County College. First Deaf/hard-of-hearing person to complete the program.

Bachelor of Arts, English Literature 2000

Drew University

HONORS AND AWARDS

For “The experience of growing up Deaf in a hearing-abled family: A phenomenological study,” *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare* (2024).

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

Llamosa, P., & Wetmur, A. B. (2025). For a more holistic conceptualization of clinical supervision: Challenges and opportunities for clinical practice. *Social Work*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/swaf020>

Wetmur, A. B. (2024). The experience of growing up Deaf in a hearing-abled family: A phenomenological study. *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, 51(1). <https://doi.org/10.15453/0191-5096.4715>

Book Chapters

Gault, G. L., Wetmur, A. B., Plummer, S., & Findley, P. A. (2023). Violence against people with disabilities: Implications for practice. In E. Slayter & L. Johnson (Eds.), *Social work practice and disability communities: An intersectional anti-oppressive approach*. Pressbooks. <https://pressbooks.pub/disabilitysocialwork/>

Sherwood, K., Kattari, S. K., & Wetmur, A. B. (2023). Sexuality, hearing loss, and d/Deaf individuals. In S. K. Kattari (Ed.), *Exploring sexuality and disability: A guide for human service professionals* (pp. 96–107). Routledge.

Manuscripts Under Review

Wetmur, A. B., & Durant, K. T. (revised and resubmitted). Access is not accommodation: Disability Justice, care ethics, and social work’s Rawlsian inheritance. *Affilia*.

Wetmur, A. B., & Skyer, M. (under review). We are disabled: Ableism, classification, and Deaf political identity. *Disability & Society*.

Wetmur, A. B., & DeJong-Shier, M. (in revision). Before anyone says no: Anticipatory self-sorting in social work field education. Target journal: *Applied Learning in Social Work Education*.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Active Studies

- Collaborative autoethnography of Deaf faculty experience in American academia (with K. Scoresby)
- Follow-up study to “Beyond ramps, curb cuts and captions: A call for Disability Justice in social work” (with E. Slayter, S. K. Kattari, L. Yakas, et al.)
- Study of attendee and non-attendee perceptions of access at the CSWE Disability Justice and Disability Joy conference, developed at CSWE’s request (with L. Wernick and E. Bowman)
- Whose job is it to be understood? Communication-access labor and d/Deaf children in hearing families: a qualitative interview study of d/Deaf adults conducted in ASL (IRB submission in preparation)

Manuscripts in Preparation

Wetmur, A. B., & Durant, K. T. (in preparation). From deficit documentation to institutional accountability: The Embodiment-Identity-Access (EIA) Assessment in clinical social work. Target journal: *Clinical Social Work Journal*. Companion to “Access is not accommodation.”

Wetmur, A. B., Durant, K. T., & Jackson, S. (in preparation). *Flipping the table: Disability Justice critiques of social work’s foundational frameworks*. MSW textbook manuscript proposal.

Wetmur, A. B., Durant, K. T., DeJong-Shier, M., Fiero, A., & Evans, S. (in preparation). Futures work through a Disability Justice lens [Book chapter]. In L. Nissen, E. Uehara, & N. Smyth (Eds.), *Grand Challenges for Social Work Futures Project volume* (title forthcoming).

Wetmur, A. B., Durant, K. T., DeJong-Shier, M., Fiero, A., & Evans, S. (in preparation). *Disability Justice as a cross-cutting framework for the Grand Challenges for Social Work* [White paper].

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

Invited Presentations

- Wetmur, A. B. (2026). *Integrating across the Grand Challenges: Strategies, barriers, & new commitments*. Invited panel, GCSW Festival of Ideas, Washington, DC.
- Wetmur, A. B. (2026). ASL storyteller, *Story Time: An inclusive bilingual (English/ASL) reading of The Quest for the Cockle Implant*. Community event sponsored by the University of Connecticut Avery Point, the Connecticut National Estuarine Research Reserve, and the HELLO Lab, Groton, CT.
- Wetmur, A. B. (2013–2020). *Disability Justice, Deafness, and Deaf culture*. Recurring guest lecture, Eastern Connecticut State University, Willimantic, CT.
- Wetmur, A. B. (2026). *From isolation to identity: Centering d/Deaf standpoint epistemology in Disability Justice pedagogy*. Invited presentation, Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Annual Program Meeting, Atlanta, GA.

Conference Presentations

- Wetmur, A. B. (2025). *Integrating Disability Justice principles into an affirming social work practice model*. Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting.
- Scoresby, K., Wetmur, A. B., & Niehaus, M. (2025). *The role of social work in supporting Deaf children and their families*. International Congress on the Education of the Deaf, Rome, Italy.
- Wetmur, A. B., & Scoresby, K. (2025). *Deaf in American academia: A collaborative autoethnography*. International Congress on the Education of the Deaf, Rome, Italy.
- Wetmur, A. B. (2024). *Deafness and disability in the college classroom*. Disability Justice IS Social Work Convening.
- Wetmur, A. B. (2023). *Social work and disability: A historical perspective*. Disability and Social Work Convening.

Submitted

- Wetmur, A. B., & Skyer, M. (submitted). *We Are Disabled: A Coalitional Framework for Ableism, Classification, and Deaf Political Identity*. Proposal submitted for the ACE-DHH Conference, Boston, MA, January 2027.

TEACHING

Courses Taught

University of Kentucky, College of Social Work (2023–present). Instructor of record for fifteen distinct courses (36 sections) across the BASW, MSW, and DSW curricula, taught online.

Bachelor of Arts in Social Work

SW 435 Foundations of Professional Ethics in Social Work (Fall 2023, Spring 2024, Fall 2024, Spring 2025, Fall 2025)

Master of Social Work

SW 600 Social Work Practice with Individuals and Families (Fall 2023)
SW 620 Understanding Theory in Social Work Practice (Summer 2024, Summer 2025, Fall 2025)
SW 625 Introduction to Social Work: Professional Behavior and Ethics (Fall 2023, Spring 2024, Fall 2024, Spring 2025, Fall 2026)
SW 726 Psychopathology for Clinical Social Work (Spring 2026)
SW 731 Advanced Social Welfare Policy and Analysis (Spring 2026)

Doctor of Social Work

SW 852 Introduction to Doctoral Studies (Summer 2024, Spring 2025, Summer 2026)
SW 853 Contemporary Social Work Concepts (Summer 2024)
SW 855 Supervision, Ethics & Professional Practice (Fall 2023, Fall 2024, Fall 2025, Fall 2026)
SW 860 Program Evaluation Methods (Spring 2024, Spring 2025, Spring 2026)
SW 865 Foundational Theory (Spring 2024)
SW 872 Clinical Praxis Theory (Fall 2025, Fall 2026)
SW 876 Critical Issues in Social Work Education (Fall 2024)
SW 892 Colloquium I (Summer 2026)

SW 893 Justice-Informed Social Work Practice (Spring 2025, Summer 2025 [two sections], Summer 2026)

Doctoral Program Instruction and Mentoring

Scholarship with DSW students, including co-authorship on peer-reviewed manuscripts and a textbook proposal
DSW Capstone Project, Class of 2027, co-teacher
DSW Residency Week 2024, section instructor
Mentored and provided a reference for a CSWE MFP winner
DSW New Student Orientation, Summer 2024, Summer 2025, and Summer 2026
Social Work Systematic Literature Review Search Strategies, instructor

Gallaudet University (2021–2022): BSW program, including quantitative and qualitative research methods, macro practice, and micro practice.

Connecticut College and Manchester Community College (2012–2023): American Sign Language and disability studies across seven courses; First-Year Seminar on Disability Justice.

Curriculum and Program Development

- Developed a Disability Justice course for the MSW program and redeveloped it for the BASW curriculum, carrying it through the University of Kentucky College of Social Work curriculum approval process (2024); BASW offering forthcoming
- Redesigned SW 876: Critical Issues in Social Work Education, a DSW course, including interactive asynchronous lessons and a revised syllabus (2024), and taught the redesigned course
- Redesigned SW 871: Advanced Psychopathology and Psychopharmacology, a DSW course, updating curriculum, learning outcomes, and course materials; base syllabus revised 2024 and 2026
- Designed and implemented the ASL curriculum now institutionalized at Connecticut College
- Developed a First-Year Seminar on Disability Justice, Connecticut College (2022)
- Helped establish the Sign Language Certificate Program at Manchester Community College, developing ASL and disability studies curricula across seven courses
- Collaborated with Dr. Shelita Jackson, Director of BASW Undergraduate Studies, on expanding Disability Justice content across the College’s BASW curriculum

Teaching Areas

Social work ethics and ethical decision-making; clinical and trauma-informed clinical practice; clinical supervision; social welfare policy and structural inequity; Disability Justice and accessibility; Deaf studies and culturally responsive practice with d/Deaf and hard-of-hearing communities; psychopathology and psychopharmacology; program evaluation and research methods; professional and scholarly writing; online and hybrid pedagogy in professional education.

CLINICAL PRACTICE

Owner and Therapist 2017–Present

True Places Counseling PLLC, New London, CT. Bilingual (English/ASL) clinical practice serving d/Deaf, Deaf/Disabled, hard-of-hearing, and disability communities. Specialization in trauma, EMDR, and DBT.

Clinician 2013–2017

Change, Inc., New London, CT

Clinical Social Worker 2009–2013

American School for the Deaf, West Hartford, CT

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND FIELD IMPACT

Chair, National Committee on Disabilities (Inaugural) 2026–2028

National Association of Social Workers (NASW)

- Provide strategic leadership integrating Disability Justice frameworks across social work practice, ethics, and professional education
- Advise national leadership on accessibility, equity, and disability inclusion within professional policy and programming
- Convene cross-sector scholars, practitioners, and advocates to shape field-wide initiatives

Futures Lead, Cross-Cutting Disability Justice Working Group 2025–2026
Social Work Grand Challenges Futures Initiative

- Lead integration of Disability Justice as a cross-cutting framework across Grand Challenge domains
- Facilitate foresight-based collaboration and long-range scenario planning

Co-Founder, Social Work Disability Justice League 2022–Present

- Organizer, Annual Disability Justice League Unconference

BOARD AND ADVISORY SERVICE

Leadership Advisory Council Member 2025–Present
Grand Challenges for Social Work. Contributes to national strategic visioning for the future of social work research, education, and practice.

Board Member 2026–Present
CT Hands & Voices, a parent-driven nonprofit supporting families of children who are d/Deaf or hard of hearing throughout Connecticut.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Ad hoc peer reviewer: Social Work; Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education; Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare; Disability & Society.

- Faculty reviewer, MSW and DSW admissions, University of Kentucky College of Social Work
- Organizer, Annual Disability Justice League Unconference

CREDENTIALS AND CERTIFICATIONS

Licensed Clinical Social Worker (CT) | SIFI Certification | EMDR Training

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

National Association of Social Workers (NASW) | Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR) | American Deafness and Rehabilitation Association (ADARA) | Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)