



# Grief and Hope for 2021

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As we enter a new year, this issue will look both forward and back. We introduce a new cover for the journal and I begin by honoring the artist whose work it represents, Christine Pemberton. Ms. Pemberton was an accomplished painter and we are honored to feature her work, “Street Scene,” on our 2021 cover. We knew each other for many years through my work at Howard Center, a community mental health center in Burlington, Vermont. Although we met because of some of the struggles she confronted in her life, she was much more than that. A thoughtful, perceptive, and loving friend, daughter, and sibling, Christine was also a founding member of Howard Center’s Arts Collective, a consortium of clients and employees of the agency who joined together to create and appreciate art. The Collective was a grass roots organization that embodied a democratic approach. Membership was defined by interest in art rather than position within the agency. Ms. Pemberton died unexpectedly and prematurely in early 2020, before the pandemic was active in the US, but her death heralded those of so many others in this horrid year. This new cover honors Ms. Pemberton, the spirit of the Howard Center Arts Collective, and all whose lives were lost in 2020. At the same time, it reminds us of the richness of life and the abilities of so many to thrive in the face of adversity.

This first issue of 2021 includes some of the first articles submitted in response to the COVID 19 pandemic. We received many surveys reporting on rates of depression, anxiety, and stress in various populations and several of these reports are published here. We include a Fresh Focus article by Guan et al. (2020) describing the early challenges and adaptations in an assertive community treatment program as it responded to the pandemic. We also include other papers detailing further responses to the pandemic: how clinics mobilized, novel interventions they implemented,

adjustments made by both clinicians and clients. Other papers address telepsychiatry, a practice that expanded exponentially along with the spread of the virus. We expect to publish more on these topics in the months to come. Once again, we thank our authors and reviewers who contributed despite the exigencies of this extraordinary year.

We have recently updated our Aims and Scope, which will guide us in the future as we determine which submissions are of greatest relevance to our community:

*Community Mental Health Journal* focuses on the needs of people experiencing serious forms of psychological distress, as well as the structures established to address those needs.

Areas of particular interest include critical examination of current paradigms of diagnosis and treatment, socio-structural determinants of mental health, social hierarchies within the public mental health systems, and the intersection of public mental health programs and social/racial justice and health equity.

While this is the journal of the American Association for Community Psychiatry, we welcome manuscripts reflecting research from a range of disciplines on recovery-oriented services, public health policy, clinical delivery systems, advocacy, and emerging and innovative practices.

The pandemic has highlighted the effects of structural racism on all aspects of health and well-being; it reinforces the decision to specify social and racial justice in our Aims and Scope. We are pleased that an additional Fresh Focus article in this issue addresses structural factors in the Movement for Global Mental Health. Cosgrove and colleagues (2020) challenge some of the assumptions and suggestions put forward by the World Health Organization and the Lancet Commission on Global Mental Health. Specifically, the authors argue that there has to date been a disproportionate focus on scaling up access to diagnosis and treatment and, in doing so, prioritizing a colonizing, medicalized perspective. While these efforts may be well-intended, the authors

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suggest that a focus on deficits conceived as existing within individuals risks minimization of contributory social problems such as poverty, sexism, and racism. They articulate a rights-based approach that prioritizes attention to structural inequities and elevates the voices of those with lived experience. This model has broad applicability and resonates with the Aims and Scope of this journal. It also has relevance beyond the global south—the focus of this article—and carries implications for how we address other marginalized and oppressed groups, including those who reside in wealthier countries. We welcome research and opinion that elaborates on these themes.

Both of the Fresh Focus articles will be open access for the first 2 months of 2021. We hope this a better year for all of us. Thank you for your ongoing support as both readers and contributors.

## References

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