**ePoster Presentation**

**(SSWR 2016)**

**Titles (12 words):**

Financial Capability: Financial Literacy and Self-Efficacy from the Students’ Perspectives

**Background/Purpose**

Financial social work and its emphasis on financial capability are emerging priorities in the education of social work students and within the profession. At the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, the School of Social Work is training students as new practitioners in the field. Both as college students and budding social workers, they are an ideal group in which to examine perceptions, financial knowledge and self-efficacy, and career plans. There is intriguing research on how social workers are addressing the financial hardship concerns of their clients, and it is demonstrating largely that social workers identify gaps in their educational backgrounds on working effectively with individuals, families, and communities regarding their complex financial struggles. Closely interwoven with this is that they may feel ill-equipped not only to help deal with clients’ financial issues but also feel financially illiterate themselves and recognize the need for more training. Translating that to social work education, social workers must become familiar with financial concepts not only for their own lives but also in how they assess, collaborate, and intervene with their clients and/or larger client systems. This indeed is part of the Grand Challenges in financial capability.

**Methods**

This project utilized an educational intervention to help students learn about financial issues and to develop their own sense of financial capability. The educational intervention consisted of a series of six workshops on financial throughout the school year and included the following elements:

* Teaching the integration of these concepts with sound social work practice
* Instruction on how to intervene effectively with clients in financial hardship with implications for their emotional and behavioral well-being
* Learning about applicable micro and macro social work theories
* Knowledge of ethical and social justice implications
* Learning from micro and macro social work practitioners
* Relevance of these concepts to entitlement programs, resources, and other new laws and programs affecting clients’ well-being, as well as relevant public and global policies
* Assessing financial well-being

A standardized instrument was administered pre- and post-intervention; a focus group with students was also conducted to delve into students’ perceptions and learning about financial capability and its relevance to their personal and professional lives.

**Results**

Data analysis demonstrates a statistically significant improvement in scores, pretest and post-test, across financial knowledge and financial self-efficacy. Results from the focus group indicate that students gained a great deal of financial knowledge from the series and enjoyed learning. Students also indicated that they learned how to apply the knowledge they learned to social work macro and clinical practice.

**Conclusion/Implications**

This project outlines an innovative idea for research and implementation that contributes not only to innovative research in the area of financial capability for social work students, but also capitalizes and builds upon curricula within social work programs. It is more timely than ever to consider financial capability among social workers who will soon be working with vulnerable clients and systems. This project focuses on students’ financial capability as a complement to their education and later, as they pursue careers in social work.