The potential of marketing communications to protect social workers in times of crisis.

Abstract

Socially stigmatized service workers (SSWs) like probation officers, social workers, and even aged care workers are often subject to negative media scrutiny when a crisis occurs, leading to public outrage and subsequent high attrition rates. The primary focus of this study is to examine the potential for marketing communication to generate a state of empathic concern amongst the public towards SSWs because an empathic public is less likely to want to punish, despite media calls to do so. A case is presented for the use of marketing communication explained through the lens of narrative execution and the general theory of emotion. Using a content analysis of public service announcements from representative bodies of social workers, in the US, UK and Australia we find little evidence of strategic intent to use narrative format or elicit empathic concern. A call and direction for further research is made in light of this finding.

Introduction

“Social workers failed to protect Noah McIntosh before his death, lawsuit alleges” (Fry, 2020) “Social workers failed to protect two toddlers who were murdered by men authorities knew to be dangerous, a damning review has found” (Dolan, 2019 p.37); “Social workers “dropped the ball” and “failed to take appropriate action,” (Downey, 2019). These are only some of the recent headlines in mainstream press reflecting the consistently negative media portrayal of social workers, which in turn contributes to a negative public perception of their roles (Frost, 2019). As The Times’ (UK) Greg Hurst reported in 2019, “…social work has become the job that dare not speak its name…Negative stereotypes of politically correct do-gooders or hapless professionals blamed for failing to protect children are so prevalent that social workers often feel judged” (Hurst, 2019 p.36).

Social workers fall into the category of stigmatized service workers (SSWs) because they engage in work with individuals who themselves are stigmatized, for example, the homeless, the mentally ill, the poor (Bove and Pervan, 2013). Their work can be difficult and often necessitates a range of effortful coping strategies (Ashforth et al., 2017), something Bove and Pervan (2013) have termed stigmatized labor. Unsurprisingly, studies indicate that, in these kinds of roles, workers have a higher chance of suffering from poor psychosocial well-being and health, as well as high stress and turnover (Bickmeier, Lopina, and Rogelberg, 2014).

While valued, there is an acknowledged lack of direct interest in SSWs. As such, perceptions of these service workers are often only formed only when media brings them to the fore (Olin, 2013). This is problematic because the media is usually only interested in reporting these roles during a crisis event (Chenot, 2011). Using social workers as a context, Chenot (2011) describes these events as a “vicious cycle” where local and/or national syndication occurs, highlighting worker
incompetence or neglect followed by political intervention or threat of agency review. Resignations and policy reform can occur before media attention dissipates and this cycle repeats even in times when very little could have been done to prevent the incident (Starks, 1997; Chenot, 2011). Fallout can include increased stress, burnout, diminished morale and lower levels of commitment to the service or agency, and turnover, (Balfour and Neff, 1993; Tower, 2000; Landsman, 2001; Gibelman 2004; Zugazaga et al., 2006). Driscoll (2009) also notes increased managerial work as a further consequence, shifting the focus to administrative duties rather than client attention.

Research in marketing (Pervan and Bove, 2015) which draws on a substantial body of work in psychology (Batson et al. 1997; 2002), suggests that a public showing empathic concern for SSWs is less likely to respond negatively to a crisis event. A key recommendation of the study for public and private organizations that represent SSWs is that empathy generating strategies should be put in place before a crisis event. This was based on findings that response to crisis is less negative when the public is more empathically concerned regardless of the crisis’ severity; with empathic concern even overcoming public anger when the crisis was not too severe. Given this finding, we seek to explore the marketing communication strategies organizations can use for empathic concern generation.

Two contributions to strategic marketing communication are made in this study. The first is the presentation of a conceptual model, which outlines the effect of narrative format and emotional content on empathic concern for SSWs, which in turn leads to reduced stigmatization and helping behavior. The second, is a better understanding of whether the current communication strategies being used across three governing bodies of SSWs reflect the use of narrative format and emotional content recommended by the model.

The study proceeds with the presentation of our theoretical background and conceptual development. We then report the findings from three content analyses that offer some face validity testing of our theorization. We conclude with a discussion of the findings of our content analyses and highlight implications and future research directions.

**Theoretical Background**

In this section, we first review the extant literature on empathy and the use of narrative format in marketing communications. Then, based on this review, we develop our conceptual model, which is underpinned by Transportation theory. This framework suggests that narrative transportation is a means by which marketing communications can be used to reduce the negative impact of reported crisis on SSWs.

**The importance of generating empathy**

Empathy is an “other-oriented emotional response congruent with the perceived welfare of another” (Batson et al., 1997, p.105). For example, empathic individuals can metaphorically step inside the shoes of others, and not only understand their role, but feel the emotions they experience in the role (Aaker and Williams, 1998). Batson and his colleagues have shown over a series of studies that the ability to empathize with stigmatized individuals, like an aids sufferer, a homeless person, even a murderer, improves attitudes towards their representative group and can lead to
helping behavior towards the group (Batson et al., 1997; 2002). The underlying explanation given for this effect is that empathic concern leads to a perception that the individual had less control over the event that led to the stigma, and therefore there is less controllability of causal attribution regardless of perceptions of their responsibility (Weiner, Perry and Magnusson, 1988). The effect is also explained by increased valuing of the individual (Batson et al., 2002). Both less controllability and increased valuing result in more positive evaluations. Pervan and Bove (2015) used Batson’s theory of empathic concern to show that an empathic audience perceive SSWs (mental health workers) less negatively during crisis. The effect was attenuated by anger when the crisis was more severe leading to a greater desire to punish the SSW. Thus, there is a body of evidence to indicate that empathic concern creates a buffer between SSWs and the effect of media portrayal on public perceptions and attitudes.

Batson et al. (1997) make clear in their studies that empathic concern works most effectively when it is developed prior to exposure to the stigma. To this end, understanding the effectiveness of marketing communication to essentially prime the public to show empathic concern toward SSWs prior to crisis is a compelling business problem. It is to the literature on generating empathy as a learned state that we now turn.

**Empathy as a learned state**

An empathy appeal in marketing communications is a message strategy that activates state empathy in a target audience as the basis for persuasion (Shen, 2015). There is a body of evidence showing that marketing communication can be used to induce empathy (Bagozzi and Moore, 1994; Shen, 2010a, 2011, 2015). Thus far, two paths are suggested; the first contends that content that elicits negative emotions like anger, sadness, fear and tension can lead to empathy (Bagozzi and Moore, 1994). The second path asserts that the particular and persuasive effects of the narrative can lead to empathy (Shen, 2015). Both of these approaches have been explained using the context of televised public service announcements (PSA).

Bagozzi and Moore (1994) found that exposure to child abuse PSAs led to negative emotion, which in turn led to empathic responses. They used Lazarus’ (1991) general theory of emotion to speculate that a confronting PSA creates a felt harm or threat to the viewer leading to negative emotion. Further, that each negative emotion reflects a distinct reaction to the potential thwarting of something dear to them, via appraisals made of another’s situation that also have personal significance; thus generating an empathic response. In their study, they explain how awareness of child abuse triggers a feeling of loss or threat to one’s “ego ideals, moral values and images of other persons and their well-being” (p. 60). They hypothesized that viewing an emotional, as opposed to a rational appeal, would lead to greater anger, sadness, fear and tension, which would in turn induce empathic responses leading to helping behavior.

Using a narrative format is another way to generate state empathy. This effect has been shown widely including studies on drama in advertising (Chebat, Vercoller and Gelinas-Chebat, 2003); the reading of fiction (Mar, Oatley and Peterson, 2009); gaming (Gentile et al., 2009); and the use of PSAs (Shen, 2010a; 2011; 2015). The strength of narrative format in developing empathy is that the structure invites interpretation, or sense making, by the reader or viewer, and thereby stimulates cognitive and affective connections through personal memories, self-relevance and vicarious experiences (Chebat et al., 2003; Shen, 2015). Shen (2015) who also used PSAs explains how the
generation of state empathy during message processing reflects perspective taking, emotional contagion and identification. Perspective taking increases the likelihood of accepting a message and reduces the influence of counterarguments, while emotional contagion minimizes the possibility of negative emotions like anger; finally, identification allows the vicarious development of social bonds and relationships with those in the PSA (Davis, 1994). The latter considered critical as the “action tendency of state empathy is to relate and associate, rather than to reject or attack” (Shen 2015, p.574). However, Shen’s (2010b) conceptualization of the effect of state empathy specifically excludes empathic concern. This is because the persuasive message focused on situations evoking positive empathy, relating to the wellbeing of the viewer, in this case smoking cessation, rather than concern for another.

Taken together these studies provide cautious support for the potential of marketing communications to develop empathy in others. In the current study, we are concerned with the wellbeing of the “other” and specifically the beneficial impact of generating empathic concern for SSWs (Pervan and Bove, 2015). However, Bagozzi and Moore’s (1994) work addresses unpleasant emotions, something Batson, Fultz, and Schoenrade (1987) have termed empathic distress. Although, they too show it leads to helping behavior, the motivation to help is theorized as egoistic and designed to alleviate unwanted thoughts and feelings. In contrast, the helping behavior derived from empathic concern is altruistically motivated, driven by the desire to help an individual or group the person feels favorable towards (Batson et al., 1987). Given the negative portrayal of SSWs already evident in the media, and the negative impact on wellbeing this has, it is likely to be more beneficial to SSWs if empathic concern rather than distress is generated to induce help. It is the use of narrative format that appears more likely to achieve this. As such, we ask the following research questions:

RQ1: How can the use of the narrative format inform marketing communications to reduce the negative impact of reported crisis on socially stigmatized social workers?
RQ2: Do marketing communication strategies by peak bodies representing SSWs, focus on narrative based communication to generate empathic concern for their workers?

Narrative format of marketing communications

A narrative is a temporal sequence of connected events for the characters involved (van Laer et al., 2014). A narrative follows a plot line with schematic elements such as setting, event, reaction and consequence (Appel and Richter, 2010) and typically concerns relationships between people (Mar et al. 2006). Narratives persuade not by constructing logical arguments as informational accounts do, but by engrossing the audience into the real or fictional experiences of others, a process termed narrative transportation (Green and Brock, 2000; van Laer et al., 2014). Narrative transportation is operationalized as the degree to which an individual is engaged in the story, has vivid mental images of the event described or shown, and is emotionally impacted by the story (Green and Brock, 2000). This leads the audience “to focus on the events in the story rather than make counterarguments” (Shen, Sheer and Li, 2015, p.106). In other words, a transported audience is too cognitively busy engaging in the story to generate counterarguments against the story’s persuasive attempt which are often embedded and implicit (Shen, Sheer and Li, 2015). The result is that narratives can alter the attitudes and beliefs that recipients hold about the world (Appel and Richter
Such as stigmatization, as transportation results in “a loss of success to real-world information” (Green and Brock, 2000, p.703).

Argo, Zhu and Dahl (2008) show that the conveyance of the sufferings and struggles of protagonists in narratives (especially when depicted as a ‘real life story’) often fosters deep emotional responses in consumers if they have dispositional empathy and are transported into the story. Indeed, emotions are not only evoked but can suddenly shift by the progression of unexpected events that the characters face in the narrative (e.g., attack; Nabi and Green, 2015). Appel and Richter (2010) find that individuals with a strong need for affect, experience high levels of transportation while reading a narrative. These respective findings suggest that individuals who are more transported into a story report higher affective empathy for the story characters (Johnson, 2012) as they try to understand their experiences (van Laer et al., 2014). This in turn influences the individual’s willingness to act pro-socially, that is help the protagonists (e.g., Johnson, 2012).

Although Argo et al. (2008) viewed empathy and transportation as two independent process mechanisms, Bal and Veltkamp (2013) show that they are connected, namely that the experiential state of narrative transportation leads to higher empathy. This is because the process of transportation enables identification with the character in the story and causes the viewer/reader to empathize with the character and even experience the events in the story (Bal and Veltkamp, 2013; Johnson, 2012; Johnson et al., 2013).

This leads us to our conceptual model as depicted in Figure 1 which suggests that narrative transportation has a two-throng approach to reducing the need to punish a SSW during a crisis. The use of marketing communications in narrative format with strong emotional content, (for example, depicting a social worker that suffers during the course of their work), increases the degree of narrative transportation (Appel and Richter, 2010). This relationship is strengthened by the individual’s personal disposition e.g., need for affect (Appel and Richter, 2010), or empathy trait (Argo, et al., 2008), or ‘transportability’ (van Laer et al., 2014) e.g., need to escape (Green and Brock, 2000). The first persuasive effect of narrative transportation is that it shifts beliefs and attitudes toward information that is woven into the plot of the narrative (Appel and Richter, 2010; Green and Brock, 2000; Johnson, 2012; Oliver et al., 2012). This suggests that existing beliefs and attitudes concerning stigmatization can be weakened by narrative transportation as reduced cognitive activity lowers the propensity for counterarguments as the audience focus on the plot unfolding (Nabi and Green, 2015).

The second persuasive effect of narrative transportation is that it fosters emotional responses such as empathic concern toward the story’s characters, not only leading to attitude changes but engendering feelings of obligation to help them (Bal and Veltkamp, 2013; Johnson, 2012). For example, Mazzocco et al. (2010) found that the link between narrative transportation and attitude towards homosexuals as deserving of compassion was mediated by empathy. Similarly, Oliver et al. (2012) showed that empathic attitudes arising from narrative formats with strong affective (compassionate) reactions led to more favorable attitudes towards stigmatized groups (elderly...
persons, immigrants and prisoners), intentions to perform behaviors that are beneficial to the targeted group (e.g., donate money, sign a petition, discuss the situation with others), and information seeking behavior to learn more about the advocacy groups who assist the stigmatized groups.

What is particularly favorable about this marketing communications approach is that the effects of narrative transportation are pervasive. Known as the ‘sleeper effect’ these belief shifts may not be apparent immediately but increase in magnitude over time, lasting for about two weeks (Appel and Richter, 2007). This is because when individuals are transported into stories they are better at remembering the story which enables mental representations afterwards (Bal and Veltamp, 2013). Indeed, for sleeper effects to occur, an incubation period is needed, in which individuals can think back and mentally relive what they have read or seen (Bal and Veltamp, 2013). Thus, the sleeper effect is useful in so much as it can exert an influence on downstream attitudes when individuals read in the media about SSWs in crisis.

It remains to be seen how prevalent the use of narrative format is toward generating empathic concern for SSWs. An initial investigation of this informs the next sections of this study.

Methodology

Advocacy groups for social workers were chosen as the context for investigation. Social workers have been identified as socially stigmatized by Ashforth et al. (2007) and associated with crisis events. They are also one of the largest groups of SSWs. For example, in the US, over 680,000 social workers are in employment with projected growth of 16% over the next 10 years (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018).

Communication by advocacy groups such as peak bodies covers four principal functions, namely, policy research and information gathering, public awareness and education, organizing and coordination and pressure and influencing (McNutt, 2006). Extant literature has shown that in a social work environment, use of the internet has allowed groups to appeal to decision-makers and the general public via the targeted information flow the technology allows (Edwards and Hoefer, 2010). During times of crises, organizations frequently use press releases (PRs) via websites to inform the media or public of the crisis event (Alfonso and Suzanne, 2008). Press releases have been found to be an effective tool of communication as they are timely, regularly followed by journalists (Dyck and Zingales, 2003), and can advance the organization’s profile (Waters et al., 2009).

To better understand the PR practices of professional organizations that are tasked with supporting their social worker members, we accessed the PRs of the largest representative bodies in three countries, National Association of Social Workers (NASW) in the US, the British Association of Social Workers (BASW), and the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW). In total 666 press releases were examined over a six-year period (2013-2019; 165 in the US, 195 in Australia.
and 306 in Britain). Two independent judges were used to perform the coding process. Both were experienced faculty research assistants familiar with content analysis. The judges were provided with a training session which explained the coding categories and were then required to code a number of press releases independently. These were then assessed for consistency with any discrepancies reconciled between the coders and the researcher.

Coding involved two phases, with the first examining the use of narrative in the PRs. To do this, we used Escalas’ (2004) definition of narrative, which stipulates the need for chronology and causality whereby the story contains an initial event resulting in a psychological (or physical) state leading to goals, actions, and outcomes. See Table 1 for the list of codes and narrative examples.

The second phase examined the kinds of emotions evoked about SSWs. These codes also provided insight to whether Bagozzi and Moore’s (1994) empathic distress motive was being evoked. Each PR was rated as overall emotional, rational or equal parts emotional and rational and, if the PR was categorized as overall emotional, whether the sentiment was positive or negative. In the case that the sentiment was negative, whether it was disparaging toward the worker or concerned the welfare of the worker. See Table 2 for the full list of codes and emotion examples.

The content analysis process calls for judges to have the freedom to make independent decisions (Kolbe and Burnett, 1991) and therefore the judges performed their coding in separate locations. Once complete, inter-judge reliability was assessed in order to settle on a single data set (Bagozzi, 1994). A coefficient of agreement was calculated. This was computed for all PR categories; narrative, content, appeal, and overall tone. The results showed that the agreement across all categories was 87.1%. Across the other subcategories it was 88.3% for PR content, 94.1% for appeal, 89.1% for tone and 89.5% for focus. This provided confidence that an acceptable level of consistency had occurred in the coding process to apply the same set of categories to the same content (Kassarjian, 1977).

Results
Results of phase one showed that only three PRs reflected narrative content, and these were all released in 2019 by the BASW (1% of total) in the format of quoted interviews with staff and social work students. All were positively framed in terms of how social workers were part of the solution to societal problems. In phase two, results indicate that the PRs released focused mainly on policy
announcements, upcoming events or a stance on a social issue with these three areas reflecting the focus of over 50% of PRs from the NASW and the AASW and over 40% in the BASW. A further 19-26% (NASW 25.8%; AASW 21.5%, BASW 19.3%) of the PRs focused on the professional nature of the SSW role or the task performed. However, PRs about the welfare of the worker were noticeable low in the US (1.2%) and Australia (2.1%) with only the BASW (10.5%) providing evidence of focus in this area.

Where the PR focused on the professional nature of the SSW role, the task performed, or their welfare, a binary assessment of the nature of the appeal (emotional or rational) was made and, where the appeal was overall emotional, it’s valence or tone (negative or positive). The results reported in Table 3 show very few were overall emotional with the highest at 8.8% in Britain, while in the US only 2.4% and Australia 7.7%. Results presented in Table 4 are aggregated across associations and indicate that PRs about the professional nature of the role (62%) and tasks performed by SSWs (85%) were primarily positive in tone. By contrast, PRs about the welfare of the worker were overwhelmingly negative but supportive (92%). This provides some evidence that empathic distress may be generated by these PRs though in raw numbers this represents just 23 of the 666 PRs examined.

Discussion

This study shows that the organizations that represent a prominent group of SSWs, social workers, have not focused their communication efforts on developing empathic concern. Of the 666 PRs examined between 2013-2019 only three contained narrative about the SSW, all in 2019 and released by the BASW. Further, only the BASW noticeably put out press releases that addressed the welfare of the worker. However, this was just 10.5% of their 306 press releases with just 2% or less of PRs in the US and Australia having this focus. Further, only 3.5% of these PRs contained an emotional appeal.

The industry associations under examination do focus on developing positive sentiment toward their members. For example, the NASW have annual awards highlighting the positive portrayal of social workers in film and television media. In addition, communication also focuses on developing the perception of social workers as highly trained professionals. This is in line with research, which indicates that a prestige buffer can mitigate the fallout from crises (Ashforth et al., 2007). However, there is no support in the literature that positive sentiment can induce empathic concern for SSWs.
Further, this study findings indicate little to no attempt is currently being made in PRs to facilitate the narrative transportation, which may lead to empathic concern. While there is some evidence of negative sentiment in emotional appeals, which can evoke perspectives leading to empathic distress for the stigmatized individual (Batson et al., 1987; Bagozzi and Moore, 1994) these kinds of PRs are also very few in number. Also, given the pressure SSWs are already under, engendering a distress motive to help during crisis may well put undue pressure on workers in-between crisis.

Overall, the findings are unsurprising insomuch as it is counterintuitive to focus on generating concern for workers in a sector already under stress. Nevertheless, the need to do this is the assertion of this study and it appears evident that a shift in approach is required if industry members intend to redress the impact of negative media reporting of SSWs during crisis events.

Managerial Implications

Currently, solutions to change public perception of SSWs centre primarily around preemptive relationship building with journalists, and television and movie producers to depict more positive media portrayals of SSWs (e.g., Chenot, 2011; Olin, 2013). However, this should be complemented by a focus on generating empathic concern toward these service workers. In this study, we have presented previous research that suggests marketing communication tools have the potential to help to achieve this. Further, we conceptualize how appeals that contain a narrative format and supportive emotional content are more likely to lead to narrative transportation reducing counter arguments against negative perception of SSWs. Thus increasing persuasion of communication and generating empathic concern for SSWs, which lead to the benefits of reduced stigmatization and helping behavior. The narrative found in the PRs were based around lengthy quotes from SSWs or those training to become SSWs. The use of first-person dialogue through quoted interview transcripts appears a strategy worthy of pursuing.

Much of the research presented on the use of marketing communication to generate empathy has focused on PSAs. Future research should examine how to effectively generate narrative format using other promotion tools and executions. Practical wisdom will dictate the range and cost of the strategy available to these kinds of not-for-profit organizations. Industry associations are now using a range of digital communication channels and these may be viable options for generating empathic concern for SSWs. For example, according to findings by Kent (2008, p.35), blogging helps organizations foster trusting and empathic relationships by allowing organizations to enter “private realms”. In this instance, the nature of the work performed, and the welfare of the worker would be useful topics to explore. Social media sites such as Facebook, YouTube or Twitter also provide a platform where practitioners can communicate and create dialog with a wider audience that may not have been possible through mainstream media channels. Communicating via social media has been found to engender empathy in target audiences through two-way communication (Kim and Ko, 2012), and is an effective means of getting required messages across to the media and the public. Through these various digital channels, a storytelling strategy can engage audiences over extended periods and results in empathy in the receiver (Woodside, 2010) often well after a campaign stops (Singh and Sonnenburg, 2012). It is important to note also that empathy generating strategies should be executed primarily before a crisis event (Pervan and Bove, 2015) and not simply as a reactive tool following a crisis event.

Limitations and future research
The current study focuses on PRs only. While this provided external validity as PRs were the predominant means of communication to a wider audience used by the peak bodies we studied, future research needs to examine the other approaches now being employed particularly in the digital realm. Research also needs to be extended on the effect of empathic concern on improved attitudes and helping behavior. Specifically, whether the effects shown in previous studies, based on Batson et al.’s (1997) work, still occur when empathy is generated via a marketing communication tactic. Further to that, much of the evidence presented in favor of the efficacy of marketing communication was based on research using televised PSAs. Other modes of marketing communication need to be examined. The focus should be on the relative effectiveness of marketing communication strategies realistically available to associations representing SSWs. For instance, evaluating the effectiveness of social media, given its cost effectiveness. Research is also needed on whether narrative in an SSW communication strategy can enhance empathic concern toward SSWs. Again, the power of social media given its usefulness in generating dialogue and storytelling offers a promising starting point.

The Department for Education in the UK report social worker turnover rates at 16% in 2018 (Department for Education UK, 2018) against a healthy norm of 10%. Turnover amongst corrections officer has been reported as over 30% in some states in the US (Fifield, 2016). This is reflective of an environment of instability and discontinuity of relationships between service workers and the beneficiaries of their service. Negative media attention has been identified as one of the key contributors towards this high attrition outcome (Chenot, 2011). This study posits something that industry practitioners may find counter-intuitive; that altering communication strategies to include a narrative format and emotional content with the intent of generating empathic concern towards SSWs may offer an effective way of counteracting the effect of negative media attention during crisis events. This would form part of a suite of strategies to ensure these important service workers are spoken about and portrayed in a positive light.

References


Figure 1: Conceptual model: Narrative transportation and empathic concern
Table 1: Codes used for Content Analysis: Narrative

SECTION A: Use one or more of the following to categories content of the press release.

Does the release have a goal-directed action-outcome sequence - an initial event leading to a physical or psychological response which then lead to goals and outcomes? (Escalas 2004).

1. The social worker had a very heavy case load (initial event) leading feelings of distress (psychological state) that they wanted to alleviate (goal) this led them to explore the value of their EAP (action) leading to their involvement in the program (outcome).

2. The social worker had a very heavy case load (initial event) leading feelings of distress (psychological state) ) that they wanted to alleviate (goal) this led them to explore various ways to escape the feeling (action) as a result they developed a drinking problem (outcome).

3. The client had a very hard home life with an abusive partner (initial event) leading to feeling of ill health and hopelessness (physical and psychological state) so she began to explore way to get out of the relationship (action). A social worker was able to help her seek refuge in a shelter (outcome).

SECTION B: If you coded 1-4 in SECTION A was there a meaning of the story for social workers?

1 = Yes, please state (see examples below)
2 = No

1. e.g., The social worker had a very heavy case load (initial event) leading feelings of distress (psychological state) that they wanted to alleviate (goal) this led them to explore the value of their EAP (action) leading to their involvement in the program (outcome).

Meaning: social workers have a hard life, but they have the capacity to manage this

2. e.g., The social worker had a very heavy case load (initial event) leading feelings of distress (psychological state) ) that they wanted to alleviate (goal) this led them to explore various ways to escape the feeling (action) as a result they developed a drinking problem (outcome).

Meaning: Social workers have a hard life and sometimes are unable to manage this

3. e.g., The client had a very hard home life with an abusive partner (initial event) leading to feeling of ill health and hopelessness (physical and psychological state) so she began to she reached out to human services to get help (action). A social worker was able to help her seek refuge in a shelter (outcome)

Meaning: Social workers are an important part of the solution.

Table 2: Codes used for Content Analysis: Emotions

SECTION C: Use one or more of the following to categories content of the press release.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Press release is about the professional nature of the job/worker</th>
<th>1 = Yes</th>
<th>2 = No</th>
<th>3 = Yes</th>
<th>4 = No</th>
<th>5 = Don't Apply</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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</table>
e.g., reference to qualifications and/or other training, reference to formal roles or positions
2 Press release is about the tasks performed by the worker
e.g., specific task undertaken, goals achieved or not achieved, awards
3 Press release is about the welfare of the worker
e.g., comments about the wellbeing, health or safety of the workers, worker rights & pay,
this also includes social workers being taken to court or convicted/cleared
4 Press release is about a research project
5 Press release is about a policy announcement or view point of the organization on policy or other
related matters
6 Press releases announces an upcoming or past event
7 Press release is about a social issue – e.g., addiction on the rise or more children homeless
8. Other: please elaborate in “other” section of coding sheet

SECTION D: Use one of the following categories to classify the appeal of the press release
Classify the press release appeal as:
1 Overall emotional
2 Overall rational
3 Equally emotional and rational

SECTION E: If you coded 1, 2, 3 in SECTION C use one of the following categories to
specify the overall tone of the press release.
1 Overall tone of release is positive
e.g., language used in terms of the workers professional ability and task completion:
well trained, excellent work, superb effort, great skill, etc...
e.g., language used in terms of the welfare of workers: workers are happy, great outcome
for the workers, fulfilling job, happy community, valued workers, healthy workers etc...
2 Overall tone of research is negative and disparaging of the worker
e.g., language used in terms of the workers professional ability and task completion: poorly
trained, in need of training, negligent, poor work/skills, damaging acts, neglectful, etc...
3 Overall tone of research is negative but supportive (or showing concern) of the worker or
profession
e.g., language used in terms in term of the welfare of workers: stress, burnout, turnover, In
need of help, poor health, poor salaries and job conditions etc...
4 Overall tone is in equal measure positive and negative
e.g., equal use positive and negative examples given above
5 Overall tone is neutral
e.g., no ref to positive or negative, simply a statement of fact.
Table 3: Narrative, Content, and Emotional Appeal of Press Releases: 2013-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Press release content</th>
<th>National Association of Social Workers (NASW)</th>
<th>Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW)</th>
<th>British Association of Social Workers (BASW)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional nature of the role</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasks of work performed</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare of the worker</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
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<td>Research project</td>
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<td>Policy announcement</td>
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<td>Upcoming event</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stance on social issue</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>16</td>
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</table>

Critical values: $\chi^2=5.137$, d.f.=2, $p = .077$. Computed for the first two content focuses only given the assumption of 80% cells containing expected counts of five observations or more.

Press release appeal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>National Association of Social Workers (NASW)</th>
<th>Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW)</th>
<th>British Association of Social Workers (BASW)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
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<td>2.4</td>
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<td>Rational</td>
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<td>Equally emotional and rational</td>
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Critical values: $\chi^2=24.597$, d.f.=4, $p = .000$

Total

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Table 4 Tone of Press Releases: 2013-2019

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Press release tone</th>
<th>Press release content</th>
<th>Professional nature of the role</th>
<th>Tasks of work performed</th>
<th>Welfare of the worker</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative but supporting (showing concern for worker)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative and disparaging of worker</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>66</td>
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Author/s:
Pervan, S; Bove, L; Rayne, D

Title:
The potential of marketing communications to protect social workers in times of crisis

Date:
2022

Citation:

Persistent Link:
http://hdl.handle.net/11343/249360