



## **Carework Virtual Symposium**

### **“Moving Past Emergency Responses: Care as Essential Infrastructure”**

March 1-3, 2022

#### **SUBMIT YOUR BIGGEST AND BEST IDEAS**

Living through the COVID-19 pandemic has had transformative impacts in the world of care, some negative and some positive. The Carework Network is organizing a three-day virtual symposium to bring together carework researchers from across disciplines and across the globe. We invite submissions in English or Spanish, and translation services will be available for all sessions. The theme is “Moving Past Emergency Responses: Care as Essential Infrastructure.” We now invite extended abstracts for consideration in our Scholars in Dialogue sessions, a novel format that will feature established scholars discussing three selected papers from innovative and emergent scholars. These sessions are designed to move beyond the conversation about immediate emergency responses and engage with longer-term questions about the future of carework scholarship and advocacy. See below for a description of the session themes and expert panelists.

#### **HOW TO APPLY**

We invite scholars at all levels and from all disciplines to share their biggest and best ideas, even if they are still in formation. We will select three of the submissions to be featured in each session, and these papers will form the basis of the conversation. It is our hope that this substantive exchange of ideas will make all of our work stronger as we move to advance our field in this critical historical moment.

Scholars interested in submitting their work should submit a 2-3 page extended abstract to [careworknetwork@gmail.com](mailto:careworknetwork@gmail.com) by October 15, 2021. Please indicate clearly which session you are submitting to. If selected, you will be notified by December 1, 2021 and expected to submit a full draft paper by February 1, 2022.

#### **AND, SAVE THE DATE FOR WORKSHOPS**

The symposium will also offer series of workshops designed to allow participants to work in small groups and get feedback from experts. Topics for the workshops include “Methodological Issues,” “Policy Work,” “Publishing on Care Work.” We will invite registration for the workshops in the coming weeks.

## SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

### **Session 1: Revisiting the Meaning(s) of Care** (March 1, 10am-12pm EST)

Organizer: Guillermina Altomonte

Expert Panelists: Joan Tronto, Nancy Folbre, and Nieves Rico

The COVID-19 pandemic has moved care work to the center of public debate in many countries across the globe. The terms of the dialogue have changed—its provision now redefined as infrastructure; its providers as essential workers (both remunerated and not). These categories not only make care visible and allow us to demand urgent (and long overdue) policy changes, but also invite us to rethink the boundaries and possibilities of this concept.

This session convenes a discussion on how to theorize care work in our current times. We welcome submissions aimed at, though not restricted to, these themes: How has the pandemic pushed existing conceptualizations and categorizations of care—paid and unpaid, public and private, community and institutional-based, “dirty” and nurturing, human and non-human? How has the pandemic redefined the relationship of care work with kindred concepts, such as social reproduction or “essential work”? What has the pandemic taught us about existing theories of valuation/devaluation of care work (or how care “counts”)? How do we envision the theorizing and policy use of the concept of care moving forward?

### **Session 2: The Role of the State** (March 2, 3-5pm EST)

Organizer: Katherine Ravenswood

Expert Panelists: Gabrielle Meagher, Juliana Martinez, and Fiona Williams

The current pandemic has highlighted the ways in which feminized care work (paid and unpaid) is essential to society and the economy. This has been apparent in both research and public debate where those in low paid care occupations are on the frontline during 'lockdowns' – often at greatest risk, with least protection. At the same time, the additional care duties that women have taken on in the home have negatively impacted their paid work opportunities. Despite the ways in which care work is, more than ever, essential to support society and the economy, it is often overlooked by governments and left to the market to regulate, even in countries reputed to have better and stronger government regulation of employment and public health.

This session builds on the concept of care as essential infrastructure and seeks forward-looking papers that illustrate or suggest how care work can be built into nations' economy and infrastructure. This session aims to provide international perspectives, and therefore encourages papers from economies or nations that are less often researched, or papers that compare national contexts.

### **Session 3: Technological Futures of Care** (March 3, 10am-12pm EST)

Organizer: Cindy Cain

Expert Panelists: Ariel Ducey, Allison Pugh, and Julie MacLeavy

Technological solutions have been proposed for a range of care needs – from managing health information, predicting needs, controlling medications, supporting mobility, and even serving as a companion for care recipients. Even before the pandemic, technological advancements were thought to be one way to confront the care gap and improve quality of life for care recipients.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic is presenting additional pressures to consider how technology and care intersect. Reductions in face-to-face interactions have resulted in more virtual contact between care recipients and caregivers, both formal and informal. New advances in machine learning and artificial intelligence have been considered for better predicting needs. Automation has been seen as a solution for staffing shortages in care organizations. However, new technologies also present new challenges, including ethical issues, financial considerations, unequal access, and unintended effects. This session will imagine our various technological futures of care, with a discussion of both the benefits and possible drawbacks of technological solutions to care problems.

## **ABOUT THE CAREWORK NETWORK**

The [Carework Network](#) is an international organization of scholars and advocates who focus on the caring work of individuals, families, communities, paid and unpaid caregivers, social service agencies and state bureaucracies. Care needs are shifting globally with changing demographics, disability movements, and climate change driven environmental crises. Our mission is to address critical issues related to carework, such as how identities influence carework; how inequality structures carework; how caring work is recognized and compensated; how national and global policies influence the distribution of care; the relationship between care work and movements for democracy, labor rights and social justice; care worker migration; working conditions of care; the impact of technology and artificial intelligence on care; the different experience of care in urban and rural areas; and whether and to what extent citizens have a right to receive, and a right to provide, care. Scholars and advocates working on issues related to elder care, child care, health care, social work, education, domestic work, political theory of care, social reproduction, work/family, disability studies, careworker health and safety, and related issues are encouraged to submit proposals.

The Carework Network welcomes submissions from all academic disciplines, advocacy and non-profit organizations, and public and private sector organizations. We also encourage participation by undergraduate and graduate students.