

THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK PRESENTS

# GREENING SOCIAL WORK DURING THE TIME OF COVID-19

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10 at 1PM PST**  
**MEETING ID: 852 2042 7479**

COVID-19 has challenged the social work profession in many ways, including how practitioners and academics work with people remotely, and how to address environmental issues and climate change as major challenges facing contemporary social work theory and practice. In this session Lena describes the Green Social Work (GSW) Perspective, explaining how COVID-19 arose because humanity transgressed the animal-human barrier and brought a virus that had been harboured there into the human domain. In due course, the easy availability of travel across country borders meant that the scene was set for a global pandemic to which humans had no immunity. The changes this wrought on society from travel restrictions to the shutdown of entire economies and ending the freedom of association between peoples proved demanding. Fortunately, most people responded appropriately by taking personal precautions to wear masks, sanitise surfaces and wash their hands with soap often. However, for many people, including health and social work professionals, the lack of adequate PPE (personal protective equipment) for considerable periods of time, and the restrictions on people visiting each other for social purposes, including those sick and dying in hospitals and care homes led to high levels of distress among those directly affected.

How do we respond to mitigate the likelihood of another similar pandemic? In this presentation, I argue that social workers and social work educators have key roles to play in protecting the exploitation of the environment for the purposes of making profits for the few – something that First Nations people have been arguing for a very long time. I also argue that humanity has to live more sustainably – not leave behind any carbon or other footprint that will limit the ability of others now or in the future to thrive, and that social workers, by greening the profession can do that by consciousness-raising endeavours and direct interventions on environmental issues that require community mobilisation to safeguard Mother Earth. This means taking seriously the duty to care for the physical environment as well as the people, plants and animals living within it.



## **DR. LENA DOMINELLI**

*University of Stirling, UK, world acclaimed social scientist; recognized for international contributions to critical theory and practice. Dominelli holds a Chair in Social Work at the University of Stirling. She has a specific interest in projects on climate change and extreme weather events, disaster interventions, vulnerability and resilience, community engagement, coproduction and participatory action research.*



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