Jessica Shaw

Assistant Professor at University of Calgary

Calgary, AB, CA

Intersectional feminist professor & social worker. Researches: medical assistance in dying (MAiD); pregnancy, birth, & abortion experiences.

Biography

Jessica Shaw has been a sessional instructor with the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary since January 2012, and has been an Assistant Professor since January 2016. Jessica was born on Manitoulin Island and grew up in rural Northern Ontario. Her experiences as a youth in a rural community helped to shape her social work understanding of the importance of service accessibility, and of the nature of dual and multiple relationships. In addition to her Social Work degrees, Jessica holds both undergraduate and graduate specializations in Women and Gender Studies, and is a DONA trained birth doula. In recognition of the need to connect full-spectrum doulas (doulas who provide services for people of all genders, in all settings, and for all pregnancy outcomes) with clients and with each other, Jessica started a full-spectrum doula collective in 2014.

Jessica is widely known for her work as the Research Coordinator at Canadians for Choice (now Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights), where she produced the report Reality check: A close look at accessing abortion services in Canadian hospitals. Jessica's work on abortion access has been recognized nationally and internationally. Currently, Jessica serves on the Board of Directors for Women Help Women, an international organization that bridges the gap between abortion rights advocacy and service provision.

Research Interests:
Jessica is currently involved with a number of research projects related to medical assistance in dying (MAiD) in Canada. She has worked with the first cohort of physicians who have provided MAiD (outside of Québec), and has documented their experiences, as well as the experiences of their patients and the patients' family and friends. Her most recent study is a Participatory Action Research project that explores the perceptions and experiences of MAiD within highly marginalized populations.

Jessica is also invested in understanding marginalized experiences of reproductive rights, sexual rights, self-determination in healthcare, and body positivity, including: cishet, queer, and transgender menstrual and pregnancy experiences; menstrual extraction; abortion and birth doulas; self-managed abortion; the midwifery model of care; polyamory and relationship orientation; naturism.

Industry Expertise

Women, Social Services, Health Care - Providers, Political Organization

Areas of Expertise

Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD), Abortion, Social Justice, Feminism, Social Work, Social Work Ethics, Narrative and Story, Storytelling, University Education, Health and Gender, Self-managed Abortion , Birth, Midwifery, Doula, Naturism , Polyamory , Relationship Orientation , Medical Aid in Dying

Affiliations

Women Help Women, Alberta College of Social Workers , National Abortion Federation, Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, (Former) Executive Member of the Ontario NDP

Education

University of Calgary
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Social Work

Lakehead University
Master of Social Work with Specialization in Women's Studies

Lakehead University
Honours Bachelor of Social Work

University of Ottawa
Baccalaureate of Arts: Concentration Women's Studies/Concentration Psychology

Accomplishments

Ron Ghitter Award in Human Rights
2013 - Awarded for advocacy work to advance abortion rights in Canada.

James Gripton Doctoral Scholarship in Social Work
2011 - Awarded for innovation in the pursuit of social justice.

Catherine and Jean-Pierre Soublière Scholarship in Women's Studies
2006

Ontario Lieutenant Governor's Community Volunteer Award for Students
2003