

# Addressing Genocidal Thinking Past & Present: Utilizing the Shoah Archive in Social Work Education

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# Learning Objectives for Today:

- ▶ Participants will learn how to access the public portion of the Shoah archive.
- ▶ Participants will be able to describe the mission and relevance of the Shoah archive as it relates to social work practice and education.
- ▶ Participants will identify ways that genocide testimonies can build students' social work skills in research and preparation for listening to trauma narratives.
- ▶ Participants will analyze exercises for using the archives with students and clients.

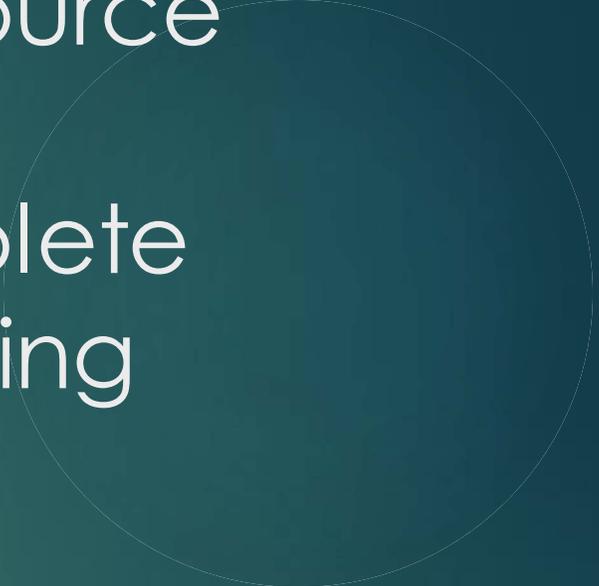
# What is the Shoah Archive?

- ▶ University of Southern California's Shoah Visual History Genocide Archive
- ▶ 55,000 genocide testimonies from first person survivors
- ▶ 3000+ available anywhere
- ▶ 65 Countries & 43 languages
- ▶ 9 genocides represented in the 20th and 21st centuries
- ▶ 115,000 hours of testimony – searchable by keywords
- ▶ Gifted to Ferris State University by Mickey Shapiro, the son of a holocaust survivor

# Genocides currently included in the archive

- ▶ The Holocaust & Contemporary Antisemitism
- ▶ The Armenian Genocide
- ▶ Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda
- ▶ Nanjing Massacre in China
- ▶ The Guatemalan Genocide
- ▶ The Cambodian Genocide
- ▶ The South Sudan Civil War
- ▶ The Central Africa Republic conflict
- ▶ The Anti-Rohingya Mass Violence





The archive is “An invaluable resource for humanity, with nearly every testimony encompassing a complete personal history of life before, during and after the subject’s firsthand experience with genocide”

[HTTPS://SFI.USC.EDU/VHA](https://sfi.usc.edu/vha).

# What is Genocide?

- ▶ Genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:
  - ▶ Killing members of the group;
  - ▶ Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
  - ▶ Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
  - ▶ Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
  - ▶ Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.
- ▶ Gregory H. Stanton, President, Genocide Watch
- ▶ <http://www.genocidewatch.org/genocide/whatisit.html>

# Ways Genocide Testimonies can be Valuable in Social Work Classrooms

- ▶ Familiarize students with hearing trauma survivors' personal stories
- ▶ Process emotions and vicarious empathy resulting from hearing trauma narratives
- ▶ Teach skills for managing secondary traumatic stress
- ▶ Help students understand why research ethics are important
- ▶ Help students prepare for an immersion experience such as study abroad
- ▶ Provide students with interdisciplinary collaborative experiences with disciplines like math, history, and languages and literatures
- ▶ Help students put current events into broader context

# Kurt Messerschmidt

## Holocaust testimony





How might listening to Kurt's testimony be valuable for social work students?



““ I came into graduate school thinking every person who has gone through a traumatic experience will be upset and cry while sharing their story. [Before] watching the testimonies...I might have misjudged someone's experience just because they weren't acting the way I assumed they should.

”

MSW Student, Fall 2018

# Exploring trauma narratives in practice classes

- ▶ Students have expectations about how trauma survivors should sound and react emotionally to their stories/experiences
  - ▶ Listening to testimonies gives the opportunity to process these experiences in real time
- ▶ Students have their own reactions and experiences listening to the testimonies
  - ▶ This allows the faculty member to process with students
- ▶ Provides for a discussion of secondary trauma and vicarious empathy
  - ▶ Faculty can model and teach self-care strategies immediately after hearing a testimony



““ Before watching the Shoah testimonies I would get choked up and would not be able to respond to someone speaking about their traumatic experience. Being able to observe these testimonies...has given me more confidence.

””

MSW student, Fall 2018

# Other Applications in the Social Work Classroom

- ▶ Preparation for Study Aboard

- ▶ Primarily to provide exposure & self-care

- ▶ Teaching the History of IRB

- ▶ Primarily to contextualize research ethics history

# Teaching about "The 8 Stages Genocidal Thinking"

- ▶ **CLASSIFICATION**
- ▶ **SYMBOLIZATION**
- ▶ **DISCRIMINATION/DEHUMANIZATION**
- ▶ **ORGANIZATION**
- ▶ **POLARIZATION**
- ▶ **PREPARATION**
- ▶ **PERSECUTION/EXTERMINATION**
- ▶ **DENIAL**
- ▶ <http://www.genocidewatch.org/aboutgenocide/8stagesofgenocide.html>

# Accessing the Shoah Archive

- ▶ Shoah Homepage
- ▶ <http://sfi.usc.edu/>
- ▶ Visual History Archives
- ▶ <http://sfi.usc.edu/vha>
- ▶ Login Page
- ▶ <http://vhaonline.usc.edu/login>
- ▶ Register for an account
- ▶ <http://vhaonline.usc.edu/register>
- ▶ Online VHA Search Page
- ▶ <http://vhaonline.usc.edu/Search>

**USC Shoah Foundation**

Visual History Archive



# Thank You!

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