

David Karp
Research/Areas of Specialization

Areas of Specialization: Social Psychology, Qualitative Methodology, Mental Health

Research: Professor Karp's primary identification is as a social psychologist. Most of his research involves participant observation and in-depth interviewing. Theoretically, he is partial to symbolic interaction. After writing about aging during the middle to late 1980s he began an investigation of how people live with and make sense of clinical depression. This work is summarized in his recent book *Speaking of Sadness: Depression, Disconnection, and the Meanings of Illness*. Currently, along with Paul Gray and Lynda Lytle Holmstrom, he is working on the writing phase of a longitudinal study of family dynamics during the senior year in high school as students apply to college. These projects, as well as earlier books on cities and everyday life, reflect Professor Karp's enduring interest in how people invest their daily worlds with meaning.

Current Projects: His earlier books on cities, everyday life and aging reflect an enduring interest in how people invest their daily worlds with meaning. These same themes are reflected in his 1996 book on clinical depression entitled *Speaking of Sadness: Depression, Disconnection, and the Meanings of Illness*. *Speaking of Sadness* was the 1996 winner of the Charles Horton Cooley Award from the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction. His current research, based on in-depth interviews, seeks to learn how persons close to someone suffering from a serious emotional illness construct and negotiate moral boundaries of caring. While the substantive focus of this investigation is on care taking, the broader conceptual concern of the study is to understand the cultural resources people draw on as they try to answer for themselves the question "What do I owe a family member or friend in trouble?"