

In a Special Section on *Personal Narratives on Activism for Social Justice and Systems Transformation*

The Evolution of a Social Justice Counselor: Implications of Lessons Learned for Allies in the Field

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This article provides a personal narrative of my own evolution as a social justice counselor. In describing this evolutionary process, I discuss a number of experiences that have led me to look for new ways to work as a professional counselor over the past 35 years. My search for new roles that I could play as a professional counselor was driven by a desire to find ways to more effectively foster the development and well-being of larger numbers of persons whose mental health is adversely impacted by various forms of injustice and oppression. More specifically, this drive has been largely fueled by a persistent motivation to dream of new ways that counselors could more fully realize their potential to promote human development by helping to build a more just and peaceful society.

It is important to point out, however, that my evolution involves much more than simply dreaming about the untapped potential of the counseling profession to more effectively stimulate healthy developmental outcomes among large numbers of clients by stimulating positive changes in environments in which they are situated. This involved seeking out and working with other colleagues, who were similarly interested in testing new intervention strategies that were intentionally designed to expand the impact counselors and psychologists can have in promoting mental health and human development by ameliorating injustices in our contemporary society.

In describing my evolutionary journey in the following pages, I discuss some of the key lessons I learned and the significant people that have impacted me in three distinct phases. This includes:

- [1] describing some of the factors that contributed to my evolution as a social justice advocate in my early development as a professional (Phase I: 1973 - 1979);
- [2] identifying key people and experiences that catapulted new directions I took during the second phase of this evolutionary process (Phase II: 1979 - 1989); and
- [3] discussing some of the encounters I have more recently experienced that continue to stimulate my personal and professional evolution (Phase III: 1989 – to the present).

Before continuing with this narrative, I want to point out that the motivation to write this article goes beyond a desire to simply describe my own individual evolution. Rather, it is my hope that persons reading this article will be motivated to do a couple of things after they have finished learning about my own evolutionary process. First, I hope readers will take time to think about the ways that counselors and psychologists can more effectively impact the lives of larger numbers of people whose mental health is adversely impacted by the various forms of injustice and oppression that continue to be perpetuated in our society.

Second, I also hope readers will join the growing number of persons in the Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ) (<http://counselorsforsocialjustice.com/>) or Psychologists for Social Responsibility (Psy-SR) (<http://www.psysr.org/>) associations and work in an organized manner to transform the mental health professions by developing and implementing new professional roles and services that help build a more sane, just, and peaceful world. With this latter point in mind, I have included several sections in this article that describe implications of the lessons I learned in my evolution as a social justice counselor for the work other counselors do.

Phase I: Factors Contributing to an Emerging Social Justice Consciousness During My Early Professional Years

My initiation into the counseling profession began as a graduate student in the School Counseling master's degree program at Fairfield University (Fairfield, Connecticut) from 1973 to 1975. Two major theoretical perspectives dominated most training programs in counseling and psychology at the time. This included Carl Rogers's client centered theory and the behaviorist perspective popularized by B. F. Skinner. Although principles of behaviorism were occasionally interjected into some of our classes, students entering the counseling program at Fairfield University understood that the faculty members were committed to primarily promoting Rogers's theory.

As a young graduate student, I had ambivalent reactions to the emphasis that was placed on Rogers's client centered theory in our training program. On the one hand, learning about Rogers's helping theory was professionally and personally empowering. This sense of empowerment largely came from the new knowledge and skills I was acquiring that enabled me to build positive relationships with persons I worked with during my practicum and internship courses. Some of the clients I worked with in these courses expressed a genuine interest in developing new personal insights and gaining an increased sense of self understanding as a result of participating in counseling sessions with graduate students who used Rogers's theory in their work. Faculty members reinforced this sense of empowerment by affirming that the insights and self understanding clients manifested in the work I did at my practicum and internship sites (as noted in our tape recorded counseling sessions) were indicators of professional development and effective helping.

On the other hand, I was keenly aware that the emphasis the counseling program placed on assisting clients to explore their intrapsychic experiences did little to alter the sources of environmental stress that contributed to many clients' on-going problems. Despite my efforts to communicate a genuine sense of empathy and unconditional positive regard with numerous persons I was assigned in my practicum and internship courses, it was apparent that other interventions were necessary to more effectively assist these clients in realizing their potential for health and well-being. The negative reactions I had to my training program's overuse of Rogers's theory were further stimulated by my awareness that such efforts often resulted in clients temporarily feeling better about themselves in our counseling sessions only to re-enter environmental settings that were oppressive, not just, and unchanged. Knowing that I was helping clients to temporarily feel good about themselves as a result of their involvement in counseling only to return to unjust and oppressive environments did not appeal to me.

In hindsight, I now understand how the thoughts and feelings I had about the limitations of traditional counseling theories were influenced by broader social-political-cultural events occurring at that time. After all, my undergraduate and graduate school years were situated in a time when the United States was undergoing a social-political-cultural revolution. The revolutionary zeitgeist of that time emphasized the importance of ameliorating various social injustices that adversely impacted the health and well-being of millions of people in our society. One of the central ideas promoted by the social justice movements occurring at that time was the notion that society and its institutions were in desperate need of radical change if people were to realize the sort of dignity, freedom, and equality that underlie healthy human development. To a core group of students enrolled in the counseling program at Fairfield University then, these revolutionary ideas made it increasingly apparent that the limitations of behaviorism and Rogers's client centered theory needed to be addressed if we were to be truly helpful to many of our clients.

Working within the system

The increasing frustration that several students in the counseling program experienced as a result of becoming more aware of the limitations of the existing counseling paradigms led a number of us to do something about our concerns. One of the first actions we implemented involved developing a student organization in the Counseling Department at Fairfield University in 1973. The primary goal of this student organization was to "democratize" the professional training program. To achieve this goal, we convened organizational meetings where students were encouraged to talk about the strengths and weaknesses of our training and elected representatives who were responsible for advocating for changes in the curriculum by petitioning the faculty. Our approach to these advocacy efforts focused on ways that faculty members could build on the department's strengths while addressing the limitations and concerns expressed by students.

Despite the positive intentions and goals of this student organization, we met much resistance from faculty members as well as some other students who did not think it was appropriate to be engaged in such advocacy efforts. Although our efforts to work for positive changes *within the system* resulted in some successes, a number of the student activists (including myself) were increasingly discouraged by the continuing resistance we encountered. This frustration led a number of us to talk about alternative interventions that could be implemented *outside the system* (i.e., outside the Counseling Department) to expand our thinking about other ways

counselors and educators could promote healthy human development by fostering a greater level of sanity, justice, and peace in our society.

Working outside the system

Three of the activists (including myself), who organized the student organization, decided to develop an *alternative community education intervention* to address the abovementioned concerns. This intervention resulted in developing a new course offered independently from the University. This course was aptly entitled, *Dealing with the Challenges We face in Our World*. Anyone interested in learning new ways to promote healthy human development by fostering a greater level of sanity, justice, and peace in our society was welcome to participate in this free course. Classes were held at the rental home where three of the student activists lived.

This alternative community education intervention consisted of 8 class meetings lasting 2 hours (7:00 – 9:00 pm) on Wednesday evenings during the 1974-1975 academic year. The class meetings included invited speakers who were knowledgeable on the different topics covered in the course. The course planners also used a number of documentary films that were checked out of the University library to increase the participants' knowledge of the topics covered in different classes as well.

The course curriculum focused on a number of issues that were of particular interest to many people in the general community and graduate students in teacher and counselor education programs at Fairfield University in particular. The specific topics covered in 8 class meetings included: [1] an examination the economic, social, and psychological costs of the Vietnam War and the impact of the anti-war movement in our society; [2] presentations focusing on the importance of supporting every person's right to free speech and expression; [3] guest speakers and film presentations highlighting the psychological impact that racism has on People of Color and White persons in the U.S., [4] discussions about the relevance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s philosophy of non-violence for teachers and counselors; [5] an examination of the social, political, and psychological impact that the feminist movement and the sexual revolution were having on people in our society; [6] discussions about the reactions people were having to the gay movement that was emerging across the country; [7] the relevance of the growing social justice movement among persons with disabilities for the work educators and counselors do; and [8] discussions concerning the relevance of the newly emerging environmental movement for education and counseling professionals.

Each class meeting followed a structured format. First, the course organizers briefly discussed the purpose and format of the class meetings. Information regarding the class format included noting that we would first hear from a guest speaker or view a documentary film presented during the initial 45–60 minutes of the class. This was followed by an open discussion about the information presented in the first part of the class meeting. The course organizers emphasized that particular attention would be directed to exploring the relevance of the information presented for the work counselors and educators were doing in the field. On the average, 11 persons attended the eight class meetings; most of whom were students in the counseling program at Fairfield University and other activists from the greater community.

My first counseling position: Recognizing the need to learn new helping strategies

My formal training in the master's counseling program at Fairfield University lasted from 1973-1975. The positive and negative experiences I encountered during this phase of my professional evolution resulted in a heightened passion to foster healthy human development by working as a *new kind of counselor*. Although not fully clear on the specific interventions I would use to realize this passion, I knew they would include two primary action strategies. One involved providing direct counseling services to clients whose coping capacities were overtaxed by the environmental stressors that characterized their daily lives. The second strategy I wanted to employ in the future involved the implementation of environmental change interventions that would be aimed at fostering clients' empowerment by advocating for a greater level of social justice in the different settings where clients were situated. This included a desire to foster positive changes in family, educational, employment and community settings.

With this passion in heart and commitment in mind, I embarked on a search for my first job as a professional counselor. These efforts resulted in being hired as a co-director of a residential treatment program for adolescents in Northern California. This was a very challenging position for a couple of reasons. First, it involved working with a group of teenagers who manifested serious emotional problems. Although I had just graduated with a master's degree program in school counseling, I had very little training working with seriously emotionally disturbed teens.

Second, as I became more familiar with the family and school histories of the adolescents in the program, it became apparent that numerous injustices contributed to the manifestation of their mental health problems. This included but was not limited to injustices these teenagers routinely experienced in their families (e.g., being subjected to parental abuse and neglect) and schools (e.g., being bullied by peers and disrespected by school personnel). While the emotional difficulties they exhibited exacerbated the problems the youths experienced in their families and schools, their lack of personal empowerment and absence of an adult who advocated for them were additional factors that enabled the abovementioned injustices and their negative psychological outcomes to continue unabated.

The primary responsibilities outlined in the job description for this position included the provision of individual and group counseling services as well as tutoring the adolescents and overseeing the general management of the household. Typically, we maintained our capacity by having 18 residents in the program. This resulted in many hours of formal and informal individual counseling with the youths on a daily basis. Group counseling sessions were held every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 6:00 pm–7:30 pm.

Using a combination of Rogerian and behavioral strategies with these youths resulted in many positive short term outcomes. Such outcomes included noticeable advancements in the adolescents' impulse control, the development of more effective decision-making skills, and the manifestation of new insights about their personal problems.

However, these gains were often offset by a variety of school and community dynamics that represented unique forms of social injustice. Among the injustices occurring at their schools included a tendency for our residents to be the first accused of various school violations (e.g., when items were stolen at school, when teachers complained to school administrators about students being disorderly in their classrooms, etc.). Law enforcement personnel also exhibited

a prejudiced disposition when relating to the adolescents in our residential program. This was manifested in frequent visits by the police to our home when car thefts occurred, fights reportedly took place between various teenagers, and complaints about marijuana smoking were lodged by anonymous persons in the general community.

Although the youths in our program did their fair share of engaging in these inappropriate and illegal activities from time to time, they were by no means the only teenagers guilty of such infractions in their schools and the general community. They were, however, consistently the first to be accused and often unfairly determined guilty of these and other problematic behaviors when they occurred.

It was increasingly clear to me and the other staff members in the program that we needed to do much more than provide counseling and tutoring services if we were to help promote our youths' long-term development. In talking about this need in staff meetings, we all acknowledged that our professional training programs did not effectively prepare us for the challenges we faced when working with the youths in our residential program. One of the major factors we agreed needed to be addressed involved dealing with the problem of stigmatization that negatively impacted the adolescents in the program.

Knowing a little bit about the ways that stigmatization affects people's perceptions of individuals who are viewed as failing to meet social standards of acceptability, the staff in the residential program noted that many youths at our adolescents' schools and in the general community were likely to be negatively impacted by the stigmatization as *troubled adolescents*. Further discussions of this situation resulted in consensual agreement that the staff needed to address this unique social injustice in concrete ways.

With this in mind, I began working with the rest of the staff to develop what we referred to as *community outreach services*. These services included having weekly meetings with school officials to see how our youths were doing in fulfilling their academic responsibilities. We directed particular attention to the strengths and progress the adolescents were making at school in these meetings and immediately addressed any difficulties that reportedly involved our adolescents at school.

The staff at the residential home also began to outline topics we wanted to discuss in *mini-workshop formats* with larger numbers of school administrators, counselors, and teachers in the future. These topics included discussing: [1] the special needs of adolescents who have been abused and neglected in their childhood, [2] techniques to help emotionally troubled youths resolve conflicts before they get out of hand, and [3] our desire to ensure that our adolescents' due process rights would be respected before school personnel made automatic judgments that they were guilty of violating school regulations without conducting a fair investigation of such alleged violations.

Staff members from the residential treatment home also met with law enforcement personnel to express our support of their work as well as noting concern about numerous past claims of illegal activity by our youths that, although later proven to be inaccurate and unsubstantiated, resulted in the detention of several adolescents in the town jail. We reinforced these outreach efforts by inviting law enforcement officers to have dinner with us and the residents at the home in the future so all of us could continue these discussions and search for solutions to all of

our concerns. These dinners enabled several police officers to get to know the frustrations our youths experienced when they were falsely accused of violating the law. The dinners ultimately resulted in more positive and mutually respectful relationships being built between many of the adolescents in our program and several law enforcement officers in the community.

While these outreach services complemented the use of traditional counseling interventions in our programmatic approach to promote healthy adolescent development, the non-traditional roles we played in working with school officials and law enforcement personnel represented new terrain for myself and the other counselors at the residential treatment. Despite the lack of attention that was given to these intervention strategies in our professional training programs, I was becoming increasingly convinced that the combination of traditional counseling theories as well as the implementation of new kinds of environmental change strategies designed to stimulate a greater level of justice represented were the necessary basis for becoming the sort of *new kind* of counselor I was interested in becoming in the future.

Implications of My Phase I Experiences For Other Social Justice Counseling Allies

Before describing the second phase in my professional evolution, I want to summarize some of the lessons I learned from the experiences I encountered during the first phase of my professional development and briefly discuss their implications for other counseling students and practitioners. As was mentioned earlier, growing up during the cultural revolution of the 1960s and 1970s certainly helped nurture my commitment to promote democracy, peace, and justice in our society. It did so, in part, by stimulating new critical thinking abilities that increasingly led me to question many historically established perspectives, values, and ways of operating that contributed to the perpetuation of an unjust, oppressive, and violent status quo in the United States.

These critical thinking skills were extended during my graduate training at Fairfield University. This largely occurred by having numerous opportunities to critically analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the traditional counseling theories and intervention strategies that were the basis of my training at Fairfield University in the 1970s. From my perspective, the development of critical thinking skills is essential in becoming an effective social justice counselor.

By having numerous opportunities to test the traditional counseling theories and interventions I learned at Fairfield University in my practicum and internship courses, I noticed the frequency with which these theories and practices seemed to work better for some clients than others. More specifically, I noted that a majority of White, middle class clients appeared to be more consistently derive greater personal benefit by using client centered helping approaches than did the poor youths-of-color. The frequency with which this phenomenon occurred led me to think about the strengths and weakness of Rogers's helping theory from an economic and racial perspective.

Although I had many questions about these issues, I did not receive many satisfying answers about the ways that clients' racial and economic background might affect their preference for certain helping strategies in my graduate classes. However, my thinking about these issues was greatly enhanced by spending a great deal of time engaged in conversations with other students who had similar questions outside our class meetings.

Implications for other students interested in developing critical thinking skills

For students who feel that their training programs fall short in fostering the kinds of critical thinking skills they believe are necessary to develop a social justice counseling perspective, it would be useful to convene a meeting where students with similar concerns can discuss ways to address this issue. From my own experience in helping to organize such an initiative in my master's program, I can verify the potential this sort of self advocacy strategy has in stimulating the empowerment of a subordinate group (in this case graduate students represent a unique subordinate group in need of self advocacy actions).

Another implication of implementing this strategy is the potential to build a stronger and more supportive student community. This was very noticeable when we organized a student group at Fairfield University as the students participating in that advocacy project recognized how their own critical thinking skills were greatly enhanced by learning from one another during our organizational meetings.

Initiating this kind of student advocacy project can also help students get a feel for the types of challenges, concerns, and anxieties clients are likely to experience when social justice counselors introduce the concept of self advocacy in the helping process. Thus, rather than viewing efforts to organize students as being an activity that is separate from students' classroom learning, it is useful to view such efforts as providing unique hands-on opportunities to learn firsthand about some of the strengths and limitations of implementing advocacy services as an empowerment strategy in the future.

The implications of lessons learned about the misuse of power

Another important experience that stimulated the development of my critical thinking skills as a graduate student in the 1970s related to the negative reactions faculty members and some students had to creating the student organization discussed above. From my perspective, the resistance these persons exhibited to such efforts contradicted the strong beliefs they articulated about the importance of communicating genuine respect, empathy, and positive regard for the thoughts and feelings of others (Rogers, 1969). Although the graduate students involved in building this new organization expressed a sincere interest in promoting a greater level of democratic decision-making in our department, the most ardent supporters of Rogers's counseling theory were also the most resistant to this form of graduate student empowerment.

The fact that our efforts to democratize the graduate program were met with heightened resistance by faculty members and students who articulated their commitment to a humanistic counseling perspective helped me learn another important lesson that is likely to be relevant to other students and practitioners in the field today. Simply stated, this lesson involves the importance of keeping in mind that the struggle to promote democracy and justice in one's work as a student and as a practitioner does not come easy or result in the types of successes one might immediately desire. Consequently, it is important to prepare oneself for letdowns and surprises that occur when perceived allies are not as supportive of one's attempts to promote democracy and empowerment as one may have expected, or when persons in power positions misuse their organizational power to undermine efforts to promote a greater level of justice in different settings.

An additional lesson I learned from my Phase I experiences relates to the importance of being mindful of the degree to which the actions and inactions of many persons in the counseling profession help to maintain an unjust status quo that ensures their own position of power and the benefits that come with it. In analyzing my own experiences at Fairfield University and more specifically the faculty members' resistance to the students' efforts to democratize the graduate program, it appeared to me that the same power dynamics that were fueling many of the injustices occurring in the broader society were played out in similar ways (though on a smaller scale) in our counseling program.

The refusal of the faculty to share their power by not accommodating students' requests for more democratic decision-making in the department did much more than teach me important lessons about the ways that power can be used to repress the expressed needs of graduate students interested in making social justice and democracy a reality in their training program. This situation also helped me to better understand and empathize with the frustrations and anger that persons in other oppressed groups were openly expressing as a result of being routinely subjected to much more serious injustices that had far more negative consequences on their lives than the frustrations caused by the faculty at Fairfield University. All of these lessons may be useful to keep in mind when other allies (and especially graduate students) strive to implement social justice principles when working within a system that does not genuinely value efforts to promote a greater level of democracy and justice within that system.

The implications of the lessons learned from working outside and inside the system

Additional important lessons were learned as a result of channeling my frustration over the faculty's refusal to address students' expressed concerns by working outside the system. This involved joining with other concerned students to develop the alternative education project described above. As a result of being a part of this project, I became much more knowledgeable about a host of contemporary issues that were relevant for the work I would do as a professional counselor but not covered in the counseling program I attended. By working with other individuals on this project, I was also able to acquire new skills that were vital in becoming a competent social justice counselor. Such competencies included the development of new consultation, program planning, instructional, and community organizing skills to name a few. Although the new competencies I acquired were vital for my professional development as a social justice counselor, the downside of working outside the system related to the constant struggle to maintain an alternative educational intervention with fewer resources than other persons working within the system had available to them.

Certainly, graduate students and counseling practitioners can acquire the competencies mentioned above by working within the system. However, my own experiences have taught me to value the efforts of people who choose to work outside the system, as they are required to regularly exercise the competencies discussed above in addition to demonstrating creative problem-solving strategies when trying to implement alternative interventions without the necessary resources.

As a result of having the opportunity to work both within and outside of the system as a graduate student, I became clearer on the positive and negative aspects of both options. For instance, I learned that while resources are usually more available when working within the system (e.g., in a university, community agency, private counseling agency, etc.), the

administrative regulations, lack of democratic decision-making, and tendency to repress creative individuals from implementing out-of-the-box interventions represent negative factors that undermine social justice counselors' freedom and creativity.

On the other hand, while I experienced greater freedom from rigid bureaucratic regulations, a sense of comradeship with other like-minded persons, and encouragement to be as creative as possible in achieving the goals of this alternative community education project, much time was involved in begging and borrowing resources from others to ensure the effective operation of the project. Graduate students and new professionals are encouraged to consider these factors when assessing their career own directions. In doing so, individuals are reminded that there are trade-offs regardless if one chooses to work within or outside the system.

The implications of lessons learned about the importance of self-reflection

Of all the lessons I learned during the first phase of my evolution as a social justice counselor, perhaps the most important one involved recognizing the need to routinely take time for self reflection. By conscientiously taking time to reflect on the many thoughts, feelings, and experiences I had during this early phase of my professional development, I gained a greater understanding as to why I was motivated to become a different kind of counselor and what it would take to do so.

One of the important aspects of this self reflection process involved the time I spent thinking about the biases and values that contributed to my willingness to challenge the status quo. What resulted was a growing awareness of how much I genuinely valued my knowledge of *democracy* and *justice* and, more specifically, my understanding as to how these concepts contributed or detracted from people's mental health and psychological well-being when operative or repressed in our society. These insights led to a growing awareness of my lack of understanding of the pragmatic ways that counselors could effectively promote a greater level of democracy and justice in their work settings.

Another important outcome that ensued from these self reflections involved assessing the degree to which I was willing to continue to challenge the existing status quo knowing the kinds of negative reactions I would likely encounter from persons in power positions (i.e., faculty members and supervisors) as well as some of my peers. Reflecting on these issues early in my career resulted in facing an important crossroad in my development.

I understood that one path at the crossroad would result in gaining a greater level of acceptance by the faculty and other students at Fairfield University if I simply was less committed to promote the principles of democracy and justice in our society in general and the counseling profession in particular. However, it was equally clear that taking this path required me to disengage from the principles my parents taught me about the importance of standing up for and with people who were treated unjustly in life. It also meant turning away from the lessons I learned from numerous persons involved in the civil rights and peace movements of the time; persons who were willing to risk personal harm by striving to promote a greater level of democracy, justice, and peace in our society.

The path I finally choose to take at this point in my career was similar to what Peck (1998) described as being a "road less traveled" (p. 11). My reflections of the experiences I

encountered on this path stimulated new insights into what it would take to remain true to the principles of justice that had become a central part of the person I was becoming. These reflections included an increasing awareness of the ways that I would continue to experience rejection and ridicule by others for following the path of social justice counseling. The interesting thing about these self insights is that I experienced an increased sense of inner strength and determination to remain true to my principles and desire to test new professional roles that were aimed at promoting healthy human development by simultaneously working to help build a more just society in the future.

I believe the benefits I derived from remaining faithful to this on-going process of self reflection was vital to my evolution as a social justice counselor. However, I do not think that this is unique to only myself. In fact, other social justice theorists have emphasized the importance of routinely engaging in this sort of self reflection as it represents a cornerstone in becoming a competent social justice counselor (Ivey, D'Andrea, Ivey, & Simek-Morgan, 2007; Sue & Sue, 2003).

Phase II: Gaining New Knowledge and Skills from Colleagues and Clients

Many of the insights gained from my self-reflections in the first phase of my professional evolution illuminated my need to: [1] become more knowledgeable about the content and process of human development and [2] acquire a more extensive repertoire of helping skills that would enable me to become an effective counselor who operated from a social justice perspective. My desire to get more formal training in these areas led me to move to Nashville, Tennessee in 1979. The move to Nashville was based on the hope that I would be accepted into the doctoral program in Human Development Counseling at Vanderbilt University.

Part of my motivation for applying to this program was based on information I gained about Dr. Roger Aubrey, the director of this department. Upon investigating Dr. Aubrey's scholarly accomplishments, I learned that he had written quite a bit about the new roles counselors were encouraged to play in stimulating environmental changes that would promote the healthy development of larger numbers of persons than most traditionally-trained counselors had done in the past. Little did I know at the time that my acceptance into the Human Development Counseling Program and work with Dr. Aubrey would mark the beginning of the second major phase in my evolution as a social justice counselor.

My development during this phase was particularly influenced by the experiences I had with several key persons. This included my experiences I had working with Dr. Aubrey, Dr. Judy Lewis, Dr. Judy Daniels, the Reverend Jesse Jackson, and the clients in the Adult Day Treatment and Adolescent Development Programs at the Community Mental Health Center at Meharry Medical College.

Roger Aubrey: Historian, developmentalist, social justice advocate, mentor, and friend

Dr. Aubrey had established himself as a respected historian in the counseling profession and an expert in a particular theoretical perspective of human development. As a historian, Roger documented how the counseling profession was built on the legacy of many persons whose work addressed various injustices that adversely impacted the development of millions of persons in devalued and oppressed groups. Dr. Aubrey directed particular time to describe the

contributions of such counseling pioneers and social justice advocates as Frank Parsons and Jesse Davis in his historical publications.

As a developmentalist, Roger embraced a structural view of human development. He consequently infused readings that focused on this theoretical perspective in all of his graduate courses. He did this because he strongly believed that the structural developmental perspective represented a vital framework that his master's and doctoral students would find useful a guide in the work they would do in the future (Aubrey & Lewis, 1988).

Dr. Aubrey also demonstrated a deep commitment for social justice and believed that counselors were responsible for promoting this principle in their work. I was fortunate enough to directly observe the ways that this commitment was manifested in Roger's work as a faculty member and as the Director of the Human Development Counseling Program while I was a doctoral student. This commitment was consistently reflected in the content Roger presented in his classes. In this regard, Roger routinely had his master's and doctoral students explore how the complex problems of classism, sexism, heterosexism, and racism not only affected the people counselors were called upon to worked with, but also impacted counselors' psychological development and views of helping as well.

Another way Roger implemented his commitment for social justice involved his willingness to serve on many master's theses and doctoral dissertation committees for students who wanted to research the impact particular injustices had on human development. Not only did he support students in these research endeavors, but he also mentored his advisees by helping them explore new professional roles counselors could play to address the injustices that were the focus of students' theses and dissertations. As a result of making this commitment to students, there was a dramatic increase in the number of master's theses and doctoral dissertations that focused on a broad range of social injustice issues in the Human Development Counseling Program. This also led numerous students to make professional presentations at state and national conferences as well as publishing their research findings in counseling journals. I was fortunate to have been one of the students who benefited from Dr. Aubrey's support and mentoring in this regard.

A third way I noted Roger's commitment for social justice to be implemented in his work involved his advocacy for hiring women and persons of color when new tenure track faculty positions became available in the program. Dr. Aubrey's success in these advocacy efforts was no small feat as Vanderbilt University continued to be steeped in various forms of institutionalized racism and sexism that resulted in few persons of color or women being hired for tenured track faculty positions even in the 1980s. However, as a result of Dr. Aubrey's commitment to just employment practices, the Human Development Counseling Program became recognized as one of the most diverse academic units on campus.

Judy Lewis: Educator, theorist, community-organizer, and social justice advocate

Like Dr. Aubrey, Judy Lewis was a faculty member in the Human Development Counseling Program when I was a doctoral student in the early 1980s. I was also employed at the Meharry Community Mental Health Center (MCMHC) at that time.

The MCMHC was a part of the Meharry Medical Center complex; a predominately Black medical school that primarily serves the needs of poor African American families in Nashville. Since I

was employed as a mental health counselor at the MCMHC, I was able to supervise numerous master's students that were enrolled in Dr. Lewis's practicum and internship courses.

While I gained a breadth of information about different human development theories by being a student and mentee of Roger Aubrey, my knowledge of the new roles counselors could play to effectively address the social injustices many clients were routinely subjected was greatly expanded as a result of my professional contacts with Dr. Lewis. These contacts included consultation meetings I had with her and a number of her students who I supervised at the MCMH.

I was particularly intrigued with the ecological approach Dr. Lewis articulated in these supervision meetings. My interest in her ecological approach to human development was significantly heightened when Dr. Lewis provided me with a book she had co-authored entitled, "Community counseling: A human services approach" (Lewis & Lewis, 1977).

Dr. Lewis's community counseling model provides counselors with a set of practical blueprints for implementing a broad range of services that address various injustices many clients routinely experience in their lives. In addition to describing how counselors can implement traditional counseling services without perpetuating various forms of oppression in the helping process, Dr. Lewis emphasized other important roles counselors could use as social justice advocates in this textbook. This included but was not limited to her description of the way counselors could provide psycho-educational and life skills training services to persons adversely impacted by various forms of oppression; outlining how counselors could serve as consultants with parents, teachers, administrators, and other persons who play significant roles in the lives of marginalized and oppressed clients; discussing lobbying strategies with elected officials and other policy-makers; and emphasizing the usefulness of having counselors work as a community organizers and organizational change agents to address systemic injustices in various environmental contexts.

Perhaps what impressed me most about Dr. Lewis was that she was not an armchair professor who had little real life experience in the settings she discussed in her classes and writings. On the contrary, Dr. Lewis had spent years working in different environmental systems as a social justice advocate, community organizer, and organizational change agent. My respect for her real-life experiences and scholarly accomplishments led me to invite her to bring her practicum and internship students to the MCMHC so I could provide tours that would help students in the Human Development Counseling Program see how I was trying to implement some of the new roles and services Dr. Lewis wrote about in her community counseling textbook.

Several years after meeting Dr. Lewis, I was honored to have her ask me and another colleague to join her in revising a new edition of her community counseling textbook. I was not only honored to be invited to partake in this important scholarly venture, but to do so with another up and coming individual whom I had come to respect for the unique work she was doing with youths in Nashville, Tennessee. This person's name was Judy Daniels.

Dr. Judy Daniels: Youth advocate, community organizer, and comrade

In early 1983, my responsibilities at the MCMHC expanded to include working with adolescents and their families as well as adults enrolled in the Day Hospital program. Knowing of my work

with adolescents, a colleague told me that I should check out a new youth organization called the Nashville Youth Network (NYN) and the approach that a young professional named Judy Daniels was using to foster the empowerment of alienated youths.

Upon going to one of the NYN meetings, I was genuinely impressed with a number of leadership development and group work strategies Dr. Daniels implemented with about 20 teenagers from various local high schools who attended this organizational meeting. I was particularly impressed with how Judy ensured that everyone's views and suggestions would be heard during the meeting. It was also inspiring to observe the manner in which she assisted the youths in making sure that all decisions for future actions were made in a truly democratic manner with no one person imposing a single perspective on other youths at the meeting. The effective way Judy implemented these group skills was further illuminated by her ability to assist the youths in expressing highly charged emotional reactions to the various forms of injustice and oppression they were subjected at school, within their families, and in the community at-large in constructive and growth-producing ways.

Another aspect of the work Dr. Daniels demonstrated during this meeting that caught my attention related to the way she promoted a hopeful view of the teenagers' future despite the negative situations the adolescents experienced in their lives. It is important to point out that her optimistic view of the youths' future was neither naïve nor Pollyannaish. Rather, Judy talked about the tremendous potential the youths had to create positive changes in the community; changes that could result in a greater level of justice and respect for themselves and their friends if they effectively organized themselves into a social-political force across the city.

The group leadership skills Dr. Daniels demonstrated by summarizing the youths comments and her effectiveness in challenging the teenagers to work together to create real social-political changes in Nashville was inspiring and motivating to those in attendance at the meeting; including myself. The effectiveness of these leadership skills resulted in numerous teenagers spontaneously explaining what they thought they could do to promote the rights of adolescents in the Nashville community by working within NYN.

The excitement, inspiration, and pragmatic hopefulness generated at this meeting led me to return to future NYN meetings. In doing so I learned new ways that counselors could foster the sort of youth empowerment that is essential in assisting teenagers to effectively ameliorate the injustices many youths commonly experience in their lives. Among the social justice projects NYN implemented in the ensuing months included:

- publishing a city-wide youth run newspaper (that included controversial articles on teen sexuality, HIV/AIDS, abortion rights, and the types of things teenagers could do to promote peace in the community);
- organizing a state-wide "constitutional convention" (that was held at the State Legislature and involved a number of elected officials);
- developing a Safe Rides Program (a project aimed at lowering the number of injuries and deaths caused by alcohol related auto accidents by providing free and confidential rides home from social events that youths attended);
- conducting *street theater* with political messages (where teens acted out various social-political issues during busy times in the city's business district); and

- hosting a Holiday Celebration (where the youths prepared and served over 900 hot meals for youngsters in low income housing areas during the December holiday season).

Not only did Judy assist the youths in planning and implementing these and other youth-run projects, but she also helped them process their thoughts and feelings after each project was implemented. These processing meetings enabled the youths develop a more complex understanding of how these constructive community interventions represented the type of responsible and empowering advocacy that helped teenagers gain a greater level of respect from others as NYN sought to realize a greater level of justice in the community.

As I continued to offer my support to NYN, my professional relationship with Judy evolved into a personal relationship as well. Our increasing professional and personal bonding led us to work together on many other social justice projects in the Nashville community over the next few years. The many hours I spent talking with Judy about alternative professional roles we could play to not only address the needs of clients in distress, but in building a more just and sane society was and continues to be a vital part of my evolution as a social justice counselor. The many professional and personal lessons I learned from Dr. Daniels during the 1980s were complemented and extended by the unique and inspirational experiences I gained by working with the Reverend Jesse Jackson during the mid- and late-1980s.

Reverend Jesse Jackson: A model of organizational expertise and courage in action

In December 1983, I was elected to serve as one of the co-chairpersons for Jesse Jackson's presidential campaign in the State of Tennessee. Working with thousands of grassroots allies across Tennessee, the campaign volunteers were able to build a formidable coalition that was recognized by the New York Times in a front page article in March 1984. Upon making a number of campaign stops in Tennessee and reading the praise of our organizational successes in the New York Times, Reverend Jackson hired me to travel with him as an advance staff member in California during the latter part of his national campaign.

Working as an "advance staff member" with the campaign necessitated traveling to those cities where Reverend Jackson planned to visit a day in advance of the candidate. This was done to ensure that all the logistical and scheduling details were completed at each campaign stop. I would then meet Reverend Jackson the following morning at the airport, provide him with a written schedule of events, summarize the types of audiences expected to attend each event, and discuss specific local issues that might be relevant for the speeches he would give at each stop. Operating in this capacity, I was able to develop a close personal relationship with Reverend Jackson and his family that has lasted to the present time.

By working as his advance person in California, I was also able to have lengthy conversations with Reverend Jackson about a host of topics. These conversations included: [1] talking about the tremendous enthusiasm and hopefulness the campaign was generating among millions of people around the country; [2] discussions related to organizational issues pertaining to the campaign; and [3] reflective interactions about the criticisms and threats that were routinely directed towards Reverend Jackson during the campaign.

In our conversations about the enthusiasm and hopefulness generated by millions of people around the country as a result of the issues he presented in the campaign, Reverend Jackson

repeatedly talked about the need to harness this enthusiasm and hopefulness into organizational initiatives that would promote positive changes in society long after this historic campaign had completed its course. These conversations resulted in detailed descriptions of the ways his presidential campaign could help develop a new multi-racial, multi-issue coalition that was designed to forge a greater level of sanity, justice, and peace in our nation. In commenting on these issues, Reverend Jackson spent much time outlining many practical ways the campaign could unite people from diverse backgrounds and political persuasions to address different injustices of common concern to increasing numbers of people in our nation.

What impressed me about these conversations was that the action strategies Reverend Jackson described complemented many of the ideas Roger Aubrey presented in his graduate courses regarding the things counselors could do to help foster healthy human development, the concepts included in Judy Lewis's community counseling theory, and the pragmatic interventions Judy Daniels implemented with youths in Nashville, Tennessee. The ideas Rev. Jackson shared in our conversations also complemented the lessons I was learning from the clients I worked with in the Adult Day Treatment Program at the MCMHC.

Learning from clients devastated by classism, racism, and serious mental health problems

One of the reasons I was voted to serve as the co-chair of the Tennessee Jesse Jackson Presidential Campaigns in 1984 and 1988 was the growing recognition and respect I had gained from many people across the state in advocating for the rights of persons of color who experienced chronic mental health problems. My commitment to these clients was, in part, reflected from numerous advocacy services I implemented to support the rights of chronically ill, poor, persons of color in the Adult Day Treatment program at the MCMHC.

I was initially employed as a counselor in this program in 1979 and continued in this position until 1988. The clients, who were referred to the Adult Day Treatment Program, were between the ages of 18 and 64 years. Most had been diagnosed with serious and chronic mental health problems (i.e., chronic undifferentiated schizophrenia) and previously resided in the state mental health hospital for 24-hour care. All of my clients were poor persons and ninety-nine percent were of African descent.

The de-institutionalization movement that was implemented by federal mandate at the time resulted in moving large numbers of persons with serious and chronic mental health problems from state hospitals to community-based day treatment programs across the United States. The primary care these persons received up to that time was chemotherapy. This resulted in having these clients maintained on such powerful psychotropic medications as thiorazine, haldol, and melleril to name a few. According to the clients' medical records, little "talk therapy" was previously implemented as part of their mental health care in the state hospital. The use of chemotherapy as the primary form of "therapy" these clients received was grounded in the belief that the types of psychopathology they manifested were largely precipitated by dysfunctional physiological processes that warranted medical intervention.

I was primarily hired to work in the Adult Day Treatment Program at the MCMHC because I met the criteria of possessing a master's degree in counseling. However, I did not have any formal training in using the medical model to diagnosis and treat clients that were to be served in

Adult Day Treatment program. Despite this limitation, I proceeded to use the client centered approach to counseling I had learned from my master's program at Fairfield University along with numerous other theoretical interventions I was becoming familiar with as a doctoral student in the Human Development Counseling Program at Vanderbilt University.

As I implemented these counseling theories with my clients at Meharry, I noticed that they consistently reported a couple of similar concerns. First, many clients frequently talked about the negative side effects they experienced from their medication. Among the main complaints they expressed about this aspect of their therapy was that they felt like "zombies" and were unable to effectively take care of themselves or even engage in appropriate conversations with other persons during the day.

Another common client concern that was frequently expressed by these clients related to the heightened pessimism they experienced regarding their future. Much of this pessimism was anchored in the clients' exasperation with the severe economic problems they faced in their lives and thoughts about the possibility of never being employed again. These clients also expressed heightened frustration about the ways that various forms of racism contributed to their economic and personal difficulties.

Despite the depressing contextual realities of their lives, I was continuously impressed with the strong, positive religious beliefs the majority of clients in the Day Treatment Program expressed in individual and group counseling. These beliefs and the personal connections many of the clients had with their church communities represented notable sources of collective strength that enabled them to keep on keeping on despite the very real odds they faced in their lives. Another distinct source of strength many clients demonstrated related to the support they experienced by developing new friendships with other clients in the Day Treatment Program.

Implications of My Phase II Experiences for Other Social Justice Counseling Allies

The implications of lessons learned from the historian

The learning I experienced from Roger Aubrey regarding the genesis of counseling profession and its ties to social justice activism in the early 1900s has relevance for anyone interested in becoming a social justice counselor. One of the many important pieces of knowledge I gained from Dr. Aubrey in this regard involves the emphasis he placed on the need for counselors to understand the factors that contributed to the ebb and flow of the profession's commitment to social justice during the 20th Century. In doing so, Roger reminded us that, being knowledgeable about the historic factors that contributed to professional support for as well as resistance to promoting social justice initiatives in the past, enabled counselors to intentionally implement organizational advocacy strategies that have proved to be effective in fostering an increased commitment for a social justice perspective in the profession as well as working to prevent large scale resistance to this perspective in the future.

The manner in which Dr. Aubrey directed students' attention to the content and process human development from a structural perspective has additional implications for social justice counselors in general and for my own evolution in this area in particular. I recall the many exciting insights I gained by noting the consistency that the developmental theorists Roger covered in his classes focused on those contextual factors that positively or negatively impacted people's cognitive, ego (self), moral/ethical, and social development. The degree that Roger

focused on these contextual issues further affirmed and expanded my understanding of the need for counselors to embrace new professional roles that were intentionally aimed at stimulating more democratic and just environmental conditions as well as using traditional counseling strategies to address clients' individual, intrapsychic concerns in the helping process. Since the ultimate goal of implementing social justice counseling and advocacy services is to promote healthy human development, Dr. Aubrey's developmental teachings and publications are very relevant for the future success of social justice counselors as they provide clear and practical guidelines to assist clients in realizing their developmental potential for health and well-being.

Persons interested in supporting a social justice perspective in the counseling profession typically bring much enthusiasm in doing so. However, they also frequently lack a clear understanding of the process of psychological maturity and the contextual factors that stimulate or impede healthy human development. One of the lasting aspects of Dr. Aubrey's professional contributions that is relevant for other persons interested in implementing social justice counseling principles in their work involves his writings about ways that counselors can work to stimulate clients' psychological maturity by ameliorating toxic, oppressive, and unjust environmental conditions that impede the healthy development of large numbers of persons in devalued and marginalized groups in our society.

The implications of lessons learned from an expert in community counseling practices

The many lessons I learned from Dr. Judy Lewis helped to concretize my understanding of the different strategies counselors can use to stimulate positive environmental changes that are designed to promote the healthy development of larger numbers of persons than practitioners have done in the past. Her community counseling theory put into words some of the interventions I had used when working with adolescents in Northern California as well as adults in the Day Treatment Program at the MCMHC.

Dr. Lewis's community counseling theory also extended my thinking about new services counselors could use to eradicate the various injustices that continued to impair the development of many people in our society. This included the importance of providing consultation services with policy makers in schools, employment, and community settings; working with persons in the mass media (e. g., newspaper reporters, television and radio broadcasters, etc.) to disseminate information about the impact social injustices have on human development; and organizing persons in oppressed groups to petition lawmakers to make changes in established policies and/or legal statues that better meet the needs and interests of people in marginalized groups.

There are numerous implications of the lessons learned from Judy Lewis and her community counseling framework for social justice counselors. First, counselors interested in learning new strategies to promote clients' mental health by fostering social justice in the environmental settings where they are situated (e.g., clients' family systems, schools, universities, workplaces, etc.) will find that Dr. Lewis's comprehensive theoretical model offers a practical set of blueprints for achieving these goals.

In addition to acknowledging the need to offer *direct client services* with persons in immediate need (by providing individual, small group and family/couples counseling with clients in distress), Dr. Lewis's model expands counselors' thinking about the need to implement other vital services that address the ecological needs of clients. From a social justice perspective these services include providing:

- *direct school and community services* that include life skills training and psycho-education services that foster the empowerment of persons in marginalized and oppressed groups (e.g., assertiveness training, school-based violence prevention, career development classes that focus on social justice issues);
- *indirect client services* that involve offering social justice consultation and advocacy services with persons who have a significant impact on clients' lives (e.g., parents, teachers, religious leaders in the community); and
- *indirect school and community services* by lobbying elected officials and other community leaders to have them develop and implement policies and interventions that are designed to ameliorate various forms of discrimination, injustice, and oppression that are perpetuated in communities across the nation.

The implications of lessons learned from the social justice-youth advocate

Working with Dr. Judy Daniels helped me more clearly understand how the interventions listed above could be effectively implemented to foster the empowerment of youths who sought a greater level of justice and respect in their families, schools and communities. The enthusiasm, optimism, and visionary perspective Judy Daniels exuded when working with teenagers in NYN demonstrated how social justice-minded professionals could promote healthy and responsible adolescent development while simultaneously stimulating a greater level of justice and peace in the greater community. Listed below are some of the lessons learned from my experiences with Judy that have relevance for counseling students and practitioners who are interested in working with youths from a social justice perspective.

First, Dr. Daniels modeled how group facilitation skills can be used to ensure that genuine democratic-decision making occurs in youth meetings. This was primarily done by teaching adolescents how to run meetings in ways that reflected democratic decision-making. In doing so, Judy skillfully modeled this approach when acting as a facilitator during the NYN meetings. In doing so Judy demonstrated the importance of making sure that all of the youths attending the meeting had an opportunity to freely express that were discussed during the meeting. She also modeled how to assist the adolescents in realizing that other youths had the right to freely disagree with the views or suggestions other teenagers expressed in the meeting as well. Acquiring group skills that enhance the democratic decision-making in respectful ways are important competencies social justice counselors need to implement when working in a broad range of group settings and particularly when facilitating interpersonal interactions in youth meetings.

Second, Judy's work with youths in Nashville illuminated the importance of facilitating group discussions that enabled teenagers to develop a collective vision of a future reality that was congruent with the participants' shared values, expectations, and perspectives. Dr. Daniels did this by using many of the standard group counseling skills students learn in the graduate training programs (e.g., paraphrasing, use of open-ended questions, summarizing at the

beginning, during, and at the end of each NYN meeting). Social justice counselors, who are interested in addressing the various forms of oppression adolescents commonly experience in their lives would do well to consider how they plan to facilitate similar vision-building group discussions by using these and other group skills to combat the sense of hopelessness and alienation that adversely many youths in communities across the nation.

Third, my evolution as a social justice counselor was further enhanced by lessons I learned from Judy Daniels about the importance of tying a collective vision that was developed by group members to specific action plans. This important lesson helped me to correct mistakes I made when acting a social justice group facilitator. While I was often effective in helping groups come to a consensus about collective vision that represented the group's purpose and goals, I was less effective in helping group members develop a set of realistic action strategies that were necessary to realize the group's vision. By watching Judy model how group focusing skills could be effectively used to keep adolescents on track when discussions moved away from generating concrete actions plans that were aimed at helping the group to realize its collective vision, I learned important lessons that increased my competence in this important aspect of social justice counseling. It also represents an important area of consideration for other social justice allies who are interested in providing similar group services in the field.

The implications of lessons learned from Reverend Jesse Jackson

My first hand observations of the ways that Reverend Jackson consistently endured criticisms and faced numerous threats to his life during his campaigns represent additional lessons of relevance for the work social justice counselors do. It is reasonable to assume that most social justice counselors are not likely to experience death threats for the work they do (at least not with the consistency that Rev. Jackson did during his 1984 and 1988 presidential campaigns). However, it is equally reasonable to suggest that, when social justice counselors challenge the different forms of oppression that are perpetuated by the status quo, they will be subjected to criticism and other forms of negative backlash from persons who support the existing social-educational-political-economic systems in which they and their clients are situated. It is further suggested that the level of negative backlash social justice counselors are likely to experience will correlate with the level of transformational changes they seek to realize in their work.

One of the lessons learned from Rev. Jackson's approach to dealing with the criticisms and threats he has experienced for his social justice advocacy that is of particular relevance for students and practitioners who have reservations about confronting various forms of injustice and oppression in their work. Perhaps readers have heard such individuals state that they would not be comfortable confronting injustices that adversely impact clients' lives because the risks involved outweigh their willingness to actively do so.

Clearly, it takes a certain type of character and courage to confront injustices in our work as counselors by challenging the existing status quo despite the unfair criticism and threats that accompany such actions. In thinking about the type of character and courage it takes to do so, I have reflected on a point that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. made in his teachings about social change that Rev. Jackson repeatedly made reference of in many of speeches as well as in more personal discussions I had with him during his national campaigns. The point is captured in a quotation by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. that describes the type of character and courage that individuals need to effectively promote justice and peace in our world. Quoting Dr. King, Rev.

Jackson would often remind his listeners that "the ultimate essence of a person is not measured by where one stands during times of comfort and convenience, but during times of crisis and controversy" (King, 1964, p. 18).

I believe the point made in this quotation is particularly relevant for counseling students and practitioners who are interested in applying a social justice perspective in their work, but wonder if they should face the risks and criticisms that predictably accompany such work. Dr. King's quotation provides a poignant response to questions counseling students and practitioners may have about these issues. Personally, I have found this quotation to be a source of inspiration and strength when facing similar questions myself. Hopefully, the lesson to be learned from this quotation will serve others in similar ways when they experience their own doubts and insecurities about fulfilling the important responsibilities of being a social justice counselor.

The implications of lessons learned from the victims of injustice

Among the most important lessons I learned during the second phase of my evolution as a social justice counselor that may also be relevant for other allies in the field comes from my experiences with the clients I worked with in the Adult Day Treatment Program at the Meharry Community Mental Health Center. These lessons included learning about: [1] the ways that the medical model of mental health-care was used to tranquilize and oppress persons in marginalized groups; [2] the importance of having counselors develop a social justice perspective that enables them to effectively address the individual-intrapsychic needs of their clients as well as helping to eradicate the different forms of oppression that contribute to clients' mental health problems; and [3] the need to assert the courage that is necessary to implement new professional roles and services that are aimed at addressing the two issues listed above.

I particularly appreciated and want to extend a personal word of thanks to the clients in the Meharry Adult Day Treatment Program and their family members for being willing to participate in the new services I recommended using to assist them in dealing with their life challenges. This included but was not limited to allowing me to come to their homes to provide family consultation and support services; agreeing to participate in self-advocacy training services I developed to help my clients learn more effective ways to deal with various injustices they experienced in their lives; agreeing to testify at the State Legislature when cutbacks in funding for mental health services for poor persons were proposed by members of the legislature; and engaging in a number of community empowerment services (e.g., voter registration and education projects, surveying their neighborhoods to assess the needs of children and adolescents, organizing fund-raising events to subsidize field trips).

The implications of the lessons learned from these experiences have relevance for other social justice allies in the counseling profession. Two are noted here. First, I learned about the positive outcomes that can be generated by involving clients with serious mental health problems in community empowerment services such as those listed above. Other allies in the field are encouraged to explore the potential benefits of implementing similar activities to stimulate their clients' psychological well-being, personal agency, collective responsibility, and social justice in the communities where they live.

Second, when implementing the social justice services listed above with the clients in the Adult Day Treatment Program at Meharry, I learned that it is helpful to creatively use a combination of traditional counseling theories and non-traditional social justice interventions to assist clients' in realizing new and untapped aspects of their human potential. Based on my experiences in this regard, I suggest that other counselors are likely to find unexpected benefits to be derived from synthesizing traditional helping concepts and skills that counselors learn in their professional training programs with new social justice counseling and advocacy interventions that are emerging in the field.

Phase III: Making a Stronger Commitment to the Multicultural-Social Justice Movement in the Counseling Profession

My interest in gaining a greater understanding of the connections that exist between cultural issues, human development, and social justice led me to make a career change in the late 1980s. After more than a decade of being a student and faculty member in the Human Development Counseling Program at Vanderbilt University and operating as a social justice counselor at the Meharry Community Mental Health Center; I accepted a faculty position with the Department of Counselor Education at the University of Hawaii in 1989. The following sections of this narrative describe some of the opportunities and experiences I encountered that contributed to my continuing evolution as a social justice counselor.

Learning as an activist faculty member at the University of Hawaii

The first factor that further propelled my evolution in the third phase of my professional development relates to my new teaching responsibilities at the University of Hawaii. In preparing to teach my graduate courses in the counseling program, I directed particular attention to finding ways to further synthesize traditional counseling theories with new information that was being generated by multicultural and social justice counseling theorists and researchers in the field. My commitment to this synthesis reflected the ethical responsibilities I needed to meet by addressing traditional training standards established by various professional accreditation bodies as well as helping students acquire new competencies they would need to acquire to become culturally-competent counselors and social justice advocates.

An important lesson about teaching that I had learned when serving as an instructor at Vanderbilt University was intensified in the courses I taught at the University of Hawaii. This lesson involved learning to develop a more in-depth understanding of the ways in which my students' and my own cultural-racial identity development impacted the content and process of our classroom interactions. I found the different racial/cultural identity development theories that emerged in the professional literature over the past 30 years to provide valuable insights that helped to explain the positive and negative reactions students had to controversial multicultural and social justice counseling issues I infused into all of my courses. In doing so, I was better able to facilitate class discussions that allowed space for disagreement while preventing the kinds of antagonistic reactions that people operating from different cultural identity perspective can easily have towards one another when participating in difficult discussions about controversial issues of relevance to counselors.

The third lesson I continue to learn as a faculty member at the University of Hawaii relates to the negative backlash I experienced from some students, faculty members, and administrators who did not think it was appropriate to express support for various aspects of the multicultural and social justice counseling movements. Among the areas that continue to stimulate serious backlash from the persons mentioned above include concerns I express about the perpetuation of various forms of institutional racism in the College of Education at the University of Hawaii and the need to protest the illegal and immoral wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (D'Andrea & Daniels, 2007, 2009). Despite the backlash I experienced from this work, I expanded my work as a social justice advocate at the University and in the general community. This included advocacy activities that were designed to address the complex problem of institutional sexism as it is manifested in the state's public education system; and increasingly my public opposition to the militarization of our society in general and the University of Hawaii in particular.

Learning from professional service projects

One of the greatest factors that impacted my evolution as a social justice counselor and advocate from 1989 to the present time involves the professional service projects I have and continue to participate with other counselor educators, practitioners, and students. Among the local and state projects I have been involved during this time include but are not limited to: securing grant funding to implement an employment counseling project that provided job training and consultation services to over 3,000 chronically unemployed persons across the State of Hawaii; implementing a conflict resolution project for at-risk youths and their parents; developing a state-wide violence prevention program in the Hawaii public school system; using a new theory of social justice organizational development to address the complex problems of institutional racism and sexism at the University of Hawaii; providing group counseling services with homeless adolescents and their mothers; and organizing several workshops that were sponsored by the Hawaii Counselors Association and focused on issues related to multicultural counseling competence and social justice advocacy.

In addition to these professional service projects, I worked on a number of national and international multicultural-social justice projects that also have been vital in contributing to my continuing evolution. These projects involved working with other social justice counseling allies in the United States, Japan, Canada, Nicaragua, South Africa, and Guatemala from 1993 to the present time. The catalyst for becoming involved in these advocacy efforts was a meeting that Dr. Don C. Locke and I organized at the American Counseling Association's (ACA) annual conference that was held in Atlanta, Georgia in 1993.

The meeting was very productive and resulted in the formation of a new body called the National Ad Hoc Multicultural Committee. Several respected multicultural-social justice counseling advocates agreed to serve on an advisory council that was formulated at the meeting. These persons included Derald Wing Sue, Patricia Arredondo, Thomas Parham, Allen Ivey, Mary Bradford Ivey, Judy Daniels, and Don Locke. Later, the name of this organization was changed to the National Institute for Multicultural Competence (NIMC) and included former ACA President Beverley O'Bryant as a new member on the Advisory Council.

The NIMC is responsible for sponsoring a number of national and international projects and organizational development endeavors over the past 16 years related to multicultural and social justice counseling issues. Several of these endeavors were intentionally designed to foster

significant changes in ACA and the American Psychological Association (APA) and specifically to help institutionalize the values and principles underlying the multicultural-social justice movement in the mental health professions.

Some examples of the projects implemented by the NIMC include helping leaders in ACA and APA acquire new multicultural competencies by offering professional development training services on several occasions with leaders and staff persons in these associations; advocating for formal endorsement of the multicultural counseling competencies in ACA and the multicultural guidelines in APA; sponsoring numerous town hall meetings aimed at "Continuing the National Discussion on Race, Justice and Peace" in counselor education and psychology training programs across the United States; and building new coalitions and institutional entities that focused on social justice issues in the counseling profession (D'Andrea et al., 2001). This latter endeavor resulted in the founding of the Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ) association in ACA in 2000.

Implications of My Phase III Experiences for Other Social Justice Counseling Allies

This section summarizes some of the implications of my learning during Phase III that have relevance for other social justice allies. First, my experiences in Hawaii continue to underscore the importance of constantly keeping in mind the different thoughts and feelings people have about social justice issues. By intentionally directing attention to the different perspectives other persons have about these issues, social justice counselors can avoid contributing to unproductive interactions that are more likely to occur when we primarily focus on our own thinking and biases about social justice.

Second, since I have been employed at the University of Hawaii, I have learned to use the racial/cultural identity development models that have emerged in the fields of counseling and psychology to address the challenge describe above. Not only has learning about the characteristics that mark the different stages and statuses of people's racial/cultural identity development stimulated new insights into the diverse perspectives individuals have of multicultural and social justice issues, but these insights are very helpful in thinking about the ways that I can more effectively interact with persons operating from different stages of racial/cultural identity development than myself when discussing such issues in professional situations. The use of these theoretical models for the above stated purposes is likely to be relevant for other allies experiencing similar challenges in the field as well.

Third, I continued to learn much about myself and other persons in Hawaii who reacted negatively to my social justice work as a faculty member and community advocate. Using the developmental models discussed above to reflect on the different perspectives that may have contributed to the negative reactions I experienced from some persons helped me to avoid reacting personally to criticisms and attacks I have and continue to encounter from some individuals at the University of Hawaii (D'Andrea & Daniels, 2009). These experiences also strengthened my commitment to promote a greater level of justice at the University by working with other colleagues and activists committed to similar principles. The increased sense of inner strength that resulted from dealing with such negative reactions was supported by my on-going commitment to routinely take time for self-reflection and self-criticism that began during Phase I of my professional evolution.

I also gain inner strength to deal with the negative reactions and attacks that continue to come from various persons in Hawaii as well as colleagues in the counseling profession at-large by reflecting on the lessons I learned from Rev. Jackson and Dr. King regarding the importance of standing tall during times of controversy and crisis. These lessons have particular implications for those social justice counseling allies who struggle with similar criticisms and other types of negative reactions for their commitment to and work as social justice counselors. Hopefully, the insights I have shared in describing my own approaches to these challenges will be helpful to other allies who face similar experiences.

The final lesson that I will briefly discuss in this article is something I learned during all three of the phases described above and most notably in the third phase of my professional evolution. In addition to the new knowledge and skills I acquired throughout my professional evolution, the unique and positive relationships I have developed with other social justice counseling allies have had a profound impact in sustaining my commitment to this perspective. The intimate connections I developed with the founders of the NIMC continue to have a profound impact on my personal and professional development. The unique and long-term bonds we have developed as a group has led us to affectionately refer to ourselves as *familia*. Although it is difficult to accurately communicate the impact that this *familia* continues to have on my personal and professional development, safe it is to say that my experiences with this group of people has influenced my evolution in ways I could never image more than a 15 years ago. One of the implications of this lesson for other social justice allies is the recognition of the importance of building strong and lasting bonds with other persons who share a similar commitment to the social justice movement as oneself. One way to do this is by becoming an active member of a professional organization whose members are committed to simultaneously promoting human development, mental health, and social justice in their work endeavors. Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ) in ACA and Psychologists for Social Responsibility (Psy-SR) in APA represent two organizations that I would encourage the reader to join and become actively involved as ways to make similar connections with other allies in the field.

Conclusion

This article describes some of the key persons and experiences that contributed to my growth as a social justice counselor. These persons and experiences contributed to a process of personal and professional development that I never dreamed possible as a young graduate student in the counseling program at Fairfield University more than 35 years ago. This process has not only helped me develop a broad knowledge-base and skill set that enables me to operate more effectively as a social justice counselor and advocate, but it has also encouraged me to test many new (and dare I say "revolutionary") ideas and practices related to the multicultural-social justice paradigm in different settings. These ideas and practices are important factors that continue to help me make a positive impact the lives of larger numbers of persons than I was able to do while trying to master Rogers's client centered counseling theory years ago.

In closing, I want to reiterate a few of the points mentioned early in this narrative. This included pointing out that: ...the motivation to write this article goes beyond a desire to simply describe my own individual evolution. Rather, it is my hope that persons reading this article will be motivated to do a couple of things after they have finished learning about my own evolutionary process. First, I hope readers will take time to think about the ways that

counselors and psychologists can more effectively impact the lives of larger numbers of people whose mental health is adversely impacted by the various forms of injustice and oppression that continue to be perpetuated in our society.

Second, I also hope readers will join the growing number of persons in the Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ) (<http://counselorsforsocialjustice.com/>) or Psychologists for Social Responsibility (PsySR) (<http://www.psySR.org/>) associations and work in an organized manner to transform the mental health professions by developing and implementing new professional roles and services that help build a more sane, just, and peaceful world.

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