Answering the Call for Systems Change: Facilitating the Development of a Social Justice Theoretical Orientation and Skills in Counselor Trainees

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Abstract

There is much agreement within counseling psychology on the importance of social justice, yet social justice education and training remain limited in counseling psychology programs (Beer et al., 2012; Pieterse et al., 2009; Singh et al., 2010). Critical components to social justice education and training include an emphasis on systems theories that could inform interventions (i.e. advocacy and activism) at the exosystem and mesosystem levels as well as learning about the breadth of activism and advocacy skills. Assessment, diagnosis, and conceptualization are considered core functional competencies in professional psychology (Fouad, 2009), yet these processes are often only taught at the individual level. If the goal of advocacy and activism are to foster systems change, considered a functional competency in counseling psychology (CCPTP, 2013), then it is crucial to provide systems-level theories and skills in counseling psychology education and training. We describe how we have attended to the provision of systems-level education and training in our respective programs. We will provide recommendations about the inclusion of systems-level theories, classroom formats, assignments, and mentorship designed to foster trainees' development of a systems-level theoretical orientation, as well as skills to engage in social justice research, leadership, and both micro- and macro-level advocacy interventions.

Keywords: social justice, advocacy, systems, training, theoretical orientation

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Principles of social justice have been foundational to counseling psychology since its inception and throughout its leadership within psychology (Brady-Amoon & Keefe-Cooperman, 2017; DeBlaere et al., 2019; Fouad et al., 2004). Yet, there remains a disconnect between counseling psychologists' theorizing and practice, as shifting our perspectives toward systems-level change has seen little progress (DeBlaere et al., 2019; Liu, 2017; Olle, 2018). Of note, while a multicultural perspective should ideally be rooted in social justice *action* (Vera & Speight, 2003), too often, "multiculturalism" focuses on "cultural differences" rather than social justice action. As such, we see the two as distinct, and focus here specifically on social justice. Scholars (e.g., Beer et al., 2012; DeBlaere et al., 2019; Pieterse et al., 2009; Speight & Vera, 2004; Singh et al., 2010; Vera & Speight, 2003) have repeatedly called for a focus on how to *enact* social justice prevention, outreach, advocacy and activism interventions within training programs. To this end, Constantine and colleagues (2007) identified social justice competencies that delineated the knowledge, awareness, and skills necessary for social justice action. Similarly, Lewis and colleagues' (2003) multidimensional model outlined a more comprehensive list of counselor advocacy competencies. More recently, some examples of social justice education and training have been introduced into the multicultural literature, including models of social justice counseling (e.g., Green et al., 2008), classroom assignments (e.g., Brinkman & Hirsch, 2019; Murray et al., 2010), standalone courses and curricular changes (e.g., Sanabria & DeLorenzi, 2019), community-based models (e.g., Hof et al., 2009), and program-based affinity groups (Brady-Amoon et al., 2012).

Yet even with these advancements, the integration of such activities and curricular changes in training programs appears to be the exception rather than the rule. Moving from idea to action has been challenging for graduate programs, perhaps due to the difficulties inherent in disentangling psychology, and the academy itself, from their historic racist, sexist, and classist ideological roots (Goodman et al., 2004; Olle, 2018). Further, many faculty have not received requisite training in this area (e.g., education in systems-level theory). Indeed, many (though not all) of the published recommendations are still focused on *social justice counseling*, or advocacy at the individual level. Further, incorporating some of the published recommendations in training programs would require the creation of new courses or curriculum overhauls, which face several barriers in the academic world (time, budget, and administrative constraints).

Regardless of the reasons, we can no longer wait. New clinicians, researchers, and consultants enter the profession lacking skills in how to engage in advocacy and activism that fights oppression within the systems and structures of our world. We find it imperative that training programs meet the real-world demand (and ethical and professional duty) to join with communities of oppressed people and engage in dedicated action to fight systems and structures that incarcerate, kill, and deny dignity and human rights. In the sections to follow, we offer concrete suggestions for training new professionals with a critical lens -- to use theory to conceptualize and intervene at levels beyond the individual.

Systems Theories, Social Justice, and Conceptualization

Despite the shift from merely theorizing to more concrete expectations (e.g., Scheel et al., 2018), social justice training and education is often lacking in counseling psychology training programs (e.g., Beer et al., 2012; Pieterse et al., 2009; Singh et al., 2010). This disconnect between theory and education, training, and practice may be explained at least in part by three potential "stuck points": (1) A lack of field-wide integration of comprehensive systems-level, justice-oriented theories (DeBlaere et al., 2019), (2) A lack of field-wide education and training on the breadth of activism and advocacy interventions (DeBlaere et al., 2019), and (3) Failure to recognize that we must engage our case conceptualization skills to understand the systems-level etiology of our systems-level problems, and to match our systems-level interventions with our conceptualization (Wilcox et al., 2020).

First, a note about distinguishing between the individual and systems levels. We believe that the recent American Psychological Association (APA, 2021) resolution emphasizing psychology's role in addressing racism is a helpful place to start. They state that psychologists should consider the following four levels of racism:

Structural, Institutional, Interpersonal, and Internalized (APA, 2021). Structural racism is defined as that which results from enacting or failing to repeal "laws, policies, and practices that produce cumulative, durable, and race-based inequalities" (p. 1). Institutional racism refers to that which results from policies, practices, and procedures, at the level of specific institutions. Structural and, to a lesser extent, institutional, represent the "systems level" to which we refer, and map onto Bronfenbrenner's (1977, 1979) macrosystem and exosystem, respectively (APA, 2017). On the other hand, interpersonal and internalized racism (see APA, 2021)--notably, what we more often learn about and focus on--represent the individual level.

For psychology, intervening upon the systems that lead to individual distress is a form of prevention similar to physician John Snow's removal of the London water pump responsible for the 1854 London cholera outbreak: address the source of the illness, and prevent rather than remediate (treat or cure) the inevitable illness. Yet while counselors and psychologists are generally able to express a vague sense that clients' individual struggles are driven by systems-level problems, they often have much more difficulty moving from theory to practice in addressing those systemic issues.

At the individual level, "Assessment/Diagnosis/Conceptualization" is considered a *functional competency* in professional psychology (Fouad, 2009). This is because counselors and psychologists recognize treatment must be rooted in conceptualization, and conceptualization must be rooted in integrative theory. Further, both conceptualization and treatment must be grounded in an understanding of sociopolitical context as well as science. APA (2015) requires that training programs teach psychological theories that serve as the foundation of individual case conceptualization, and comprehensive exams often require an advanced ability to demonstrate the necessary knowledge and skills to apply theory to etiology and treatment.

Through case conceptualization, clinicians seek to answer several questions. First, what exactly is the target of change (the "problem")? How did it come to be (etiology)? What does the therapist know about problems like this with similar etiologies? What does the therapist know about the client's sociopolitical and interpersonal contexts? Given the answers to these questions, how does theory suggest a therapist might intervene upon the target of change (treatment plan)? Finally, what skills are necessary to enact and evaluate the treatment plan? Clinicians spend a substantial proportion of their training years learning to apply this paradigm to the individuals with whom they work, gradually incorporating this process into their professional practice.Throughout our careers, we continue to write about how we personally engage this process, as required for predoctoral internship applications, postdoctoral applications, job applications, and board certification. Indeed, some state licensure boards still require an oral examination focused on our case conceptualization and treatment planning process.

Systems change is considered a subfacet of advocacy, a functional competency in counseling psychology (Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs, 2013). Yet, despite the incredible emphasis that we place on individual case conceptualization and treatment planning, rarely do we receive or provide training and education in exosystem and macrosystem case conceptualization and intervention (APA, 2017; Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979). How many of us have ever been asked to articulate our *systems-level* or *social justice theoretical orientation*, and how it informs our "systems-level treatment planning"? Or how our personal contextual/ cultural positionality and worldview informs our systems-level theoretical orientation? How many of us *could* articulate this if asked? To be able to do so would require equally-extensive training in comprehensive, interdisciplinary theories and models of exosystems and macrosystems (APA, 2017; Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979), as they inform *etiology*. Further, it would require education and training on the substantial empirical research available demonstrating the *macrosystem causes of both individual and community distress* (e.g., see Hatzenbuehler et al.,, 2013; Malat et al., 2018) and the data supporting our systems-level theories. We would also need to learn comprehensive, interdisciplinary theories and models of exosystem and macrosystem *change* (i.e. treatment), which is to say, better understand advocacy and activism strategies (e.g., Lantz et al., 2016). Finally, we would need education and training in the breadth of advocacy and activism skills that one can learn to facilitate such treatment (e.g., Lewis et al., 2003).

Matching Intervention to Conceptualization at the Systems-Level: Advocacy and Activism

For many, when they hear "social justice action," what may come to mind is a particular, stereotypical set of actions associated with a narrow set of activism strategies (e.g., marching; die-ins). Just as there exists a plethora of intervention skills and approaches at the individual level, however, so too are there a plethora of intervention skills and approaches for addressing problems at the exosystem and macrosystem levels. Advocacy and activism skills exist along a continuum of intensity, ranging from conventional, to disruptive, to violent (Barnhardt, 2014; Lantz et al., 2016). Skills can also be enacted from a number of locations within power structures, such as top-down (as an "inside" person with some degree of power), bottom-up (grassroots), as an insider, or as an outsider (Lantz et al., 2016).

One framework for matching intervention to conceptualization includes the recent Society of Counseling Psychology Advocacy Toolkit (Banks et al., 2019). The authors highlight *methods* of intervention depending upon the *level* of intervention. For example, two key questions guide conceptualization at the individual level: (1) What is the source (etiology) of the client's distress? and (2) Based on the etiology, what are the theoretical and empirical mechanisms of change to resolve the distress? Upscaling the conceptualization process to systems-level intervention, one might consider the level and source of the harm: is the root cause at the federal, state, local, or organizational/institutional level? Given that, what structures should be targeted (e.g., a policy, school system, or professional organization)? The answer may include multiple levels and multiple institutions. Subsequently, depending upon the source(s) of the inequity (distress), and desired target of change, various direct or indirect intervention methods or policy influence methods (Banks et al., 2019) may be selected.

Direct action examples include being involved in government hearings, policy conferences, or serving on policy task groups (Banks et al., 2019). Indirect action focuses energy on mechanisms likely to influence or shape public opinion about policy (for example, media, social media or podcasts), but does not directly involve contact with policy makers (Banks et al., 2019). In deciding on direct versus indirect action, one should also take into account one's systems-level theoretical orientation and the mechanism (e.g., education, guidance, persuasion, or pressure) by which one hopes to influence policy, as the mechanism of influence may shape whether one pursues direct or indirect means of change (Banks et al., 2019). These considerations should be intertwined with considering how and where the inequity first manifests. Lastly, the chosen intervention may also be a function of an individual's skill sets and strengths in four broad domains: communication, relationship-building, research, and strategic analysis skills (Banks et al., 2019). The complexities of intervening across these levels requires additional skills that can complement traditional training norms (e.g., teaching skills, theories).

Thus, it is imperative for social justice action that graduate training programs provide their students with the knowledge and skills necessary to conceptualize and address systems-level change. We must work intentionally to foster our students' ways of thinking about systems change such that it eventually comes naturally, just as we expect at the individual level. Otherwise, trainees may continue to conceptualize systems-level problems as nested within the individual, contributing to a host of clinical errors (e.g., blaming, misdiagnosis, or inadequate treatment approach). There are a number of ways in which such training, formal and informal, may occur within graduate programs. Below, the authors provide recommendations and examples of how they have implemented such training in their own educational practice.

Where the Rubber Meets the Road: Social Justice Training

Course Design

Trainees cannot develop a social justice orientation to their work if their core coursework does not center social justice theory and action. As an initial step in developing a social justice theoretical orientation, instructors must critically examine their syllabi and course design. As a baseline step, faculty should examine course syllabi for evidence of social justice material being *threaded through* a course, as opposed to being a topical focus of discussion on one or two days in a semester. Relatedly, most coursework in counseling psychology usually incorporates elements of ethical practice. Ensuring that multicultural and social justice perspectives are included

alongside ethics instruction reinforces the interdependent nature of ethics, multiculturalism, and social justice. Lastly, in order to truly facilitate a social justice orientation among trainees, it must be infused across curricula consistently, regardless of course content and instructor. If required coursework is also often cross-departmental, this likely requires not only intra-program coordination, but also inter-program/departmental collaboration.

Example

The first author (MMW) redesigned her multicultural counseling class to center a systems theories frame, encourage emotional engagement, directly address Whiteness and White supremacy, and provide education and training in advocacy and activism (see Appendix A for a list of resources). In-class time is predominantly process-oriented, with accountability for readings and content attended to through weekly journals (Appendix B), in a quasi-flipped classroom approach. The first two class sessions, however, are content-oriented such that students learn about the original tripartite multicultural competence model (Sue et al., 1982), the multicultural orientation model (Davis et al., 2018), Critical Race Theory, Critical Whiteness Theory (e.g., Nayak, 2007), intersectionality (e.g., Crenshaw, 1991; Moradi, 2017; Grzanka, 2020), Fundamental Cause Theory (Hatzenbuehler et al., 2013), and social justice advocacy as a form of prevention.

We discuss how family systems theories and critical philosophy emphasize that systems (and the individuals within them) strive for equilibrium, often resisting even positive, healthy, and desired change; and, that White supremacist bourgeois patriarchy (see Liu, 2017) is the overall system within which we exist, and which constantly strives to maintain status quo. This is the foundation of fostering students' social justice orientations: Just as in individual models, they are exposed to multiple theoretical lenses; asked to consider how *they* believe systems-level problems develop; how they believe systems change best occurs; and how their answers align with the given theories. For example, we discuss the approaches to advocacy and activism described in Lantz et al. (2016), emphasizing that the approaches they cover are just some of many. MMW then asks students to consider not only how they see themselves intervening with systems through this lens, but the ways in which their implicit orientation is rooted in their positionality. MMW uses herself as an example, noting that she leans more toward a *tempered radical* approach (i.e., working from within rather than outside organizations using a tempered approach; see Kezar et al., 2011; Lantz et al., 2016), which she sometimes calls a "Trojan Horse" orientation owing to the ancient Greek myth; but, that her orientation toward tempered radicalism is likely rooted in her Whiteness and ability to social-class "pass" in some spaces.

We then further discuss the importance of matching one's intervention to the identified problem from the perspective of one's social justice orientation. MMW has observed over the years that this foundation helps students to articulate their own social justice theoretical orientation and better identify strategies to address systemic problems, including the development of long-term strategies (e.g., career goals).

We co-create a living document of group engagement rules that guide us throughout the semester. Students are asked to simultaneously hold space for critical thinking about the systems level, emotional engagement about its impacts at the individual level, and the interplay between the two. I (MMW) introduce my students to a concept I have come to call *critical self-compassion*. I explain that one of our central tasks is to learn to hold multiple, opposing truths simultaneously. In that vein, I advise students that to do the necessary personal work required of our multicultural journey, we must be able to experience our own reactions non-judgmentally and allow ourselves compassion as we encounter new information. More specifically, we must understand that we did not elect to learn the problematic beliefs and ideas that we now must unlearn; and, we must also be willing to *critically examine* our reactions and from where they originate, holding ourselves accountable to challenge those ideas, beliefs and reactions.

Students are expected to read empirical literature throughout the semester, and demonstrate adequate integration and application of concepts learned in weekly reflection journals. During most class periods, students are shown a video (see Appendix A) meant to elicit emotional connection with experiences of oppression, as well as provide them with contextual historical information. During the second half of the class, we process the

feelings and reactions that were elicited, with particular emphasis on examining our own roles in systems of oppression from the systems-level frames previously discussed. These class sessions can be deeply emotional, and sometimes tumultuous, explosive, or violent at some level. Of note, MMW has observed that discussing critical self-compassion, as well as White Fragility (DiAngelo, 2018) at the beginning of the course helps to temper (but not eradicate) this tumult. The weekly reflection journals are an opportunity to process the video and class discussion in a more private space.

At least two additional class sessions are reserved for didactic learning about social justice. Emphasis is placed on (1) developing one's social justice theoretical orientation, built upon the systems frames discussed earlier, and (2) activism and advocacy skills. Regarding theoretical orientation, students are asked to reflect on *how systems change occurs* and *how they can be most effective* as social change agents. We discuss theories of advocacy, activism, and change, and MMW uses herself as an example, sharing her *tempered radical* approach, how her approach is evident in the work that she does, and the ways in which her approach is linked to her positionality, personality, and experiences. Students learn about the continuum of activism and advocacy experiences, and she provides political advocacy training.

Assignments and Activities

The primary project associated with MMW's course is a political advocacy project (see Appendix C). After their training on social justice, activism, and advocacy theory as well as advocacy and activism skills, students work on a collaborative project that culminates, ideally, in meeting with their United States congressperson to advocate for a policy position relevant to counseling and psychology. So far, this has been advocating for the preservation and strengthening of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program. If we are unable to obtain a meeting, we instead work on a detailed letter advocating for our position. Students are trained and supervised in conducting background research; preparing notes on relevant research and stories that highlight the importance of our position; and on making connections with our congressperson's legislative priorities. Students use these notes to either prepare for our meeting or write their letter. Feedback has consistently suggested that students find this project intimidating at first, but then experience both relief and enjoyment afterward.

Several projects included in the second author's (KSS) Master's-level Multicultural Counseling syllabus are designed to help students begin the process of engaging in advocacy and activism as professionals-in-training. The first project is an in-class exercise designed to help students apply their knowledge and practice thinking systemically about problems in real-world clinical treatment. The second project involves consultation work with a non-profit (see Appendix D).

First, building upon readings for the class that include systems-level theory (e.g., Sue et al., 2019), empirical literature (e.g., Goode-Cross, 2011), critical theory and essays (e.g., Adams et al., 2018), and professional critiques (e.g., Rogers-Sirin, 2017), students are placed into small groups for a class period and given a hypothetical case study involving an urban, outpatient clinic serving low-income clients of color, a setting in which many of our students may work. Embedded within the prompt are details that call for a systems-level conceptualization and intervention strategies. For instance, clinicians in the scenario are White, are noted as making racist or classist remarks about clients, and it is noted that clinician turnover is high. Further, the prompt describes that clients who identify as women often terminate treatment sooner than men, that clients are described as having "emotional outbursts,"and that treatment of addiction and mental health issues is focused only on the individual.

After reviewing the case, students must develop a plan that conceptualizes the issues they see as concerning (e.g., perhaps women leave treatment because there are limitations to accessible childcare in the community). Next, we discuss how we might conceptualize the clinic and its community members from a systems perspective (e.g., systemic racism and classism is ingrained in the facility's structure and practices; its healing practices are based on White, middle-class values; the assumption that clients are having "emotional outbursts" instead of investigating what these legitimate frustrations might be signaling about where the pathology *truly* resides). Finally, we discuss specific systems-level interventions that would target areas of concern (e.g., staff development on multicultural

and social justice competencies; investing in bringing in a more diverse clinical staff; partnering with childcare facilities) and ameliorate the reliance on pathologizing clients whose participation within an unjust, racist, sexist, classist system is unlikely to lead to positive mental health or wellness outcomes.

Another critical professional skill for counselors and counseling psychologists is consultation, which rarely receives instructional attention or supervised practice in real-world settings. Recently, for the second project, I (KSS) partnered with a Black woman-owned nonprofit small apparel company aimed at promoting social justice through design, with a long-term goal of providing training to K-12 public school employees and students on systemic racism (see Appendix D). Students in my Multicultural Counseling course were assigned to groups, each of whom met with the CEOs and learned about their business plan and ideas. Each group was then tasked to use counseling psychology research and social justice practices to provide recommendations to the CEOs about existing models of intervention in educational settings, engaging in advocacy and activism, and ideas for socially just community, legal, legislative, and financial engagement. Students presented their work to both the organization CEOs and the class for their final project.

Similarly, CNH designed and teaches a Social Justice Consultation Class in which students partner with nonprofits run by a racially marginalized person and a local government office (Clements-Hickman et al., 2018). In its second year being offered, students elected to partner with two nonprofit organizations run by Black women: Nerd Squad and Step by Step (see Appendix E). Students engaged in assessment with the nonprofit directors to understand their needs and determine what could be achieved in one semester. Students visited each nonprofit's regular meetings, developing relationships with the people served by the nonprofits (girls of color interested in STEM and young single mothers, respectively). They then utilized their research and consulting skills to complete a project identified by each director. Students noted that having an opportunity to be treated as professionals, observe the dynamics of small organizational systems, and be agents of change by employing their social justice lens to consultation made the course work meaningful.

Finally, in the third author's (LRM) advanced diversity seminar, students are asked to develop and implement a social justice intervention (see Appendix F). The project has three parts. First, students identify a marginalized group for which they plan to implement the intervention and conduct a review of the literature on the needs of their chosen group. Second, students present their planned social justice intervention to the class for critical feedback and suggestions. Students are encouraged to communicate and seek feedback from stakeholders within their chosen population to ensure that the development of the intervention is collaborative. Last, students implement the social justice intervention, write a reflection on what did and did not go well with the intervention, and share their realizations with the class in an informal discussion.

Research Training

Social justice research training includes critically evaluating the field's research methodologies and resulting knowledge base, particularly in terms of scope of representation, appropriateness of research methodologies, and integration of social justice principles in research activities (Adams et al., 2015; Fassinger & Morrow, 2013; Grzanka et al., 2017). Similar to needed changes to coursework structure, research mentors must first critically evaluate the methods they teach (and *do not* teach). In reviewing research methods courses, we should be asking: What are the dominant methodologies given the most space and time? What is the balance of quantitative and qualitative methodologies? How does content integrate diverse methodologies from outside the traditional, postpositivist lens? Does content include specific research paradigms such as intersectional (Grzanka et al., 2017), critical race, participatory action research (Kidd & Kral, 2005), and queer approaches (Grzanka, 2019)? Are philosophies of science explicitly taught, or is this ignored, which often results in an implicit positivist frame? We recommend research educators conduct an honest and critical examination of what they teach and practice, and thus communicate, about the value of social justice-focused research. At minimum, research educators and mentors should examine training through a decolonization framework (Adams et al., 2015), centering cultural psychology and liberation psychology principles (Martin-Baró, 1991, 1994; Tate et

al., 2013). In addition, educators should emphasize diverse approaches to scientific inquiry and research by providing instruction and *hands-on* experiences and mentorship in quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method approaches that use social justice informed principles (Cokley & Awad, 2013; Lyons et al., 2013; Ponterotto, 2013).

Examples

The second author's and fifth authors' (KSS and CNH) approach to social justice within the research training environment involves the critique of empiricism to understand complex contextual experiences (Wampold & Imel, 2015). Additionally, we question the field's reliance on experimental or other strict empirical processes using participants, often with WEIRD (Wetsern, educated, industrialized, rich, Democratic) characteristics, to generalize "'fundamental' or 'universal' truths" to all of humanity (Brady et al., 2018, p. 11407). In research methods, psychopathology, and advanced technique courses, students are challenged through reading, dialogue, and article critiques to articulate the ways in which dominant group narratives are centered in psychological theory and scholarship. Students are asked to carefully examine the participant pool, instrumentation, and definitions or thresholds of defined psychopathology or categories of the DSM-5 (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) in the extant literature, as well as questioning the gold standard of randomized clinical trials for treatments identified as empirically-supported. By questioning the processes by which we come to know "the truth" about psychological processes, students begin to understand that the endeavor of psychology itself is culture-bound. Further, we must question the authority granted to the profession as it continues to exclude vast categories of people from its investigation into human behavior, and indeed to pathologize the non-pathological (and under-pathologize the culturally-accepted pathological) in the process. Adequate representation of participants from all groups and appropriate methodological and epistemological diversity are necessary to understand complex individual and systemic processes and to create socially just psychological research.

Further, in Dr. Shaffer's research team, students are asked to write and reflect on their identities related to the team's qualitative work investigating the phenomenon of Whiteness in the clinical training environment. The group discusses their biases and cultural lenses that will shape their interpretation of data, as well as their contribution to the team itself. An explicit discussion of power dynamics among the team members and the faculty advisor allows for the dismantling of White, hierarchical power narratives inherent in academic structures. The advisor aims to share power with the students, encouraging the use of their experiences to shape the project's direction.

Using critical paradigms, informed by queer theory, critical race theory, and intersectionality, provides transformative options for the way we do science and the dissemination of our findings. Scholarship within these paradigms requires that the product serve more than the academic audience, so Dr. Hargons' students are encouraged to create social media posts relaying the key findings from their work to community and lay audiences. Her doctoral mentees have developed social media outlets such as @Blkfolxtherapy and @Academics4BlackLives as research dissemination platforms. Moradi and Grzanka (2017) point out the importance of intersectionality in social justice-informed research, citing it as "critical praxis for social justice" (p. 500). Drawing upon Crenshaw's (1991) framework, the populations we study are understood within a context of multiple marginalizations and the power dynamics that lead to their stereotypical representation in the canon. For Dr. Hargons, the empirical articulation of counternarratives is an important social justice scholastic intervention. As an example, her research team's work disrupts deficit narratives about Black sexuality (Hargons et al. 2018), presenting a sex positive framework that holds the systems that create sexual risk outcomes accountable, as they also examine the pleasure and benefits of healthy sexuality among Black people.

Mentorship

Mentorship and modeling are crucial to professional development in graduate school (Hargons et al., 2017; Langrehr et al., 2017). Additionally, fostering social justice advocacy and systems-level ways of thinking outside of the classroom emphasize these perspectives as a way of being rather than an academic exercise. MMW's approach to mentorship is a multicultural-feminist mentorship approach (Fassinger & Hensler-McGinnis, 2005),

with an emphasis on strengthening the pipeline into the profession for underrepresented students and early career professionals (ECPs), particularly those who have a social justice orientation. This approach is grounded in a *systems-level etiology* of the barriers faced by minoritized students in the pipeline. Fassinger and Hensler-McGinnis (2005) describe principles central to a multicultural-feminist approach, including lessening the power differential between mentor and mentee where possible; focus on the relational and the reciprocal nature of the relationship; commitment to diversity; and ability to challenge "ist" structures. Fassinger and McGinnis (2005) go on to state that boundaries operate differently in a multicultural-feminist framework, and that "[A mentor] will be presumed to know (or care) little about the particular personal problems of her mentees, but in fact, she is likely to know much about their contextual barriers and challenges" (pp. 156-157).

From this approach, I (MMW) seek to intentionally foster students' (both undergraduate and graduate) and ECPs' roles as leaders, advocates, and activists, getting to know each person's goals and strengths and helping them to identify pathways into leadership roles and advocacy opportunities. I strive to identify barriers as well as solutions, connecting students with resources when possible. This work requires that I foster a type of working alliance with students, such that they know they can express their concerns and needs safely. Additionally, I often "talk out loud" about the systemic barriers I am observing, their historical roots, and short- and long-term solutions, seeking to model systems-level thinking and problem solving. My students have also attended extracurricular political advocacy meetings with me (and on their own/on my behalf with my mentorship) and have gone on to occupy a number of professional leadership positions.

The tasks for Master's-level mentorship are somewhat different from doctoral-level mentorship. Often, Master's-level trainees are trained as practitioners first and scholars second, as the large majority of Master's trainees will make their careers in practice rather than research. In a qualitative inquiry (Boswell et al., 2015), Master's students reported that personal characteristics of their mentor, mentor encouragement, and discussion of what to expect "in the real world" were critical to their mentorship. As such, ongoing discussions of what Master's students may face in practice, particularly as it relates to social justice issues and systems-level barriers, are of great importance. For instance, we discuss that the systems in which they may work will be inherently racist, sexist, classist, and heterosexist, and that their Code of Ethics (ACA, 2014) requires that they advocate for socially just treatment for their clients within all systems (ACA, 2014, A.7.a). We also discuss the ethical imperative that they learn to care for themselves within these systems (ACA, 2014), as they may be harmed by injustice in agencies with oppressive systems and practices.

As Dr. Wilcox states above, strengthening the pipeline for students from marginalized groups into the counseling profession *and also into doctoral programs in counseling and counseling psychology* is an important task for Master's-level (and undergraduate) faculty. In particular, identifying students from minoritized groups who are interested in doctoral work and mentoring them into research and clinical experiences that will help strengthen their applications for doctoral work is critical for the professions, particularly as the profession remains overwhelmingly White (APA Center for Workforce Studies, 2019). Often, students with one or more minoritized identities are first-generation students who can benefit from discussions of how to navigate academia, noting its inherent biases, unequal power structures, and hierarchy. Mentoring talented students with oppressed identities is critical to the social justice mission of diversifying the psychology workforce and shifting dominant-centered narratives.

The third author's (LRM) approach to mentoring is developmental and student-centered with a multicultural lens. At the beginning of the mentoring relationship, no assumptions are made about what the student does and does not know about the journey on which they are about to embark. LRM shares her career journey and how it has been influenced by her identities. Much of this sharing is around her own marginalized identities. The intention is to begin a dialogue about cultural backgrounds/differences between mentor and mentee that will continue over the span of the student's time in graduate school and beyond. Often what emerges is that the third author's research is actually "me-search," as she seeks to understand how experiences of discrimination may affect not only mental

and physical health, but also career development. Another important facet of mentoring is role modeling, using available opportunities to discuss important events (e.g., police shooting of Black people) to engage in discourse about what "we" can do to begin changing the systems in which we live so they are more equitable. Action steps may include involvement in certain groups (e.g., Black Lives Matter) or seeking leadership positions, where systems change can be implemented. Students who choose to engage in leadership positions have commented that the work can be rewarding and gives them insight into how change occurs at higher levels (e.g., the process is rarely linear).

Clinical Training and Supervision

We would be remiss not to speak about the importance of infusing social justice training into clinical training and supervision. Coursework and experiences with research are meant to prepare students for clinical practice by building a multicultural orientation (Davis et al., 2018). However, although trainees will likely embrace social justice ideals, they often struggle most with social justice action, thinking it must be large in scope rather than small changes in individual organizations that can have significant positive effects for clients. One way to encourage social justice action in supervision is to ask trainees about their opinions on the ways in which a particular agency can be improved, which may lead to discussion of organization-level changes and power differentials therein. It is then possible for the trainee to incorporate small changes that positively affect clients and articulate organizational inequities.

The third author (LRM) uses the ADDRESSING framework (Hays, 2016) to assist supervisees in conceptualizing their and their clients' diverse identities and to facilitate a critical reflection of identities of power and privilege. Students are asked to begin by ADDRESSING themselves as a class activity (and may choose to share or not) and to practice the use of ADDRESSING a client. ADDRESSING is an acronym that stands for age, developmental/acquired disability, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, indigenious background, nationality, and gender (Hays, 2016). Hays posits that attention to these identities leads to a more complete understanding of the client and their experiences. Although the framework only provides a starting place for the exploration of cultural identities, Hays' approach can be beneficial because it provides a simple reference point that supervisees can apply in their conceptualization of every client. Supervisees have noted that this approach helps them to consider clients' experiences of oppression as influential to their presenting concerns. Further, understanding the identities in which supervisees and their clients hold more and/or less privilege is important not only for social justice counseling, but also to take action toward systemic change.

The first author's (MMW) early experience in community mental health working alongside social workers allowed her to better integrate advocacy into clinical supervision practice. Through this early experience, Dr. Wilcox learned about community resources, how to assess post-acute care needs, interface with interdisciplinary agencies to connect clients directly with resources, and also leverage her professional position to facilitate the procurement of those resources (e.g., connecting a client to case management and assisting in the Medicaid application process). She found it striking to later hear from some of her own supervisors that this was "not the work of psychologists." We can challenge these narratives in clinical supervision by working with trainees to develop this knowledge and these skills, and to foster an expectation that psychologists work with clients to connect them with resources and advocate with them or for them (which is to say, *intervene*; Lewis et al., 2003) at the microsystem level. This is the application of systems conceptualization and treatment planning.

We can also help students navigate power structures within the supervisory relationship. Often, supervisors are lacking in their own multicultural and social justice advocacy awareness, yet they are ethically required to ensure trainees possess these critical competencies (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019). Master's-level trainees are often working in systems that serve clients in minoritized groups or those with chronic, severe conditions (e.g., inpatient hospitals, addictions treatment). These settings are clinically challenging, often overloading trainees with developmentally inappropriate levels of responsibility for clients. To the extent possible, it is critical that faculty assist students in navigating conversations about clients (or concerns such as caseload or agency practices) with their site supervisors. Students may have ideas about more socially just approaches to working with their clients or

within the system than their supervisors, but may be reluctant to address these topics in supervision. The tension between advocating for a client's (or trainee's) best interest and disagreeing with or "defying" a clinical supervisor's direction is anxiety-provoking for trainees based on the evaluative nature of supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019). Faculty can role play or practice these challenging supervision conversations with students. Further, when faculty advocate with or on behalf of their trainees, they are also modeling systems-level interventions when they do so.

Relatedly, it is critical that faculty encourage students to advocate for themselves. Universities and training programs routinely make unilateral decisions affecting students without first consulting them. It is important that training programs are *willing to receive feedback about* and *take action to correct* unjust practices within their own domains. This requires intentional reflection and assessment. Ideally, programs should develop a mechanism for receiving feedback and a process of decision-making that shares power with students above and beyond established practices such as student program representatives. Faculty cannot expect students to hear feedback without being willing themselves to confront the inequitable systems of power that govern their own practices.

Conclusion

It is clear that social justice is important to counseling psychology. How do we move past philosophizing, however, to truly building a counseling psychology wherein social justice *action*, not just values, are the norm? It undoubtedly involves a process of constant critical reflection and self-evaluation. In this paper, we sought to identify some of the barriers to action, and provide both recommendations and examples across multiple areas of training that readers can adopt in their own practice as educators. We must adjust our expectations for systems-level education related to theory and practice to be commensurate with our expectations at the individual level. Much is written about the importance that social justice be infused throughout the curriculum rather than relegated to "special topic" status; however, this requires that we provide education on systems-level theories and interventions to the extent that we do for individuals.

Certainly, there are barriers to making such substantial changes to the curriculum as well as to infusing systems-level education and training into existing curricula. For example, it may be difficult to cover both individual-level and systems-level considerations within a single semester; yet, it is also difficult to add additional classes to an already burdensome curriculum. We argue, however, that thinking only in terms of "adding" (adding to the syllabus; adding to the curriculum) has been another barrier to progress in social justice education and training. Instead, we call on counseling and psychology to reconsider their overall approach to "multiculturalism" and social justice. For example, Grzanka (2020) noted that psychology is epistemologically pulled toward situating our analysis and conceptualization within the individual, to the detriment of systems and structural analysis. Grzanka highlighted Metzl and Hansen's (2014) similar critique of medical education and training, as well as their Structural Competencies approach to recenter medicine on the structural rather than the individual. Such an approach is not *additive* but rather *transformative*, emphasizing the need to move away from over-centering pathology within the individual and, for our purposes, the intrapsychic. Whether within or across semesters, time is indeed limited; and, we are overdue to reallocate time to the systemic and the structural.

This also means that educators must ground themselves in such knowledge and skills. We must be open to critical feedback and be intentional in our ongoing growth, or we cannot expect counseling psychology training to move forward. Indeed, as was likely true for the generations before us, little explicit training was available to us on advocacy, activism, or developing a social justice theoretical orientation, much less providing such education and training to our own students. Instead, we sought out learning and mentorship in these areas so as to be able to foster a new generation of well-versed counselors and counseling psychologists. We believe it is incumbent upon all of us to develop these competencies; however, we also understand that this is difficult given the lack of easily-available, relevant education. Thus, we hope that the recommendations and examples provided herein are helpful not only in guiding faculty, supervisors, and students toward new practices, but also in identifying areas where

readers may benefit from bolstering their own knowledge. We have found that the more that we learn in these areas the better social justice advocates we are in all of the roles we occupy.

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Appendix A
Multicultural Teaching Media Resource List

Books

Alexander, M. (2012). *The new jim crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness.* New York: The New
        Press.

Coates, T. (2015). *Between the world and me.* Melbourne, Australia: Text Publishing.

Coates, T. (2017). *We were eight years in power: An American tragedy.* New York: One World Publishing.

DiAngelo, R. (2018). *White fragility: Why it's so hard for White people to talk about racism.* Boston: Beacon Press.

Evans-Winters, V. (2019). *Black feminism in qualitative inquiry: A mosaic for writing our daughter's body.*
        Routledge.

Hunter, D. (2015). *Building the movement to end the new jim crow: An organizing guide.* New York: The New
        Press. [organizing guide companion to Alexander, 2012]

Kendi, I. X. (2016). *Stamped from the beginning: The definitive history of racist ideas in America.* New York:
        Nation Books.

Kendi, I. X. (2019). *How to be an antiracist.* New York: One World Publishing.

Lensmire, T. J. (2017). *White folks: Race and identity in rural America.* New York: Routledge.

Oluo, I. (2018). *So you want to talk about race.* New York: Seal Press.

Wise, T. (2011). *White like me: Reflections on race from a privileged son.* New York: Soft Skull.

Documentaries

Racism
        Last Chance for Eden Part I
        White Like Me
        13th

Sexism & Toxic Masculinity
        Killing Us Softly 4
        Last Chance for Eden Part II
        Miss Representation
        The Mask You Live In

Gender Identity
        Trans

Sexual Orientation
        For the Bible Tells Me So

Social Class
        People Like Us: Social Class in America
        The One Percent

Immigration
        No Le Digas a Nadie (Don't Tell Anyone)

Shorter Videos with Links

Criminal Justice Reform

John Oliver Sequence on Criminal Justice System (Note: this is an HBO series, so you may need to screen for
        editing/content):
        1.   Mandatory minimums: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pDVmldTurqk
        2.   Prisoner Re-entry: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gJtYRxH5G2k
        3.   Municipal violations: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0UjpmT5noto
        4.   Public defenders: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=USkEzLuzmZ4

5. Civil forfeiture: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kEpZWGgJks
6. Bail: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IS5mwymTIJU
7. Police accountability: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zaD84DTGULo

Racism

1. The Unequal Opportunity Race: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vX_Vzl-r8NY
2. How Microaggressions are like Mosquito Bites: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDd3bzA7450&t=37s
3. Dr. Matt Miller's SPOKENproject: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9T2nlhsGHhPRc4oyeMkh9A/featured

Social Class

1. Wealth Inequality in America: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPKKQnijnsM&t=2s

Ableism

1. How Autism Freed Me to Be Myself: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQ95xlZeHo8&list=WL&index=17&t=5s
2. I Got 99 Problems… Palsy is Just One: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=buRLc2eWGPQ&list=WL&index=19&t=7s

Religion (Islamophobia):

Ageism

1. The Harmful Effects of Ageism: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dnp3T4Yzaws&list=WL&index=13&t=0s
2. Let's End Ageism: https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#search/religion+ted/ KtbxLvHcNMtpggSCTVHgjQJtXSRMwqhVsV

Websites and Podcasts

Seeing White (as featured on *Scene on Radio* podcast): https://www.sceneonradio.org/seeing-white/

On Being: Mahzarin Banaji - *The Mind is a Difference Seeking Machine:* https://onbeing.org/programs/ mahzarin-banaji-the-mind-is-a-difference-seeking-machine-aug2018/

The Synapse*: For the Culturally Responsive Educator*: https://medium.com/synapse/podcast-recommendations- for-the-culturally-responsive-educator-tax-day-edition-31d7fc316ac5

Teaching Guides

Teaching the New Jim Crow (High School): https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/publications/teaching-the-new-jim-crow

The Real Cost of Prison Project - http://www.realcostofprisons.org/materials/riverside_new_jim_crow_study_guide.pdf

Society of Counseling Psychology Advocacy Toolkit https://www.div17.org/scp-connect/community-advocacy-a-psychologists-toolkit-for-state-and-local- advocacy/

Appendix B
Weekly Journal Prompt
Melanie M. Wilcox, Ph.D., ABPP

Each week, you are to submit a journal (approximately 2 pages) that integrates your own personal experience of the video and the class discussion afterward with the readings of the week (and those prior if applicable). The readings should match the class content (e.g., social class and social class). The journals must demonstrate that you know and understand the content from the readings; that you understand the topic as discussed in class; demonstrate reflection and introspection on your own privilege, oppression, and how it shapes you as a person and a counselor; and integrate all of these.

Appendix C
Advocacy Project
Melanie M. Wilcox, Ph.D., ABPP

This semester, we will build upon the theory and skills you are learning by engaging in an advocacy project. Advocacy comes in many forms and may be engaged in at multiple levels of systems. We will specifically target **policy** *advocacy.*

On [date], the lecture in class will focus on political advocacy training similar to that provided by the American Psychological Association. We will focus on advocating for the preservation and strengthening of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program. During class time, after learning about effective advocacy, we will begin to workshop the elements of successful advocacy specifically for our federal legislators (senators and members of the House of Representatives). In the meantime, [professor] will coordinate with [legislator's] office to attempt to schedule an in-person meeting. We will prepare as though we will be attending an in-person meeting (for those available to attend) with [legislator]; however, if a meeting is unable to be set, you will write a collaborative letter instead.

As we will discuss, as a class, you will need to **(1)** explain your "ask" (in this case, gaining their support for preserving and strengthening PSLF in any reauthorization of the Higher Education Act); **(2)** connect your issue to [legislator's] priorities; **(3)** connect personal and professional experiences (no identifiable client information) to your issue and the legislator's priorities through story; **(4)** provide research to support your position, sharing it in a succinct and digestable way; and **(5)** reiterate your ask (will you support the preservation and strengthening of PSLF in the reauthorization of the HEA?).

After our initial workshopping as a class, you will work collaboratively outside of class time to prepare for our in-person meeting (or letter writing) by:

- Doing background research on the issue
- Collecting relevant stories from your group and practicing them with each other
- Determining who will discuss (or write) which components and in which order during the meeting
- Compiling an agenda with notes to prepare for the meeting (or preparing the letter)
- Those who are unavailable to attend the in-person meeting will still be expected to assist their classmates with the preparation.

After we attend the in-person meeting, you will collaboratively write a "thank you" letter to [legislator], reiterating our ask and inviting them to contact us with any questions.

To receive a grade, as a class, you will submit at the conclusion of the project:

1. Your preparation notes
2. Your meeting agenda (or letter)
3. Your "thank you" letter (N/A if no meeting)

And, each individual must submit:

4. Your individual reflection journal
5. Your signature sheet signed by your peers confirming that you assisted with the class project

[Professor] is available to consult and support you through these steps at each stage, and will be with you at the meeting.

Appendix D
Social Justice Consultation Project
Katharine S. Shaffer, Ph.D.

Students will be working with the client, XXXX, a justice-focused apparel company that is expanding its mission.

Students will be placed in groups of approximately 6 students each. Once students receive their group assignments by the course instructor, the group will be responsible for coordinating a conference call Zoom meeting with the Founders of XXXX:

During this Zoom conference call, students will be required to gather information to help support the mission expansion of this organization in the form of a consultation project. Your aims are as follows:

- The call should be scheduled for no later than ___
- During the call:
    - Get a detailed history of the organization and its beliefs, values and mission
    - Understand the organization's ideas, objectives and plans for expansion
- After the call:
    - Help the client (the organization) devise strategies for meeting their objective(s), as described in the meeting
    - Your research work will begin here,
    - Once you have clearly detailed and identified all of the above, it is now time to turn to:
        - the scholarly literature
            - Research already completed
            - Experts
        - current community practice models
        - other resources (perhaps websites, podcasts, etc.)
    - The research portion of the project should take place between the time of your call (no later than ____) and approximately _____.
- After the research is completed
    - Work with your team to compile your data in a systematic way that represents your ideas clearly and concisely, using APA style citations
    - Assemble a powerpoint style presentation that outlines what you learned from the organization about who they are and what they want to achieve, and then provide recommendations for how to best meet those objectives based on your research.
    - Make sure to provide a reference list and save copies of your references that can be shared with the organization
- Your presentation is due for final presentation to the class (and due in your Assignments section) on___. You will also provide a copy of the powerpoint and all resources to the organization after your presentation.

A few notes:

The organization may decide to ask you to focus on a very small, targeted and specific objective, a few at a time, or a larger, bigger picture objective. Any of this is doable. The org. is aware that you have fewer than 7 weeks to complete this project. The organization may decide to ask each group to research the same topics, or they may ask for different topics from different groups. Work only within your own group to respond to your specific advocacy research task(s).

Once you and your team have met with the organization for the first meeting and then discussed your strategies for research afterward, you may find that a second meeting with the org, or a very detailed email exchange is helpful. This is not required, but it might be helpful to ensure the direction your team is taking for research and recommendations is useful to the organization. Please make sure to give the organization plenty of time to schedule a second meeting (do not wait until the last minute).

Appendix E
Social Justice Consultation Project Description
Candice N. Hargons, Ph.D.

This year's projects will be with Step by Step and Nerd Squad. We will be conducting a participatory organizational consultation project on the impact of the program on the children of Step by Step moms, starting at the grassroots by connecting with the moms who are involved, the executive director, and staff, potentially ending with a strongly established relationship with the organization, kids, mentors, moms, and a presentation for the community. You will investigate with parents using surveys, focus groups, and interviews for a better picture of what their lives are like. For example, many of the moms are transient, couch hopping for housing. The executive director would love for them to self-report how their children's behaviors are affected, and identify how our team can offer a social justice informed set of sustainable solutions.

With Nerd Squad's consultation, you will work with the founder/executive director, FCPS teachers, and squad (girls receiving STEM mentoring services) to co-create a plan for advancement and expansion. The director is interested in what FCPS teachers think is missing from STEM education.

A 15-30 minute PPT or other multimedia presentation is required (roughly 15-25 slides), and a complementary, well-designed executive report should be developed as a handout. Collaborating with the organizations to execute the project and present the findings is also part of the assignment. A complete trial run (in class) of your presentation before presentation day is required to ensure that it is high quality. This project will be guided by a specific consultation model selected by the group.

1. Using a Qual:quan mixed methods approach, examine the experience of young single moms and/or youth in Lexington, which will include your time spent with people in the programs.
2. Research from peer-reviewed articles and other relevant sources should inform your presentation.
3. Include recommendations informed by various stakeholders, including executive directors, parents, staff, youth, etc.
4. Highlight cultural and social justice considerations.
5. Provide an executive report with APA formatted references used for your presentation (no more than 25 pages).

Appendix F
Social Justice Project
Laura Reid Marks, Ph.D.

Students are expected to develop a social justice intervention in a community of their choice. Students may choose to develop an intervention individually or as a group with other students in the class. Students should carefully consider the community when planning the intervention. In other words, students should review the literature of their population of choice and reach out to stakeholders in that community and hold a meeting with them to discuss the intervention and solicit feedback. The intervention can only be finalized when stakeholders' feedback has been sufficiently integrated (as determined by all parties). This project should be a collaboration and not simply students going into a community without input from stakeholders. Students will deliver this intervention at some point this semester and present a summary of the intervention experience in class. This project will have three components:

1. Students will present in 10-15 minutes their planned intervention by incorporating a brief literature review of the population of interest and a need for an intervention, who the stakeholders are, theory/model guiding the intervention, implementation plan, evaluation, and potential strengths/weaknesses of the intervention. Students may opt to use a PPT presentation or handout. A copy of the PPT or handout should be submitted.

2. Students will deliver the intervention after collaborating with stakeholders and incorporating any suggested feedback. Interventions may occur at one time point or multiple time points throughout the semester.

3. Students will write a 8-10 page paper describing their final intervention. They will also present in 25-30 minutes their final intervention using a PPT presentation. Students should be sure to include a summary of the final intervention, challenges and barriers that they faced, and some form of evaluation of their intervention. In addition, a reflection of the experience should be included. Some questions to help guide this reflection are: What was easy? What was hard? What would you do differently? A copy of the PPT and paper should be submitted. For the paper, APA style 7th edition should be followed.

Footnote

Dr. Marks would like to acknowledge Dr. Ayşe Çiftçi whose social justice project assignment she reproduces with approval in her course. Dr. Çiftçi was Dr. Marks' major professor while she was a doctoral student at Purdue University. Dr. Çiftçi is currently a full professor and faculty head of Counseling and Counseling Psychology in the College of Integrative Sciences and Arts at Arizona State University.