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INTRODUCTION

We must become the change we want to see in the world.

(Mahatma Gandhi)

The writing of *Social Justice Counseling: The Next Steps Beyond Multiculturalism in Application, Theory, and Practice* has taken place during the last ten years. It has been a journey that parallels the multicultural social justice movement within the mental health field, fraught with strong reactions to the content of the book. These have been both highly laudatory and—in the earlier years of writing—strongly critical about the place of social justice within the context of counseling, psychology, and social work. Over the ten years since this book became an idea, the mental health field has broadened to more easily include issues of social justice as integral to the work of psychologists, counselors, and social workers, and the criticism about social justice as a fundamental aspect of counseling has diminished, albeit not disappeared. Based on our work, our experiences, and our commitment to justice, equality, and equity for all people, and the critical issue of redistributing power and privilege as a means toward social justice, we have stayed the course with this book and are delighted to share with you our thoughts and experiences related to multicultural social justice counseling.

This book has a foundation in the amazing work of many colleagues who have paved the way in the field for multicultural counseling and psychology (e.g., Joseph Aponte, Patricia Arredondo, Manuel Casas, William Cross, Michael D’Andrea, Judy Daniels, Juris Draguns, Janet Helms, Farah Ibrahim, Allen Ivey, Teresa LaFromboise, Anthony Marsella, Thomas Parham, Paul Pedersen, Joseph Ponterotto, Don Pope-Davis, Issac Prilleltensky, Maria Root, Derald Wing Sue, Stanley Sue, Joseph Trimble, Clemont Vontress, and many others). The chapters in this book build on the incredible work and efforts of the pioneers in the multicultural field and present ways to embed social justice as the next step in the counseling, psychology, and social work fields. This book is a first step in systematically looking at how to integrate social justice into the mental health field without it being absorbed and diluted in the multicultural work that has taken root and now constitutes a cornerstone of contemporary counseling with an emphasis on cultural diversity and plurality.

Social inequities that are rooted in oppression, intolerance, privilege, power, and inequities are not new. For a long time, discrimination, oppression,

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and intolerance have methodically excluded people based on race, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, gender, age, religion, physical disability, mental disability, and so forth, and this has created obstacles to access, opportunity, and participation. Counselors, psychologists, and social workers are constantly working with clients, families, communities, and schools that experience profound issues of oppression, discrimination, social inequities, unfair treatment, and disproportionate privilege, as well as unequal social, political, and economic access. Yet, consistent with the origins of Western psychology, we frequently focus on the individual and her or his pathology or strengths, rather than the broader social, economic, political, and ecological context.

The unintended result of our mental health tradition has created a situation in which we often neglect larger critical issues that impact mental health, and we make conscious decisions to deemphasize those aspects of our clients' lives. Incorporating social justice into our work does exactly the opposite—it helps us in examining and helping our clients to address vital life circumstances and issues that affect them and become salient components in counseling and psychotherapy. Social, economic, ecological, historical, and political issues and concerns, and social action as well, subsequently become key ingredients in the psychotherapeutic relationship.

The attention to cultural diversity has moved the field of mental health toward greater responsiveness in the 21st century. In the United States, where Latinos and Asians are the fastest-growing groups nationally, 12% of the population is foreign born, and projections indicate that by 2042, people of color will outnumber Whites, with the nation projected to be 54% minority in 2050 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). While in some circles there is greater acceptance of cultural diversity, there is at the same time a growing polarity in attitudes and values regarding the acceptance of ethnic and racial diversity, tolerance for differences in religious beliefs, and acceptance of differences in sexual orientation. These differences, coupled with the world shrinking through globalization, media and technology, and the vast

migration of people all around the world, counselors, psychologists, and social workers by necessity must become knowledgeable and sensitive to issues of diversity.

In turn, mental health professionals must acquire distinctive skills to accompany their growing awareness in order to effectively work with culturally diverse populations. This requires a growing acceptance of, respect for, and appreciation of the dignity and uniqueness of race and ethnicity, physical and mental disabilities, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, and socioeconomic status. Even with emergent approval of cultural diversity, there has not been systematic attention as to how to link culturally responsive mental health work with social justice counseling. This book provides an examination of how to move to the next steps that go beyond the combination of social justice and multicultural counseling, presenting ideas about social justice application, theory, practice, and research. In addition, this book is different from other books on social justice in providing a foundation of the theories, skills, and techniques that are critical to understand being a competent multicultural social justice mental health provider, examining issues that we believe must be understood by social justice mental health professionals as key components of their work. These issues are typically separated and addressed as separate components of social justice work, and therefore separate books are written specifically focusing on a component. But this book uniquely brings together the next steps beyond multiculturalism for the first time, to include a comprehensive look at them. Issues that are included in this book include the integration of multiculturalism and social justice, models of intervention, relevant socioeconomic and political issues, change theory, advocacy, leadership, empowerment, interdisciplinary collaboration, social action research, training, and global issues.

Three common questions that are asked in multicultural social justice work are as follows:

- 1) What is social justice?
- 2) What are the differences between multicultural counseling and social justice counseling?

- 3) How does a multicultural social justice counselor, psychologist, or social worker actually provide counseling?

The intent of this book is to answer these critical questions; the answers are essential in taking the next steps to move beyond multicultural counseling. Over the past few decades, we have established a body of literature, including excellent research and theory, along with guidelines about becoming an effective multicultural practitioner.

The book is divided into six sections. It begins with Part I, which includes the current chapter, an introduction to counseling and social justice. Chapter 2 reviews the theories of multicultural counseling and presents how this body of literature relates to social justice work. Next, Chapter 3 presents social justice as a fifth force and outlines definitions, theories, historical perspectives, models, and characteristics of a social justice counselor, psychologist, and social worker.

In Part II, there is a description of the Multi-Phase Model (MPM) of psychotherapy, counseling, human rights and social justice, a social justice counseling model that we have developed as a framework from over 50 years of combined experience. This part begins with Chapter 4, a discussion on the development, rationale, and prerequisites for effectively utilizing the MPM model. It is followed by Chapter 5, in which we describe the MPM.

Part III shares the deeply personal social justice journeys of each of the two authors as well as a number of graduate students. The inclusion of our respective personal narratives and the students' narratives was to reach you, the reader, on a more personal level, with hopes that you can identify your own social justice journey. The stories describe several individuals' journeys in becoming social justice mental health practitioners and share the power of transformation through training and practice.

Following the personal narratives is Part IV, which describes the critical intersection between social change and social justice. Chapter 9 examines dimensions of change, including an exploration

of process, power, and resistance to change. The next two chapters describe what we consider critical qualities of a competent multicultural social justice counselor. Chapter 10 provides a close look at leadership, leadership styles, issues of gender, and characteristics of a social justice leader. Chapter 11 examines advocacy within the framework of social justice counseling. It includes an overview of the history of advocacy, qualities of an effective advocate, and challenges of being a counseling social justice advocate. Chapter 12 continues with an examination of one of the most important markers for working from a multicultural social justice perspective, that is, empowerment. Given that nowadays in counseling, psychology, and social work, there are no critics of empowerment, and that everyone is supportive of empowering clients, families, and communities, the chapter takes a critical look at how mental health professionals sometimes inadvertently disempower others under the guise of empowerment. To more closely examine these issues, this chapter discusses what we call *authentic empowerment* and describes its relationship to social justice counseling. Finally in Part IV, Chapter 13 focuses on interdisciplinary collaboration. We have found that remaining within one's own sphere of counseling, psychology, or social work is highly limiting in doing social justice counseling. To address this, we have included this chapter on the importance of working across disciplines, and we have included guiding principles for interdisciplinary collaboration.

One of the criticisms of social justice counseling has been the scarcity of evidence-based research to support incorporating social justice into counseling. To address this, we have incorporated Part V, Social Justice Applications, which includes chapters on social action research and training. Chapter 14 examines the dimensions of social action research that is geared toward social change, looks at descriptors of social action research, and considers how social action research relates to counseling, psychology, and social work. Chapter 15 discusses a social justice training model to assist educators in developing graduate training models that emphasize multiculturalism, social justice, and human

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rights. This chapter provides ideas, suggestions, and recommendations on how to train the next generation of multicultural social justice counselors, psychologists, and social workers.

Part VI is the final section of the book. Chapter 15 examines the importance and relevance of social justice in a global environment that assists counselors, psychologists, and social workers to “think globally, and act locally.” The chapter underscores the impact of globalization on social justice and the interaction between national and global injustices and mental health work. Finally, Chapter 17 concludes the book with a discussion of the realities of social justice work and how to “feed one’s soul” when working on injustices. It is crucial that helping professionals practice self-care so that they are able to continue with courage and passion when battling against social injustices.

We believe that this book is the first to present how to take the next steps beyond the incredible

multicultural strides we have taken in the mental health field. We also feel that the inclusion of several topical areas that are essential to social justice mental health work in one book comprehensively synthesizes the knowledge and material necessary to move to the next steps of application, theory, and practice that will move us forward to a more equitable, just, and healthy society and world.

We wish you success in your social justice work, and as Mahatma Gandhi said, “A small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history.”

REFERENCE

- U.S. Census Bureau. (2008). *An older and more diverse nation by midcentury*. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/012496.html>