Social Justice in Counseling Psychology: Then, Now, and Looking Forward

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Abstract

In this article, a diverse group of early, mid, and advanced career scholars call for counseling psychology to continue to evolve in our integration of social justice action in our field. In doing so, we first consider our history as proponents and enactors of social justice, highlighting the ways in which counseling psychologists have served as social justice leaders in psychology. We then discuss our field's contemporary challenges to, and opportunities for, social justice progress as we work toward equity and justice. Finally, we offer recommendations for counseling psychologists individually and as a field to move forward in our social justice action. Given our longstanding social justice values and our unique training as counseling psychologists, if we aim with intentionality to use our skills toward systems change, counseling psychologists are poised to have a strong and proactive role as social change agents within psychology and society at large.

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With this 50th anniversary issue of *The Counseling Psychologist* (*TCP*), we have the opportunity to envision a blueprint for social justice action within counseling psychology. This blueprint would address mechanisms through which we can operate as change agents to dismantle the interlocking systems of oppression that create and maintain the everyday inequities that result in human suffering. Given the many social injustices facing disenfranchised and marginalized people in the current sociopolitical times—what Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. referred to as the "fierce urgency of now" (King, 1967, p. 11)—it is imperative that as counseling psychologists, we expand our roles and fully embrace not only social justice values in principle, but the work of social justice as a fundamental part of our professional identity (Vera & Speight, 2003). Action is more important than ever in a time when hate crimes increasingly target People of Color (Eligon, 2018). For example, Black trans women represent the largest group of murders within trans and non-binary communities (Human Rights Campaign, 2019), historic civil and human rights legislation is being rescinded within the United States (Human Rights Watch, 2019), and anti-immigrant practices continue to drive xenophobia and dehumanization efforts around the world (Misago, Freedmantle, & Landau, 2015).

In this position paper, we seek to extend the call of our forbearers who, for almost two decades, have challenged our field to continue evolving in our implementation of social justice (e.g., Vera & Speight, 2003). This is not to say that counseling psychology has neglected social justice—quite the contrary. For example, a search conducted of Sage publications on September 18, 2019, of the phrase "social justice" within *TCP*, identified 429 articles that were inclusive of the term, including the 2014 double special issue titled "Non-Traditional Teaching Methods for Social Justice." Many of these articles represent repeated calls to the profession to engage more intentionally in social justice, articulating the ways in which social justice discourse in counseling psychology has not fully evolved to social justice action in all aspects of our profession (e.g., Goodman et al., 2004; Motulsky, Gere, Saleem, & Trantham, 2014; Olle, 2018; Singh et al., 2010; Vera & Speight, 2003). Indeed, empirical work has consistently suggested that counseling psychology trainees desire greater social justice preparation in their programs (e.g., Beer, Spanierman, Greene, & Todd, 2012; Singh et al., 2010), and counseling psychologists in practice report experiencing multiple barriers to participating in social justice advocacy (Kozan & Blustein, 2018). It is our hope that this manuscript may support and guide our field forward, further clarifying

and affirming our social justice values. Thus, in commemorating the anniversary of *TCP*, we present an analysis of the past and present of social justice in counseling psychology, and offer recommendations in the hope that we may realize our full potential as social justice leaders. Where possible, we attempt to identify demonstrable markers of social justice action as indicators of our progress as a field.

Where We've Been: Counseling Psychology's Social Justice Roots

In the *Handbook of Social Justice in Counseling Psychology* (Toporek, Gerstein, Fouad, Roysircar, & Israel, 2006), Fouad, Gerstein, and Toporek (2006) stated that "Since its inception, the profession of counseling psychology has demonstrated an interest in social justice, action, and advocacy," and further asserted that social justice is "a critical and defining feature of counseling psychology as a profession" (p. 2; see also Hartung & Blustein, 2002; Ivey & Collins, 2003; Kiselica & Robinson, 2001). These values have manifested in our research, teaching, training, conferences, and awards of the Society of Counseling Psychology (SCP). In particular, social justice values within counseling psychology can be observed in the rich history of counseling psychologist leaders within our field specifically, as well as within the American Psychological Association (APA) more generally.

Counseling Psychologists as Leaders Within Psychology

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. asserted at the 1967 APA Annual Convention that social scientists played little to no role in revealing the truth of the brutality of segregation in the South and in promoting the resulting political reforms (King, 1967). Psychologists, as a group did not immediately act in response. The ongoing inaction led to the creation of ethnic minority psychological associations such as the Asian American Psychological Association, Association of Black Psychologists, National Association of Latinx Psychologists, and Society of Indian Psychologists, independent of APA—efforts in which counseling psychologists served as leaders (see Delgado-Romero, Forrest, & Lau, 2012). The initiative to create independent ethnic minority psychological associations was led by Dr. Joseph White, whose intention was to create a Black Psychology qualitatively different from, and that addressed the inherently racist structure of, mainstream White psychology (Cokley & Garba, 2018; Forrest et al., 2008; White, 1970). Counseling psychologists have also been instrumental in founding APA Divisions that address issues relevant to other marginalized and oppressed groups such as women (Division 35; Society for the Psychology of

Women, in 1973), sexual and gender minorities (Division 44: Society for the Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity, in 1985), and racial and ethnic minorities (Division 45: Society for Psychological Study of Culture, Ethnicity and Race, in 1986). In these ways, we have long served as social justice leaders within psychology.

Moreover, during the rise of the cultural competence movement, eminent counseling psychologists were among those whose scholarship pointed to the importance of considering a counselor's worldview as it relates to and influences the counseling process and treatment outcomes with clients from marginalized backgrounds (Gushue, 2004; Helms & Richardson, 1997; Sue et al., 1982). Research has demonstrated the negative impact that messages perpetuated by dominant groups and can have on an individual's psychosocial development and therapeutic outcomes. For example, in one study, counselors with negative attitudes toward bisexuality provided more biased and judgmental reactions to a bisexual client vignette as compared to more accepting counselors (Mohr, Israel, & Sedlacek, 2001). In turn, LGBT clients themselves have noted and attempted to address challenges they have experienced in therapy, such as microaggressions, often by well-meaning professionals (Shelton & Delgado-Romero, 2011). Feminist psychologists (e.g., Brown, 2018), and racial identity theorists (e.g., Helms & Richardson, 1997) have conducted similar work and advanced our understanding of the experiences of women and racial and/or ethnic minority people.

In 2011, counseling psychologist Melba J. T. Vasquez, the first Latina and Woman of Color President of APA, centered social justice as a foundation of her presidential platform, identifying it as a core value for all psychologists (Vasquez, 2012). Consistent with this value, counseling psychologists have played a leading role in developing justice-oriented APA guidelines for psychological practice such as the *Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients* (APA, 2012); *Guidelines for Prevention in Psychology* (APA, 2014); *Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Transgender and Gender Nonconforming People* (APA, 2015); *Multicultural Guidelines: An Ecological Approach to Context, Identity, and Intersectionality* (APA, 2017); *Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Girls and Women* (2018); *Guidelines for Psychological Practice with People with Low-Income and Economic Marginalization* (APA, 2019); and *Race and Ethnicity Guidelines in Psychology: Promoting Responsiveness and Equity* (APA, APA Task Force on Race and Ethnicity Guidelines in Psychology, 2019). Taken together, counseling psychologists have demonstrated not only an awareness of the need for social justice action, but have engaged in social justice action work across multiple professional areas (e.g., professional organizations, research, practice).

Beyond the actions of counseling psychologists as leaders within APA, the SCP as an organization has a reputation for being a social justice leader within the profession. For instance, the SCP was one of the founding divisions of the National Multicultural Summit and Conference, and is informally known as one of the 10 APA Divisions for Social Justice.

Social Justice within the Society of Counseling Psychology

The SCP has consistently sought to articulate, reflect upon, and critically examine the core values that shaped the specialty since its inception in the 1940s. For instance, early training standards in the 1950s addressed the need for doctoral students to "be familiar with the broad problems of social structure and organization, with cultural conditions, and with the heterogeneity of subgroup patterns within our culture" (APA, Division of Counseling and Guidance, 1952, p. 178). In the 1960s, counseling psychologists noted the importance of understanding the unique needs of underprivileged groups and enacting social change (Thompson & Super, 1964). The evolution of these concepts during the 1970s and 1980s led to further refinement of our professional identity and an inducement to the field to focus on diversity and sociocultural factors (Ivey, 1979).

In the early 1990s, under the leadership of Presidents Naomi Meara (1989), Mike Patton (1991), and Bruce Fretz (1992), changes were made to the SCP leadership structure to increase responsiveness to underrepresented members (Heppner, Casas, Carter, & Stone, 2000). As part of these changes, sections were added with the intention of focusing efforts toward social justice, identifying ways that counseling psychologists could take action on issues of racism (Section on Ethnic and Racial Diversity), sexism (Section on the Advancement of Women), and heterosexism (Section on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Issues); and building intersecting coalitions across sections to better deconstruct the impact of oppression for all marginalized groups (i.e., the creation of the "More Pie" dialogue; Fouad et al., 2006).

Additionally, SCP hosts a national or international conference that has been held every 6 years in the recent past; a large undertaking, the conference is often a presidential initiative of the sitting SCP president (see Fouad et al., 2004, for a review). The aims of the 2001 conference in Houston, reflective of Nadya Fouad's presidential initiative, were to implement a proactive agenda for the profession and to better prepare counseling psychologists to address diversification of their professional roles. Political advocacy training and social justice strategies were a focus of the conference program. Speight and Vera (2004) described this conference as "a (re)establishment of social action as a mainstay in counseling psychology" (p. 109). Meara and Davis (2004)

highlighted the outcomes of the conference in helping counseling psychologists understand the importance of political advocacy as well as the necessity of integrating social justice in training, science, and practice. This commitment to social justice was further integrated domestically and internationally during the 2008 International Counseling Psychology Conference (Forrest, 2010). In sum, counseling psychology's efforts to incorporate social justice is evident through organizational leadership, structures, and activities. Next, we consider social justice within contemporary counseling psychology.

Social Justice in Contemporary Counseling Psychology

Although our field has demonstrated a strong historical foundation in social justice, enacting social justice is not without its challenges. In this section, we discuss some challenges to enacting social justice, as well as critique of our efforts to date. We also present recent developments that could represent critical opportunities for growth in the area of social justice action for counseling psychology moving forward.

Counseling Psychology, Embedded Within Psychology

In understanding our social justice position, it is important to acknowledge that counseling psychology is not a completely independent professional field. We are embedded within the larger profession and APA. This connection may pose a challenge to social justice action for counseling psychologists. The recent update to the APA *Multicultural Guidelines: An Ecological Approach to Context, Identity, and Intersectionality* (2017) suggested that professional psychology (and thus counseling psychology as well) must move beyond individual-level interventions and actively attend to collective well-being, if we truly intend to effectively address individual well-being. Despite this seemingly encouraging evolution of the Guidelines, it is notable that previous iterations of the APA Ethics Code included the principle of Social Responsibility (Principle F) that was removed in 2002. Principle F read, in part:

> Psychologists are aware of their professional and scientific responsibilities to the community and the society in which they work and live. They apply and make public their knowledge of psychology in order to contribute to human welfare. Psychologists are concerned about and work to mitigate the causes of human suffering. When undertaking research, they strive to advance human welfare and the science of psychology. (APA, 2002, p. 32)

Although currently Principle D describes Justice, its definition is limited in scope to the provision of equitable psychological services and warning against discriminatory practices, rather than focusing on addressing systemic injustice.

In contrast to APA, the American Medical Association (2013) Code of Medical Ethics, for example, attends to the improvement of community and betterment of public health, highlighting the physician's responsibility to recognize "humanity as our patient." Further, the American Nurses Association (2015) Code of Ethics for Nurses encourages nurses to take action to influence leaders, legislators, governmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and international bodies, and explicitly attends to privilege and oppression (see Table 1 for a review of ethics codes from peer professions). Although the language used to address justice varies, APA is conspicuous among multiple peer professions in its omission of language linking social responsibility to the ethics and accountabilities of the profession. This is important to highlight because counseling psychology (a) is embedded within the larger structures of APA and professional psychology, and it would be naïve to assume that this does not influence our discipline's practice of social justice, and (b) can again serve as a leader within psychology toward formalizing our professional commitments to justice.

The Need for a System-Level Focus

Despite our potential to lead as social justice agents, some scholars have noted the ways in which counseling psychologists' current conceptualization of social justice may impede our forward movement as social justice advocates (Liu, 2017; Olle, 2018). One critique is the separation of social justice discussions from the sociopolitical context (e.g., Liu, 2017). These scholars assert that many discussions about, and definitions of, social justice fail to address the systems of oppression, such as White supremacy, that create, reify, and widen the very health, economic, social, and political disparities that we aim to address through our social justice efforts. The results include scholars' call to protagonists' action in the absence of an antagonist, a call to ameliorate disparities in the absence of acknowledging their cause, and attempts to empirically understand people's attitudes and actions absent their systemically rooted motivations. For example, Liu (2017) noted that counseling psychology research on multicultural competence and White privilege have been impeded by its failing to address the foundations of White supremacy.

Additionally, systems analysis and diagnosis require guidance by systems-level theories; a number of such theories are available to guide counseling psychologists, including critical race theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017);

Table 1. Inclusion of Diversity, Sociopolitical Issues, and Advocacy Within Ethics Codes of Peer Professional Organizations

Professional organization	Areas addressed			Description
	Diversity	Sociopolitical issues	Advocacy	
Allied mental health fields				
AAMFT (2015)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Notes the importance of being involved in advocacy public participation, or participation in the political process
ACA (2014)	Yes	No	No	Includes social justice as a core value, defines social justice as working to end oppression and injustice, and defines advocacy as work to remove barriers
ASCA (2016)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Defines school counselors as social justice advocates at the individual level with, and on behalf of, clients and families
NASW (2017)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Notes that social justice is a core principle for social workers to promote and pursue social change
Medicine				
AACAP (2014)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Asserts importance of minimizing injustice for children and adolescents
AMA (2016)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Attends to the improvement of community and betterment of public health; states physicians have the responsibility to recognize "humanity is our patient"
ANA (2015)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Directs nurses to take action to influence leaders, legislators, governmental agencies, nongovernment organizations, and international bodies; includes attention to privilege and oppression

Note. AAMFT = American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy; ACA = American Counseling Association; ASCA = American School Counselor Association; NASW = National Association of Social Workers; AACAP **=** American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry; AMA = American Medical Association; ANA = American Nurses Association.

liberation psychology (Martín-Baró, 1994), and feminist theory (Worell & Remer, 2002). In applying critical theory to the analysis of counseling psychology and professional psychology more generally, Olle (2018) noted that complicity with oppressive systems need not be conscious; our behaviors can uphold and recreate systems of oppression in our unconscious motivation to recreate the conditions to which we are accustomed. Thus, intentional or unintentional complicity that fails to seek to actively dismantle oppressive systems may serve as a barrier to our continued social justice development as a discipline. We posit that social justice inherently prioritizes actions taken to directly address and dismantle oppressive systems such as systems of White supremacy, patriarchy, and heteronormativity. This conceptualization considers systems of oppression from an intersectionality perspective (see Moradi, 2017), acknowledging the unique impact that multiple positionalities can have on groups and individuals. We argue for the decisive importance of examining the interdependence of systems of oppression that reserve the majority of resources for those at the very top of the sociocultural hierarchy (referred to by Liu [2017] as "power governors" [p. 351]; we point readers to Liu's (2017) cogent analysis of these interlocking systems). Consequently, although counseling psychology has historically acknowledged the need for social justice action aimed at systemic change, some scholars would maintain that we have not attended to enacting systems-level change to the same degree as we have attended to individual-level interventions.

Recent Developments and Opportunities

Despite potential barriers to progress, counseling psychology has made, and continues to make, forward movement related to social justice action. For example, prominent counseling psychologists recently published in *TCP* a psychological framework for radical healing in Communities of Color (French et al., 2019). In addition, readers are directed to reflections by former *TCP* editors detailing the integration of social justice into the identity of the journal over time (Buki et al., 2019). Moreover, for the 2020 Counseling Psychology Conference, President Anneliese Singh's presidential initiative centers the theme of creating a counseling psychology of liberation.

Of note, important advances are being made in the training of future counseling psychologists. Specifically, the most recent Counseling Psychology Model Training Program (Scheel et al., 2018) identifies social justice as a central value of counseling psychology and our professional identity, stating that "Promoting social justice is at the core of counseling psychologists' professional activities" (p. 22). Scheel et al. (2018) described the model training

program as explicitly attending to social justice training. In addition, it is documented in the Counseling Psychology Core Competencies, Essential Components, Behavioral Anchors, and Examples that (a) [being] oriented toward social justice is integral to the identity of counseling psychology (#1f); (b) advocacy is a functional competency (#8); and (c) systems change itself is a functional competency (#8b), with the ability to articulate the role of therapists as change agents at the Readiness for Practicum level, and the expectation that counseling psychologists "promote change at the level of institutions, community, or society" (p. 14) as markers of Readiness for Entry Into Practice (Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs, 2013). This language, particularly in the context of requisite competencies, takes a decidedly stronger position on social justice than APA at large.

Our review of social justice within contemporary counseling psychology suggests that we continue to acknowledge the importance of social justice in our research and guidelines for training and practice, but greater attention to systems-level interventions and change is needed. Although the Counseling Psychology Model Training Program (Scheel et al., 2018) and research by counseling psychologists (e.g., DeBlaere et al., 2014) indicate that social justice can take several forms, actions taken toward systemic change to reduce suffering remain essential to enacting social justice. Next, we present recommendations that we hope will further social justice action in our field.

Oh, the Places We'll Go: From Social Justice Commitment to Greater Social Justice Action

In counseling psychology, many past efforts to infuse social justice into training have often focused on clinical training (e.g., practicum placements that emphasize social justice interventions; Burnes & Singh; 2010; Goodman et al., 2004; Toporek & Chope, 2006). Although certainly valuable, additional training in social justice theory and systems change is also necessary if we are to continue to evolve in our social justice commitment. Thus, we offer recommendations for engaging in social justice action that are aimed at expanding our conceptualization of social justice action in counseling psychology. Specifically, in the remainder of the article, we: (a) discuss the potential benefit of conducting an assessment of community readiness for social justice action to better direct our field's efforts in this regard, (b) propose the development of a counseling psychology social justice and advocacy model, (c) encourage working alongside community organizers on social justice change, (d) suggest ways in which our research can assist in fulfilling social justice aims, and (e) provide examples of engaging social justice change through public discourse and action tools.

Conducting an Assessment of Community Readiness

As we consider strategies for moving our field forward in enacting social justice, a potentially beneficial first step may be to assess counseling psychology's readiness to engage social justice action. In this article, we have attempted to identify our progress in social justice action. Although we were able to cite definitive markers in our field's journey (e.g., the development of SCP sections), to our knowledge, a comprehensive assessment of our field's social justice commitment and actions has not been conducted. The Community Readiness Model (CRM; Plested, Jumper-Thurman, & Edwards, 2016) is one such model which could guide these efforts. The CRM has been utilized to examine a variety of social issues (e.g., sexual minority concerns among Latinx campus community; Rivera-Ramos, Oswald, & Buki, 2015). In this case, we suggest utilizing the CRM to conduct an assessment of our field's readiness to fully engage social justice action, and in particular, social justice action at the level of system change. The CRM describes six dimensions of readiness. Importantly, the CRM asserts that readiness is calculable, may vary across dimensions, and is critical to understand in order to develop successful interventions (see Plested et al., 2016, for a description of the assessment and scoring procedures). The dimensions includ, (a) community efforts (i.e., extent of efforts to address social justice action), (b) community knowledge of the efforts (i.e., extent that counseling psychologists are aware of our field's efforts and their efficacy), (c) leadership (i.e., extent that counseling psychology leaders are supportive of social justice action), (d) community climate (i.e., attitude of counseling psychology toward social justice action; an attitude of powerlessness vs. empowerment), (e) community knowledge about the issue (i.e., the degree to which counseling psychologists understand social justice action and its relevance in on our field), and (f) resources related to the issue (i.e., extent of access to relevant resources to support social justice action).

In addition, within these dimensions, there are nine stages of readiness. These consist of (a) no awareness (i.e., social justice action is not recognized by counseling psychologists as an issue), (b) denial/resistance (i.e., social justice action is not broadly acknowledged to be an important issue), (c) vague awareness (i.e., the majority agree that social justice action is important, but there is no urgent motivation to enact change), (d) preplanning (i.e., there is agreement within the counseling psychology field that social justice action is important and some are addressing this issue, but our efforts are not concentrated or comprehensive), (e) preparation (i.e., leaders in counseling psychology are actively planning to address social justice action, but there is limited support for their efforts within the broader counseling psychology field), (f) initiation (i.e., social justice action

activities are underway), (g) stabilization (i.e., social justice action is broadly supported and community members are trained and skilled), (h) confirmation/ expansion (i.e., social justice action efforts are established and data are consistently collected), and (i) high level of community ownership (i.e., multifaceted understanding of social justice action exists and sustained evaluation informs future initiatives).

Thus, the CRM could provide a structure for counseling psychology to begin to systematically assess our readiness to engage in social justice action and develop discrete and measurable actions commensurate with our level of readiness to which we can hold ourselves and each other accountable. As well, on a smaller scale, training programs could assess their readiness to address social justice action, develop appropriate interventions consistent with their goals, and evaluate the effectiveness of those interventions. Similarly, we assert that developing a model of social justice advocacy and action within counseling psychology could provide an important framework and identify tools for evolving social justice action within our field.

Developing a Counseling Psychology Model of Social Justice Advocacy and Action

Just as Dr. King (1968) asked APA to be "maladjusted" to the named oppressions of "racial discrimination and racial segregation . . . religious bigotry . . . economic conditions that take necessities from the many to give luxuries to the few . . . the madness of militarism, and the self-defeating effects of physical violence" (p. 15), counseling psychologists have the opportunity to "maladjust" to our conventional professional activities such that we are on a liberatory and social justice action course (i.e., a path that seeks to dismantle oppressive systems). The development of a model of social justice advocacy and action would provide a framework from which the hallmarks of our field (e.g., lifespan development, positive psychology, multiculturalism) emerge.

Next, we outline general concepts of importance and offer recommendations for consideration in the development of such a model. First, a comprehensive social justice model would require the inclusion of community activist perspectives to ensure the actions that manifest from the model are relevant to the communities we are attempting to serve. Second, advocacy and action at the individual, community, national, and international levels would need to be considered. Third, as we discussed previously, and as outlined in the American Counseling Association Advocacy Competencies (Toporek & Daniels, 2018), engagement in multiple modalities of distributing information to promote social justice (e.g., writing an opinion editorial

[op-ed] on the impact of racial trauma on People of Color), should be outlined. In addition to dissemination of information, multiple modalities of advocacy and activism must also be delineated. Fourth, we must teach and learn theoretical foundations in macrosystem issues and change, such as critical race theory (see Delgado & Stefancic, 2017) and fundamental cause theory (see Hatzenbuehler, Phelan, & Link, 2013), to ensure that we are as adequately prepared to develop interventions at the macrosystem level as we are at the micro- and meso-system levels. Finally, the proposed model would need to be dynamic in its ability to train future generations of counseling psychologists, while also having the capability to engage established professionals.

Working Alongside Community Organizers on Social Justice Change

As we stated previously, engaging community activists is essential to social justice action efforts. One way that counseling psychologists may participate in social justice action is, as Olle (2018) recommended, to work locally. Next, we describe ways that counseling psychologists may work to support community organizers and activists by: (a) researching the impact of participating in advocacy work for community organizers, (b) inviting community organizers to participate in our professional meetings and conferences, (c) entering the community to provide services, and (d) incorporating community activism training in our graduate programs.

Researching the psychological impact of advocacy. Currently, the empirical work on how counseling psychologists can be effective social change agents is limited, which curtails our success in effecting social change. However, engaging in advocacy is one of the ways in which individuals with marginalized identities cope with discrimination (Wei, Alvarez, Ku, Russell, & Bonett, 2010). However, there is still much to be understood about the use of advocacy as a coping strategy, as well as the psychological impact of advocacy on marginalized populations (e.g., Ngamake, Walch, & Raveepatarakul, 2013). Although most social identity-based advocacy frameworks consider action to be a step toward liberation, the act of resisting against a system of oppression is not without costs (e.g., Burnes & Singh, 2010; Olle, 2018). For instance, what do students experience as they are trained to engage in advocacy within their programs and clinical settings? One can point to historical and contemporary examples of activists being targets of violence or experiencing trauma (Jones, 2007) or burnout (Gorski & Chen, 2015) as a result of activism.

Contributing to a broader understanding of the psychological impact of engaging in activism, as well as how individuals respond to resistance to social change, is just one direct application of research to activist communities who may experience unique stressors.

Collaborate with, and invite participation by, community activists and organizers. We may also directly invite participation by community activists and organizers in our professional spheres. Counseling psychologists have articulated the importance of working in collaboration with these partners as a way of increasing the understanding of critical social justice concerns related to various communities (Goodman et al., 2004; Singh, 2016). However, opportunities exist to increase these collaborations. For instance, how often are community activists and organizers invited to collaborate within counseling psychology beyond guest lectures in classes? How many true community partnerships are embedded within SCP leadership? These types of self-reflections could spur identification of meaningful collaborative partnerships on existing social justice initiatives led by community activists and organizers (Hargons et al., 2017). As an example, the Muslim Mental Health Conference provides complimentary admission to Muslim religious leaders with the goal that they may learn from, as well as educate, mental health care providers working with the community (Institute of Muslim Mental Health, 2019). Counseling psychologists can connect with activists in a similar manner by providing complimentary conference attendance to community organizers, and thus generate a platform to collaborate. There are many creative ways that we can step outside of the university and the therapy room and, in turn, invite those doing the labor of social change into shared spaces.

Integrate community organization and activism into training. Additionally, we could begin to incorporate skills of community activism into our training. As a guide, other professionals attend demonstrations and protests to support their areas of expertise. For example, members of the National Lawyers Guild often serve as legal observers to ensure that demonstrators' civil rights are not violated. Street medics originated during the Civil Rights Movement and continue to play an important role during protests and demonstrations, where they tend to injuries from rubber bullets, tear gas, and pepper spray (Weinstein, 2014). Paralleling these efforts, counseling psychologists could provide crisis management services at demonstrations. Alternatively, as counseling psychologists, we can consult with those conducting street medic or other community-based trainings on crisis management best practices, de-escalation strategies, or other topics within our areas of expertise. We can also work directly with activist organizations to provide mental health first aid training.

Engaging in Research as Social Change Action

Research in understudied areas is a critical form of social justice insofar as it provides an opportunity for individuals from marginalized communities to use their voices to tell their stories. Further, data generated can be used to provide justification for resources to serve underserved communities. Counseling psychologists, in particular, have a long history of conducting traditional research in and with marginalized communities toward these aims. For example, recent issues of *TCP* include articles on the experiences of transgender and gender nonconforming People of Color (Lefevor, Janis, Franklin, & Stone, 2019), non-U.S.-based international college students (Kim & Yon, 2019), and individuals who panhandle (Cadaret et al., 2018). Researchers in other psychological disciplines have also been drawing attention to necessary future directions in justice-oriented research such as family separation (Humphreys, 2019) and youth poverty (Wadsworth, Ahlkvist, McDonald, & Tilghman-Osborne, 2018). Although justice-oriented research by traditional methods must continue and expand in the service of disrupting oppressive systems, we also need to expand our use of nontraditional methods. For instance, establishing and maintaining meaningful relationships with community partners through engaging in participatory action research and community-based participatory action research methods has long been recommended as a strategy to further social justice efforts (Kidd & Krall, 2005). Through these approaches, counseling psychologists can work collaboratively with communities to generate research questions, interventions, and sustainable solutions to issues pertinent to the community. For example, counseling psychologists have worked closely with LGBTQ+ community organizations to prepare law enforcement personnel to work effectively with LGBTQ+ persons and communities (Israel, Harkness, Delucio Ledbetter, & Avellar, 2013).

Engaging Social Justice Change Through Public Discourse and Action Tools

Although social justice-oriented research is critical, a singular focus on publishing in academic journals and books that are primarily read by academics is limiting. Most of the general public is not going to have access to journals such as *TCP*, or to the expertise counseling psychologists have gained through years of research and/or clinical experience. It was this concern that led Joseph White (1970) to publish his article "Toward a Black Psychology" in *Ebony* magazine. His rationale was that his ideas would have far more exposure and influence in a publication that would be read by thousands of Black people rather than only by a handful of other academics. For these reasons,

we recommend that counseling psychologists engage in innovative ways of engagement and dissemination that can shape important policy conversations, influence public attitudes, and advance a social justice agenda. We believe that our field's conceptualization of social justice work should be expanded beyond traditionally understood professional actions to include more proactive efforts of public engagement.

Opinion editorials. One innovative way that counseling psychologists can engage in this form of social justice advocacy is through the writing of op-eds (Hargons et al., 2017). Unlike journal articles, op-eds are read by a broader audience of people, including policy makers and staffers, researchers and scholars, the President of the United States, journalists, publishers and editors, TV producers, and the public. Whereas there are several examples of counseling psychologists who write op-eds, structural and philosophical challenges still exist in the way counseling psychologists are trained that discourage or disincentivize students and professionals from this form of public writing. Although counseling psychology has shown some commitment to public writing through the publishing of op-eds on the SCP website, many of the contributions do not appear to be op-eds in the traditional sense. Op-eds are published opposite the editorial pages of newspapers and, similar to peer-reviewed journal articles, are screened by editors and go through a rigorous editing process. As a result, traditional op-eds have a certain amount of prestige. For example, the *New York Times* receives over 1,200 submissions a week, with most being rejected (Shipley, 2004).

Counseling psychology programs should offer professional development opportunities for students and professionals to acquire public writing skills. This would require a change in the culture of most training programs. For example, the University of Texas at Austin counseling psychology faculty have increasingly engaged in writing op-eds and, as a result, students are expressing more interest in this type of writing. A recent example of public writing on race by counseling psychology students (Krueger, Cokley, & Bailey, 2019), which has been read by over 22,000 readers in five countries and has been shared on social media over 230 times, underscores the importance of teaching both scientific and public writing skills. The typical journal article will almost never reach such numbers. Writing op-eds can bring visibility to the social justice work being done by counseling psychologists, highlight the expertise and insights that we have, and give us access to policy makers and other influential people. Changes to our training should allow for appropriate opportunities to develop competence and self-efficacy in not only writing op-eds, but in engagement in other forms of thought leadership and public involvement including TED talks, radio

and TV appearances, and speeches among others. For example, counseling psychology faculty and students might consider consulting the Op-Ed Project, https://www.theopedproject.org/.

Social media. Beyond writing in more publicly accessible outlets, social media represents another avenue whereby counseling psychologists can initiate and support social justice efforts. The #blacklivesmatter, #metoo, #marchforourlives, and #thisisourlane movements began with hashtags, eventually organizing into massive resistance movements. Social media can also provide important sources of information relevant to counseling psychology training. For instance, there are #Twitterstorian communities comprised of well-known and respected historians throughout and beyond the United States who address misinformation and societal challenges. Emphasizing this point, popular "Twitterstorian" and Princeton History professor Dr. Kevin Kruse recently said, "I believe that we, as scholars, have a duty to engage with the public. As much time and energy as I put into my scholarly books and articles and teaching, we have a duty to these larger audiences. . ." (Perry, 2018). Recently, #thisisourlane was developed by physicians in response to the National Rifle Association attempting to rebuke the American College of Physicians for their position paper on reducing injuries and deaths by gun violence (Butkus, Doherty, & Bornstein, 2018). Physicians came together beyond a hashtag to develop @ThisIsOurLane.

Current and upcoming generations of counseling psychologists are well-versed in how to ethically engage on social media with little-to-no training. This provides an opportunity for counseling psychology to be inspired by other disciplines already actively engaged in social justice using social media, and to engage in public discourse to "educate with" the public—a key counseling psychology value (Goodman et al., 2004).

Toolkits and beyond. Beyond the use of social media, there have been notable efforts by psychologists engaged in research to disseminate information in accessible ways to communities. Drs. Nayeli Chavez-Dueñas and Hector Adames co-founded the Immigration, Critical Race, and Cultural Equity lab (see "Who we are," 2019), which routinely disseminates relevant and timely toolkits (e.g., resources for mixed status immigrant families and DREAMers) using a framework of psychology that is "for the people, by the people, and accessible to the people" (para. 1). Counseling psychologists can collaborate with community leaders to develop materials for activists on a variety of topics including healthy communication, self-care, and coping with trauma. For example, Dr. Sameerah Ahmad's Family and Youth Institute

focuses on researching issues pertinent to Muslims in the United States as well as on educating and empowering the community. Dr. Ahmad and colleagues routinely present at Islamic conventions, conduct workshops, and provide lectures. Counseling psychologists can partner with organizations and communities to conduct workshops on the topic of remaining energized for social change.

Conclusion

In sum, we call for counseling psychology to continue to evolve in social justice *action* aimed at dismantling the systems of oppression that serve as the root cause of the inequities and individual-level suffering. We want to make what is implicit in our identity more explicit in our strategy. We have the opportunity to see the larger arc of psychology in which our discipline rests, and the ways that we have consistently called for attention to social justice. We have an opportunity to move our field forward as we deepen our commitment to action, and influence other psychological disciplines to more effectively reduce systemic oppression and promote equity and justice. Such advancement will require us to step outside of our comfort zones, open ourselves to being transformed by the process, broaden our perspectives, center our aims to serve those most affected by injustice, challenge areas of discomfort and bias that arise, and organize our efforts in tandem with multiple professional and community partners. We cannot shed the social privilege that has been afforded to us as professionals, but we can use it to serve in meaningful ways.

Authors' Note

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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