A Study of Peer-Nominated Exemplars of Social Justice Commitment in Counseling and Psychology

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the people and communities who have experienced marginalization and who deserve social justice. With all my heart, I hope this small thing helps.

Abstract

The current study used qualitative methods to examine the perspectives and experiences of 18 peer-nominated exemplars of social justice practice in psychology and counseling. A 9 question semi-structured interview was conducted with each participant addressing 4 research questions: What is social justice in counseling and psychology? How did the exemplar develop his or her orientation towards social justice? What challenges are associated with the exemplar's social justice work? How does the exemplar maintain his or her vitality and resiliency? The data was analyzed using Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) methods. A total of 51 themes emerged from 1,061 minutes (17 hours, 41 minutes) of interview data. These themes were grouped into 13 domains. The results present a nuanced picture of the practice of social justice in counseling and psychology, an engaging, personal perspective on the development of social justice orientation, a detailed examination of the challenges associated with social justice work, and key practices that can be used to sustain vitality and resiliency. The research process and results show that psychologists, counselors, social workers, family therapists, and other mental health practitioners are actively engaged in social justice work and have developed a thoughtful, cohesive set of practices that can be informative to those in practice, training, and research.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Social justice involves a vision of a society based on participation, equitable distribution of resources, and dedication to the well-being of all members (Bell, 1997). In education, social justice approaches have been linked to personal liberation and social change (Freire, 1970). Various authors have cited a long history of social justice concern in the helping professions. Kiselica and Robinson (2001) traced social justice in counseling and psychology to the mental hygiene movement's advocacy on behalf of psychiatric patients and to Frank Parson's foundation of the Bureau of Vocational Guidance in the early 20th century. Social justice has been cited as a core historical value of social work (Barker, 1999). Albee (1969) based his critique of the medical model's application in psychology in part on the understanding that social inequity powerfully affects the well-being of many people and that psychologists must be trained to be of service to marginalized communities if the profession is to remain relevant, intellectually vibrant, and financially viable.

Within counseling and psychology, social justice has been linked to the multicultural and feminist movements based on a shared focus on equal relationships, recognition of societal contributions to problem development, and willingness to address unearned privilege (Crethar et al., 2008). Despite these connections, social justice has been identified as a separate movement (Ratts, 2009) that is focused on social action, consideration of new professional roles, and interventions focused on society as well as individuals (Vera & Speight, 2003). Fouad et al. (2006) stated: "social justice within the context of counseling psychology focuses on helping to ensure that opportunities and

resources are distributed fairly and helping to ensure equity when resources are distributed unfairly or unequally" (p. 1). Caldwell and Vera (2010) defined social justice in counseling psychology as:

> *scholarship and professional action designed to: (a) acknowledge that the unfair distribution of power in societal institutions has unfair implications on psychological health and wellness; (b) examine how broad, systemic inequities and oppression impact psychological development, health, and well-being; and (c) implement interventions that target changing unjust systemic sources of client and community problems (e.g., unequal access to resources, prejudice, and oppression).* (p. 167)

Within counseling, the publication of advocacy competencies by the American Counseling Association (ACA) (Lewis et al., 2002; Ratts et al., 2010) has drawn increased attention to social justice work. In counseling psychology, the *Handbook for social justice in counseling psychology: Leadership, vision, and action* (Toporek et al., 2006) provided a comprehensive overview of the state of social justice work in counseling psychology education, training, practice, and research. In addition, recent publications in prevention (Hage et al., 2007), program evaluation (Arthur & Lalande, 2009), vocational psychology (Blustein et al., 2005), and family therapy (Beitin and Allen, 2005) have addressed the application of social justice.

Theoretical and empirical work suggests that counselors and psychologists engaged in social justice work may face additional stressors. Skovholt et al. (2004)

posited that while practitioners dedicated to multiculturalism open their professional lives to extraordinary rewards, the stresses of working across cultures requires extra attention to professional resiliency. Studies related to social justice in counseling and psychology have noted significant barriers such as limited resources, minimal training, and emotional stress (Caldwell & Vera, 2010; Pieterse et al., 2009; Weintraub & Goodman, 2010). Kiselica and Robinson (2001) stated that counselors engaged in social justice work may experience significant emotional distress, disapproval from peers, jarring resistance from those who oppose their aims, and even a risk of losing their jobs. Helms (2003) noted that most counselors who pursue social justice often do so on their own time and without reimbursement. In addition, counselors espousing social justice face significant obstacles within their professional settings because universities, mental health agencies, and hospitals are frequently invested in the maintenance of the status quo (Helms, 2003; Ivey & Collins, 2003). These challenges related to social justice work may add to other significant stresses of the counseling profession in which loss of resiliency and burnout are already prominent risks (Lee et al., 2010).

Statement of the Problem

The current study asked four research questions related to social justice in counseling and psychology:

- What is social justice in counseling and psychology?
- How did the exemplar develop his or her orientation towards social justice?
- What are the challenges associated with social justice work?
- How do the exemplars maintain their professional vitality and resiliency?

Practitioners nominated by the professional community were contacted and asked to participate in a structured interview based on a questionnaire designed for this study (see Appendix B). The nomination process and subsequent interviews were carried out between July 2011 and May 2012.

Significance of the Problem

As noted above, social justice has historical roots in the mental health professions, and recent publications suggest an increased focus on social justice in education, training, research, and practice (Toporek et al., 2006). Within counseling psychology for example, professionals and students have voiced support for social justice. At the 2001 National Counseling Psychology Conference, 88% of the attendants endorsed social justice as an important aspect of the field (Fouad et al., 2004). In a study of 214 ACA members, Steele (2010) found that most supported both social justice advocacy in the profession and the use of the ACA advocacy competencies. Despite this evidence of increased prominence, research on social justice is relatively limited at this time, and areas for development have been characterized as nearly limitless (Toporek et al., 2006).

Focusing on social justice is also closely related to calls to enhance mental health services for all people. The multicultural movement has long acknowledged that oppression, unearned privilege, and the unequal distribution of resources powerfully affect members of culturally diverse communities (Sue & Sue, 2008). Kazdin and Blase (2011) argued that traditional models of mental health treatment, especially individual, family, and group psychotherapy, are insufficient to address the extensive costs associated with mental illness. These authors advocated for increased interventions on the

societal level, noting that many factors such as public policy and law may either contribute to mental illness or be a part of the solution. Counselors and psychologists may be encouraged to engage in advocacy and social action in order to address sources of psychological problems and enhance people's well-being.

Speight and Vera (2008) called for research regarding how counselors and psychologists develop as social justice advocates. One recent study addressed this issue using a critical incident qualitative method with primarily trainees and academics as participants (Caldwell & Vera, 2010). At this time, no research exists related to incremental or long-term aspects of professional development in social justice. One study has addressed the professional practice of social justice among school counselors (Singh et al., 2010b), but the field may benefit from examining this issue from a broader professional base.

Lewis et al. (2010) noted that more counselors have recognized how powerfully social factors such as oppression, social disadvantage, and discrimination affect their clients' lives. In order to meet these needs, counselors connect advocacy and social justice work with more traditional therapy. Despite recent advances in theory and research, the authors noted significant gaps in understanding how counselors carry out social justice work. The current study enhances the field's understanding of how counselors practice social justice. Grove McCrea et al. (2004) speculated that counseling psychologists who engage in innovative practices and nontraditional roles may feel a loss of professional identity and diminished support from their peers. The current study examines how a commitment to social justice work affects practitioners' sense of

themselves as professionals and their professional resiliency.

A basic premise of social justice in counseling is that people are powerfully affected by inequality, oppression, and injustice. Research related to mental illness supports this claim. In general, members of diverse cultural groups generally underutilize mental health services (Sue & Sue, 2008). African Americans, Latino/a Americans, and Asian Americans have significantly less access to needed mental health services than Whites (Wells et al., 2001; Sue et al., 2012). For example, African-Americans and Hispanics in the United States are more likely to experience chronic or severe manifestations of mental illness than Non-Hispanic White Americans (Berslau et al., 2005).

A recent special issue of the American Psychologist addressed ongoing challenges in mental health disparities among ethnic minority communities in the United States. For example, López, et al. (2012) noted that Latinos/as may be more likely to experience recurrent depression than Whites and are less likely to receive standard treatments such as medication management. Snowden (2012) summarized a large body of research suggesting that African-Americans also experience more chronic, disabling manifestations of both Major Depressive Disorder and Post-traumatic Stress Disorder. Snowden (2012) further identified systemic barriers to African-Americans receiving appropriate treatment as sources of mental health disparities. For example, African-Americans are more likely to receive mental health care in emergency rooms or inpatient clinics than outpatient clinics. Systems of financing, access, and policy may contribute to inadequate care. Even now, little comparative effectiveness research exists for African-

Americans. Sue, et al. (2012) noted major conceptual challenges in determining the prevalence of mental illness among Asian Americans: significantly, recent studies have often ignored culturally relevant symptoms. While the authors noted that rates of mental illness are difficult to determine, they found that Asian Americans indisputably underutilize mental health services compared to all other ethnic groups in the United States; this pattern of underutilize stands even when calculated using potentially low prevalence rates.

Kessler et al. (1999) examined rates of perceived discrimination among adults in the United States. Participants reported experiencing discrimination based on their race, ethnicity, gender, age, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and disabilities. Members of racial minorities and women frequently reported their social status as a source of discrimination. Furthermore, participants with less education were more likely to experience discrimination than participants with more education. The experience of discrimination was associated with prevalence of mental health disorders among people in lower income categories. Sellers and Shelton (2003) found that perceived discrimination was associated with psychological distress among a sample of African-American college students. Mays and Cochran (2001) found that lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults in the United States experience discrimination more frequently than heterosexual adults. The participants in this study considered their sexual orientation a significant source of discrimination, and these experiences were associated with higher rates of mental health disorders. This study suggested that it is the experience of discrimination rather than sexual orientation itself that generates mental health issues in

the LGB community.

In a review of literature, Smith et al. (2009) stated "the relationship between poverty and emotional distress is one of the most robust in the research literature" (p. 160). The authors cited evidence across studies indicating substantially higher rates of depression among low income people, increased rates of psychiatric illness, and comparatively limited access to appropriate mental health services. In addition, the authors noted increased exposure to violence, unhealthy environmental conditions, and unsafe housing as psychologically damaging experiences associated with poverty.

Despite recently increased attention to social justice and studies affirming that social justice issues powerfully affect psychological well-being, few studies have examined social justice as an aspect of professional development. Given the limited training and barriers to practice identified in the literature, examining resiliency of practitioners who pursue social justice may contribute to the field's understanding of this facet of counseling and psychology practice.

Definitions

The literature yields multiple definitions of social justice in mental health. Fouad et al. (2006) offered the following definition: "social justice within the context of counseling psychology focuses on helping to ensure that opportunities and resources are distributed fairly and helping to ensure equity when resources are distributed unfairly or unequally" (p. 1). Toporek (2000) noted the importance of mental health outcomes by defining social justice practice as "an action taken by a counseling professional to facilitate the removal of external and institutional barriers to clients' well-being" (p. 6).

Goodman et al. (2004) specified ways that mental health professionals may address social justice themes: "scholarship and professional action designed to change societal values, structures, policies, and practices, such that disadvantaged or marginalized groups gain increased access to these tools of self-determination" (p. 795).

The current study also addresses professional resiliency. Resiliency among helping professionals has been characterized by maintaining professional vitality, commitment, and emotional well-being (Skovholt, 2001). Luthar et al. (2000) defined resilience as "a dynamic process encompassing positive adaption within the context of significant adversity" (p. 543).

The current study recognizes that numerous mental health disciplines address social justice in research, training, and practice. Social workers, for example, are frequently trained in advocating for their clients (Vera & Speight, 2003), and family therapists attend to societal influences (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2004). While both counseling and social work have an historical connection to social justice, these professions have been consistently distinct in training, work settings, and practice models (Barker, 1999; Grobman, 2005; Kiselica & Robinson, 2001; Smith et al., 2008). Therefore, this study focuses on the practice of social justice among counselors and psychologists. Counseling and clinical psychology are certainly distinct specialties (Niemeyer et al., 2009). The decision to include psychologists generally rather than just counseling psychologists is justified based on the shared history between counseling and clinical psychology, similarities in training models, and similarities in professional settings (Niemeyer et al., 2009).

Fouad et al. (2006) noted that counselors and psychologists have engaged in social justice work across dozens of settings and in numerous roles. Given the limited empirical

research on social justice and the many potential manifestations, this study included nominated practitioners who work in direct service, supervision, education, consultation, and research.

Summary

Social justice has a long history in the mental health field; this history has been further developed by the work of liberation psychologists, multicultural-focused professionals, and feminists. Recent publications and surveys of counselors and psychologists suggest increased energy and interest related to social justice. On the other hand, the literature suggests relatively limited training, empirical research, or practical follow-through related to social justice. A focus on social justice is justified by long-standing patterns of limited access to mental health services by traditionally marginalized groups, by the well-documented effects of discrimination, and by ongoing findings that mental health disparities persist. Recent literature lays a groundwork for understanding social justice work in psychology and counseling. The present study builds on these current definitions and approaches while addressing gaps in understanding by exploring the experiences of peer-identified exemplars of social justice commitment.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Introduction

A review of social justice in counseling and psychology training and practice begins with the following premises. Many of the problems faced by people emanate not from the individuals themselves, but from unjust societal forces. Recognizing this fact, counselors and psychologists have an obligation to address systemic iniquities, and counselor and psychologist educators must prepare trainees to respond to social justice concerns. A commitment to social justice may require counselors and psychologists to reconsider traditional roles, develop innovative approaches, examine the moral underpinnings of their work, and confront challenging ethical questions (Lee & Walz, 1998; Ratts et al., 2010; Toporek et al., 2006).

The current study addresses theoretical and empirical research related to social justice in counseling and psychology training and practice. The definition of social justice varies across the sources reviewed. However, Fouad et al. (2006) provided an overview: "social justice within the context of counseling psychology focuses on helping to ensure that opportunities and resources are distributed fairly and helping to ensure equity when resources are distributed unfairly or unequally" (p. 1). This definition serves as a beginning point to consider the rich debate regarding the philosophical underpinnings and practical manifestations of social justice in counseling and psychology.

Within counseling and psychology, a series of publications have heralded the increasing relevance of social justice. *The handbook of social justice in counseling psychology: Leadership, vision, and action* (Toporek et al., 2006) and *ACA advocacy*

competencies: A social justice framework for counselors (Ratts et al., 2010) provide overviews of the state of social justice in counseling and psychology, addressing areas such as practice, training, research, policy, international issues, and ethics. These efforts can be seen as a response to interest expressed by students and professionals. For example, 88% of the attendees at the 2001 National Counseling Psychology Conference endorsed social justice as an important aspect of the field (Fouad et al., 2004). Steele (2010) found that, in a sample of 214 American Counseling Association (ACA) members, most participants supported both social justice advocacy in the profession and the use of the ACA advocacy competencies.

The development of social justice in counseling and psychology has evident connections to both feminist and multicultural counseling theory and practice (Crethar et al., 2008; Helms, 2003; Sue & Sue, 2008). Sue and Sue (2008) went so far as to identify social justice as an essential component of multiculturalism by stating: "multicultural counseling and therapy must be about social justice" (p. 287). One ongoing source of debate to be addressed in this review is the connection between multiculturalism, feminism, and social justice approaches to counseling.

Counseling and psychology are not alone in exploring social justice. Social justice has also been characterized as a core component of prevention interventions (Hage et al., 2007), program evaluation (Arthur & Lalande, 2009), and vocational psychology (Blustein et al., 2005). Social justice issues have been addressed extensively in education (i.e. Bell, 1997; Friere, 1970) and teacher training (Cochran-Smith, 2004). Barker (1999)

identified social justice as an essential historical aspect of the social work profession. Beitin and Allen (2005) addressed the importance of including social justice themes in family therapy. The field of community psychology has been particularly active in articulating a vision of social justice in practice and training (Prilleltensky, 2001; Watts & Serrano-García, 2003). Some scholars have suggested that the counseling profession look to these fields for ways to integrate social justice into standards of professional practice (Ratts et al., 2010; Vera & Speight, 2003). Others have stated that counselor and psychologist professional identity hinges upon maintaining an individual, developmental focus that leaves systemic concerns to fields such as social work and law (Smith et al., 2009).

Review of Theory

Foundations of Social Justice

Freire (1970) advocated for a critical analysis of the dynamics between teachers, students, and society. He argued for a collaborative learning process in which learners' understanding and perspective are valued in equal measure to the educators' expertise. Students ought to be encouraged to construct knowledge based on their experiences. Freire proposed that education serve as a liberating force both for individuals and for societies. Writing from an educator's perspective, Bell (1997) provided the following definition:

> *Social justice is the full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are*

physically and psychologically safe and secure. (p. 3)

In addition to participation, equity, and safety, Rawls (1971) stressed that social justice must also consider the importance of individual rights and mutual obligation, balancing these factors when seeking to create a state of equity.

Citing Freire as an influence, Martín-Baró (1994) advocated for psychology to be transformative, not only for individuals, but also for societies. He asserted that by focusing on individual concerns, psychologists have strengthened existing societal injustice. Psychologists, he argued, have discouraged a thorough examination of how social injustice contributes to human suffering in two ways: by shifting focus toward the individual and away from legitimate systemic sources of distress; and by eschewing political action in favor of clinical interventions. Martín-Baró's model of liberation psychology, which grew out of the political repression of 20th century Latin America, pressed psychologists to think creatively about people's needs, moving beyond the boundaries set by training, background, and socialization.

History of Social Justice in Counseling and Psychology

Fouad et al. (2006) described social justice as a long-standing facet of counseling, and one that is consistent with other core components of the profession. One aspect of the social justice approach to counseling involves advocacy, which Ratts, Toporek, and Lewis (2010) defined as "taking social justice ideals and putting them into action" (p. 6). Toporek (2000) defined social justice advocacy as "an action taken by a counseling professional to facilitate the removal of external and institutional barriers to clients' well-being" (p. 6).

Kiselica and Robinson (2001) described the history of social justice advocacy in counseling. They noted that social justice advocacy often takes place in the community rather than in traditional counseling settings. The authors traced social justice advocacy in the 20th-century United States to the Mental Hygiene Movement started by Clifford Beers in 1908 with the publication of his autobiography. Using his experiences as a psychiatric patient to publicize injustice in the treatment of people with mental illnesses, Beers sought to reform psychiatric care and advocated for patients' rights. The authors further cited Frank Parsons' foundation of the Boston Vocational Bureau in 1908, Drs. Kenneth and Mamie Clark's research-supported challenge to segregation, and early objections to the use and interpretation of standardized intelligence tests with culturally diverse students as instances of counselors, psychologists, and helping professionals addressing systemic injustice. Beginning in the 1960s, counseling and psychology's attention to racial bias in research and several special issues of prominent journals (e.g. "Counseling and Social Revolution" in *The Personnel and Guidance Journal* in 1971) showed the profession addressing social justice concerns. Recent developments, notably feminism and multiculturalism, have also addressed inequality, oppression, unearned privilege, and inequitable distribution of resources. The authors presented the contemporary example of Lawrence Gerstein, a counseling psychology professor at Ball State University who has worked extensively to address the experiences of Tibetans by publicizing human rights abuses and using his knowledge of counseling to help develop services for refugees.

Moral Dimensions of Social Justice

Each of the above historical examples involved the blending of professional practice and personal values. Prilleltensky (1997) called for psychologists and counselors to develop a clear perspective on the moral dimensions of their work, define the values underlying their practice, and explicate how these values may come to be in society. The author's work is frequently cited as a model for the development of social justice in counseling and psychology practice (Toporek et al., 2006; Vera & Speight, 2003). The author asserted that psychology contains many unstated and unexplored moral positions, values, and assumptions that affect mental health practice. A traditional focus on individual responsibility, self-agency, and self-control left unexamined has, in the author's estimation, frequently affected marginalized clients and communities adversely. The author suggested that psychologists explore and articulate their visions of "the good life" and "the good society," defined as " the values, models, and ideals they wish for individuals and for societies" (p. 518). Psychologists have traditionally espoused an individualistic perspective that considers each person the locus of problems and does not adequately consider how social structures contribute to problems. Even the empowering approach to counseling typically focuses on individual or group rights and diminishes the importance of mutual obligation. Echoing Martín-Baró (1994), the author argued that the individualistic perspective further obscures and strengthens the deleterious power of inequitable social structures and prevents change for either individual clients or for society as a whole.

Prilleltensky (1997) proposed emancipatory communitarian psychology as an

alternative conceptualization of psychology and one that relates directly to social justice. This approach involves careful attention to the interplay between self-determination and obligation to others with a focus on enhancing the well-being of the community as a whole. The emancipatory communitarian approach seeks to collaborate with communities, frequently focusing interventions on systemic concerns dictated by community-level understanding of needs. Counselors may facilitate community understanding and support the actualization of community values. Communities offer insights into the definition of ethical practice, particularly if needs require innovative interventions. A commitment to emancipation includes an examination of who benefits unfairly from systemic injustice and how societal oppression adversely affects people's psychological well-being. Counselors may address systemic concerns through advocacy, societal-levels interventions, and by addressing oppression in individual interventions.

Counselor Characteristics and Approaches

Based on their historical review, Kiselica and Robinson (2001) presented a number of characteristics that counselors must develop in order to address social justice issues. These included:

> *The capacity commitment and an appreciation for human suffering; nonverbal and verbal communication skills; the ability to maintain a multisystemic perspective and to use individual, group, and organizational change strategies; knowledge and use of the media, technology, and the Internet; and assessment and research skills.* (p. 391)

The authors also noted that counselors who engage in social justice work encounter

significant personal and professional risks such as emotional stress, disapproval from peers, and negative reactions from people opposed to their work. In some cases, counselors may risk losing their jobs by addressing systemic concerns. To minimize risks associated with advocating for social change, the authors recommended that counselors adopt an attitude of compromise, develop self-awareness, work to see others' points-of-view, learn about the professional context in which they are working, and find appropriate, achievable goals.

The authors provided two suggestions for adapting counseling work for a social justice approach. First, they encourage the practice of working in clients' communities rather than agency settings when appropriate. Second, they propose a thoughtful examination of professional boundaries relative to client culture and the potential to strengthen counseling relationships. For example, the authors consider that counselors and clients may work together to address social justice issues through advocacy or carefully navigate others dual relationships. In other circumstances, adapting counseling practices does create potential ethical risks, especially with regard to boundaries, and the authors encouraged counselors to use a reasoned, collaborative approach to change and to acknowledge risks associated with clients' presenting issues (e.g. borderline personality disorder). Finally, the authors encouraged counselors to consider how their morals can be integrated into their professional practice.

Refining Social Justice Theory for Counseling

Goodman et al. (2004) noted significant theoretical development regarding social justice in counseling and examples of widespread support for the inclusion of social

justice in counselors' professional agenda. Despite these developments, the authors also noted few descriptions of how social justice principles may be put into action and what social justice practice would look like.

The authors defined social justice in counseling as "scholarship and professional action designed to change societal values, structures, policies, and practices, such that disadvantaged or marginalized groups gain increased access to these tools of self-determination" (p. 795). Social justice practice may occur on the individual, community/organizational, and systemic levels. The authors cited the influence of both the feminist and multicultural psychology movements, which have addressed social context, oppression, power, and privilege. Despite this heritage, counseling and psychology practices have most often been focused on the individual level of intervention, sometimes to the exclusion of community, organizational, and systemic problems.

The authors identified six principles of practice that form the foundation of social justice work: "ongoing self-examination"; "sharing power"; "giving voice"; "facilitating consciousness raising"; "building on strengths"; and "leaving clients with the tools for social change" (p. 798). The authors made the following assertion about integration in social justice work:

> *These tenets are useful across a range of social justice practices, including research, program design, policy development, and community intervention. In some sense, these distinctions become artificial in the social justice context because each type leads seamlessly to the others. Research is done to determine*

> *community needs, programs are developed to meet those needs, these programs are evaluated to determine their effectiveness in ameliorating problems, and this research then informs policy.* (p. 798)

Thus, social justice practice seeks to integrate levels of intervention, approach, and professional roles.

The authors asserted that ethical considerations underlie social justice work. Similarly to Prilleltensky (1997), the authors stated that values form the foundation of both research and practice. Furthermore, social justice practices, like multicultural and feminist approaches, "entail empowerment and collaboration rather than exploitation and objectification" (p. 819).

Goodman et al. (2004), Vera and Speight (2003), and Helms (2003) specifically cited the Atkinson et al. (1993) model for working with culturally diverse clients as an example of an approach with implications for social justice work in counseling. This model includes three dimensions that a counselor may use in determining which role to employ: locus of problem etiology, client level of acculturation, and intervention goal. Potential roles include counselor, psychotherapist, facilitator of indigenous support and healing, consultant, outreach worker, change agent, and community advocate.

Social Justice and School Counselors

Bemak and Chung (2008) elaborated how social justice principles may be applied to school counseling practice, and their suggestions have implications for counselors across settings. Despite the prominent achievement gap and calls from within the profession, the authors stated that counselors have frequently resisted adoption of social

justice principles. One reason may be "nice counselor syndrome" (p. 372). Nice counselor syndrome (NCS) involves a desire to build consensus, avoid conflict, and be perceived as friendly and pleasant to work with. NCS may impel counselors to take on a variety of tasks assigned by administrators that ultimately detract from the counselor's mission with students. Furthermore, NCS prevents counselors from initiating discussions or engaging in actions that may cause discomfort, conflict, or frustration. Counselors may be encouraged to adopt an NCS attitude by personal factors such as fear, anxiety, anger, or apathy. Professional factors such as being overwhelmed by job duties, fear of infringing on other staff members' professional roles, administrative obstacles, or the fear of losing one's job may also contribute. In order to address and overcome NCS, the authors encouraged counselors to develop self-awareness, articulate a vision of social justice, find empirical support, focus on the values that connect them to social justice work, take measured risks, develop political skills to navigate challenging organizational issues, and learn to accept discomfort and conflict. While the authors primarily addressed the school counseling setting, both NCS and their suggestions regarding the development of personal and professional skills may be applied across contexts.

Social Action in Career Counseling

Herr and Niles (1998) asserted that career counseling and career guidance should be considered important components of the social justice approach to counseling. They described a history of career guidance rooted in the transition from an agricultural to an industrial economy in the late 19th century. The importance of social action in career counseling can be seen in school to work transition, the adjustment of workers to their

jobs, and unemployment interventions. In all cases, counselors consider relevant social contexts, intervene on a systemic level, and seek to balance individual intervention with advocating for broader change. In some cases, counselors have actively encouraged changes in public policy such as increasing career guidance services for high school students, articulating the concerns of workers with disabilities, and ensuring that appropriate job readiness interventions continue to be included in unemployment programs.

Despite these areas in which social action figures prominently, the authors noted that few career counselors conceptualize their work as being related to social justice. The authors suggested that counselors may further refine social justice practice by attending to public policy, including legislation, and pursuing expanded roles for counselors that address systemic concerns. Counselors may also encourage graduate training programs to articulate the importance of career development in personal well-being, to train future counselors to consider social justice a key component of their professional lives, and to help trainees develop the skills necessary to effectively engage in social action.

Social Justice, Multiculturalism, and Counseling Roles

Vera and Speight (2003) framed the development of social justice in counseling by addressing connections and divergence between multiculturalism and social justice. The authors described multiculturalism as a critical component of counseling training, research, and practice. The authors argued that multiculturalism and social justice are inextricably linked in the lives of the people whom counseling serves:

Social justice is at the heart of multiculturalism in that the existence of

> *institutionalized racism, sexism, and homophobia is what accounts for the inequitable experiences of people of color, women, gay, lesbian, and bisexual people (among others) in the United States. Moreover, discrimination and prejudice are intimately connected with quality of life issues for these groups of people.* (p. 254)

Despite the evident links between multiculturalism and social justice, the authors reported that strategies to effectively address injustice had been insufficiently developed. The authors noted that counseling and psychology have traditionally focused on individual practice, and that multiculturalism, particularly cultural competence, has focused on responding to diversity within the narrow confines of individual interventions rather than in the broader social and political arena.

The authors asserted that multiculturalism in counseling and psychology is made necessary because of systemic oppression. Counselors must recognize this connection between societal injustice and mental health. The authors argued that recognition of the deleterious effects of injustice requires increasing the development of professional roles that exemplify the field's commitment to enhancing the well-being of all people.

Towards that end, the authors specifically identified activities outside of traditional individual therapy that would be consistent with integrating multiculturalism and social justice. These roles entail advocacy, outreach, prevention, and psychoeducation. Social work practice often includes a focus on societal factors and social workers are frequently trained to address public policy and basic material needs as well as mental health concerns. The authors proposed that counselors learn from this

example. The authors further supported general principles of collaboration and community empowerment: counselors must be aware of strengths present in the community rather than focusing only on problems. A social justice perspective includes the belief that communities have resources that can be applied to remedy systemic injustice. Rather than providing ready-made solutions, the authors encouraged counselors to use their skills to enhance communication, evaluate interventions, and develop community-driven needs assessments.

Helms (2003) responded to Vera and Speight (2003). The author described the social justice movement in counseling psychology as part of a tradition of professional "self-examination" (p. 305). The author disputed Vera and Speight's (2003) criticism of the multicultural movement. She noted that counseling developed an early perspective on the importance of recruiting culturally diverse professionals. She also noted frequent focus on oppression, racism, and socioeconomic issues in multicultural writing. In addition, Helms criticized Vera and Speight's recommendations, stating that they maintain an individual focus while calling for systemic intervention.

Helms identified inadequacies in training as reasons why counselors and psychologists may not effectively identify social justice interventions. Training in advocacy, outreach, program design, contextual case conceptualization, and systemic issues are rare. She further asserted that, although the literature in multicultural counseling has addressed social justice themes across levels of intervention, implementation has primarily focused on individual interventions. Citing Shullman's (2002) work on consulting psychology, Helms advocated for training focused on group

interactions, organizational assessment, and intervention. She described scenarios in which counseling skills developed for individual interventions may be applied to assist in communication between conflicting cultural groups, within communities, and towards political goals. Counselors would work towards community-defined goals and communities would evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

Social Justice, Multiculturalism, and Feminism: Common Themes

Crethar et al. (2008) took the position that multicultural, feminist, and social justice approaches to counseling and psychology share values and methods. The authors noted that each movement focuses both on the individual and on the social context. Each approach requires counselors to attend to the effects of oppression. Each movement addresses privilege, which the authors defined as "the systematic and unearned benefits select groups of persons in society are bestowed based on certain variables" (p. 269). The authors defined social justice counseling as "a multifaceted approach to counseling in which practitioners strive to simultaneously promote human development and the common good through addressing challenges related to both individual and distributive justice" (p. 270). These actions are guided by the principles of "equity," "access," "participation," and "harmony" (pp 271-272). In illustrating how each principle may guide counseling practices, the authors noted that counselors espousing social justice, multicultural, or feminist perspectives would likely act in similar ways to seek the benefit of the individual and to reduce societal injustice. The authors identified the following commonalities: the need to create social change in order to promote lasting changes in individual well-being; an equal partnership between the counselor and client; counselor

affirmation of clients' experiences of injustice; and the belief that societal factors contribute significantly to individual problems. Counselors working from social justice, feminist, and multicultural approaches will adapt interventions and roles based on client needs. Each paradigm calls on counselors to embrace roles such as change agent, advocate, and activist. The authors' asserted that, while differences between multicultural, feminist, and social justice counseling do exist, the shared values and themes of these movements make an integrated approach to practice possible.

Social Justice in Counselor and Psychologist Training

Speight and Vera (2008) described recent developments in social justice pertaining to the training of counselors and psychologists. The authors encouraged programs to review and adopt the model of Boston College in which social justice concerns are integrated into each course and training experience. Goodman et al. (2004) provide illustrative examples of each of the core principles of social justice work in the training model at Boston College, citing both benefits in terms of student development and challenges related to personal turmoil, developing new skills, and addressing complicated issues. Talleyrand et al. (2006) provide an illustration of the program at George Mason University, which incorporates social justice issues across the curriculum as well. Murray et al. (2010) described the use of service-learning projects as a way to help counselor trainees develop advocacy skills related to social justice. These approaches may enhance the capacity of counselors to confront systemic issues and to practice from a social justice perspective.

Advocacy Competencies

The American Counseling Association's advocacy competencies (Lewis et al., 2002; Ratts et al., 2010) provide a framework for counselors hoping to engage in social justice action effectively and ethically. The competencies' framework includes a distinction between working directly with clients or students and working on behalf of clients or students. Counselors also work across the individual, school/community, and public domains. For example, counselors working individually with clients may focus on helping clients develop self-advocacy skills, recognize the role of oppression, and pursue empowerment. Counselors may also intervene on behalf of clients in the school or community domain to engage in systems advocacy. On the public level, counselors may work with clients to provide information to the public about culture, oppression, or other concerns. Working on behalf of clients in the public domain, counselors may engage in activism or political advocacy. The advocacy competencies provide an additional resource for counselors hoping to develop a social justice approach.

Criticism and Challenges

Ivey and Collins (2003) identified significant barriers to the integration of social justice, clinical practice, and multicultural competency. Despite significant progress in the development of multicultural guidelines and support of social justice approaches, the authors asserted that neither movement had been effectively implemented. This hesitance may come in part from the location of institutions in the larger social system. For example, universities are part of a broader capitalist, culturally-biased system that opposes the type of change either multiculturalism or social justice would hope to

generate. In addition, people holding privilege and social power are often actively resistant to change. Helms (2003) also stated that the systems in which counselors typically work resist social justice interventions.

The author offered a frank assessment of the practical viability of social justice interventions within mental health service and academia. These practices are unlikely to be reimbursed by insurance companies, paid for directly by communities who might seek them, or funded as research endeavors. In reality, practitioners committed to social justice often do so on their own time and without being paid. Without financial and institutional support, social justice commitments, no matter how deeply held, are likely to be ultimately abandoned. Therefore, the author advocated for additional training for counselors to work systemically to find ways to make social justice work financially and practically viable.

Smith et al. (2009) offered criticisms of social justice advocacy in counseling. The authors identified the theoretical underpinnings of the social justice movement as a shift in problem locus from individuals to society and the belief that counselors are obligated to address social ills that affect psychological well-being. The authors noted that historically counselors have focused primarily on developmental concerns and mental health. While counselors have focused on growth and health, other professions such as social workers, sociologists, and lawyers have focused on rights, justice, and similar principles of the social justice movement. Many counselors may have chosen the profession precisely because of a desire to focus on development. Training models also distance counselors from the justice-focused perspective.

In addition, social justice is, by the authors' assessment, grounded in a liberal political ideology that may not be consistent with some counselors' values and beliefs. In practice, social justice approaches may be misused to pursue hidden agendas, enhance self-promotion, increase power of already privileged individuals (especially advocates), demand specific types of advocacy from all counselors in a manner that limits choice and freedom, increase elitism, encourage people to think of themselves as victims, and remake the role of counselor. The authors argued that while social justice has been a recurrent concern in counseling, the profession as a whole has not typically focused on advocacy. This fact distinguishes counselors from social workers, for example. According to Smith et al. (2009), demands for counselors to engage in social justice work weaken counselors' professional identity. Toporek and Williams (2006) further acknowledged that many counselors have reacted negatively to the inclusion of social justice in the professional agenda. They noted that, while social justice recognizes the essential political components of counseling research and practice, many counselors have maintained the belief that the profession can be apolitical.

Fouad et al. (2004) described the 2001 4th National Counseling Psychology conference at which social justice was a priority. The authors cited the creation of social action groups (SAGs) at this conference as a significant step toward the development of a social justice vision for the field. The realities of the SAGs highlighted a critical issue related to social justice in practice. The purpose of the SAGs was to bring together motivated counselors to explore significant social issues and to develop of strategies to address these issues. SAGs were created for community violence, domestic violence,

child abuse and neglect, homelessness and welfare, economic disparities, services for people with chronic or severe mental illness, social justice ethics, managed care, and racism. Groups were to meet once a day during the three days of the conference. The authors reported extensive interest in participating in social action groups. Of the 1,052 attendees, over 400 indicated a plan to take part. Ultimately, only 77 conference attendees participated in the SAGs. This figures represented less than 8% of conference attendees and less than 20% of those who indicated that they would take part. The products of the SAGs were also modest. In general, the SAGs, recommended further study of the issues in question. The experience of the SAGs indicated that, while many counselors express interest in social justice work, few take action.

Goodman et al. (2004) noted that commitment to social justice requires practitioners and researchers to examine their work for unintended consequences and ethical pitfalls. For example, the idea of empowerment may not be consistent with the cultural values of some communities. Counselors engaging in self-evaluation may discover value differences that affect their work with communities, and they must be open to ongoing dialogue about these differences. In some cases, the stated interests of a client or community may be at odds with what a counselor believes will best serve that person or community. Although sharing power is an important facet of social justice work, convoluted informed consent procedures, institutional demands for research productivity, and publication issues generate challenging questions. When committing to the principle of giving voice, counselors make significant decisions about whose perspective to support and uphold. Addressing consciousness-raising in social justice

work may create a dual dilemma: encouraging counselors to engage in consciousness-raising when they may not have developed sufficiently to do so effectively; and creating a hierarchy based on who is considered more advanced or capable in this area. Goodman et al. (2004) state that when members of more privileged groups presume to educate traditionally marginalized communities, they risk reinforcing cultural or social hierarchies rather than supporting social justice. For example, when White counselors engage in consciousness-raising about racism in the African-American community, or when middle-class counselors address social class, careful attention must be paid to acknowledging privilege, collaboration, and empowering community-driven perspectives. A strengths focus, often considered a mainstay of advocacy work, may send a conflicting message about the locus of problems: the implication being that by being more effective, marginalized clients may overcome their difficulties and that social change is unnecessary or of secondary concern. In many cases, the nature of social justice work (conducted by students or volunteers) means that limited time and resources prevent counselors from providing clients with the tools they need, especially a consistent, long-term relationship. Finally, ethical decision-making models, most of which are based on individualistic ideology and are set to resolve issues related to traditional counseling professional roles, may not be sufficient to address the concerns that arise from social justice work.

Review of Empirical Research

The following empirical studies address social justice in various aspects of counselor training and practice including training programs, perceptions of training,

social justice advocacy, social justice orientation, and experience of direct practice. Additional empirical studies, while not specifically associated with social justice, provide valuable insights and will be summarized briefly here.

As stated previously, several authors noted the applicability of the Atkinson et al. (1993) model for working with culturally diverse clients. This model includes three dimensions: locus of problem etiology, client level of acculturation, and intervention goal. Based upon how the client's presenting concerns plot on these three dimension, the counselor and client choose among potential roles including counselor, psychotherapist, facilitator of indigenous support and healing, consultant, outreach worker, advisor, change agent, and community advocate.

Using vignettes designed to elicit a particular role, Atkinson et al. (1997) examined the ratings of each of the helper roles by multicultural-trained psychologists as well as the preferences of Asian-American college students for each helper role. Multicultural-trained psychologists rated the intended role as most helpful for 6 of the 8 roles. For the two vignettes designed to elicit advocate and advisor respectively, the average rating of helpfulness for other roles was higher. Asian-American college students reviewing the same vignettes rated the roles of either consultant or facilitator of indigenous support as most helpful for all vignettes. For all vignettes, the students rated consultant, facilitator of indigenous support, change agent, and counselor as the four most helpful roles. The role of psychotherapist was rated as least helpful for 7 of the 8 vignettes, and the roles of facilitator of indigenous healing, advocate, and advisor were consistently rated among the four least helpful roles. Although the results of the study

may have been affected by the quality of the vignettes and limitations of the samples, both multicultural-trained psychologists and Asian American college students supported adapted roles based on client characteristics and presenting concerns. Roles such as facilitator of indigenous support, change agent, and consultant have been included in suggestions regarding social justice work. Based on the vignette included in the study, the role of advocate was not highly rated by either group.

In a qualitative study of 18 mental health practitioners, Goh et al. (2010) examined practices deemed effective by counselors, psychologists, social workers, and family therapists engaged in work with diverse communities. The participants identified three expanded roles. The role of advocate involved working within the broader service community and political context to help other professionals understand clients' culture and life experiences. A second role involved a more engaged approach to therapy focused on interpersonal connections and moving beyond a traditional, reserved, professional role. Finally, the participants described a role of frequently helping their clients meet basic material needs. Other practices related to social justice included working in the communities where clients live, fostering a collaborative approach to mental health services, using client language, and being flexible about session times and locations. The participants reported that obtaining resources was one culturally relevant outcome measure. The results indicated that the social justice approach, while never explicitly addressed in the study, is evident in the practices of professionals who work with diverse communities.

Social Justice in Training Programs

Pieterse et al. (2009) explored training in multicultural competence and social justice advocacy in American Psychological Association (APA) and Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP) -accredited graduate programs. The term *social justice* appears directly in the CACREP accreditation standards but does not appear in the APA standards. The authors stated that no extensive review of social justice training practices had been published.

The authors identified a total of 278 APA- and CACREP-accredited programs and attempted to obtain information from 200 programs. Through a search of websites, the authors were able to identify 169 programs with mandatory multicultural courses. The authors contacted the instructors of these courses by email requesting course syllabi, and 62 responded (response rate of 36.7%). Of these responses, 8 were related to optional courses and were thus screened out. Of the remaining 54 programs, 29 were doctoral programs and 25 were master's programs. Syllabi were obtained from each region of the United States, although the U.S. South represented 50% of the sample. Syllabi were categorized based on the course's objectives and goals, required readings, course content, and grading criteria. Coding for multicultural content was based on the Sue et al. (1992) tripartite model. Citing Toporek et al. (2006), the authors reported using the following definition of social justice: "focus on forms of oppression that limit access and opportunity in society according to membership in various sociodemographic groups (e.g., race, sexual orientation, social class, ethnicity)" (p. 101). Based on a review of the syllabi, a research team generated categories for coding the content of the syllabi based

on multicultural and social justice themes.

The results of the analysis showed 26 courses that included a required text related specifically to social justice. A majority of the courses (59%) included social justice themes in the statement of goals and objectives. Fewer syllabi (48%) included specific course content such as lectures or planned discussions related to social justice. Social justice content most often included information about oppression or inequality and infrequently involved reference to social change or advocacy. Only 15% of the courses included a social justice project in the grading evaluation.

The study exhibited several potential concerns. It is possible that the syllabi do not reflect the content of the courses. Social justice themes may be presented more often by instructors or introduced by students themselves. Conversely, instructors and students may not address social justice material as proposed in the syllabi. The degree to which readings are processed as part of the course may present significant variation in how social justice themes exist in a given course. As some programs (e.g. Boston College and George Mason University) incorporate social justice training across the curriculum, this survey may not give sufficient description of the overall approach to social justice evident in a training program. In summary, while social justice was frequently featured in the mission statements of these courses, the syllabi exhibit limited training in social justice practice. Students may obtain training in social justice through practica, mentorship, conferences, or other opportunities, but this study indicated that few counseling trainees receive extensive preparation related to social justice in their coursework.

Trainees' Perception of Social Justice Training

The previous study addressed the status of social justice in training programs. Singh et al. (2010a) reported that, at the time of their study, no previous research had addressed counseling trainees' perception of social justice training in their graduate programs. The authors addressed this question using qualitative methods. Training directors of APA-accredited internship sites and training directors of APA-accredited counseling psychology programs were contacted by email and asked to forward the survey to students completing their pre-doctoral internship. Sixty-six trainees completed the survey out of 484 counseling psychology students estimated to be eligible (a 13.6% response rate).

Using the Goodman et al. (2004) framework for defining social justice, the authors developed an Internet survey that included four open-ended questions:

> *How do you define social justice?; How do you practice social justice professionally?; How do you practice social justice personally?; How do you envision social justice principles should be integrated into counseling psychology training?* (p. 773).

The survey also included 10 demographic questions, including questions about the participants' training experience.

The research team consisted of seven women: six pre-doctoral interns in counseling psychology and one training director. Three participants engaged in the data analysis using guidelines identified by Corbin and Strauss (2008). The data analysis team independently coded the results of the four open-ended questions and the process was

discussed at biweekly meetings of the research team as a whole.

As is characteristic of the studies reviewed, the research sample was primarily female (75%), White (75%), and heterosexual (75%). All of the participants reported having taken a cross-cultural or multicultural counseling course. Fewer participants reported having taken an advanced multicultural counseling (39%), gender issues (22%), sexual orientation issues (14%), or social class (10%) course. Only 15% of participants reported having taken a course on social justice issues. Participants reported receiving training through practica, research, conferences, workshops, and other professional trainings. Participants reported obstacles to social justice training including faculty time (56% of participants), faculty interest (39%), limited funding (53%), and coursework requirements (47%). Eighty-six percent of participants identified at least one obstacle to social justice training. Only 41% of participants reported having access to faculty with significant knowledge of social justice issues.

The authors reported the emergence of four themes related to the definition of social justice. These themes were: “promotion of social equality”; “minimization of current social inequalities”; “recognition of the context of society”; and “social justice as a concept or ideal to strive toward versus actions or efforts that are behaviorally based or outcome oriented”(p. 777). The authors reported six themes related to the professional practice of social justice: “self-awareness/reflection of one’s biases”; “self-education on social justice issues”; “infusion of social justice in clinical work”; “infusion of social justice in research”; “infusion of social justice in teaching”; and “campus/community activism” (p. 777). The theme of infusion of social justice in clinical work included

encouraging clients to address social issues and counselors advocating for social issues. Counselors reported focusing on creating egalitarian counseling relationships, addressing injustice in counseling, and addressing cultural issues.

The authors reported five themes related to the personal practice of social justice: "self-awareness/reflection on personal biases"; "self-education"; "consciousness-raising"; "walking the talk"; and "social justice activism" (p. 777). The participants reported a high level of personal and professional integration with regard to social justice. The authors noted that the participants, while addressing emotional experiences, did not address how they maintain professional resiliency.

Finally, the authors reported three themes related to future directions in counselor training and education: "the infusion of social justice principles into training": "infusion across all aspects/level of training"; "walking the talk"; and "training opportunities outside of counseling psychology programs" (p. 777).

Several aspects of the study warrant critique. The overall response rate for the study was low, and the authors did not report any procedures to follow-up, increase the sample size, or generate a random sample. Therefore, the study may not present a valid picture of training generally. Participants self-selected into the study, and may have done so for a variety of reasons. It is possible that the participants represent social justice exemplars, but it is also possible that their participation was related to a number of other characteristics. The authors did not provide information regarding how many participants endorsed any one theme, which would have generated a clearer picture of how prevalent many aspects of social justice work were among the participants. As presented the results

of the study are broad rather than descriptive. For example, insufficient examples are provided to address how social justice themes are incorporated into teaching, research, or clinical practice. Although representativeness may not be the purpose of qualitative research, given this procedure it seems possible that important information was missed. The focus on pre-doctoral internship trainees may have led to misrepresentation: recent increases in attention to social justice may mean that recent enrollees in doctoral programs receive different training.

Given the limited training in social justice provided to counseling trainees found by Pieterse et al. (2009), it is not surprising that Singh et al. (2010a) found that doctoral trainees cited significant barriers to practicing from a social justice perspective. The doctoral trainees who participated in this study exhibited significant self-direction, personal commitment, and a willingness to find training opportunities outside of their doctoral programs. These results must be considered in light of the low response rate, which suggests these participants' attitudes and actions may not represent those of trainees or professionals generally.

Social Justice Advocacy

In addition to examining the practices of training programs and doctoral trainee attitudes about their social justice training, examining the attitudes and characteristics of counseling trainees informs the state of social justice in the field. In a quantitative study, Nilsson and Schmidt (2005) examined predictors of both desired and actual social justice advocacy among graduate students in counseling. Citing Cohen (2001), the authors defined social justice advocacy as "organized efforts aimed at influencing public

attitudes, policies, and laws to create a more socially just society guided by the vision of human rights including political, economical, and social rights" (Nilsson and Schmidt, 2005, p. 267). The authors characterized their study as exploratory, stating that despite extensive theoretical work on social justice in counseling, they were unable to locate any empirical research addressing counselors and social justice advocacy. The research hypothesis was that the following factors would be associated with interest in social justice advocacy: political interest; the student's age; total courses taken as a graduate student; interest in others' well-being; worldview; and ability to solve problems. The authors hypothesized that these predictors and interest in social justice advocacy would contribute to actual social justice advocacy.

Participants in the study were 134 graduate students enrolled in the counseling and counseling psychology graduate programs at one university in the Midwestern United States. The majority of the students were enrolled in a master's program (81%), with 13% enrolled in a doctoral program, and 7% in another degree program. The sample was primarily female (84%), White (84%), and heterosexual (92%). Eight percent of the sample identified as African American, 4% as Latino/a, and 1% as Asian American. Four percent of the sample identified as Gay or Lesbian and 3% identified as Bisexual. The majority of the sample identified as Christian (66%), 16% identified as not religious, 16% as other, and 1% identified as Jewish and Buddhist respectively. Fifty-eight percent of the sample identified as democrats, 22% as republicans, and 19% as another political orientation. Statistics regarding nation-of-origin and social class were not reported.

The participants were assessed while in class. The authors reported not tracking

the number of students who chose note to participate in the study. Political interest was assessed using a likert scale included on the demographic questionnaire. The authors used the following instruments to measure characteristics of the participants: the Problem-Solving Inventory (PSI; Heppner, 1988); the Social Interest Scale (SIS; Crandall, 1975); and the Scale to Assess World Views (SAWV; Ibrahim & Kahn, 1987). Social justice advocacy was assessed using the Activity Scale (ACT; Kerpelman, 1969). The ACT measures both desire to engage in social justice advocacy (ACT-D) and actual social justice advocacy activities (ACT-A). The ACT addresses the degree to which participants engage in actions, communication, and study related to social advocacy.

The authors analyzed the data using multiple regression. Based on the research hypotheses noted above, models were generated with desire to engage in social justice advocacy (ACT-D) and actual social justice actions (ACT-A) as outcome variables. The authors reported that because the sample included relatively few men, LGB-identified people, and culturally diverse students, differences related to these variables were examined using univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA). African-American participants, Latino/a participants, and the one Asian-American participant were grouped together as "students of color"; Christian students were compared to all non-Christian students. Nearly all of the participants (91%) identified as having an optimistic worldview on the SAWV, and therefore only this type of worldview was included as a predictor.

Overall, the authors found low levels of both desire to engage in social justice advocacy and actual social justice advocacy among the participants. Citing Kerpelman

(1972), they described the participants as having “complete non-activist behavior” (p. 277). The following results of the analysis must consequently be understood within the context of this limited interest and engagement in social justice among the sample. The ACT instrument may have contributed to this result: the ACT was designed to be used with college students and does not include items related to direct work with diverse communities, expansion of counseling roles, feminist approaches to counseling, or multicultural engagement. Using a sample of trainees may also have affected the outcome, as graduate students are frequently engaged in direct practice only part-time. On the other hand, these results may be seen as consistent with additional studies suggesting limited training in social justice (Singh et al., 2010a), barriers to practicing from a social justice perspective (Pieterse et al., 2009), minimal follow-through by ostensibly interested counselors (Fouad et al., 2004), and the perception that social justices' active advocacy is inconsistent with counselors' typical personality characteristics and career aspirations (Bemak & Chung, 2008; Smith et al., 2009). Whatever the explanation for the results indicating low levels of social justice practice among the sample, the results must be interpreted cautiously in light this key finding.

The full regression model for desire to engage in social justice advocacy (ACT-D) included age, number of courses taken in the graduate program, political interest, concern for others (SIS), optimistic worldview (SAWV), and problem solving (PSI). This model predicted 30% of the variance in desire to engage in social justice advocacy. Only political interest was significantly associated with the outcome variable at the .05-level.

The full regression model for actual social justice advocacy included age, number

of courses taken, political interest, concern for others (SIS), optimistic worldview (SAWV), problem solving (PSI), and desire to engage in social justice advocacy (ACT-D). This model predicted 40% of the variance in actual social justice advocacy. Only political interest and desire to engage in social justice advocacy were significantly associated with actual social justice advocacy at the .05-level.

The results of the ANOVAs showed that men had more desire to engage in social justice advocacy than women, and LGB students had more desire to engage in social justice advocacy than heterosexual students. There were no differences between these groups in actual social justice advocacy. There were no differences on either outcome measure between White students and students of color, between Christian and non-Christian students, and between democrats and republicans.

Several aspects of the study warrant critique. The measure used to assess social justice advocacy may not encompass the activities of counselors. The ACT instrument, as discussed above, may not sufficiently address the unique manifestations of social justice in counseling and psychology. As the authors noted, the participants included only students enrolled in one university, and therefore the sample does not represent counseling graduate students more broadly. Furthermore, the results of the study may be influenced by the characteristics of the training program, the program's policies regarding selecting graduate students, or by the degree to which faculty members serve as models of social justice advocacy. Social desirability may have affected the results, especially since the participants were assessed in class. The composition of the sample provides additional concerns. The small numbers of students of color, diverse religious

backgrounds, and LGB-identified students gave the analysis low power to detect differences between groups. The regression models presented may have benefitted from further review to exclude extraneous variables. Theoretical literature suggests connections between multiculturalism and social justice, and a measure of cultural competence may have provided salient information as a predictor.

In an additional study of graduate students, Wendler and Nilsson (2009) sought to examine the relationship between Universal-Diverse orientation (UDO), cognitive complexity, and social justice advocacy among counseling trainees. The authors defined UDO as "an awareness and acceptance of both similarities and differences among people" (p. 28). The authors cited research related to UDO and cognitive complexity in counselors and counseling trainees, but noted a continued lack of empirical studies related to social justice advocacy. Citing previous research noting the possibility of participants representing themselves in an unrealistically favorable manner, the authors included a measure of multicultural social desirability. The authors hypothesized that, controlling for social desirability, number of multicultural classes completed, education level (master's or doctorate), cognitive complexity, and social justice advocacy would contribute to UDO.

Participants in the study were 120 students enrolled in master's (n = 84) or doctoral (n = 36) programs in counseling, counseling psychology, or counselor education at four universities in the Midwestern United States. The majority of the participants were women (74%) and identified as White (79%). African Americans comprised 7.5% of the sample, 5.8% identified as multiracial, 5.8% as international students, 1 as Asian

American, and 1 as Latino/a. Sixteen participants (13.5%) identified as Gay, Lesbian, or Bisexual. Participants were contacted by mail to participate in the study. The authors did not report the return rate or any follow-up procedures to enlarge the sample or encourage survey completion. UDO was assessed using the Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale-Short Form (M-GUDS-S; Fuertes et al., 2000). The M-GUDS-S contains three subscales that measure Diversity of Contact, Relativistic Appreciation, and Comfort with Differences. Cognitive complexity was assessed using a 4 x 6 grid in which participants matched 4 roles with 6 personality constructs (Spengler & Strohmer, 1994). As in the previous study, social justice advocacy was assessed using the ACT instrument, which includes two components: actual social justice advocacy (ACT-A) and desired social justice advocacy (ACT-D). Finally, multicultural social desirability was assessed using the Multicultural Social Desirability Scale (MSDS; Sodowsky et al., 1998).

The results of the MGUDS-S were, by the authors' report, problematic, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients unacceptably low on both the Relativistic Appreciation and Comfort with Differences scales. Therefore, the authors used only the Diversity of Contact scale, which represents behavioral aspects of UDO, to represent UDO as a whole.

Between group differences were examined using ANOVA for UDO, cognitive complexity, and social justice advocacy. Doctoral students were found to have higher levels of UDO than master's students. LGB-identified students had higher levels of desired social justice advocacy and actual social justice advocacy than did heterosexual students. Sexual orientation was not included in the regression analysis because the

authors reported an insufficient number of LGB participants.

The authors further analyzed the results using hierarchical multiple regression. Multicultural social desirability was first included as a control variable. Social desirability was significantly associated with UDO, explaining 5% of the variance. In the next step, number of multicultural classes and education level were added as predictor variables. The new model accounted for 15% of the variance in UDO. Education level was significantly associated with UDO, but number of multicultural classes was not. The third and final step added cognitive complexity, actual social justice advocacy, and desired social justice advocacy to the model. The full model was associated with 27% of the variance in UDO. Actual social justice advocacy was significantly associated with UDO, while neither cognitive complexity nor desired social justice advocacy contributed significantly to the outcome.

An examination of the intercorrelations yields relevant information related to social justice advocacy. Neither ACT-A nor ACT-D was associated significantly with multicultural social desirability. ACT-A and ACT-D were significantly correlated (.65). Actual social justice advocacy was significantly associated with participation in multicultural classes (.17) and education level (.17). Desired social justice advocacy was significantly associated with education level as well (.17).

The characteristics of the sample were an area of concern for this study. While the authors were able to recruit participants from multiple universities, the demographics of the sample continue to be problematic. In this case, sexual orientation was found to be a factor in differences in social justice advocacy, but an insufficient number of LGB-

identified participants prevented the inclusion of this variable in the regression model. In addition, potentially significant factors such as race and nation-of-origin were not included in the analysis. The use of a measure of multicultural social desirability adds credibility to the results, but as in the previous study, an examination of multicultural competence may have helped. The psychometric challenges reported by the authors related to the use of the M-GUDS-S warrant further examination, as it is unclear that the one scale used to represent UDO adequately represents the concept as presented by the authors.

In summary, these quantitative studies of graduate trainees in counseling indicated relatively low levels of social justice advocacy. Actual advocacy is associated primarily with one's desire to engage in social justice advocacy. Attitude toward diversity (UDO), political interest, participation in multicultural courses, and education level may also be associated with becoming involved in social justice. Despite the small sample size, it does appear that LGB-identified trainees focus more on social justice work than their heterosexual counterparts. Many other characteristics thought to contribute to differences in social justice attitudes and behavior such as spirituality, political orientation, attitudes toward the world, and problem-solving skills are either not associated with social justice work as measured or have modest correlations.

Social Justice Orientation

While the previous studies examined attitudes of trainees in general, Caldwell and Vera (2010) used qualitative methods to examine the experiences of trainees and professionals who had made a commitment to social justice. The authors defined social

justice orientation as "the disposition of individuals who endorse social justice beliefs and are engaged in social justice advocacy, and who may or may not be members of dominant social groups" (p. 164). The authors noted limited empirical research regarding social justice orientation in the counseling field. The authors identified exploring experiences critical to the development of social justice attitude as the primary purposes of the study.

The design of the study was critical incident technique (CIT). The authors supported the use of this methodology based on the limited previous research available, the capacity of CIT studies to generate theory, and the belief that personal and professional experiences significantly contribute to social justice orientation. Procedures for identifying participants committed to social justice included contacting each of the authors of the *Handbook for social justice in counseling psychology: Leadership, vision, and action* (Toporek et al., 2006), soliciting presenters from the 2006 Teachers College Winter Roundtable on Cultural Psychology and Education, and soliciting presenters from the 2007 National Multicultural Conference and Summit. The latter two conferences had social justice as a primary theme. Based on these criteria, the authors contacted 242 eligible participants, of who 36 completed the questionnaire (14.9% response rate). The authors did not describe any attempts to encourage participation or follow-up with potential participants. Eighteen of the participants were students, 11 were either associate or assistant professors, 3 identified as staff psychologists, one as a training director at a university counseling center, and one as an instructor. Professional role data was missing for one participant. The majority of the participants identified as female (83%), White (56%), and heterosexual (78%). Compared to other studies reviewed here, the sampled

included more African-American (22%) and Latino/a participants (11%).

The results were generated through an Internet survey. This included both a demographic questionnaire and the Critical Factors Questionnaire (CFQ) designed for the study. The following definition of social justice was provided to participants:

> *Social justice work in counseling psychology is understood as scholarship and professional action designed to: (a) acknowledge that the unfair distribution of power in societal institutions has unfair implications on psychological health and wellness; (b) examine how broad, systemic inequities and oppression impact psychological development, health, and well-being; and (c) implement interventions that target changing unjust systemic sources of client and community problems (e.g., unequal access to resources, prejudice, and oppression).* (p. 167)

The survey asked participants to identify experiences related to the development of their social justice orientation, rank those experiences based on influence, and expound about the effect of their two top-ranked experiences.

The data was analyzed using the constant comparison method. The research team consisted of one counseling psychologist with extensive training in social justice work and one investigator who had limited knowledge related to social justice. The second researcher's training, background, and biases were not addressed. Two masters-level counseling students audited the results. The authors reported an overall interrater reliability of 84% for the categories generated, which the authors reported was within acceptable standards.

All participants reported either a high (56%) or moderately high (44%) commitment to social justice. The survey yielded a total of 169 critical incidents. The authors reported five major themes encompassing the types of incidents: "influence of significant persons"; "exposure to injustice"; "education/learning"; "work experiences"; "religion/spirituality"; and "other" (p. 168). Influence of significant persons was the most commonly noted theme (78% of participants) and included influential mentors (64% of participants), family members (39% of participants), and peers (19% of participants). The majority of participants (78%) included exposure to injustice as a critical incident, with 64% of participants citing a personal experience of injustice and 52% citing having witnessed injustice. Fifty-eight percent of participants included an educational experience as a critical incident: 36% cited coursework, 28% noted readings, and 22% identified the orientation of their training program. Work experiences were also frequently cited (50% of participants), including clinical and community work (44% of participants) and research work (17% of participants). Religion/spirituality was cited by 14% of participants. A total of 9 critical incidents could not be included in these listed themes and were included in the "other" category.

The authors reported the modal ranking of each category. Exposure to injustice was most often ranked first, or most influential, in social justice orientation development. Influences of significant others and religion/spirituality were most often ranked second. Education/learning was most often ranked third. Finally, work experiences and other were most often ranked fourth. Further data regarding ranks was not provided.

Thirty-five of the 36 participants completed the final question, which asked the

participant to describe how the critical incident influenced his/her social justice orientation development. Analysis yielded five themes: “increased awareness”; “facilitated commitment to social justice”; “increased understanding of social justice”; “identity changes”; and “behavior changes” (p. 170). The theme of increased awareness was cited by 77% of participants. Results in this theme were further categorized as “awareness of injustice/oppression”, “increased self-reflection and self-awareness”, and “awareness of others’ experiences of injustice” (p. 170). The majority of participants (71%) noted that their critical incident facilitated their commitment to social justice. This theme included two further categorizations: “influenced decision to commit to social justice” and “facilitated empowerment/motivation/belief in social change” (p. 171). The theme of increased understanding of social justice was also cited by 71% of participants. This theme included four categories: “increased theoretical understanding of social justice”; “increased learning of practical applications of social justice principles”; “changed vocabulary”; and “increased critical thinking” (p. 171). The theme of identity changes was cited by 69% of the participant. Subthemes included: “shaped personal and professional identity”; “instilled/internalized values”; and “shaped worldview” (p. 171). Finally, the theme of behavioral changes was cited by 66% of participants. This theme included subthemes of “initiated more learning”, “engaged in activism”, and “changed relationships” (p. 171).

The article has several areas of concern. The sample, which was comprised primarily of academic professionals and students with the means and interest to attend large national conferences or publish, may not sufficiently capture the social justice

orientation of the many counselors who focus on direct service rather than research. The authors provided relatively limited information about the data analysis process, leaving questions about how the categories were generated, how consensus was reached, and potential power dynamics in the research team. Notably, the second investigator is likely not listed as an author, and his/her background is not discussed. Aspects of social justice change that are more developmental, gradual, or dispositional may be missed by the critical incident methodology. While critical incidents may elucidate changes and transition, the results to do not yield significant information regarding the ongoing practice of social justice orientation among counselors.

Compared to trainees in general who as noted above show low levels of activism, participants who do engage in social justice work report a strong commitment. Based on the results of this study, personal experiences are strongly associated with the development of social justice orientation. In particular, experiencing or witnessing injustice frequently compels counselors' commitment to social justice work, enhances understanding of the effects of injustice, and increases self-awareness. Significant others such as mentors and family members seem to have greater influence on the development of social justice than academic training. This may be expected given the previously cited research regarding limitations in social justice training. For the participants in this study, a critical incident led to identity changes, changes in behavior, and a deepened commitment to social justice work.

Trainees' Experience of Practice

While Caldwell and Vera (2010) identified a themes related to the development of

social justice orientation, the results do not generate an extensive picture of social justice in action. Weintraub and Goodman (2010) used qualitative methods to explore the experiences of practitioners engaged in relationship-centered advocacy (RCA). RCA integrates traditional mental health services with material support in a manner that is consistent with social justice principles. RCA is a component of a broader, community-generated program for low-income women. The principles of RCA include participant identification of relevant needs, relationship building between counselor and client, acknowledgement of the connections between emotional and material resources, and addressing oppression. Advocates in the RCA model are generally volunteer master's-level counseling trainees.

Participants in the study were masters-level counseling trainees who worked as advocates in the RCA model between 2005 and 2007. Of 15 eligible participants, the authors interviewed 10. Former advocates who were not interviewed included 3 who declined, one who was unable to schedule, and one who could not be contacted. The authors reported achieving data saturation after 10 interviews and consequently they elected not to interview the remaining eligible former advocate. Each of the participants worked as an advocate during his or her first year of master's study. The majority of the advocates were women (90%) and White (90%). The advocates' partners in RCA included 4 White women, 4 African American women, 1 Latina woman, and 1 Biracial woman. One research interview was conducted by phone and 9 were conducted in person. Interviews were transcribed and copies were provided to the participants. In addition to interview data, the authors analyzed journals kept by the students while they

worked as advocates. These journals had been previously examined by the advocates' doctoral-level supervisors and were kept by the supervisors as future research material.

The first author coded the data using qualitative content analysis. This process involved identifying thematically distinct participant statements, grouping these into broader categories, and, most broadly, collecting categories into concepts. The authors reported that codes were checked by an outside auditor and also examined by the second author. The authors reported that analysis revealed four concepts: "negotiating the advocacy relationship"; "insider-outsider dynamics"; "responding to the perceptions of privilege and disparity"; and "gaining professional and personal insights" (p. 51).

The concept of negotiating the advocacy relationship involved balancing the advocates' response to their partners' emotional and material needs. This concept included three categories: "staying with women's priorities"; "authenticity, mutuality, and collaboration"; and "working toward empowerment versus just getting things done" (p. 51). Staying with women's priorities, endorsed by all participants, involved advocates aligning with the concerns of their partners in a manner consistent with the principles of RCA. Authenticity, mutuality, and collaboration, endorsed by "most" participants, involved the use of self-disclosure and the development of a connection between the advocate and partner. Advocates believed self-disclosure was helpful, but that they also felt conflicted about going beyond what they considered typical of counselors. Working toward empowerment versus just getting things done, cited by "most" participants, included advocates assisting their partners in developing tools to help themselves rather than stepping in to do things for the partner.

The concept of insider-outsider dynamics included two categories: "having shared identities and experiences" and "having unshared identities and experiences" (p. 52). "A substantial majority" of participants cited having shared identities and experiences, noting how common background characteristics enhanced relationships. In addition, "about half" of the participants noted having strong feelings of identification with their partners that led to upsetting emotions. All participants also noted having unshared identities and experiences. The participants stated that differences helped generate relationship-building conversations, but these differences also caused difficulty in understanding each other.

The concept of responding to perceptions of privilege and disparity included three categories: "awareness of disparity"; "awareness of privilege"; and "emotional reactions" (p. 53). Awareness of disparity, cited by all participants, involved the development of the advocates' understanding of their partner's complex emotional and material struggles. Each of the participants discussed awareness of privilege, which included understanding the benefits of the advocates' own race and class identities. The authors framed the category of emotional reactions as primarily related to social justice issues. Advocates reported feeling helpless, guilty, self-doubting, and angry at injustice or systemic structures. They also reported positive emotions including pride, sense of professional accomplishment, and appreciation for their partner's success.

The final concept was gaining profession and personal insights. Although the authors provided several summaries of information such as "understanding of the nature of psychological change," "importance of developing a trusting relationship," "emerging

styles as helpers," and professional identity development, the authors did not cite these as categories as in other concepts (p. 55).

The study design generates several sources of critique. Social desirability may have affected the results. Both authors had been closely associated with the development and implementation of RCA, and the second author is a prominent faculty member in the study participants' training program, generating the possibility of investigator bias (Wampold, 2001). The authors provided general descriptions of the prevalence of category such as "most of," but they did not specifically identify how many participants endorsed a particular category. The inclusion of positive emotions in the responding to perceptions of privilege and disparity can be questioned. Based on the chosen quotes, these experiences seemed to relate to the participants' relationship and sense of accomplishment in perceiving themselves as helpful. The concept of gaining personal and professional insights was vague, and further coding may have revealed significant categories within this concept. In addition, the authors did not sufficiently describe how the data was used: journals and interview transcripts certainly provided different types of information, and it is unclear if the analysis grouped these sources of information together or examined them separately to develop the results.

In this study, the RCA model generates the picture of social justice practice. The results related primarily to the advocates' reactions and professional experiences. As may be expected based on Caldwell and Vera's (2010) study of counselors committed to social justice, personal factors such as emotional reactions, identity development, and increased awareness are critical in the development of social justice orientation and the

use of social justice skills.

Social Justice Practice Among School Counselors

The understanding of the professional practice of social justice work is further enhanced by Singh et al. (2010b) in a qualitative study addressing approaches to social justice described by practicing school counselors. The authors stated that no research had been conducted regarding how school counselors commit to social justice in practice. Participants in the study were 16 school counselors. The majority of the participants were female (75%) and White (69%). Four participants identified as African American and 1 participant identified as Asian. The majority of participants identified as middle class (63%), while 31% identified as upper middle class, and 1 identified as lower middle class. All participants were currently working as school counselors and all had a graduate degree in counseling (master's degree, 88%; doctoral degree, 12%). In order to recruit participants, the authors sent electronic fliers through school counseling listservs disseminated in the Southeastern United States. The participants self-identified as successful social justice advocates. The authors did not indicate if any potential participants were screened out of the interview process. The response rate could not be calculated given the recruitment method.

Ten participants were interviewed in person and 6 by phone using a semi-structured interview protocol of 12 questions. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. The research team included a counselor educator who identified as a South Asian-American woman, three counseling graduate students who identified as White women, and a school counselor who identified as a Jewish woman and acted as the internal

auditor. The initial interviews were coded using an open coding method, leading to the creation of a codebook used in subsequent analysis. The authors reported using the constant comparison method, citing Strauss and Corbin (2008) as their guidance in the use of grounded theory. Coded concepts were grouped into categories. The authors reported that no new themes emerged after interviewing 14 participants, and 2 additional participants were interviewed to check this result. The team used regular meetings over 1 year, journals, repeated analysis, and a final disconfirmation search process to ensure credibility of their results.

The analysis yielded seven strategies for social justice advocacy. Two strategies were cited by all participants as existing across settings and were characterized by the authors "an integral part of the other strategies" (p. 139): "political savvy," or the ability to operate in an appropriate interpersonal manner given the school context; and "consciousness-raising" (p. 138). The participants identified five additional strategies used when appropriate: "initiating difficult dialogues"; "building intentional relationships"; "teaching students self-advocacy skills"; "using data for marketing"; and "educating others about the school counselor role of advocate" (p. 138). Initiating difficult dialogues, endorsed by all participants, included a willingness address social justice concerns with school leadership, teachers, and students. Building intentional relationships, endorsed by 14 participants, involved finding colleagues willing to collaborate on social justice concerns. Teaching student self-advocacy skills, endorsed by all participants, involved encouraging students to be self-sufficient and providing information and encouragement. Using data for marketing, endorsed by 15 participants,

entailed use of clear information to underscore the importance of social justice concerns. Finally, educating others about school counselors' roles as advocates, endorsed by 14 participants, included discussing social justice commitments with teachers and administrators to raise awareness about school counselor work in this area.

The method of obtaining participants in this study is of some concern. While the participants self-identified as successful social justice advocates, the authors did not describe any process whereby participants' claims were examined or verified. Participants defined social justice for themselves in the interview based on the published protocol, but the analysis did not address the definitions given by participants. While interview protocol asked a number of questions related to student responses, parent responses, and community responses to social justice advocacy, answers related to these questions are not evident in the results as reported.

The three preceding studies (Caldwell & Vera, 2010; Singh et al., 2010b; and Weintraub & Goodman, 2010) all address the direct practice of social justice work by counselors using qualitative methods. The use of different methodologies, distinct participant groups, and divergent research questions does not readily create a comprehensive picture of social justice work. However, practitioners committing to social justice draw strong connections between their personal experiences and professional lives. The practice of social justice work involves the development of self-awareness, processing of difficult emotions, and recognition of one's own privilege. Counselors engaging in social justice work do use roles beyond those traditionally espoused by the profession, including assisting in providing material support, advocating

on behalf of clients, and raising the consciousness of their professional communities about injustice. In addition, counselors engaging in social justice work advocate for themselves professionally, raising awareness about their role as advocates and change agents.

Summary

Counselors engaging in social justice work may consider new roles (Goodman et al., 2004; Vera and Speight, 2003), encounter ethical issues (Goodman et al., 2004; Toporek & Williams, 2006), and examine the moral dimensions of their work (Martín-Baró, 1994; Prilleltensky, 1997). Some training programs are working to prepare counselors to address social justice issues (Goodman et al., 2004; Murray et al., 2010; Tallyrand et al., 2006), and the development of competency guidelines (Lewis et al., 2002, Ratts et al., 2010) may help guide professionals in practice, training, and research. Not all counselors agree that social justice should be a part of counselors' obligation or professional identity (Smith et al., 2009; Toporek &Williams, 2006), and the debate regarding the prominence of social justice in counseling's agenda remains ongoing.

Both strong connections and ongoing debate permeate theoretical research about the connections between social justice, multiculturalism, and feminism in counseling. This debate includes the assertion that multiculturalism has not sufficiently addressed issues of inequality outside of work in individual therapy (Vera & Speight, 2003) Others recognize that multiculturalism and feminism have done a great deal to affect change already (Helms, 2003) by focusing on the common themes of equality in the therapeutic relationship, recognizing the role of systemic injustice in people's lives, and affirmation

of clients' experiences of injustice (Crethar et al., 2008).

Conclusions

The empirical research regarding social justice is relatively limited, and in many cases the studies reviewed characterized themselves as the only examination of the topic in question. While few definitive statements about social justice in counselor training and practice are possible at this time, several significant themes emerge. Results regarding the interest of counselors in social justice are somewhat equivocal. While counselors have endorsed the importance of social justice to the profession (Fouad, 2001; Toporek & Williams, 2006), studies have indicated a low level of activism among counseling trainees (Nillson & Schmidt, 2005). For those counselors who are committed to social justice, personal and professional development are closely intertwined, both in the development of their social justice orientation (Caldwell & Vera, 2010) and in their ongoing practice (Singh et al., 2010a; Weintraub & Goodman, 2010). For counselors practicing in the field, social justice work requires the development of both professional and interpersonal skills that may not have been a part of their professional training (Singh et al., 2010b). In fact, while social justice is present in the mission statement of many courses on multiculturalism, few courses provide extensive training or evaluation related to social justice (Pieterse et al., 2009), and very few counselors receive any specific training on social justice work (Caldwell and Vera, 2010). Research suggests that counselors hoping to gain training in social justice (Caldwell and Vera, 2010: Singh et al., 2010a) and practice according to social justice principles (Singh et al., 2010b; Weintraub and Goodman, 2010) face a number of significant barriers.

Areas of additional theoretical development and research in social justice have been described as nearly endless (Toporek et al., 2006). Based on this review of the empirical literature, few practicing counselors have participated in studies of social justice work. Perhaps because few professionals engaged in direct practice have been asked to address their social justice work, relatively little is known about ways in which social justice issues are addressed in traditional counseling. While research has examined attitudes, advocacy, and systemic interventions, no studies address the depth of social justice work that may occur in the context of an effective, empathic therapeutic relationship. Few studies have examined exemplary practitioners, and those that have generate concerns about how the participants were identified as exemplars. The field may benefit from more detailed studies that address the development of social justice orientation and practices among counselors. Critical incident methodology is valuable for identifying major influences, but processes that are more long-term or incremental have not been addressed empirically. While theoretical writing on social justice work is growing, the picture of social justice commitments in action among counselors remains incomplete. Future research may address what a commitment to social justice looks like in the daily lives of counselors. Furthermore, no research yet addresses how clients, communities, and professional peers respond to social justice interventions. Finally, the field has enumerated some of the potential stresses of social justice work, but relatively little is known about how counselors perceive the stresses of their commitment, how they respond to these stresses, and how they are able to remain committed to social justice practices in their professional lives.

Purpose of the Present Study

Based on the foregoing review of literature, the present study sought to expand the field's understanding of the meaning and practice of social justice in the lives of psychologists and counselors. In addition, the present study endeavored to identify both the stressors and sources of resilience that make sustained commitments to social justice possible. The questions to be answered were:

- What is social justice in counseling and psychology?
- How did the exemplar develop his or her orientation towards social justice?
- What are the challenges associated with social justice work?
- How do the exemplars maintain their professional vitality and resiliency?

Furthermore, the current study adds the voice of experience and expertise to the research on social justice. Kazdin (2008) argued that therapist experience and expertise must form a core component of developing Evidence Based Practices. In a meta-analysis of clinical judgment, Spengler et al. (2009) found that experience reliably enhanced clinical decision-making among psychologists. As noted above, previous studies used self-identification as the primary method of finding research participants. Jennings, et al. (2012) provided an extensive review of peer nomination as a method of identifying experts. The authors noted that peer nomination has been widely used, shows consistent correlation with objective measures of expertise, and in many cases have been shown to be more reliable than self-report measures. Consequently, the current study utilized peer nomination, purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002), and extreme case sampling (i.e. selection of most frequently nominated professionals) to identify exemplars in social

justice practice.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

Methods

The current study uses qualitative methodology for a variety of reasons. Although research interest regarding social justice in counseling and psychology has increased in recent years, substantial work remains to clarify and elaborate on the practice of social justice (Ratts et al., 2010; Toporek et al., 2006). Given the relative paucity of research about the direct practice of social justice in counseling and psychology, the ability of qualitative research methodology to allow detailed, in depth inquiry and to explore narratives proved particularly valuable (Patton, 2002). Morrow (2007), addressing the use of qualitative methods to study mental health services, argued that qualitative methods have the ability to generate rich description of complex processes. This facet of qualitative methods was preferable given the possibility of multiple, nuanced descriptions of social justice in practice. Morrow further noted that qualitative research's narrative approach reflects psychotherapy and may therefore be consistent with the values held by many mental health practitioners. Morrow described qualitative methods as a way for practitioners to gain insight into their work and for the field to address social justice issues by exploring the experiences of people generally excluded from traditional research. Patton (2002) further addressed the unique capacity of interviewing as a method to generate insight into participants' views, beliefs, and experiences in qualitative research.

Kazdin (2008) extolled the ability of qualitative research methods to integrate the strengths of both research and practice while also meeting the highest standards of scientific inquiry. Furthermore, qualitative methods are particularly powerful in developing understanding of complex processes like psychotherapy and professional development. Kazdin posited that qualitative methods elucidate particularly relevant treatment practices and enhance the field's understanding of how to best serve clients.

Pilot Interviews

In order to prepare for the qualitative interviews, the author completed 2 pilot interviews. In the first, the author interviewed a self-identified White male doctoral candidate in counseling psychology who reported a strong interest in social justice. The purpose of this interview was to refine the interview questions and gain additional experience interviewing. A second interview was completed with a licensed psychologist who reported 15 years of professional experience in university counseling centers, community agencies, and higher education administration. The second pilot interviewee identified as a White female. Subsequent to her participation in the pilot interview, she was nominated once as an exemplar of social justice. This interview was audio-recorded and designed to replicate the planned research interviews as closely as possible. The author received feedback from this interviewee and completed minor changes in the interview protocol to clarify the questions while leaving the meaning unchanged. Although the results of the second pilot interview were not included in analysis, many themes that emerged from the second pilot interview presaged those of the interviews with the actual study participants.

Participants

Recruitment and Selection

In order to identify participants, the author utilized an email-based peer nomination and purposeful sampling procedure adapted from Patton (2002). Beginning in July 2011 the author contacted 12 psychologists with at least 10 years of experience and a reputation for commitment to social justice. The author consulted with each dissertation committee member for potential key informants. The author's advisor, also a dissertation committee member, provided consultation regarding the final choices. As noted below, the author's advisor was nominated 5 times in the process, thus qualifying as an exemplar, and therefore can be considered to have particular expertise in identifying professionals committed to social justice work.

The author contacted each of the initial informants by email (see Appendix A) to request he or she nominate 5 professionals who exemplified the practice of social justice in counseling and psychology. A definition of social justice was provided as follows: "scholarship and professional action designed to change societal values, structures, policies, and practices, such that disadvantaged or marginalized groups gain increased access to these tools of self-determination" (Goodman et al., 2004, p. 795). Based on feedback from the initial informants and in consultation with a dissertation committee member, the author modified the request for nominations email. Initially this request had not specified a region, leaving open the possibility of nominations from anywhere. The email was modified to request that the nominees be in Minnesota. The rationale behind this decision was that limiting the geographical location of the nominees would likely

create more multiple nominations and provide greater likelihood of being able to interview the identified exemplars. In cases where the initial informant did not respond, the author sent a follow-up email. In 3 cases, the author's advisor also sent an email inviting nominations.

Ten of the 12 initial informants responded and provided nominees. This represents a response rate of 83.3%. Of the 10 initial informants, 9 were eventually nominated at least once in the process. Four initial informants who responded were nominated 3 or more times (range 3-5). One initial informant who did not respond was nominated twice. The other initial informant who did not respond was nominated 11 times, tied for the highest total number of nominations. Each of the initial informants who did not respond was contacted 3 times by the author and once by the author's advisor. After these repeated attempts, the author chose to respectfully cease attempting to contact these initial informants.

The email requesting nominations also asked the recipient to provide an email address for each nominee if he or she felt comfortable doing so. The author subsequently contacted each nominee by email, noting that he or she had been nominated as part of the process, providing the same definition of social justice quoted above (Goodman et al., 2004), and requesting 5 further nominees and their email addresses. In a limited number of cases, a participant reported not knowing the email address of his or her nominees or not feeling comfortable providing email addresses. In these instances, the author attempted to identify the nominee's email address through publicly available means (e.g.

agency websites, professional organization's pages). The author was unable to locate email addresses or other contact information for 29 nominees (19.2%), and no further action was taken to contact these nominees.

The nominating process went through 7 total rounds and lasted for 6 months until February 2012. A total of 151 people were nominated. Six participants responded to report that they could not think of any professionals who met the criteria outlined in the author's email. One person declined to provide nominees because of reported concerns about providing colleagues' contact information. Four people were nominated who worked a substantial distance from Minnesota (e.g. California), and the author did not attempt to contact these nominees for the reason noted above. Consequently, the author was able to contact 118 of these nominees to request that they provide further nominations. A total of 55 nominees responded representing a response rate of 46.6%. This calculated number of responses includes those initial informants who were eventually nominated because the author would have contacted them as part of the purposeful sampling procedure.

The nomination process was ended for several reasons. Response rates became progressively lower each round. In the sixth and seventh rounds, 8 of 36 nominees contacted by email responded (22.2%). Although a variety of possible explanations exist for this occurrence, one potential reason is that the nominees had less interest and engagement in social justice in these later rounds. Secondly, in consultation with his advisor and committee member and in light of existing standards in qualitative research methodology (Hill et al., 1997), the author determined that an adequate sample had been

created (see below). Finally, the nomination process had continued for 6 months and time constraints necessitated committing to the next phase of the project.

The outcome of the nominated process was as follows. Of the 151 nominees, 42 were nominated more than twice or more (27.8%). A total of 23 professionals were nominated 3 or more times (15.2%). A total of 11 professionals were nominated 4 or more times (7.2%). Eight were nominated 5 or more times (5.2%). Four were nominated 6 or more times (2.6%). Only two individual were nominated more than 6 times (1.3%), each of whom had 11 nominations. In consultation with the author's advisor and committee member and after consulting current literature, the author determined 3 nominations to be the appropriate cut-off to qualify as an exemplar. The rationale for this decision involved the fact that relatively few professionals received 3 nominations: 84.8% of nominees received fewer than 3 nominations.

As noted above, the author's advisor and committee member was nominated 5 times during the process. The author and his advisor determined that it would not be appropriate to include him as an interviewee in the study because of his close association with the project. The author's advisor agreed to serve as auditor for the qualitative analysis process. Thus, a total of 22 professionals qualified as exemplars of social justice commitment and were eligible to participate in the study. This number of participants is consistent with established standards in which the researcher seeks to establish stable results, account for heterogeneity in the sample, and complete 1 to 2 interviews with each participant (Hill et al., 2005).

Nominator Sample

As noted above, a total of 151 professionals were nominated as part of the peer nomination and purposeful sampling process. Informants were not asked to provide demographic or professional affiliation information regarding their nominees. Therefore, information about the characteristics of this sample cannot be provided.

Interview/Exemplar Sample Characteristics

Of the 22 eligible nominees who were nominated more than 3 times, 18 were interviewed (81.8%). One eligible nominee (3 nominations) declined to participate citing a busy schedule. One eligible nominee (11 nominations) did not respond to emails from both the author and the author's advisor. As noted above, the author attempted to contact this nominee 3 times and the author's advisor emailed once over the course of 6 months. The author decided to respectfully cease attempting to contact this nominee after receiving no response. One eligible nominee's (3 nominations) email address became invalid over the course of the study, and the author could not determine an alternative way to contact this nominee. Finally, one eligible nominee (4 nominations) expressed an interest in being interviewed but did not respond when asked repeatedly to schedule a specific date.

Demographic information for the 18 interviewed exemplars is as follows (see demographic table for summary). Nine participants (50%) identified as male and 9 identified as female (50%). Thirteen participants identified as White/Caucasian (72.2%), 2 identified as African American/Black (11.1%), 2 identified as Latino/a (11.1%), and one as Asian American/Hmong (5.6%). Four participants identified as Jewish (22.2%), 2

as Queer/Lesbian (11.1%), and 1 as a Bisexual woman (5.6%). Years of professional experience ranged from 10 to 45, with a mean of 25.9 years. Fourteen (77.8%) of the interviewed

exemplars held a doctorate (Ph.D. or Psy.D.) in psychology. Of the 14 doctoral-level psychologists, 11 were licensed. For the 3 unlicensed psychologists, 2 were planning to complete licensing exams, and one had not passed the licensing exam and was practicing under a bachelor's-level social work license. One interviewed exemplar held an M.A. in psychology and was licensed as a psychologist (L.P.), 1 held an M.S.W., and 1 held a Ph.D. in marriage and family therapy and an LMFT license. One additional participant held a Ph.D. in philosophy.

After deliberation and consultation with the research team, the author chose to include the 3 non-psychologists in the interview sample. Both the participants with social work and family therapy licenses currently engage in extensive direct mental health practice and reported frequent collaboration with counselors and psychologists in training and practice. The participant with a Ph.D. in philosophy had collaborated closely with colleagues in the mental health field while engaging in student development, teaching, and advocacy. This participant has, with a licensed staff member, co-supervised the training of M.A-level practicum counseling students in a higher education setting. The research team reviewed results from coding these transcripts and found no evident differences or increased frequency of variant themes.

In terms of work setting, 9 participants (50%) identified as working in a community agency setting, 4 (22.2%) in private practice, 3 (16.7%) in a university

counseling center, and 2 (11.1%) primarily in university teaching/higher education with some additional direct counseling practice. Five participants (27.7%) noted a particular focus on working with refugee and immigrant communities including torture survivors, East African, and Southeast Asian communities. See demographic table for full demographic information.

Clinical Impressions of Participants' Interview Behavior

In general, the participants reported being eager to meet and to discuss social justice in their work. Although not formally rated, the degree to identification with the term *social justice* varied substantially. Several participants reported that social justice was a core part of their work and professional identity. Two participants reported that they customarily use related terms (human rights and feminism) to refer to their professional identity, but both reported enjoying considering their work from a social justice perspective. One participant reported that she did not identify with the term social justice because this connoted political activism for her, but she did identify with the term *advocacy*. Each of the participants reported being honored to have been nominated.

Each of the participants also described the interview questions as "challenging" or "difficult." As the results indicate, the participants drew frequent connections between their personal and professional lives, and the interviews were therefore deeply personal conversations. Participants expressed a range of emotions, from elation from success to deep sadness and hurt stemming from their own marginalization and challenges.

Instruments

Invitation to Participate

The author invited participation in the study with a brief email (Appendix A) This included a definition of social justice and the requested qualifications for nominees.

Interview Protocol

The author developed the interview protocol (see Appendix B) based on a review of existing literature in consultation with the dissertation committee and the author's advisor. The protocol was designed to encourage participants to provide examples and elaborate on their experiences.

Procedure

Nominated participants were contacted by email and asked to take part in the study. Using the structured interview protocol (see Appendix B), participants were interviewed by the author in person. A member of the research team joined with the author to interview Participant 15 and Participant 18 because the research team members identified an interest in experiencing qualitative interviews for their own professional development and expressed a desire to take part in an interview to gain additional insight into the research process. Participants were provided informed consent materials (Appendix C) at the time of the interview. The average length of the interview was 59 minutes. Each interview was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim by the author. Each participant was provided with a copy of his or her interview transcript and was asked to provide corrections or clarifications if necessary. No participant responded with any corrections. One participant (Participant 9) provided an additional illustration of

advocacy by email. No other clarifications were received.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using inductive analysis in which each conceptually distinct statement of each transcript was coded (Patton, 2002). Furthermore, the principles of Consensual Qualitative Research (Hill et al., 1997; Hill et al., 2005) were applied to this study. Given the relatively limited basis of research in this area, concepts were generated directly from the data, rather than using a predetermined list of categories. Hill et al. (2005) noted a preference for allowing concepts to be generated by the data rather than from the literature, and the research team chose to follow this standard. These concepts were examined and altered based on consensus. Related concepts were identified and grouped into more general themes. At a higher level of abstraction, the themes were grouped into domains. The frequency of results have been categorized according to the convention established by Hill et al. (1997) as general, typical, and variant.

The author conducted the data analysis. Based on the Hill et al. (2005) protocol, two additional team members were recruited and trained to analyze the data. These additional team members were doctoral students in counseling psychology who reported a strong interest in social justice and had experience with qualitative research. To initiate the data analysis, the team met to discuss the research process, address and bracket any biases per Hill et al. (1997), and review qualitative methodology. All 3 team members then individually reviewed 3 interview transcripts in detail. A subsequent team meeting was held when the author had completed 13 interviews. The team met to discuss global

impressions of the interviews, address initial themes, and come to consensus about the meaning of any disputed concepts. The team discussed specific examples from the interviews, shared extensive notes, and created an initial codebook that included 89 preliminary themes related to the following research questions:

- What is social justice in counseling and psychology?
- How did the exemplar develop his or her orientation towards social justice?
- What are the challenges associated with social justice work?
- How do the exemplars maintain their professional vitality and resiliency?

The team chose by consensus to initially maintain a large number of themes to avoid restricting the analysis and to diminish unnecessary inference.

Subsequent to this first meeting, the team coded transcripts using a rotating team format, with the author reviewing and coding all transcripts. Team members created new themes adding to the initial theme codes upon discovering unrecognized themes in the transcripts. These themes were amended, collapsed, and applied based on consensus. Themes were also collapsed and eliminated by consensus. The team used the open-source qualitative software Text Analysis Mark-up System (TAMS) Analyzer (Weinstein, 2008). The team used the basic functions of TAMS Analyzer to mark concepts and themes. The software did not aid in the inductive aspects of the process and did not in any way lead to a mechanistic process. Coding was conducted using fundamentally the same inductive process as if it was completed on paper using a pen but with the added convenience of the digital format.

The coding was finalized using consensus according to CQR (Hill et al., 1997). In

addition, as noted above, the author's advisor and committee member served as auditor of the data analysis, reviewing each interview transcript and providing feedback regarding the analysis.

Investigator Biases

The primary team members were the author, a White male, and two White females enrolled as doctoral students in counseling psychology at a Midwestern university in the United States. The auditor for the present study is an Asian man with a doctoral degree in counseling psychology employed as associate professor in education policy. The team reported extensive commitments to social justice and multiculturalism in counseling and psychology. Each of the team members reported a strong desire to learn more about social justice and an appreciation for the exemplars. The team acknowledged and addressed experiences related to cultural background, gender, and other social statuses that have enhanced appreciation for social justice or that may have generated unearned privilege. The team addressed preconceptions regarding social justice, addressed the literature that formed the foundation for the current study, and processed limitations regarding understandings of social justice. At the initial team meeting and at each subsequent meeting, the team addressed the possibility of bias, supported open discourse about potential biases, and supported each other in bracketing biases per the guidelines presented by Hill et al. (1997) and Hill et al. (2005). These biases included a belief in the importance of equity, alignment with LGBTQ and anti-racism conceptions of social justice, a belief that expanded counseling roles may benefit clients in diverse cultural contexts, and personal relationships or admiration for

exemplars participating in the study. The team worked together to monitor potential effects, used a rotating team coding format to reduce bias, and consensually resolved differences in coding.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This chapter presents the domains and themes generated by the data analysis process. The frequency of themes are reported according to Hill et al.'s (2005) revised guidelines in which a theme presented in all or all but one of the interviews is *general*, a *typical* theme occurs in more than half of the interviews, a *variant* theme occurs in between 4 and half of the interviews, and a *rare* theme occurs in 2-3 interviews. All general, typical, and variant themes are discussed below. Rare themes were collapsed into broader themes or eliminated by consensus. As noted above, themes are grouped into broader domains based on similarity. The results are presented below by research question. Each theme presented below is further elucidated by participant statements.

Personal/Professional Integration

One theme was unique in that it appeared in responses to three of the four research questions. The team chose to label this theme "personal/professional integration." All of the participants cited a high degree of connection between their personal identity and values and their social justice work. Personal/professional integration formed a core component of defining social justice, describing social justice development, and addressing maintaining vitality and resiliency. This theme will be presented repeatedly using participant statements to elaborate.

Research Question 1: What is social justice in counseling and psychology?

DOMAIN A: Living Social Justice

Participants identified social justice as a core component of both their personal

and professional identities. Domain A, Living Social Justice, encompasses themes related to the broader, pervasive ways that social justice comprises a significant presence in their lives.

Theme 1: Personal/professional integration. As noted above, participants generally (*n* = 18 of 18) discussed the strong connections between their professional social justice work and their personal values and identities. Participant 6 stated:

> It's got to be a practice that's just sort of how you live. . . I feel like my commitment to social justice doesn't end at the end of the day when I leave the office.

Participant 1 expressed a similar sentiment:

> It's hard to know when I'm doing my own social justice. I'm doing it as who I am and of course I'm a psychologist, so I'm doing that work too.

Theme 2: Career choice. Participants typically (*n* =10 of 18) identified social justice as being a major factor in their career decision-making process. Participant 5 stated:

> Social justice is absolutely important to me. I couldn't take a job, well I might have to for survival, but I wouldn't like a job where I couldn't do something I thought was meaningful. In other words, social justice.

Participant 4 further elaborated the role of social justice in her career choice:

> I'm always choosing to go to places that [social justice] is a focus, certainly non-profits, the creation of community, working with people with less resources. It is in large part a lifestyle choice.

Theme 3: Evolving social justice development. Participants typically (*n* = 12 of 18) described an ongoing process of social justice development in which their views, approaches, and degree of social justice integration have changed over time. Participant 7 summarized the theme:

> Over the past 50 something years, I've gotten this sense of what is fair. It's something that's still evolving. I'm still thinking about it and trying to figure it out.

Participant 10 described becoming more explicit about connections between his social justice values and professional practice:

> I wouldn't say that I've always practiced that way. I've certainly held personally [social justice] values. But I think particularly on the diversity work group we've had over a number of years and attending programs on social justice has brought that more and more into my awareness. I don't want to miscommunicate that I've always been that way. I would say maybe it's in the last maybe 5 to 7 years that I think about social justice in a much more conscious way, particularly when I'm out in the university community doing stuff.

Theme 4: Social justice pervades conceptualization. A variant number of participants (*n* = 6 of 18) described social justice as pervading their perspective and work to a degree that they had difficulty separating social justice from other aspects of their personal and professional lives. Participant 5 stated:

> It almost feels like I could tell you everything I do, and I think it would be obvious it's social justice work.

Participant 4 expressed a similar sentiment:

> But I would say that in anything I do, [social justice] is a factor.

Theme 5: Humility. A variant number of participants (*n* = 6 of 18) discussed humility as being a core component of how they live their social justice values. Participant 14 addressed how this has affected his approach to program development and consultation in social just work:

> I don't care for credit. Credit's meaningless. The issue is to get the job done.

Participant 8 discussed the role of humility as well:

> But there's a part of me that recognizes and owns or accepts if not embraces my own limitations.

DOMAIN B: Underlying Values

For the participants, values represented a core aspect of how they identified social justice in their work. Domain B, Underlying Values, comprises those themes identified by participants as being key to how they understand and implement social justice. As described by the participants, these core values are not static, but rather are actively applied to their ongoing social justice work.

Theme 6: Equity. Participants typically (*n* = 15 of 18) described equity or fairness as a key component of how they define and identify social justice. Participant 3 stated:

> You shine a little light and people go, yeah, okay, [marginalized communities] are there. You start to mobilize some resources and people to help them out and bring a bit of fairness back to a picture where there wasn't any.

Participant 7 and Participant 5 respectively also described equity as a key component of social justice:

> Social justice to me means trying to balance the scales or get fairness in a way that's consistent with the social order.

> What it means to me is that all people having more or less equal opportunity for the whole list of health, education, rights, and all that stuff.

Theme 7: Increasing access to care. Within the context of mental health services, participants typically (*n* = 10 of 18) viewed access to services as another key definition of social justice and a core value associated with their social justice work. Participant 6 addressed the issue of access within the context of broader social issues:

> For us [social justice] really is about trying to create access to services in the same way that a parent who maybe didn't have to worry about those things [language, financial, and cultural barriers] who could pick their choice of mental health clinics, who take those two hours off a week to bring their child in, to have the same level of treatment that they could have.

Participant 14 succinctly addressed the connection between social justice and access:

> For me, social justice has to do with access to care. It has to with fair distribution of resources.

Theme 8: Awareness of power and privilege. Participants typically (*n* = 15 of 18) described awareness of power differentials and unearned privilege as a key value connected with social justice work. Participant 10 addressed how this value becomes apparent in his clinical work:

> I do bring up privilege when we talk. I do bring up class. I talk about power differential a lot. Certainly there are a lot of social justice implications around power differential. That's one way that it looks. If a client is talking about those issues, then I really support them in that. I validate what their experience is around that.

Participant 6 and 5, respectively, addressed their values regarding using their privilege to benefit others:

> Then also using my privilege as being a person with an education, with lots of letters behind my name, to be able to do something, both in the community I serve as well as in the greater community.

> I think I can use [privilege]. I'm aware there's a certain privilege I have in being White, male, older, educated, whatever. I believe I want to use that [to help clients and communities].

Participant 4 addressed her ongoing inquiry regarding privilege:

> Part of life is you have to continue to ask those questions. You have to be always thinking, why did this situation end up this way? Why was this person treated in this way? Did they get the kinds of services they should have gotten when they walked in the door?

Theme 9: Human rights. A variant number of participants (*n* = 5 of 18) described human rights as a key value related to their social justice work. Participant 13 stated:

> I think often [social justice] is caring for and looking out for human rights of

> people who've had them stripped away or never had them to begin with.

Participant 15 described her long-term commitment to human rights focus as being a key underlying value of her social justice work.

> I think about it and I have really have had a long history of human rights, working for them, not only in psychology, but also as a member of the St. Paul Human Rights Commission back in the 1980s.

DOMAIN C: Actions/Intervention - System Focused. In addition to broad personal factors and underlying values, participants identified a series of actions that they considered key to social justice work. Domain C comprises those actions that specifically focus on addressing systemic concerns and societal-level injustices.

Theme 10: Working with and against "the system." Participants generally (*n* = 17 of 18) described a dynamic process of using their understanding of health care, political, and educational systems to further social justice causes and be of service to clients and communities. In this dynamic process, participants also described working against the system toward greater equity or justice. Participant 11 addressed this duality:

> It's also very much about recognizing power and both working with it when I need to and also working against it when necessary.

Participant 6 described a broad, flexible approach to addressing systemic concerns:

> If you're someone that can really make a commitment to trying to make change and working with [state government agencies] and working with the local county government looking at a particular issue. I'm thinking right now one of our big focuses obviously here is children's mental health and access to psychiatric and psychological services and coming up with a very focused way of engaging other
>
> agencies so that you can really make a political movement.

Participant 15 noted a willingness to work against the system:

> If there are laws or institutions that marginalize people or stigmatize people, it's really important to address those and try to create a more favorable environment for people to prosper in.

Participant 5 described one particular challenge related to the health care structure:

> That's one challenge, making social justice, culturally competent, cross-cultural work fit into the mainstream billing stuff.

Theme 11: Bringing services to the underserved. Participants typically (*n* = 14 of 18) described identifying and reaching out to underserved communities as a systemic approach to addressing social justice. Participant 9 described this aspect of social justice work:

> So the idea is it is satisfying to serve people who are underserved and unserved. That's generally a principle that I've had. I know you have to write budgets for that every year. We serve unserved and underserved persons. That's a value that I have.

Participant 13 described his approach to reaching out to communities:

> Then if you can't find enough here I guess to keep you busy, you go tramping off to places like the Congo or Somalia and find folks there who in the middle of horrible situations are still being marginalized and don't have any services and access.

Theme 12: Advocacy/"giving voice." Participants typically (*n* = 15 of 18) described engaging in direct advocacy work, notably "giving voice" to the concerns, needs, and perspectives of the communities with whom they have worked. Participant 10 stated:

> I do see myself as an advocate for students. When I see things that are going to be burdensome for students or unfair, I will speak up. I see that as one of the critical roles I play [as a counseling psychologist] in the greater university community.

Participant 18 described this theme as a core role for psychologists engaged in social justice work:

> Part of what psychologists do, I think, is help be advocates for clients by helping them give voice to their problems, in a way.

Theme 13: Raising awareness. Participants typically (*n* = 14 of 18) describing shedding light on social justice issues as a key part of their systemic work. Participant 3 described this aspect of his social justice work:

> Also with allies working to affect some sort or awareness and change to the systems that are invisible to those whom the systems to benefit that continue to induce psychological, social, financial harm, etc, on those who don't have access to privilege.

Participant 13 addressed raising awareness within the context of his work with torture survivors:

> Getting groups to admit that [torture survivors] are even there, that they even exist, or that they're a big enough problem that they deserve some focus or some attention takes a lot of work just to get in there and kind of find them.

Theme 14: Leadership. Participants typically (*n* = 13 of 18) described taking on leadership roles as a component of their social justice work. Participant 11 noted that leadership had become a key component of how she addressed social justice professionally:

> I do see myself as a leader, which is loaded but I don't think we're served by not seeing ourselves for what some of our gifts are.

Participant 15 noted that in order to address social justice issues related to LGBT equality, she believed that she had to take on a leadership role:

> When I stepped into the fray with [state psychological association] and said we need to provide leadership [regarding marriage equality]. They could have just said well we oppose [the constitutional ban on same sex marriage]. I really stepped up and said we're going to be out there with this.

Participant 10 noted that his beliefs about social justice have also influenced the way in

which he conceptualizes his role as a leader in the profession:

> I think there are plenty of other counseling center directors who see [social justice as a value in leadership]. I don't see that really as a leadership value in this country. I think many leaders say you're here to serve me. I don't think that way. My view is that I'm here to serve you.

Theme 15: Training/"passing it on." Participants typically (*n* = 14 of 18) identified training as one way in which they address social justice systemically. Participant 17 described training as one way in which she increases the effects of her social justice work:

> Another piece is I use to work in a community clinic and supervise graduate students. In my mind that's a way of multiplying the effect because if you instill the value of social justice in 5 people, then what I can do gets magnified.

Participant 13 expressed a similar sentiment with a particular focus on using his experience to help mentor others who engage in social justice work:

> At this point in my career, I do a good bit of mentoring. I'm around a lot of people who are in their late 20s, 30s, or maybe 40s who have a lot more energy than I do. They're quicker. They're the next generation of people who are going to tramp around the planet doing this stuff. I can be a resource to folks like that, bringing a little bit of the experience I've gained along the way to their enthusiasm and energy and passion and give them kind of a leg up as they get going.

Theme 16: Building connections. Participants typically (*n* =12 of 18) indicated that working with others professionals and community resources forms a core part of their social justice work. Participant 16 focused on using a multidisciplinary approach in her work with refugees and torture survivors:

> During [the treatment] process, I have, with others again, brought in many of the disciplines that have contributed to this being a multidisciplinary and more holistic way for people to access health resources and to get back to being healthy or as healthy as possible after torture.

Participant 12 discussed the integral role community and cultural partnerships play in social justice work:

> I suppose, with all oppressed groups, there are the natural leaders, the natural helpers who while being part of the group also are good communicators for the group. In some way, I've always bound myself to those people, realizing that in partnership with them we have these two other groups we're really trying to connect. That's a really powerful, potentially powerful connection.

DOMAIN D: Action/Intervention- Client Focused. In addition to interventions focused on systemic issues or using broader community resources, the participants identified a number of strategies they use when working directly with clients. Domain D, Action/Intervention- Client Focused, comprises these themes.

Theme 17: Actively addressing social context and marginalization. All of the participants (*n* = 18 of 18; general theme) stated that they actively incorporate social justice issues related to social context, marginalization, and oppression into their client work. Participant 3 described how this might be conceptualized in an individual counseling session:

> I provide a space, a literal space and an emotional, figurative space for people who are marginalized in any of its forms that is not otherwise, for most of these forms of marginalization, openly available or even tolerated on this campus.

Participant 9 elaborated on his approach to incorporating social context into counseling:

> Social justice to me is looking at the person in their full culture and how the society impacts the person's functioning in the culture and either impedes it or . . . usually it doesn't facilitate but interferes with the person's functioning.

Participant 1 provided an example from her work with survivors of sexual assault on a

college campus:

> A typical example is a young college woman who's assaulted at [a campus event]. She's very quick to identify all the things she did "wrong," I'm putting that in quotes, to bring on the sexual assault. I think it requires kind of a socio perspective. Well, let's just talk about what happened to you in the context of what's wrong with the world. I might not say it like that. But talking about how women should have the right to walk by themselves at 2 o'clock in the morning. The fact that you're not safe doing that isn't your fault.

Theme 18: Fostering empowerment. The participants typically (*n* = 14 of 18) foster empowerment in their direct work with clients with a particular focus on helping clients develop self-advocacy skills. Participant 6 described her approach to empowerment:

> We're often providing a lot of information [such as]: did you know you could call the school and talk to them about that? Or did you know that when you go to the doctor you can ask these kind of questions? Things that I think people who are maybe more acculturated or more familiar with the system of life here wouldn't have to think about and would do automatically we find that we're doing daily.

Referring to her work to address sexual assault, Participant 1 addressed another form of empowerment:

> [Social justice is] helping my clients in being able to speak out about [their experiences] and working to identify perpetration of sexual assault as that.

Participant 3 incorporated empowerment into his broader definition of social justice:

> [Social justice is] knowing there is something that is perpetuating inequity and oppression, seeing that it's happening, teaching or communicating to other the reality of this, resisting in individual and organized ways the trained methods to overwhelm resistance, and then trying to encourage and empower those who are discouraged and disempowered to collectively and individually to advocate or protect or create their own solutions

Theme 19: Social justice work as healing. A variant number of participants (*n* = 9 of 18) described seeing social justice work as a key healing process for clients and communities. As Participant 1 stated:

> I think [social justice is] actually an important part of many of my clients' healing.

Participant 16 went on to define healing more specifically:

> I see myself as using psychology in the service of restoring health, dignity, and self-determination, people being able to function in their families and society again.

Participant 3 provided a succinct summary of this theme:

> I think active, compassionate action is healing.

Theme 20: Conveying empathy. A variant theme (*n* = 8 of 18) addressed empathy as a core client-focused intervention in social justice work. Participant 9 described how his value regarding empathy becomes evident in his interactions with clients:

> Whenever I meet with a client, I am probably prone to be very considerate about the person's history and not make judgments. Not be judgmental about their frailties and problems and issues and bad behavior that they have done. I try to give an expectation for the person to do better, that they are going to improve. Treating other people better also.

Theme 21: Seeing "the whole person." A variant number of participants (*n* = 6 of 18) described social justice work as being holistic, with a focus on "seeing the whole person" and meeting clients' broader needs in a respectful, adaptive manner. Participant 13 stated:

> There's that holistic piece. It's not like going to another clinic in town where you might go and get your services and leave. This is a much more holistic way of helping people rebuild lives in ways that are complete and to know them as people, to dig in and figure it out in ways, however we can, to help make things maybe not perfect but a little more right in a world that's been extremely unfair and unjust. We operate differently.

Participants 9 and 11, respectively, succinctly endorsed a holistic approach as a key component of social justice work:

> [Social justice] means looking at the whole person.
>
> Social justice work, equity and diversity work has to be approached in a holistic way.

DOMAIN E: Applying Critical Understandings and Influences. The participants described essential understandings and intellectual influences that they apply directly in their social justice work. The themes in this domain comprise the fluid, dynamic theories, understandings, and influences that form the working model of their approach to social justice.

Theme 22: Cultural Consciousness. Participants generally (*n* = 17 of 18) expressed a strong value in appreciating culture, a willingness to adapt to diverse cultures, and a belief in the value of cultural competence in social justice work. Participant 5 indicated that he sees social justice and cultural competence as inextricable:

> Maybe the question is, can you do social justice without being culturally competent and can you be culturally competent without social justice? I don't think so.

Participant 8 described the critical connection between social justice and cultural competence:

> Culture really matters [in social justice work]. . . a lot of basic cultural competence is how do you interact across difference, how do you not impose your own worldview onto someone else or unwittingly limit people's opportunities or unwittingly perpetuate systems of privilege and power?

Theme 23: Innovation/flexibility. Participants typically (*n* = 15 of 18) described being willing to try new, innovative strategies to address social justice concerns in their work across domains. Participant 6's statement summarizes this theme:

> We have to work with our clients in a different way to meet them where they're at.

> Sometimes that physically to really meet them where they're at. Sometimes that's emotionally. Sometimes that's economically. We meet them where they're at.

Participant 12 addressed specific areas where she has led the way in innovating to meet client needs:

> I had to advocate for doing things differently and for being responsible and responding to the needs, expanding the program or working with interpreters or indigenous providers in different ways.

Participant 14 described how he approached ethical questions related to innovative or flexible counseling work:

> There are many times you have to go outside the box. The box only covers a few. What about everybody else? What about all the other needs?

Theme 24: Learning from and adapting to community/client needs. Participants typically (*n* = 14 of 18) described an active process of learning from the needs of their clients and the communities whom they serve and then adapting their work to match these needs.

Participant 13 stated:

> There's always what you think going in [to a new situation] is going on. Then there's what you learn really is going on when you get there. There's no way other than getting there and getting up to your neck in it for a while that you really learn what that is. The more time you spend there, the more you go back, the more you can bring. You can understand the situation and be helpful.

Participant 6 described the ongoing influence of clients' experiences in developing and defining social justice practice:

> Probably the most significant influences are the clients we continue to work with. That provides me with the most significant source of feedback and education around what is needed and what I need to do.

Theme 25: Working through the field's historical shortcomings. Participants typically (n = 10 of 18) noted that psychology has traditionally not served many communities well, and they described a process of working through and addressing psychology's historical shortcomings in meeting the needs of culturally diverse communities and addressing social justice. Participant 8 addressed her willingness to think critically about the historical and current context of psychology:

> Thinking about justice in the profession I was going into and whom it served and whom it didn't serve well and how it might be better, that was my perspective.

The following statement by Participant 12 pertains to her approach to this theme:

> I started to see how different [refugee and immigrant community's] needs were, of course, but also how so much of what I had learned as a psychologist I needed to throw right out.

Participant 9 succinctly addressed the effects of these shortcomings:

> I see [instances in which] other psychologists, other professionals are oppressive to people.

Theme 26: Feminist principles. A variant number of participants (n = 6 of 18) reported applying feminist ideas to their work with clients as a core component of their direct social justice work. Participant 1, echoing Participant 5's statement about cultural competence above, stated:

> What came first [my social justice commitment] or my feminist orientation? I think it made sense that I would gravitate to feminism as a primary orientation. . . It's kind of hard to be a feminist and not acknowledge social justice.

Participant 12 described the role of feminist principles in her early social justice work:

> For me the beginning [of my social justice work] was giving voice to women's experiences and helping them and others to understand that the things they were talking about were not just their own fabrications. These were real. It wasn't right

> to participate in that kind of discrimination. That was my foray into standing up for injustice.

Research Question 2: How did the exemplar develop his or her perspective on social justice?

DOMAIN F: Contextual Influences. The participants described having been influenced in developing their social justice orientation by a number of contextual and social factors. Domain F, Contextual Influences, comprises these themes.

Theme 27: Social movements. Participants typically (n = 15 of 18) reported that social movements, including the civil rights movement, women's movement, and LGBT rights movement had been strong influences in the development of their perspective on social justice. Participant 7 described this theme:

> As somebody who grew up in the midst of the civil rights movement and to a lesser extent the women's movement, I think this issue of fairness and restoration are kind of big deals to me.

Participant 18 also noted the influence of the civil rights movement:

> In 1966 I volunteered on the west side of Chicago, a Black area, to get an education. That's when civil rights actually was going on. I got quite an education. That truly shaped my life.

Participant 12 described the influence of the women's movement:

> When I got to college it was kind of at the tail end of the women's rights movement and bringing women's issues into the academic setting. They were just beginning to have courses on gender studies and women's issues. I was heavily influenced by that, partly because my own values system I was encouraged to think for myself but also because the course work I took was so compelling about how I was able to understand that women's experiences were really different from men's.

Participant 11 noted the dual influence of feminism and the GLBT rights movement:

> I was a feminist when I was 18 going into college. Feminism and GLBT was really primary.

Theme 28: Faith traditions and spirituality. Participants typically (*n* = 12 of 18) described having been influenced in their social justice orientations by their faith traditions and spiritual development. Participant 1 described how traditions related to her Jewish faith influenced her social justice development:

> There's a whole philosophy called *Tikkun Olam* [which means] "repair the world." There's a lot of social justice work that comes out of different branches of Judaism.

Participant 3 described how his personal spiritual development as closely related to his commitment to social justice:

> Buddhism, is a label for this experience I have had as long as I have had memory. [Buddhism] helps explain why I'm enacted to do this other thing we term social justice, which is to live as a collective and to take care of things that are harmful to parts of the collective.

Theme 29: Cultural values. A variant number of participants (*n* = 7 of 18) cited cultural values as a specific influence on their social justice development. Participant 6 described how her Hmong culture contributes to her social justice orientation:

> Part of it is the cultural influence of what it means to really help someone. I'm very much influenced by that because in our native language to really help someone means something important.

Participant 10 described how, despite his parents' secular perspective, his Jewish culture affected his social justice development:

> The other piece of that is a cultural influence. My parents were not religious Jews, but they were certainly secular Jews. There is a very strong social justice component in Judaism that goes all the way back to the Torah. Jews have often

> been involved historically in social justice issues. It's one piece of why they've gotten persecuted so much. As much as my parents would push away from their own Judaism for a variety of reasons, I think a lot of those core values around social justice really were there for them.

Theme 30: Geography/place. An additional variant theme (*n* = 4 of 18) involved the influence of the participants' communities of origin. Participant 9 and Participant 7, respectively, both noted the influence of growing up in New York City:

> First, I was born in Brooklyn in New York. . . Being born in Brooklyn, you have way different life experiences in growing up. You are looking at what is danger and risks in the world.

> When you ask how did I learn [social justice], I kind of learned it by walking through the streets of the Bronx growing up and being in other cities. Being in Kingston, Jamaica and seeing them go through the convulsions they went through for independence back in 1960. Being in Detroit when there were riots in Detroit. Being in Chicago. Being in LA. Seeing how the same country could have really different realities for lots of different people based on simple things like what part of the country it was or skin color or religion.

DOMAIN G: Personal Narrative. The participants noted that they had also been influenced by their individual development, their own introspection, and the way that they responded to their life experiences. Domain G, Personal Narrative, includes these more individually focused themes. As noted above, Personal/Professional Integration permeated the participants' responses to multiple research questions, and therefore this theme is again presented under Domain G.

Theme 31: Personal/professional integration in personal narrative. A general theme (*n* = 18 of 18) involved the participants coming to understand their identity and values in relationship to their professional lives as an influence. Participant 12 described how this theme functioned as an influence for her:

> When I went into psychology I didn't have a sense of how I would bring [social justice] into my professional work. It some ways it was almost separate. I might go on rights marches, write letters, or participate politically. It never occurred to me to do that as part of my professional work, to advocate except personally. Then I had the opportunity early on to do some community programming. I was really drawn to that, not knowing what it would entail. I just knew that sitting in an office doing typical professional practice wasn't what I wanted. I started to develop a program working with Hmong in the community, in particular for children's mental health. It was absolutely influential for me.

Participant 15 described her continuing process of connecting her social justice values with her work as a psychologist:

> It's . . . an interwoven experience. I've been lucky enough to be in a profession where I can express [who I am] . . . it's part of the personal becomes political becomes psychological. [My social justice development] is an amalgam of that.

Theme 32: Own experience of marginalization. Participants also typically (n = 10 of 18) indicated that they had experienced discrimination, bias, and marginalization themselves, and that these adverse aspects of their personal narrative influenced their orientation towards social justice. Participant 7 addressed this theme:

> As an African American, growing up, this issue of what's fair or how, when things aren't fair, everybody suffers [was a critical influence]. That's a real recurring theme in my life and in the way that I think.

Participants 11, 12, and 15, respectively, described how experiencing discrimination compelled them to understand and address social justice issues:

> I noticed inequity and admittedly noticed it around my own marginality. For many years that was my focus.

> We [women] were discriminated against. I didn't even realize we were until I really started to see that my worldview was really different. My experiences were so different.

> Being bisexual, that is such an invisible population. I was really discriminated against as a bi woman. . .That was really, really painful.

DOMAIN H: Interpersonal Relationships. Participants noted that significant others in their lives also influenced their social justice orientation. Domain H, Interpersonal Relationships, comprises themes related to these influences.

Theme 33: Family support and traditions. Participants typically (n = 13 of 18) described family traditions related to social justice and family support for their social justice work. Participant 10 summarized this theme:

> The first thing that came to mind was my parents. My parents were tremendously influential about [social justice].

Participant 5 described activities that were part of his early development and the social justice traditions in his family:

> I remember at an early age licking envelopes for whatever cause. It was usually peace or civil rights at the time. It was just part of what we did. It was part of the family value. It was part of our activity and part of our identity.

Theme 34: Mentors and role models. Participants also typically (n = 12 of 18) reported having had mentors and role models outside of their family who helped them develop their social justice orientation. Participant 7 described these influences in his professional training:

> I tell anyone who will listen that I feel really, really lucky that I've had the teachers and the mentors that I've had, particularly in my career as a mental health professional.

Participant 13 cited influences outside of his professional life as well:

> All the way back to the 60s I've had good voices and very strong people around me that were often advocates for particular causes.

Research Question 3: What are the challenges associated with social justice work?

DOMAIN I: Professional Challenges. The participants described a number of challenges in their professional actions and interactions related to social justice work. Domain I, Professional Challenges, comprises themes that involve those challenges that are primarily professional in nature.

Theme 35: Resistance and conflict. Participants generally (n = 17 of 18) described frequently experiencing resistance to their social justice work and having to manage conflict as substantial challenges in their professional lives. Participant 17 stated:

> The other thing is you have to realize that not everybody's going to like you. Not everybody's going to like what you say.

Participant 7 described the challenges of working in systems that often do not support social justice work or with colleagues who experience apathy towards critical self-reflection:

> I think the challenges are that sometimes the systems that we work in don't even recognize what we're doing or why we're doing what we're doing. Or they don't respect it. Sometimes they recognize it but they don't respect it.

Participant 12 described conflict as inherent to social justice work:

> I realized that if I was really going to be helpful, I needed to be able to do things differently. That was not popular.

Theme 36: Extra time and work. Participants typically (n = 10 of 18) noted that social justice work often requires extra time and work compared to traditional services. Participant 16 described this theme reflecting on her more than 35 years of professional experience:

> When I think about it, I get tired. I wonder how did we ever do all this work? My answer is, well, I had much more energy, much more ambition that I wish I still

had at this point. It's been a lot of work.

Participant 6 related this theme to financial strain (Theme 37) as well:

> It's really unfortunate that all of that extra work really is also what's needed to move the treatment and yet it's not acknowledged financially. I don't know how to make sense of that.

Theme 37: Financial strain. Participants typically (n = 10 of 18) noted that social justice work involves significant financial challenges. Participant 14 described a history of financial concerns related to a social justice oriented agency he founded:

> We came close to getting wiped out a bunch of times. We were in trouble. It's almost a miracle that we're still alive.

Participant 12 also noted substantial financial pressures and sacrifices:

> I didn't realize this, although I should because I've spent years doing it, contributing a lot that I don't get financial rewards for, whether it's my own time for a particular family or there was a long period of time where my husband and I decided we were going to have me put resources into working with immigrant communities even if we lost money on it. And we did [lose money].

Theme 38: Social justice was not addressed in training. A variant number of participant (n = 9 of 18) reported that a challenge to doing social justice work is that it was not addressed in their professional training. Participant 16 stated:

> You know, this is really interesting in the sense that I can't think of any one instance in which [social justice] was explicitly talked about in my training. I'm sure there were instances in which it was mentioned in passing. But it was not something we studied explicitly.

Participant 17 noted that social justice work was tacitly discouraged in her training:

> I don't think there was any training. I'm trying to think back. I don't think there was any training or that it was mentioned. It was kind of considered wrong to step out and advocate for a client. That's being too active or something like that.

DOMAIN J: Personal Challenges. In addition to the professional challenges noted above, the participants also cited numerous challenges of a more personal and emotional nature. Domain J, Personal Challenges, comprises these themes.

Theme 39: Emotional stress/burnout. Participants typically (*n* = 15 of 18) described experiencing emotional stress related to their social justice work and risking, if not experiencing, burnout. Participant 11 stated:

> Sometimes it's also really, really painful, this work, and really hard and hurtful.

Participant 16 addressed the emotional toll of long-term commitment to social justice work:

> That exposure, when you multiply that by the continuous exposure to it, it becomes, it is overwhelming and too much.

Participant 12 described her experience of emotional stress in doing social justice work:

> There have been times when . . . I've felt just used up. The needs that are present, the challenges that are there in the work, I can't compete with them all. I can't manage them all.

Theme 40: Requires patience. A variant number of participants (*n* = 9 of 18) noted that social justice work requires patience, and that this can also be a challenge. Participant 17 stated:

> [Change is] slow. You have to be comfortable with incremental, slow change.

Theme 41: Facing endless need. A variant number of participants (*n* = 8 of 18) also expressed the many social justice concerns and seemingly endless need as a painful and challenging aspect of social justice work. Participant 16 stated:

> The challenges are the too-muchness of it. These are overwhelming problems

> both in terms of the world statistics but also the emotional aspects of it, the psychological injuries and the physical injuries. They are substantial. They can be severe.

Participant 13 expressed a related experience:

> There's just a lot of work. It's an endless thing.

Theme 42: Complexity. A variant number of participants (*n* = 6 of 18) described addressing and experiencing the complexity of social justice issues as a challenge. Participant 10 addressed this issue using an experience from his professional life:

> A lot of life circumstances lead to very difficult, layered, nuanced circumstances that don't really have a clear-cut, easy answer to them. That was one of the challenges I wanted to talk about in a bigger picture issue. I've seen situations where there was a conflict and one group of people involved in the conflict saw this as a social justice issue. [One group said]: "This person is disempowered. This is happening because this is a person of color." The other group is seeing that it isn't about that. [The second group said]: "This is about not doing a job well. This is about not meeting obligations they had agreed to meet." That sort of thing. I don't think it's always really clear where the social justice piece ends and where other issues like work performance and that kind of stuff go on. I think those are really challenging.

Research Question 4: How do the exemplars maintain their professional vitality and resiliency?

Domain K: Self-Care. The participants described various ways of maintaining their vitality and resiliency through attention to self-care. Domain K, Self-Care, comprises these themes.

Theme 43: Connecting with allies and fostering community. All participants (*n* = 18 of 18; general theme) described developing allies and having a social justice community as a key aspect of maintaining their vitality and resiliency. Participant 4 stated:

> Finding your community of people who think like you and who will say, yeah,

> that's pretty bad but we can do this [is key to maintaining resiliency].

Participant 7 also discussed this theme:

> How do you get support for it? By talking to people. By talking to colleagues. Finding people who think and are working the same way on the same kinds of issues and supporting each other so you don't feel like you're the only one out there doing this.

Participant 6 addressed this theme within the context of the professional isolation she and her colleagues had experienced doing social justice work:

> I also think it's been a relief for some of my colleagues who come out of psychology. They've said I've felt that way [about social justice] for years but haven't found a peer group to share that with or to say these things out loud to.

Theme 44: Work/life balance. Participants typically (n = 14 of 18) described continually striving to balance in their lives. Participant 1 stated:

> It's really life balance, that's what it comes to. I don't think [social justice work] is sustainable otherwise.

Participants 10, 11, and 18, respectively, described their specific strategies for taking time away from social justice issues:

> Well, I think part of it is balance. I do stuff that has nothing to do with social justice. It's just recharging because I've seen people put all their energy or much of it into social justice and just fry out. I need breaks from it. I think self-care is a really important part of sustaining that.
>
> Which is not to say everything has to be completely scrutinized. I get to watch bad TV and get a pass every once in a while.
>
> The other part is things I do just to take care of myself, to get out of the way. I love woodcarving, outdoor stuff.

Theme 45: Pick your battles. A variant number of participants (n = 9 of 18) described a process of maintaining their vitality by choosing which social justice causes to become

involved in and by not getting involved in other causes. Participant 12 described her evolving processing of learning how to pick her battles:

> I've had to scale back, refuel, and go back again. It's something I didn't used to do, but now I'm constantly aware of gauging what I'm able to do. I do that individually on a client-by-client basis and programmatically. It's probably just maturity. . . When you've plunged into things and tried to embrace all those challenges and realized that you're overshooting, it's very important to look at what can be done. At least for me it is. Not that you give up on everything else, but you set our sights on reasonable goals.

DOMAIN L: Inherent rewards of social justice work. In addition to self-care strategies, the participants noted that aspects of the work itself had helped to maintain their resiliency and vitality. Domain L, Inherent rewards of social justice work, comprises these themes.

Theme 46: Social justice work is effective. The participants typically (*n* = 12 of 18) indicated that one sustaining aspect of social justice work is that it truly helps people. Participant 1 stated:

> I am to the point that I don't think it's just spitting in the wind. I have been able to see that change over at least two decades now. I know that things happen. They happen very slowly. Things don't progress linearly. But it does lead me to be more hopeful.

Participant 13 described the effectiveness of social justice work in the following manner:

> When you leave and . . . you're really worn out but it's for a good reason [because] something good happened here. You may be a drop in the ocean as far as the need, but you were a good drop.

Participant 9 succinctly summarized this theme:

> Well, it works. I'm successful. I get reinforced for it. That's the basic principle. It works.

Theme 47: Social justice work is inherently rewarding. Participants also typically (*n* = 12 of 18) described social justice work as rewarding in its own right, noting that this aspect of the work helps them maintain their resiliency. Participants 1 and 3, respectively, shared their view on the energy they gain from social justice work:

> I think doing social justice work in and of itself creates an energy for me. It's not like it drains me as an idea or as an activity. Too much of it would. I think part of it is maintaining good life-work balance. It is very rewarding.
>
> I get energy from it. It's fatiguing to stay on my butt.

DOMAIN M: Deep meaning. Participants described social justice as being a source of deep meaning in their lives, and that this aspect of their commitment formed a core aspect of maintaining their resiliency and vitality. Domain M, Deep Meaning, comprises these themes.

Theme 48: Personal/professional integration in deep meaning. All participants (*n* = 18 of 18; general theme) described experiencing connections between their personal identity and values and their professional social justice work. As noted above, this theme was prevalent across research questions and pertains to maintaining resiliency as well. Participant 5 described his social justice work as a part of his identity:

> It sort of reminds me of if you ask a writer, maybe it's a stereotype or cliché, but why do you write? The answer is because I have to. I can't not. On some level it feels like I have to do this. It's partly a decision to have to, but partly it's just who I am that I have to do this.

Participant 6 expressed a similar belief about sustaining her vitality:

> How do I sustain it? I don't know that I can get away from it. Part of it is my background and how I grew up and knowing how important it was. People had made an investment in me so it's important for me personally to make an investment in other people and to help them get access to same things that I did

because other people invested in me.

Theme 49: Spirituality/higher meaning. Participants typically (*n* = 12 of 18) identified spirituality and their belief in higher meaning as a factor in maintaining their resiliency. Participant 4 described experiencing this in her professional life:

> You step beyond everything else in your life and connect with people in that way. I think of those as "soul moments." That's pretty empowering.

Theme 50: Hope/belief in resiliency. Participants typically (*n* = 11 of 18) described hope and a belief in human resiliency as a way in which they maintain their own resiliency. Participant 11 stated:

> What's my other option? My other option is to sit by and be part of [oppression]. I can't abide that. There's a kind of optimism and hopefulness that has to be in a lot of us who do social justice work.

Participant 18 discussed this theme within the context of his clinical experience:

> The other part is, I think, as a clinician, really very much being aware of human resiliency and the ability to overcome issues.

Theme 51: Legacy. A variant number of participants (*n* = 8 of 18) described their experience of developing a legacy with social justice and relying on this broader view of their professional lives to maintain their work. Participant 5 stated:

> More and more, with those thousands of hours that I can use to help other people learn that perspective or share that perspective. I feel like maybe it is kind of a
>
> legacy thing. I'm leaving something for younger people who are earlier on in their careers that they'll use that in some way to do good things.

Participant 13 described this theme as well:

> Every now and then I'm walking around the lake and a torture survivor from a

> decade ago or two decades ago comes up and says "Hey, I'm doing this. Life's good. My family's here." You go, whew, all right. You remember somebody crawling through the door here without a lot of hope that anything could work again. Now life's looking okay. So, yeah, it gives you a little, okay, that's good. I can go back tomorrow.

Summary

Through peer nomination, purposeful sampling, and extreme case sampling, a total of 22 eligible practitioners with exemplary commitments to social justice were identified. Eighteen of the exemplars agreed to participate in an in-person interview addressing the following questions:

- What is social justice in counseling and psychology?
- How did the exemplar develop his or her orientation towards social justice?
- What are the challenges associated with social justice work?
- How do the exemplars maintain their professional vitality and resiliency?

Analysis of the 1,061 minutes (17 hours, 41 minutes) of transcribed interview data yielded 1742 concepts. Using CQR, these concepts were grouped into 51 total themes under 13 domains. The results are discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Summary

The present study sought to answer four research questions related to the practice of social justice in psychology, counseling, and clinical mental health service by interviewing a sample of peer-nominated exemplars:

- What is social justice in counseling and psychology?
- How did the exemplar develop his or her orientation towards social justice?
- What are the challenges associated with social justice work?
- How do the exemplars maintain their professional vitality and resiliency?

Practitioners nominated by the professional community were contacted and asked to participate in a structured interview based on a questionnaire designed for this study (see Appendix B). The nominating process and interviews were carried out between July 2011 and May 2012. The study sought to add the voice of expertise to the literature on social justice by exploring the perspectives of a sample of peer-nominated exemplars. The author interviewed 18 nominated exemplars, generating 1,061 minutes (17 hours, 41 minutes) of audio-recorded conversation. The author subsequently transcribed each interview verbatim, yielding 415 pages of data. The exemplars reported having an average of 26 years of professional experience ($sd = 9.92$). The majority of the participants held doctoral degrees in psychology. The sample included participants who worked in community agencies, in university counseling centers, and in university teaching. All of the exemplars described regular direct contact with diverse communities. Analysis of the data yielded a total of 13 domains and 51 themes.

Summary of Results: Research Question 1

The first research question was: what is social justice in counseling and psychology? Responses to this question were coded under 5 domains. In Domain A, Living Social Justice, participants identified social justice as a core component of their personal and professional identities. Domain A encompasses themes related to the broader, pervasive ways that social justice comprises a significant presence in their lives. In Domain B, Underlying Values, the participants described how values represent a core aspect of how they identify social justice in their work. As described by the participants, these core values are not static, but rather are actively applied to their ongoing social justice work. In addition to broad personal factors and underlying values, the participants identified a series of actions that they considered key to social justice work. Domain C, Actions/Interventions – System Focused, comprises those actions that specifically focus on addressing systemic concerns and societal-level injustices. While focusing on systemic concerns, the participants also described attention to more traditional work with individuals, couples, groups, and families. In Domain D, Action/Intervention - Client Focused, the participants identified a number of strategies they use when working directly with clients. The final domain related to question 1, Domain E, Applying Critical Understandings and Influences, included what the participants described to be essential understandings and intellectual influences that they apply directly in their social justice work. The themes in this domain comprise the fluid, dynamic theories, understandings, and influences that form the working model of their approach to social justice.

Summary of Results: Research Question 2

The second research question was: how did the exemplar develop his or her orientation towards social justice? Analysis of responses to this question yielded 3 domains. Domain F, Contextual Influences, included contextual and social factors that influenced the exemplars' development. In Domain G, Personal Narrative, the participants described having been influenced by their individual development, disposition, introspection, and the way that they responded to their life experiences. In Domain H, Interpersonal Relationships, the participants noted that significant others in their lives also influenced their social justice orientation.

Summary of Results: Research Question 3

The third research question was: what are the challenges associated with the social justice work? Responses to this question were grouped under 2 domains. Domain I, Professional Challenges, included what the participants described a number of challenges in their professional actions and interactions related to social justice work. In addition to the professional challenges, the participants also cited numerous challenges of a more personal and emotional nature, which were included in Domain J, Personal Challenges.

Summary of Results: Research Question 4

The fourth and final research question was: how do the exemplars maintain their professional vitality and resilience? The participants' responses to this question were grouped into 3 domains. Domain K, Self-Care, included the core strategies for seeking support, maintaining balance, and persevering. In Domain L, Inherent Rewards of Social Justice Work, the participants noted that aspects of the work itself had helped to maintain

their resiliency and vitality. Finally, in Domain M, Deep Meaning, the participants described social justice as being a source of deep meaning in their lives, and that this aspect of their commitment formed a core aspect of maintaining their resiliency and vitality. The results of the study are discussed in detail by domain below.

Major Findings by Research Question

Research Question 1: What is social justice in counseling and psychology?

DOMAIN A: Living Social Justice.

The first domain presents a key finding of the current study: social justice work is much more than a professional obligation for these exemplars. By bringing together their personal and professional identities, the participants truly exemplify the spirit of Rogers' (1956) call to be genuine. While the theme of Personal/Professional Integration stretches across research questions and domains in the results of the current study, it is particularly prominent within Domain A: Living Social Justice. All of the 18 participants noted that their social justice work allows them to live their values, be themselves, and find satisfaction and meaning in their work. For these exemplars, social justice has been a key factor in their career choice.

It may be tempting to think that the exemplars are simply extraordinary people whose disposition, impulses, and saintly characteristics make the development of such strong commitments to social justice too lofty for many psychologists, counselors, social workers, family therapists, and other mental health professionals. However, the results of the current study show a consistent pattern of continuing to develop and cultivate social justice awareness, practice, and conceptualization. This finding is consistent with

the Orlinsky et al. (1999) study of 3,900 psychotherapists who described high levels of continued growth and development throughout their careers. Furthermore, a number of exemplars expressed humility about their work, discussed their own limitations, and noted that a willingness to change and grow as being important facets of their social justice work.

Israel (2006) noted that engagement in social activism may be a core component in the identity development for both members of marginalized communities and for members of dominant communities. The experiences of the exemplars show that both have taken place: some participants actively worked to confront the oppression and marginalization they faced in their own lives; others have spent decades working to abate the oppression of others. In both cases, a commitment to social justice infuses the personal identities of the exemplars.

As noted above, a number of the exemplars further identified humility as a key component of living social justice. This finding is consistent with Jennings and Skovholt's (2004) examination of the characteristics of master therapists in the United States, Canada, Singapore, and Japan. In both the current study and the canon of research on master therapists, participants describe balancing their deep understanding, professional success, and personal identity with a profound understanding of their limitations and the limitations of their work. Jennings et al., (2012) also identified humility as a characteristic of cultural competence. This is a particularly germane aspect of work in social justice, which often addresses vast, historical oppression and complex societal problems.

DOMAIN B: Underlying Values.

The participants in the current study exhibited a well-articulated, pervasive, values-based approach to their social justice work and to professional practice in general. The typical themes in this domain, Equity, Access, and Awareness of Power and Privilege, along with the variant themes of Seeing the Whole Person, and Human Rights form a cohesive set of principles that the exemplars identify as being core components of the social change they seek to create through their professional activities.

The results of this study further illuminate prominent and frequently cited theoretical articles on social justice. Prilleltensky (1997, 2000) stresses the critical importance of integrating values into psychological practice. The participants in this study report doing so on a continual basis, making these values the guiding principles of their professional lives. The finding that values form such a key component of social justice work in psychology and counseling can be seen as encouraging the ongoing examination the role of values in the field. In a study of ethical values of master therapists, Jennings et al. (2005) noted minimal research data on therapists' values and no research focused on expert or experienced therapists.

This domain also shares characteristics with Goh and Yang's (2011) study of multicultural master therapists. Their study found that multicultural master therapists recognize oppression and acknowledge privilege, a theme also identified by the social justice exemplars. In a qualitative study of individuals who were found to have strong intercultural skills, Jarrett (2003) found that values regarding human dignity and experiences of both their own and others' oppression formed essential influences. The

findings of the current study therefore affirm the theoretical assertions about the critical role values and awareness of social inequity play in social justice work. This stands in contrast to the ostensibly value-free approach that has been advocated in the history of psychology and counseling (Fox & Prilliltensky, 1997). The current student also adds to the broader canon of psychology and counseling by addressing the values of these expert practitioners.

DOMAIN C: Actions/Interventions – System Focused.

Given the prominent role systemic issues play in the theoretical literature on social justice in psychology and counseling, it comes as no surprise that the exemplars addressed numerous actions and interventions focused on the system. These include working with and against the system, advocating directly for clients, raising awareness about social justice issues, and building connections. These finding relate to and affirm the ACA's advocacy competencies (Ratts et al., 2010) while highlighting those particular practices that the exemplars deemed relevant in their professional lives. In doing so, the exemplars described developing new skills, taking on roles not customarily associated with clinical mental health practice, and being willing to learn new skills that were not addressed in their professional training.

The exemplars also described typically engaging in systemic interventions by taking on leadership responsibility in agencies, professional organizations, and community initiatives. In addition, the participants described a systemic commitment to social justice in their work to train and mentor others professionals in social justice work. Sue (2008) described multicultural organizational consultation (MOC) as a practice with

strong social justice underpinnings. Sue's conceptualization of MOC applies to the work of the exemplars in leadership positions as well as to systems-based interventions identified by the current study. The exemplars consistently bring their understanding of privilege, multicultural competence, and commitment to change to the organizations in which they work as well as to the community as a whole.

In choosing to expand counseling roles and address systemic concerns, the exemplars described facing challenges. As noted below in Domain I (Professional Challenges) and Domain J (Personal Challenges), the working with and against the system involved facing apathy, misunderstanding, and even outright resistance from colleagues, supervisors, administrators, and political forces. The exemplars noted that they often do systemic aspects of their work on their own time and with limited reimbursement. In addition, the exemplars described considering the ethics of their expanded roles. Participant 6, for example, described carefully weighing ethical considerations when considering whether or not to advocate for former clients applying for college. Participant 14 described frequently finding that ethical considerations of his systemic work, particularly in the political arena, had not been sufficiently addressed in the ethics code. A thoughtful approach to the ethical aspects of system-focused interventions pervaded the exemplars discussion of this aspect of their work as did recognition that they face complex, ambiguous ethical issues related to boundaries, multiple relationships, and professional roles.

DOMAIN D: Actions/Interventions – Client Focused.

The results of the current study also vividly illustrate how social justice work can

be integrated into actions and interventions focused on clients. All of the exemplars described a process of actively addressing context and marginalization in their work with clients. As noted above, much of the literature of social justice in counseling has focused on advocacy, systemic intervention, and expanding counseling roles. While the exemplars certainly endorsed each of the foregoing activities, a major finding of the current study is that social justice work can be conducted in more traditional individual, group, and family therapy. This finding reinforces Lewis' (2003) framework regarding the spectrum of loci for social justice intervention and the belief that the individual level of services is a critical and often unacknowledged aspect of social justice work.

In addition, the exemplars identified empathy and "seeing the whole person" as components of social justice work on the individual level. Rather than abandoning these foundational aspects of counseling practice, the exemplars described integrating essential counseling skills with a social justice mission. In fact, the results of this study indicate that addressing marginalization, teaching self-advocacy, and fostering empowerment are fundamentally grounded in an empathic understanding of the effects of injustice and a profound emotional connection with the experience of clients and communities. This point is further addressed by the exemplars who described addressing social justice as a key element of fostering healing with their clients. A willingness to balance roles and shift between systemic and individual interventions in the service of social justice shares much with the Atkinson et al. (1993) 3-dimensional model of helper roles.

DOMAIN E: Applying Critical Understandings and Influences.

The first research question asked participants to define and illustrate social justice

in their professional lives. Participants were also asked to identify influences in the development of their social justice orientation. It may, therefore, be surprising to see a domain related to understandings and influences in response to the first research question. The literature has addressed connections between social justice, multiculturalism, and feminism (c.f. Ratts, 2011; Crethar et al., 2008). The results of this study, based on the professional experiences and perspectives of peer-nominated exemplars, strongly reinforce the connection between social justice work and multiculturalism. The participants generally endorsed high levels of cultural consciousness, with a focus on cultural competence, awareness of diversity, and a dedication to addressing injustice associated with cultural issues. A variant number of participants also specifically cited the influence of feminist theory. While the number of participants who explicitly addressed feminism was less prominent, the principles of feminism certainly permeate other themes and domains in this study.

That a number of exemplars identified feminism as a core facet of social justice supports the findings of Yoder et al. (2012) in a recent study of the connections between feminist identity and well-being among a sample of college students. The authors identified "liberation" as an essential component of feminism and a principal closely associated with the social justice canon. The concept of liberation is closely related to the exemplars' perspective on empowerment and addressing marginalization. The results of Yoder and colleagues' study are nuanced and bear further review in terms of methodology, sample recruitment, statistical analysis and interpretation. Nonetheless, a pattern emerges suggesting that consistent, established endorsement of feminist beliefs is

associated with well-being. The authors suggest that counseling psychology focus not just on the experiences of individuals, but also on the broader experience of women in society.

The exemplars expressed a strong connection to the facets of cultural competence as formulated by S. Sue (1998). Scientific-mindedness and dynamic sizing can be seen in the frequent references to innovation and flexibility. The exemplars described a process of considering their practices carefully in light of the ways that their clients live and experience culture. These results may be taken in tandem with Goh and Yang's (2011) exploration of the perspectives of multicultural master therapists: these authors found that multicultural master therapists expressed a clear belief in the importance of social justice. Likewise, the current study's exemplars of social justice addressed the primacy of cultural competence. Liu and Pope-Davis (2003) argued that recognition of power and oppression are essential components of multicultural competency. The exemplars have clearly lived the connection between cultural competence and social justice in their everyday professional experiences, generating one of the most emphatic findings of the current study.

The results of the current study also relate to the practices of master therapists addressed by Jennings and Skovholt (2004). In comparing results of master therapist studies in the United States and internationally, the authors found that complexity of conceptualization was identified in each study. The exemplars in the current study described having nuanced conceptual perspectives on the concerns of their clients and, more broadly, the communities with whom they work. The aforementioned examination

of master therapist studies also indicated that flexibility in using clinical interventions was found to be a characteristic of master therapists in Korea, Singapore, Canada, and Japan.

Summary of Research Question 1

The themes related to the first research questions reflect the breadth of social justice commitment in the lives of the exemplars. Domain A, Living Social Justice, addresses as a core identity component for the exemplars, a finding consistent with previous research on social justice (Israel, 2006) and with Roger's (1956) discussion of the essential therapeutic conditions. Domain B, Underlying Values, provides support for previous theoretical articles on the role of values in both social justice and psychology (Prilleltensky, 1997). Domain B, Actions Interventions- System-focused and Domain C, Actions/Interventions- Client-focused provide a rich picture of the practice of social justice. Systemic or advocacy approaches to social justice certainly form a portion of the exemplars' commitment, and the results of the current study illuminate the previous writings on systemic approaches (Ratts et al., 2010). In addition, the exemplars describe incorporating social justice themes into their work with clients in individual, group, and family counseling. Finally, Domain E, Applying critical understandings and influences, addresses the critical value of multicultural competence (Sue et al., 1992), an acknowledgement of past shortcomings in mental health services to marginalized communities, and an ethically-minded commitment to innovation and flexibility.

Research Question 2: How did the participant develop his or her perspective on social justice?

DOMAIN F: Contextual Influences.

The exemplars described being powerfully affected by their context, history, and environments. The most commonly cited theme in this domain was the influence of social movements. Participants typically described having both participated in and been influenced by at least one major social movement, notably the civil rights movement, women's movement, GLBTQ rights movement, and the anti-Vietnam War movement. These social movements helped the participants frame questions about social justice, gave them experience in connecting with allies and working on causes, and provide an ongoing source of inspiration, identity, and meaning. This finding is consistent with Skovholt and Starkey's (2010) assertion that therapists' personal lives are a valid, rich, and often underappreciated source of information about how to conduct successful therapy. Most of the exemplars described having participated in social movements and subsequently carrying that experience and understanding into their professional lives.

DOMAIN G: Personal Narrative.

This domain comprised themes related to the individual lived experiences of the exemplars. The theme of Personal/Professional Integration fits under this domain as well. The participants described recognizing that their orientation towards social justice was often dispositional and related to their early memories of themselves, their attitudes, and their life experiences. Several participants described being unable to pinpoint where or how they developed their social justice orientation, describing it as something that has

always been a part of their personalities. The theme of Spirituality/Higher Meaning also fits under this domain. Participants described an individualized, spiritual orientation to social justice that, while at times inspired by religious traditions, often took the form of an emotional, spiritual journey based on their sense of life meaning and connection with others. Finally, participants typically described having experienced marginalization themselves. This aspect of their personal narrative opened their eyes to injustice in the world, gave many a purpose and reason to engage in social justice work, and helped the exemplars develop a deep, abiding connection with people who experience injustice. In addressing their own marginalization, the participants shared deep hurt as well as stories of their own healing. Again, Skovholt and Starkey's (2010) perspective on the importance of personal life experiences for therapist development is reinforced by the findings of the current study.

Trotter-Mathison et al. (2010) provided powerful evidence of the role of personal narrative in professional development by compiling the written accounts of critical incidents experienced by psychotherapists at various stages of their professional development. In both the current study and in these critical incidents, the participants described a process of connecting their professional work with their broader experiences and identities across their growth as psychotherapists. In addition, several authors in Trotter-Mathison and colleagues' compendium described their own experience of marginalization as a key factor in changing their approach to professional practice.

DOMAIN H: Interpersonal Relationships.

In addition to contextual influences and personal narrative, the exemplars

described being influenced by their interpersonal relationships. Participants typically described participating in a family tradition of dedication to social justice. In some instances, this involved direct action and activism. In other cases, participants described parents or grandparents who instilled values related to fairness, care of others, and equality. The participants also typically described being influenced by mentors and role models. These relationships helped the exemplars apply their dedication to social justice to their professional lives. As noted below, professional relationships form a core component of not just learning how to refine, apply, and develop social justice work in psychology, but also how to maintain one's resiliency and vitality. The finding that interpersonal relationships affected the exemplars' social justice development is consistent with an array of findings of career development literature in general. Whiston and Keller (2004) provided an extensive review of literature noting the pervasive effects of family of origin on career development. In the case of the exemplars, the values, support, and encouragement of family were frequently cited as a key factor in their approach to social justice.

Summary of Research Question 2

Caldwell and Vera (2010) also used qualitative methods to address the development of a social justice orientation. As noted in the review of empirical literature, their study, conducted through the internet, utilized critical incident technique (CIT) with a sample comprised primarily of students and psychology professors. Each of the 36 participants in their study reported either a high or moderately high commitment to social justice. Although the sample recruitment method, focus on self-nomination rather than

peer nomination, and manner of data collection differ substantially between Caldwell and Vera's work and the current study, the results show notable similarities. As with the exemplars, Caldwell and Vera's participants described having been influenced by significant people in their lives. Clearly, mentors and family members play a substantial role in the development of one's social justice orientation.

In addition, Caldwell and Vera's work cites the importance of exposure to injustice in the development of social justice orientation. In the current study the exemplars' personal experience of marginalization was also typically cited as a powerful influence. Caldwell and Vera's participants addressed work experiences as critical incidents. This theme is similar to the exemplars' belief that learning from and adapting to client and community needs form a core component of social justice work. In the current study, this theme was included under the results for Research Question 1 because of the dynamic, applied way in which the exemplars described this aspect of their development. Finally, religious and spiritual traditions are cited as important influences in both studies.

One essential difference between the two studies is the depth of personal disclosure about identity development in the current study. This result may be related to the length and breadth of experience of the exemplars, the emotional nature of their work, or the face-to-face, extended interview format. While the current study provides comparatively more themes related to the exemplars' identity and personal narrative, Caldwell and Vera's participants did allude to the role of social justice in their lives. Sixty-nine percent of their participants described experiencing identity changes related to critical incidents in their social justice development. These identity changes included:

“shaped personal and professional identity”; “instilled/internalized values”; and “shaped worldview” (p. 171). Similarly, the current study addresses the primacy of integration of personal and professional identities, and role of values in developing and applying social justice work.

Taken together, these two studies present a preliminary consensus on the development of social justice orientation. Clearly, mentors, family, experiences of marginalization, and spiritual beliefs have powerful impacts. Furthermore, social justice development can be seen as related to the core aspects of broader personal and professional development and the application of one's values. Both studies show a strong focus on the degree to which social justice becomes a part of committed professionals' identities.

The results of the current study reinforce Skovholt and Rønnestad's (1992) and Rønnestad and Skovholt (2013) finding that mentors play a key role in professional development. This finding extends naturally to social justice work. In addition, these authors described professional development as an extended process, a facet noted by the exemplars as well. Finally, the current study can be read in conjunction with narrative approaches to understanding professional development of counselors and psychologists such as Trotter-Mathison and colleagues' (2010) *Voices from the Field.* The collected critical incidents of practitioners contained therein show a rich, varied path of professional development that encompasses the influence of family, mentors, spirituality, personal identity, and lived hardship.

Research Question 3: What are the challenges associated with social justice work?

DOMAIN I: Professional Challenges.

The exemplars described having experienced a number of notable challenges that can be considered primarily professional or related to their job functioning. The exemplars generally described experiencing conflict over social justice issues and resistance to changes from colleagues or the system. In some cases, these conflicts created primarily frustration, disappointment, or delay. In other instances, the participants experienced significant career setbacks related to their commitment to social justice. This conflict and resistance occurred in an already challenging professional environment in which their commitment to social justice work typically has included extra time and work. This extra time and work was frequently related to meeting client needs, living their dedication to community concerns, or working to provide the most effective, adaptive, or culturally relevant services possible. Theme 36, Extra Time and Work was also related to another typically cited theme in Domain I: Theme 37, Financial Strain. The participants typically described working in a professional context in which social justice work, notably cultural adaption, is not reimbursed by insurance providers or regarded as part of a psychologists job function by funders. The participants described sacrificing their own financial benefit in order to stay connected with social justice work.

DOMAIN J: Personal Challenges.

In addition to professional challenges, the participants described experiencing personal, emotional challenges related to their social justice work. The exemplars typically described experiencing emotional stress and described symptoms of burnout as

challenges related to social justice in work. Previous studies have identified emotional stress as common among psychotherapists. Mahoney (1997) found symptoms of "emotional fatigue" or exhaustion reported by half of respondents. In the current study, a similar response was in many cases tied to the professional challenges noted above. In other cases, painful emotional responses were described as related to the nature of social justice work itself. A variant number of participants described feeling overwhelmed at times by their experience of endless need related to social justice issues. Participants also noted that social justice work requires patience, indicating that waiting for the slow pace of change is a substantial challenge in the field.

Summary of Research Question 3

Skovholt and Trotter-Mathison (2011) addressed 20 challenges related to working as a therapist. The exemplars echo and elaborate on these challenges in the context of their commitment to social justice. The themes shared between the work of Skovholt and Trotter-Mathison and the results of the current study focus on the inherent challenges of managing complex, seemingly insolvable presenting concerns. By addressing marginalization and inequity, the exemplars have both acknowledged client realities and chosen to confront powerful social and interpersonal forces that have persisted over centuries. The duality of seeing that change is necessary and also overwhelmingly daunting was identified by the exemplars as a major challenge.

Skovholt and Trotter-Mathison also addressed the challenges of serving clients whose needs are not being met by social services, educational institutions, or health care systems. The exemplars addressed this challenge while also noting that they experience

conflict and substantial resistance from these systems in their social justice work. This conflict and resistance may also reinforce the isolation identified by Skovholt and Trotter-Mathison. Therapists are inherently isolated by the confidential nature of the work. For the exemplars, colleagues or supervisors have sometimes not been supportive of social justice commitment. Important allies may work outside the field or come from the exemplars' families, making disclosure about the work untenable.

Both the exemplars and Skovholt and Trotter-Mathison identify the intense emotional stress faced by therapists as a substantial risk factor. This factor may be exacerbated by focusing on social justice work: a number of the exemplars described focusing on helping survivors of torture, refugees, and victims of sexual assault. While most therapy involves intense emotions, the exemplars' commitment to reaching out to people who have been profoundly harmed by oppression may only increase that intensity. O'Halloran and Linton (2000) addressed the substantial emotional stressors and burn out risk for counselor who consistently address trauma. The results of the current study support their assertions while adding breadth to our understanding of sources of secondary traumatization. Furthermore, the exemplars described doing social justice work with limited prior training, a factor which may increase confusion and lead to practitioners having fewer resources to manage the stark realities of social justice work.

Research Question 4: How do the exemplars maintain their vitality and resilience?

DOMAIN K. Self-Care.

The exemplars described self-care as a critical component of maintaining one's vitality and resiliency in social justice work. The social component of this self-care,

Theme 43, Connecting with Allies and Fostering Community, was cited by each of the 18 participants. The process of sharing experiences, resources, and perspectives was described as motivating, affirming, and sustaining. Participants also typically described seeking balance in their lives. This theme encompassed giving time to family, taking a step back from social justice work from time-to-time, and committing to the various aspects of self-care. As noted above, the participants described an ongoing development of their social justice orientation, practices, and identity. The same is true for the development of self-care strategies. A number of exemplars described the process of learning how to practice self-care after having failed to do so early in their careers. Many also identified their ability to seek and maintain balance as one characteristic that has set them apart from talented, driven peers who experienced disillusionment and career-ending burnout. Another aspect of self-care identified by a variant number of participants involved the strategic process of "picking one's battles." This involved a patient, long view of social justice work and a willingness to make difficult but ultimately valuable decisions to not engage in every social justice cause that draws their attention.

The results of the current study relate to another recent examination of coping strategies of social justice advocates. Steinfeldt et al. (2012) interviewed 11 activists who have worked to end the use of American Indian-themed sports mascots (e.g. the Washington Redskins or University of North Dakota Fighting Sioux). These activists identified "Building Alliances" and "Supportive Sharing" as key coping strategies. Such findings relate closely to the results of the current study. The exemplars universally endorsed the importance of having allies and social justice community in maintaining resiliency.

DOMAIN L. Inherent Rewards of Social Justice Work.

The participants described being reinforced in their social justice work in a variety of ways. Domain L contains two themes addressing the intrinsic rewards of their commitment to social justice. Participants typically described social justice interventions as being very effective. This held true for both work with individual clients and families as well as society as a whole. Participants further described drawing benefit from their work. They described social justice work as energizing, exciting, and inherently rewarding. Norcross (2000) described a similar appreciation for the rewards of psychotherapy practice as a key element of self-care.

DOMAIN M: Deep Meaning.

The exemplars described being sustained by deep meaning factors, but also noted that social justice work generates deep meaning to create a reciprocal experience. Personal/professional integration also appears under this theme: the exemplars generally discussed being their truest selves in their social justice work. It is perhaps ironic that participants described achieving what might be best described as Maslow's (1954) highest level, self-actualization, while so often focusing on the physiological and safety needs of clients and communities. Spirituality and higher meaning were addressed again in this domain as well. Participants typically indicated ongoing hope and faith in humanity despite trials and having witnessed extraordinary suffering. They also shared a continued awe in the power of human resiliency. The participants described believing that they were truly making a contribution, and, in a variant number of cases, addressed leaving a legacy in their social justice work.

Summary of Research Question 4

The results of the current study can be seen in light of recent literature related to the development of professional resilience. Skovholt and Trotter-Mathison (2012) addressed both the risks of burn out for helping professionals as well as strategies related to maintaining vitality and resilience. The current study shares much with these authors' work. Skovholt and Trotter-Mathison address the "joys of practice," a factor identified repeatedly by the exemplars as contributing to their resilience and vitality in the field. The exemplars unquestionably reported experiencing seeing their work as "useful and valuable," a factor identified by these authors as a key self-care strategy.

The depth of personal/professional integration was another facet of resilience identified by the exemplars, and this factors shares much in common with Skovholt and Trotter-Mathison's identification of therapist personal growth as a key resilience factor. Through living their social justice commitments, the exemplars described being most fully themselves while drawing profound meaning from their work. Skovholt and Trotter-Mathison noted that spiritual growth may be a part of this process. The exemplars echoed this recommendation, describing spirituality as a facet of the deep meaning they experience in their commitment to social justice. Orlinksy et al. (1999) found that even highly experienced psychotherapists continue to experience perceived professional growth and development. This finding is reflected in both the personal/professional integration aspects of resiliency and in the inherent rewards of social justice work: the exemplars described continuing to learn more about how to best be of service to communities, but also how best to be themselves and to sustainably live their values in

their professional work.

Mullenbach and Skovholt (2000) and Skovholt, Grier, and Hanson (2001) addressed the critical importance of both developing professional communities and working toward balancing personal and professional lives. The exemplars identified professional connections as a general theme and the core factor in sustaining effective social justice work. The exemplars also described a challenging process of learning how to say "no," finding ways to take care of themselves, and realizing that they cannot engage in every cause and address every social justice issue.

American Counseling Association's Advocacy Competencies

The findings of the current study relate significantly to recent developments in the social justice literature. In particular, the American Counseling Association enumerated social justice advocacy competencies (Lewis et al., 2003; Ratts et al., 2010). Perhaps because of the absence of a similar standard on the part of the American Psychological Association, no participant in this study discussed the ACA's standards or identified being informed by any specific standards or competencies in social justice. In fact, several participants expressed surprise that a set of competencies had been identified and published at all. Therefore, the current study offers a unique opportunity to contrast a national professional organization's attempts to establish competencies with the organic developments in the field by committed professionals.

As addressed above, Lewis et al. (2003) identified both working with clients and working on behalf of clients as legitimate areas for social justice practice. The competencies also discuss a spectrum of intervention from the microlevel, working

directly with clients, to the marcolevel, working in society at large. This matrix creates 6 areas. In acting with clients/students, the professional may engage in client/student empowerment, community collaboration, and public information. In acting on behalf of clients/students, the professional may engage in client/student advocacy, systems advocacy, or social/political advocacy.

The results of this study are certainly congruent with the ACA's advocacy competencies: in defining and describing their social justice practice, the exemplars addressed each of the areas outlined by Lewis and colleagues. Contrasts between the advocacy competencies and the results of the current study focus primarily on the fluidity of practice as described by the exemplars. The perspective and practices of the exemplars suggests a degree of integration of social justice principles into their work and professional identity in such a way as to make some of the seemingly clear distinctions of the ACA's advocacy competencies appear somewhat artificial or arbitrary. Despite the more dynamic description of social justice work enumerated by the exemplars, the results of the current study can be seen as clarifying and deepening the description of social justice work created by the advocacy competencies. The following addresses the domains and themes that relate more directly.

Client/Student Empowerment

Two themes from the current study directly relate to the advocacy competency of Client/Student empowerment. Theme 18, Fostering Empowerment, comprised the exemplars' belief that counseling interventions should enhance independence, self-determination, and develop a process by which clients and communities are able to

advocate for themselves. In addition, Theme 17, Actively Addressing Social Context and Marginalization, helps provide a basis for fostering empowerment. By bringing their life experiences and social justice concerns into the therapeutic context, the exemplars describe not only acknowledging the hardships faced by clients, but also creating the space for empowerment to happen. This acknowledgement, awareness, and skill in addressing social context and marginalization helps to inform the advocacy competencies by giving counselors one way to encourage empowerment in individual, couples, family, or group counseling work.

Community Collaboration

The advocacy competency of community collaboration involves working together with traditionally marginalized communities to achieve social justice goals. The exemplars described having done this in a variety of different settings and circumstances. A few of the many examples include: a heterosexual-identified psychologist (Participant 14) who was instrumental in developing human rights legislature that enhanced legal protection for LGBT citizens; Participant 13, who developed housing and medical services in collaboration with local communities in Africa; and Participant 5, who described working with a number of refugee and immigrant-led agencies to help them develop programming and obtain funding. In the current study, these activities were included primarily under two themes: Theme 24, Learning from and Adapting to Community Needs; and Theme 16, Building Connections. The results of the current study enhance the advocacy competencies by describing how work with communities may include both practical, applied interventions while also forming the intellectual

underpinnings (i.e., critical understanding) of the exemplars' approach to mental health work and healing in general.

Public Information

The authors of the advocacy competencies note the importance of providing public information about social justice issues. This activity is addressed more broadly in the results of the current study under Theme 13, Raising Awareness. The exemplars described, for example, writing letters to the editor to address social justice issues in immigrant and minority experiences (Participant 3), an activity that would certainly fall under this advocacy competency. In addition, the exemplars described raising awareness in much more pervasive, integrated ways such as talking to friends, colleagues, supervisors, or public officials. While the specificity of the public information competency may help practitioners identify goals regarding professional development, the results of the current study can be seen as more flexible and readily integrated into the personal and professional lives of practitioners.

Client/Student Advocacy

The advocacy competency of Client/Student advocacy is reflected by the results of the current study. Theme 12, Advocacy/"Giving Voice," addresses the many ways in which the exemplars have gone above and beyond to help meet the needs of clients and to address social justice concerns. The results of the current study can be seen as strengthening the core value of direct advocacy in social justice work by providing specific examples of how a sample of exemplars have applied this value over decades of work in the field.

Systems Advocacy

The advocacy competencies and the results of the current study are also closely aligned in addressing the importance of the advocacy competency of systems advocacy. Theme 10, Working with and Against the System, describes the tension the exemplars have felt. They described knowing that having skills for negotiating and collaborating with political, administrative, and legal systems can be of great benefit to clients. On the other hand, the exemplars discussed having understood that, in many cases, bureaucracy, institutionalized racism, or regulations that do not adequately recognize culture, for example, have been powerful barriers to clients and communities. The results of the current study enhance this competency by illustrating the complex dance that must be a part of systems advocacy. Another form of systems advocacy involves the mentorship of other professionals who are interested in social justice. Theme 15, Training/Passing it On, describes the many ways in which the exemplars have invested in the future of the field by giving time, wisdom, and key information to trainees, new professionals, and others seeking to develop their skills as social justice practitioners. Several exemplars described the practice of engaging in training as having a "multiplying" effect that must ultimately affect the system as a whole. Theme 15 may be seen as an indirect but equally relevant counterpoint to working with and against the system: by investing in creating skilled allies, the exemplars actively seek to tilt the balance of the system towards social justice.

Social/Political Advocacy

The advocacy competencies also describe the importance of engaging in broad social and political advocacy. In the current study, similar activities were included under

Theme 14, Leadership. The exemplars described frequently taking positions in professional organizations, as consultants, or working directly with government officials to address social justice issues. Participant 15, for example, described working actively to encourage her professional organization to address political issues related to LGBT rights. Participant 14 described extensive lobbying to address issues related to homeless youth and providing mental health services in a more accessible, culturally competent manner. Social/political advocacy also came through in a number of other areas. Several participants described the process of connecting the political beliefs they had seen as part of their personal lives with their professional identities, and these statements were included under Theme 1, Personal/Professional Integration as well as Domain B, Underlying Values. In addition, many participants may have found it difficult to separate their political advocacy from their collaborative work with communities or systems advocacy.

The results of the current study provide some points of potential criticism for the advocacy competencies. The advocacy competencies address only one aspect of social justice work, advocacy, and the results of the currently study are inherently more comprehensive. In providing a relatively narrow approach to social justice work, the advocacy competencies add much needed clarity to a potentially overwhelming area for professional practice and development. However, based on the results of the current study, the creation of potentially artificially separate competencies may run the risk of seeing the trees while losing the forest. The exemplars integrate social justice across the fields of their lives: these values, actions, and critical understandings fully pervade their

identities and work as mental health professionals. One potential way to rectify the discontinuity between the broad integration described by the exemplars and the categorical approach of the advocacy competencies would be to include competencies related to professional development and case conceptualization. Mental health professionals may be encouraged to process how they think about the work as a whole and, furthermore, how professional work connects to other aspects of their identity.

A second substantial difference between the advocacy competencies and the results of the current study is the role of culture. The exemplars clearly and unanimously identify Theme 22, Cultural Consciousness, as a core facet of social justice work. Therefore, the current study entails a call to address culture and the development of cultural competency in the advocacy competencies.

Cultural Intelligence

The results of the current study can be further understood in relationship to cultural intelligence (CQ), an emerging framework for training and practice in multicultural counseling. Broadly, CQ encompasses one's capacity to competently interact with individuals and groups from diverse and varied cultures (Early & Ang, 2003). CQ builds upon recent developments in intelligence theory focused on identifying and appreciating multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1993) and emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995). CQ has been applied to multicultural competence in counseling by Goh et al. (2008), and this review draws substantially from these authors' conceptualization.

The facets of CQ have direct implications for social justice work and are evident

in the responses of the exemplars. Metacognitive CQ in counseling psychology has been described as the ability to incorporate and apply culturally relevant information to one's conceptualization and behavioral approach to counseling. In recognizing the role of power and privilege (Theme 8), learning from an adapting to client/community needs (Theme 24), and innovation/flexibility (Theme 23), the exemplars evidence a high degree of Metacognitive CQ in their social justice practice.

An additional aspect of CQ with direct implications for the results of the current study is Motivational CQ, which is described as actively pursuing cross-cultural interactions and learning from these interactions. The exemplars exhibit an extraordinary will to engage in social justice work. In fact, they universally described social justice work as a deep source of professional and personal identity (Themes 1, 31, and 48). Furthermore, despite addressing substantial challenges (Domains I: Professional Challenges; Domain J: Personal Challenges), the exemplars described experiencing significant rewards of their social justice work (Domain L: Inherent Rewards of Social Justice Work; Domain M: Deep Meaning). Behavioral CQ, described as the ability to adapt behavior based on client culture, plays a prominent role in the results of this study related to direct practice (Domain C: Action/Intervention – System Focused; Domain D: Action/Intervention – Client Focused).

Summary of Major Findings

Domain A, Living Social Justice, presents a key finding of the current study: social justice work is much more than a professional obligation for the exemplars. By bringing together their personal and professional identities, the participants truly

exemplify the spirit of Rogers' (1956) call to be genuine and also the congruence identified in master therapists (Jennings and Skovholt, 1999). The results of this study further illuminate prominent and frequently cited theoretical articles on social justice. Prilleltensky (1997, 2000) stresses the critical importance of integrating values into psychological practice. The participants in this study report doing so on a continual basis, making these values the dynamic guiding principles of their professional lives. The findings relate to and affirm the ACA advocacy competencies (Ratts et al., 2010) while highlighting those particular practices that the exemplars deemed relevant in their professional lives. In doing so, the exemplars described developing new skills, taking on roles not customarily associated with psychologists, and being willing to learn practices and perspectives not addressed in their professional training. These findings reinforce Lewis' (2003) framework regarding the spectrum of loci for social justice intervention and the belief that the individual level of services is a critical and often unacknowledged aspect of social justice work. Israel (2006) argued that counseling psychologists committed to social justice can connect to their commitments by focusing on systemic interventions or traditional, more individually-focused work, or both. The exemplars in the study strongly support this type of flexible, multi-modal approach to social justice work.

The exemplars described integrating essential counseling skills with a social justice mission. In fact, the results of this study indicate that addressing marginalization, teaching self-advocacy, and fostering empowerment are fundamentally grounded in an empathic understanding of the effects of injustice and a profound emotional connection

with the experience of clients and communities. The literature has addressed connections between social justice, multiculturalism, and feminism (c.f. Ratts, 2011; Crethar et al., 2008). The results of this study strongly reinforce the connection between social justice work and multiculturalism in particular. The participants generally endorsed high levels of cultural consciousness, with a focus on cultural competence, awareness of diversity, and dedication to addressing injustice associated with cultural identities.

The exemplars described self-care as a critical component of maintaining one's vitality and resiliency in social justice work. An interpersonal component of self-care, connecting with allies and fostering community, was cited by each of the 18 participants. The process of sharing experiences, resources, and receiving support was described as motivating, affirming, and sustaining. Skovholt, et al., (2004) described the balance between integration of personal and professional identities and clearly identified boundaries as one of the paradoxical characteristics of master therapists. The exemplars present the same duality, which Skovholt (2012) has termed "boundaried generosity": they are deeply invested in social justice work personally and professionally, yet they consistently set limits, practice saying "no," and extol the centrality of self-care.

Study Strengths and Limitations

Delimitations

The nomination process and interview protocol was based on current conceptualizations of social justice found in the literature. Given the recent developments in this area and the limited base of empirical research in this area, it is possible that social justice work in practice may not be sufficiently captured. The target region for the study

was Minnesota. Practices in this region may not reflect practices typically employed or relevant in other regions of the United States or internationally. The sample of peer-nominated exemplars may not have sufficiently addressed cultural diversity. While the sample reflects the current racial, ethnic, and sexual composition of professional psychology, additional voices from underrepresented groups and international professionals may have created a fuller picture of social justice practice.

Limitations

Recent research suggests limited levels of activism amongst counseling trainees (Nillson & Schmidt, 2005), limited training in social justice work (Pieterse et al., 2009), and low levels of follow-through among interested professionals (Fouad et al., 2004). The current study examined the practices of exemplars whose commitments to social justice by definition have been much more extensive and pervasive than most others in the field. Therefore, the practices identified in this study may not be applicable in the context of a relatively disengaged general population of psychologists, counselors, and other mental health professionals.

As with any qualitative study, the results of the current study may have been affected by the biases of the research team. This may include biases related to gender, sexual orientation, race, socioeconomic status, professional orientation as a counseling psychologist in training, and beliefs about social justice. In particular, each reach team member expressed a strong interest in social justice in counseling and psychology. While every effort was made to bracket bias in a manner consistent with best practices in the field (Hill et al., 1997), the characteristics of the research team, including a notable

enthusiasm for social justice work, may have affected the results.

Practice Implications

The current study provides a number of implications for practice in psychology.

1) Validating the power of partnerships and allies. Across research questions and domains, the findings of this study reinforce the power of professional partnerships and allies. The practice of maintaining professional communities was identified as a critical social justice intervention as well as a core facet of maintaining vitality and resiliency. Professional practice may be both more effective and more sustainable if conducted in the context of supportive relationships, and practitioners seeking to engage in social justice work should first seek to identify and connect with others in the field.

2.) Focus on ongoing development of personal and professional identity. The theme of personal/professional integration permeated responses to three of the four research questions. The results of this study are a call to practitioners to identify connections between their personal identities and their professional lives. Within the context of social justice work, this can take the form of exploring values, strengths, and critical experiences that contribute to practice. The participants typically described an ongoing process of personal/professional integration, and this should be seen as a career-long developmental process.

3.) Commitment to self-care and balance. Given the value of experienced practitioners and the strains associated with social justice work, the results of this study highlight the critical value of self-care and balance. This process varied with each participant, but the theme of working on self-care was universal and can be considered a major finding of

this study.

4.) Action needed to address financial concerns. Financial concerns were identified as a major challenge in social justice work, and one implication of the current study is that practitioners and communities would benefit from continued advocacy with health insurance, government, and other stakeholders to elucidate the value in social justice work and the need for adequate compensation.

5.) Ongoing commitment to cultural competence. The results of the current study combined with the theoretical literature strongly reinforce that social justice work must be conducted within the context of cultural competence. Social justice interventions will only fulfill their intentions when bound inextricably with the principles of multiculturalism, awareness of cultural diversity, and sharing of power with communities.

Training Implications

1.) Provide training on personal/professional integration. As noted above, this theme permeated the results of this study and forms a core finding. Training programs can continue to provide training on integrating one's personal and professional identities towards the development of a satisfying career. While the results suggest that this is an essential component of social justice work, a commitment to personal/professional integration beginning in training may also be of benefit to professional not inclined towards social justice commitments. In particular, training programs may encourage trainees to identify values associated with professional work and find ways to live those values with their career choices.

2.) Training in self-care strategies. As noted above, the field has shown an increasing willingness to address self-care. The findings of the current study support that process and would also encourage training programs to augment dedication to helping trainees and early career professionals develop self-care strategies. The participants noted that they often struggled to find balance early in their careers. Given the dire consequences of professional burnout, the results encourage training programs to address this issue consistently.

3.) Training in social justice interventions. The participants noted limited formal training in social justice work. For programs and supervisors invested in fostering social justice work, providing training in interventions and conceptualization may be particularly beneficial. The results of the current study provide recommendations for both individual-level interventions as well as systemic advocacy skills.

Research Recommendations

1.) Study the effectiveness of social justice interventions. One major finding of the current study is that the exemplars typically identified social justice interventions as effective. Future research can address this assertion. In doing so, researchers should collaborate with practitioners, clients, and communities to identify relevant outcomes as well as refine the current study's definition of social justice work.

2.) Address client and community perspectives. The current study advances the field of research in social justice by exploring the perspectives of peer-nominated exemplars. Future research can contribute greatly to the field's understanding of social justice by exploring client and community perspectives on social justice in psychology and

counseling training, practices, and clinical mental health services generally.

3.) Continued focus on cultural competence and adaptation. As noted above, cultural competence was identified as a core aspect of social justice work. Therefore, the results of this study further encourage research to address cultural competence, especially innovation and adaptation of practices.

4.) Study the effectiveness of self-care strategies. The current study addresses strategies to maintain professional resiliency. Research may build upon these and other findings to explore the effectiveness of strategies in much the same way therapy outcome has been studied.

5.) Study therapist factors in a social justice context. As noted above, personal/professional integration was found to be an inextricable component of social justice work. Future research may address therapist factors in the context of social justice research. Potential variables include personality attributes, values, coping style, family-of-origin issues, career development, cultural intelligence, and relationship skills**.**

Conclusion and Comment of Personal Process

The current study presents a complex, nuanced picture of social justice practice, personal development, and resilience in the face of substantial challenges. As a counseling psychologist-in-training with a commitment to social justice, I frequently sat in awe of the exemplars during our interviews. My personal process of conducting this research has been to marvel at having had the opportunity to be in the presence of people who have developed and evolved their social justice work. I was also honored and grateful for the depth of personal information the exemplars were willing to share with

me. During our interviews, the exemplars told me about their heroes, their families, their doubts, and, in some cases, their deep pain at having experienced oppression in their lives and burn-out. Tears, both theirs and mine, were shed or barely held back on more than a few occasions. This work and these relationships have truly changed the way I see the field. I have said repeatedly that this dissertation was a brazen attempt to gather as much understanding as possible about sustaining a social justice commitment. Through this process I have met people I admire and gotten to know other colleagues on a deeper level. I can only hope to show my gratitude by following their example to the best of my ability and carrying social justice work forward in my personal and professional life.

This project has been about asking a simple question: how? How do mental health professionals commit to social justice? How did they decide to do what they do? How do they manage the challenges? How do they stay resilient? In working through the final draft of this dissertation, Tom Skovholt asked me a deeper, more personal question: why? Somehow, wondering why people choose to commit to social justice has been directly in front of me for the 3 years I have worked on this project, yet somehow it has remained just out of focus. I am reluctant to answer such a personal question on behalf of the exemplars. Perhaps sometime in the future I can go back and ask directly. With my hesitance acknowledged, I do believe our conversations revealed at least a sense of their *why*.

Many of the exemplars have experienced profound hurt because of social injustice or other life experiences. Rectifying that hurt and preventing others from feeling it brings them meaning, purpose, hope, healing, and identity. Others experienced painful family

dynamics and, by their own admission, react reflexively against authoritarian figures, injustice, and misuse of power. Again, righting the wrongs done by people who wield power or privilege unjustly and connecting with others who feel hurt are, I believe, deeply healing for them. Family dynamics play a role in a constructive sense as well. Many exemplars spoke of family traditions of working for social justice. By continuing the work of their fathers, mothers, grandparents, and other relatives, these exemplars exuded a sense of being connected to their heritage and, in many cases, to dear, lost loved ones. A number of exemplars have been moved by their religious faith, spirituality, and cultural traditions. By being of service to people who have been hurt, marginalized, forgotten, or abased, they can see that they are on a meaningful, well-worn path and connect with thousands of years of tradition. For some, living in this way may be a form of personal salvation. For others, committing to social justice seems to soothe an ineffable spiritual longing for connection, meaning, and purpose in life.

Finally, I came to understand the exemplars as profoundly sensitive people. My sense is that they experience pain, compassion, and empathy when they witness the suffering of others, and that this emotional response forms a core of their commitment to social justice. From our conversations, I believe that many of the exemplars were both born with an innate capacity to experience and respond to the suffering of others, and that they have progressively honed this birthright over decades of experience. The process of seeing suffering, feeling that suffering in the depth of one's being, acting on that feeling, and becoming progressively more capable, and engaged is, in my opinion, a core reinforcing *why* of social justice work.

In closing, I feel compelled to share my nascent understanding of my own *why*. In the moments when I have worked for social justice while maintaining genuine humility, I have a sense of making my family proud. I have been given so much in life, whether the love and caring of important others or the great wealth that comes with unearned privilege. I know, without having been told directly, that I am expected to give as much of it back as I can. In acknowledging my own deeply personal motivation for caring about social justice, I am filled with a core emotion just beyond words that is both overwhelming and liberating.

Another *why* is equally driven by my own needs as a person. For as long as I can remember, I have experienced an ache of longing around spirituality. For reasons that I cannot yet enumerate, my aching has been soothed when I am able to offer what I have of myself to someone who is suffering. Over time, what began as a feeling of longing or perhaps lacking has transformed to a grounded sense of purpose and authentic spirituality. Experiences of connectedness and meaning have not always involved social justice. But the depth of unfairness I have witnessed in the context of social justice issues like racism, classism, homophobia, and sexism touches me in a singularly emotional place. Participant 3 described experiencing "interbeing," which he described as seeing, in the context of healing interpersonal relationships, that we are all irrefutably united as one. Philosophers, poets, shaman, and, as evidenced by this project, healers like mental health professionals have grappled with the question of our connectedness as humans for millennia. In closing, I offer that the following expression of our connection to each other as the *why* for my own social justice commitment:

No man is an island,

Entire of itself.
Each is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.
If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less.
As well as if a promontory were.
As well as if a manner of thine own
Or of thine friend's were.
Each man's death diminishes me,
For I am involved in mankind.
Therefore, send not to know
For whom the bell tolls,
It tolls for thee. (Donne, 1624)

Demographic Table

Participant	Credential	Experience (years)	Setting	Sex/Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Other
1	PhD, Licensed Psychologist (LP)	22	College Counseling	Female	White	Queer-identified
2	PsyD (LP pending)	20	Private Practice	Male	Latino	Adopted
3	PhD (LP pending)	20	College Counseling	Male	White	
4	PsyD, LP	20	Community Agency	Female	White	
5	MSW, LICSW	25	Community Agency	Male	White	Jewish
6	PhD (LP pending)	15	Community Agency	Female	Asian-American	
7	PhD, LMFT	15	Private Practice	Male	African-American	
8	PhD, LP	10	University Teaching	Female	African-American	
9	PhD, LP	45	Community Agency	Male	White	Jewish
10	PhD, LP	30	College Counseling	Male	White	Jewish
11	PhD, Philosophy	20	University Administration	Female	White	Queer-identified
12	MA, LP	25	Community Agency	Female	White	
13	PhD, LP	20	Community Agency	Male	White	
14	PhD, LP	44	Community Agency	Male	White	Bisexual-identified
15	PhD, LP	35	Private Practice	Female	White	
16	PhD, LP	35	Community Agency	Female	Latina	
17	PhD, LP	30	Private Practice	Female	White	
18	PhD, LP	36	Community Agency	Male	White	

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APPENDIX A

Invitation to Initial Informants

Based on your expertise, experience, and reputation, you have been identified as a professional with extensive knowledge regarding the practice of social justice in counseling and psychology. I would like to request your assistance with my doctoral dissertation.

Our goal is to identify practitioners with exemplary commitments to social justice. We ask that you please nominate 5 professionals whom you believe exemplify the practice of social justice in counseling and psychology. You may submit your nominees by responding to this email. Your nominees should have at least 5 years of professional experience and an advanced degree in either counseling or psychology. You may nominate yourself. While you are not obligated, an email address for each nominee would be helpful.

Participants who are nominated frequently will be asked to complete a 60-90 minute interview with me regarding their professional development and practice. These interviews will be transcribed and examined using qualitative methods.

Your response to this email will be kept completely confidential. Nominees will not be informed of who nominated them.

For this study, social justice practice is defined as: "scholarship and professional action designed to change societal values, structures, policies, and practices, such that disadvantaged or marginalized groups gain increased access to these tools of self-determination" (Goodman et al., 2004, p. 795).

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. Your efforts will contribute to a deeper understanding of how counselors and psychologists experience social justice in their professional lives.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Michael Goh by email at gohxx001@umn.edu or by phone at 612-624-4885.

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APPENDIX B

Semi-structured Interview Protocol

1. What does the term *social justice* mean to you in your work?
2. How did you develop your perspective on social justice?
3. What influences significantly affected your orientation towards social justice?
4. Has your perspective on social justice changed as you have gained professional experience? How so?
5. What does social justice practice look like in your professional life?
6. Can you provide a brief illustration/case example of social justice in practice?
7. Are there challenges associated with working the way that you do? If so, what are they? How do you manage them?
8. How do you sustain your commitment to social justice? Can you provide a brief illustration/example?
9. How has your commitment to social justice affected your professional identity?

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent Statement

A study of exemplars of social justice commitment in counseling and psychology

You are invited to participate in an interview regarding social justice development and practice in counseling and psychology. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to complete the interview. This study is being conducted by Adam Sumner, M.S. for his doctoral dissertation at the department of Educational Psychology in the University of Minnesota. He is advised by Dr. Michael Goh at the University of Minnesota.

Background Information: The purpose of the interview is to gather information about social justice in counseling and psychology practice. Your input will greatly help us enhance our understanding of social justice in counseling and psychology. We will appreciate your efforts and time.

Procedures: If you agree to participate, you will be asked to a structured interview. The interview consists of open-ended questions. The interview should take about 60-90 minutes. The interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed.

Risks and Benefits of Participating in the Study: There are no significant risks or benefits associated with this study.

Confidentiality: The interview confidential. The records of this study will be kept private. All identifying information will be removed from the transcript of the interview and audio-recordings will be destroyed.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Adam Sumner, M.S. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact him at 612-624-5728, sumn0025@umn.edu or his advisor Dr. Michael Goh at 612-624-4885, gohxx001@umn.edu. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk to someone other than the researchers, contact Research Subjects' Advocate line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware Street S.E., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; telephone 612-625-1650. You may have a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Participant Certification: I have read this Consent form. I have had the opportunity to ask, and I have received answers to, any questions I had regarding the study. I understand that if I have any additional questions about my rights as a research

participant, I may call 612-624-5728 or email Adam Sumner, sumn0025@umn.edu.

By completing the interview, I agree to take part in this study as a research participant. In doing so I affirm that I am at least 18 years old and that I have received a copy of this Consent and Authorization form.

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Appendix D

Summary of Domains and Themes

Question 1: What is social justice in counseling and psychology?

Domain A: Living Social Justice: Participants identified social justice as a core component of their personal and professional identities. Domain A, Living Social Justice, encompasses themes related to the broader, pervasive ways that social justice comprises a significant presence in their lives.

Theme 1: Personal/Professional Integration (general; *n* = 18)

Theme 2: Career Choice (typical; *n* = 10)

Theme 3: Evolving Social Justice Development (typical; *n* = 12)

Theme 4: Social Justice Pervades Conceptualization (variant; *n* = 6)

Theme 5: Humility (variant; *n* = 6)

Domain B: Underlying Values: For the participants, values represented a core aspect of how they identified social justice in their work. As described by the participants, these core values are not static, but rather are actively applied to their ongoing social justice work.

Theme 6: Equity (typical; *n* = 15)

Theme 7: Increasing Access to Care (typical; *n* = 10)

Theme 8: Awareness of Power and Privilege (typical; *n* = 15)

Theme 9: Human Rights (variant; *n* = 5)

Domain C: Action/Intervention - System Focused: In addition to broad personal factors and underlying values, the participant identified a series of actions that they

considered key to social justice work. Domain C comprises those actions that specifically focused on addressing systemic concerns and societal-level injustices.

Theme 10: Working With and Against "the System" (general; *n* = 17)

Theme 11: Bringing Services to the Underserved (typical; *n* = 14)

Theme 12: Advocacy/"Giving Voice" (typical; *n* = 15)

Theme 13: Raising Awareness (typical; *n* = 14)

Theme 14: Leadership (typical; *n* = 13)

Theme 15: Training/"Passing it On" (typical; *n* = 14)

Theme 16: Building Professional Connections (typical; *n* = 12)

Domain D: Action/Intervention- Client Focused: In addition to interventions focused on systemic issues or using broader community resources, the participants identified a number of strategies they use when working directly with clients.

Theme 17: Actively Addressing Social Context and Marginalization (general; *n* = 18)

Theme 18: Fostering Empowerment (typical; *n* = 13)

Theme 19: Social Justice Work is Healing (variant; *n* = 9)

Theme 20: Conveying Empathy (variant; *n* = 8)

Theme 21: Seeing "the Whole Person" (variant; *n* = 6)

Domain E: Applying Critical Understandings and Influences: The participants described essential understandings and intellectual influences that they apply directly in their social justice work. The themes in this domain comprise the fluid, dynamic theories, understandings, and influences that form the working model of their approach to social justice.

Theme 22: Cultural Consciousness (general; *n* = 17)

Theme 23: Innovation and Flexibility (typical; *n* = 15)

Theme 24: Learning from and Adapting to Community/client needs (typical; *n* = 14)

Theme 25: Working through the Field's Historical Shortcomings (typical; *n* = 10)

Theme 26: Feminist Principles (variant; *n* = 6)

Question 2: How did the exemplar develop his/her perspective on social justice?

Domain F: Contextual Influences: The participants described having been influenced in developing their social justice orientation by a number of contextual and social factors.

Theme 27: Social Movements: Civil Rights, Women's Movement, GLBTQ Rights Movement, etc. (typical; *n* = 15)

Theme 28: Faith Traditions and Spirituality (typical; *n* = 12)

Theme 29: Cultural Values (variant; *n* = 7)

Theme 30: Geography/place (variant; *n* = 4)

Domain G: Personal Narrative: The participants noted that they had also been influenced by their individual development, disposition, introspection, and the way that they responded to their life experiences.

Theme 31: Personal/Professional Integration in Personal Narrative (general; *n* = 18)

Theme 32: Own experience of Marginalization (typical; *n* = 10)

Domain H: Interpersonal Relationships: Participants noted that significant others in their lives also influenced their social justice orientation.

Theme 33: Family Support and Traditions (typical; *n* = 13)

Theme 34: Mentors and Role Models (typical; *n* = 12)

Question 3: What are the challenges associated with the exemplar's social justice work?

Domain I: Professional Challenges: The participants described a number of challenges in their professional actions and interactions related to social justice work.

Theme 35: Resistance and Conflict (general; *n* = 17)

Theme 36: Extra Time and Work (typical; *n* = 10)

Theme 37: Financial Strain (typical; *n* = 10)

Theme 38: Social Justice was not Addressed in Training (variant; *n* = 9)

Domain J: Personal Challenges: In addition to the professional challenges noted above, the participants also cited numerous challenges of a more personal and emotional nature.

Theme 39: Emotional Stress/Burnout (typical; *n* = 15)

Theme 40: Requires Patience (variant; *n* = 9)

Theme 41: Facing Endless Need (variant; *n* = 8)

Theme 42: Complexity (variant; *n* = 6)

Question 4: How does the exemplar maintain her/his vitality and resilience?

Domain K: Self-Care: The participants described various ways of maintaining their vitality and resiliency through attention to self-care.

Theme 43: Connecting with Allies and Fostering Community (general; *n* = 18)

Theme 44: Work/Life Balance (typical; *n* = 14)

Theme 45: "Pick your battles" (variant; *n* = 9)

Domain L: Inherent Rewards of Social Justice Work: In addition to self-care strategies, the participants noted that aspects of the work itself had helped to maintain their resiliency and vitality.

Theme 46: Social Justice Work is Effective (typical; *n* = 12)

Theme 47: Social Justice work is Inherently Rewarding (typical; *n* = 12)

Domain M: Deep Meaning: Participants described social justice as being a source of deep meaning in their lives, and that this aspect of their commitment formed a core aspect of maintaining their resiliency and vitality.

Theme 48: Personal/Professional Integration in Deep Meaning (general; *n* = 18)

Theme 49: Spirituality/Higher Meaning (typical; *n* = 12)

Theme 50: Hope/belief in Human Resilience (typical; *n* = 11)

Theme 51: Legacy (variant; *n* = 8)