

## **CSJ Position Statement on Infusion of the Advocacy Competencies into Counseling and Counselor Education Programs**

### **CSJ Position**

Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ) emphasizes the Advocacy Competencies as an important element of counseling and counselor education programs and recommends that they be infused throughout all programs.

### **The Rationale**

Counselors have responsibilities to empower and advocate for underrepresented, marginalized and oppressed groups serving as a voice with and on behalf of them. These responsibilities are both ethical and professional duties of all counselors. To this end, the Advocacy Competencies should be infused into counseling and counselor education programs providing theoretical and practical knowledge to counselors-in-training and preparing students as social change agents and advocates for an increasingly diverse society.

Ethical counselors are aware of their roles as empowering agents and advocates in service as change agents on the systemic level to serve better to the marginalized and to underrepresented, marginalized, and oppressed individuals and groups. The Advocacy Competencies refer to counselors' ability to recognize the injustices that effect physical, academic, career, economic, and mental well being of individuals and having the skill sets to act to alleviate such injustices in the society. This is accomplished by working with and on behalf of our clients, the community, and society at large. Social justice advocacy is a fundamental element of providing culturally sensitive and effective services to clients therefore should be a core element in counselor education programs.

Current discussion among the scholars of counseling and counselor education supports bringing the issues of diversity, culture and context out of the periphery of counseling and counselor education programs and integrating them into the core values. This is done by infusing multicultural and social justice education into all curricular and extracurricular activities in counseling programs.

### **Relevance to Counseling**

Clients' experiences and issues are affected by their environments and society at large. Oftentimes social injustices, marginalization and oppression in the forms of racism, sexism, ableism, classism, heterosexism, sizeism, ageism and inequitable distribution of power, inequitable access to resources and inequitable access to participation function as significant causal factors in the development of clients' presenting problems. Therefore counselors are not only responsible for helping clients' change but also have responsibilities to confront and change injustices in society.

### **Recommended Actions**

1. The Advocacy Competencies should be reflected in the core values of the counseling programs.
2. The Advocacy Competencies should be infused to the entire counselor education programs in a way that the competencies are reflected in all course syllabi, mission and vision of the programs.
3. The training of counselors should reflect multicultural perspectives as well as international and global applications and iterations of counseling theory and practice. Counselors should be trained as local, regional, and international social justice advocates.
4. Counseling and counselor education programs should empower their students to take more active roles in community transformation efforts, social justice organizations, action research, and service learning.
5. Counseling and counselor education programs should provide opportunities to the students to learn to become global social justice advocates by providing international practicum and internship experiences.
6. Counseling and counselor education programs should support research and scholarship in the area of social justice and social change that is responsive to client needs.
7. CACREP and CORE standards should include expectations of the infusion of the Advocacy Competencies in all accredited programs.