

Article 10

Engaging Students and Supervisees in Social Justice: *The Social Justice Toolbox*

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Abstract

Social justice has been identified as the “fifth force” in counseling (Ratts, 2009, p. 160). As such, counselor educators and supervisors must respond by helping counselors-in-training become competent social change agents. This article presents an approach to teaching social justice skills entitled the *Social Justice Toolbox*, a collection of tools that students, educators, and supervisors can use to assist them in becoming actively involved in social justice advocacy. The goal of the toolbox is to make taking action in social justice achievable and accessible for all, at a variety of levels of participation. Additionally, potential research questions are presented.

Social justice has gained recognition as a core component of the counseling profession (Ratts, 2009). Advocates argue it is time for practicing counselors to intervene with clients beyond the traditional “culturally impositional” individual level, as it does not account for the role of oppression in the lives of clients (Chang, Crethar, & Ratts, 2010, p. 83). The Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ) division of the American Counseling Association (ACA) advocates an approach to counseling that accounts for all aspects of clients’ lives, promotes growth and empowerment, and works to combat societal injustices (CSJ, 2011). Further, the ACA Code of Ethics (2005) states, “When appropriate, counselors advocate at individual, group, institutional, and societal levels to examine potential barriers and obstacles that inhibit access and/or the growth and development of clients” (A.6.a, p. 5).

Though the above represents a call to the profession, translating this call to action presents unique challenges. This challenge remains in spite of the connection between multiculturalism (a core component of counseling practice) and social justice that is reflected in the counseling literature (e.g., Ratts, 2011; Vera & Speight, 2003). A participant in Odegard and Vereen's (2010) qualitative research elaborated on the connection with a reflection stating, "the advocacy competencies are just the action [version, the] connection to the multicultural competencies" (p. 141); however, this leap is not always easily made.

While conducting professional presentations on the topic of social justice advocacy, we have come to better understand some of the challenges professionals in counseling face in teaching and implementing social justice. Many individuals have reported an interest in participating in social justice advocacy, but hesitate when it comes to taking action. For some there is a reported lack of time to properly engage in advocacy, an unclear understanding of advocacy efforts, and/or lack of motivation to continue efforts when faced with challenges.

These anecdotal challenges reported by potential social change agents are echoed in the literature. Ward (2006) interviewed Mark Kiselica, a counselor educator who has published articles on social justice, about his development as a social justice advocate. During this interview, Kiselica noted that there is a misconception perpetuated by the social justice literature that "you must be extremely vocal to be an effective advocacy counselor" (p. 17). Kiselica also noted, "it is important for counselors to identify a style of social justice work that is right for them" (p. 17). In addressing the same issue, Glossoff and Durham (2010) suggested that an understanding of the complexity of advocacy work is essential. Therefore, a psychoeducational resource designed to inform, instruct, and motivate counseling professionals in their pursuit of advocacy efforts could help ameliorate some of these concerns.

The purpose of this article is to introduce educators and supervisors to an educational resource entitled the *Social Justice Toolbox*. This toolbox is conceptually linked to the ACA Advocacy Competencies (Lewis, Arnold, House, & Toporek, 2002). It is designed to help an individual find his or her place in the world of social justice advocacy and to provide supervisors and educators with a tool to use in their efforts to support the growth of counselors-in-training. It provides concrete activities for counselor trainees along the complex range noted by Glossoff and Durham (2010). It is our hope that this resource reduces the hesitation we believe is based in fear of not being able to do something "good enough" to be considered significant.

Counselor Education and Supervision in Social Justice Training

Counselor educators and supervisors have been called to take an active role in helping counselors prepare to respond to shifts in the field of counseling, including the social justice movement (Chang et al., 2010). Counselor education programs can be highly influential in counseling professionals' development of social justice advocacy skills by helping students develop self-efficacy beliefs related to social justice, providing social supports rooted in social justice (Miller & Sendrowitz, 2011; Miller et al., 2009), promoting political interest, and teaching specific skills in advocacy (Nilsson & Schmidt, 2005). Vera and Speight (2003) argued that now is the time for counselor education programs to take on the responsibility of social justice training.

Counselor education curricula have seen an increase in attention to social justice concepts according to the literature. In a review of multicultural related syllabi, Pieterse, Evans, Risner-Butner, Collins, and Mason (2009) found that 59% of the syllabi included objectives related to social justice and 48% of syllabi had some focus on social justice concepts. Social justice concepts have also been integrated into specific courses such as counseling theories (Brubaker, Puig, Reese, & Young, 2010), group counseling (Ibrahim, 2010), and Steele (2008) suggested concepts could be infused into any course subsequent to basic counseling techniques. Other counselor education curricula have integrated social justice concepts across courses or as a core philosophy of the program. Some strategies include teaching an understanding of ethics from a multicultural and social justice perspective (Pack-Brown, Thomas, & Seymour, 2008), using a cohort model and sequencing courses to promote the growth of students' commitment to social justice (Paisley, Bailey, Hayes, McMahon, & Grimmatt, 2010), immersing students in a social justice experience during their first year of training (Goodman et al., 2004), and building social justice advocacy competence by relating it to the school counselor national models (Dixon, Tucker, & Clark, 2010).

We believe that beyond didactic instruction, counselors-in-training need more focus on action, and there is a call for changes and/or additions to how social justice is taught in counselor education (e.g., Dixon et al., 2010; Miller & Sendrowitz, 2011; Pieterse et al., 2009). Pieterse et al. (2009) noted that few of the syllabi reviewed in their research included a focus on what counselors themselves can do regarding social justice. Additionally, according to Miller and Sendrowitz (2011) counselor education programs are falling far short in translating information into action. This research showed that although 58.1% of respondents felt encouraged to participate in social justice work, only 30% reported that their program provides the resources necessary for them to do so.

Counseling students have expressed a desire for social justice training to be infused throughout counseling training programs. Students in Singh et al.'s (2010) research reported a desire for social justice advocates to "walk the talk" (p. 786) and for programs to incorporate social justice training in their process without diluting the concepts. This infusion of social justice may contribute to the development of a social justice orientation, as counseling students and professionals have cited critical incidents in education and coursework as influential in their commitment to social justice work (Caldwell & Vera, 2010). The *Social Justice Toolbox* was designed to provide educators and supervisors with the tools needed to help students become social justice change agents, translating talk into action. There are specific activities to encourage even the most timid social justice advocate to become active. It is our hope that exposure to achievable social justice related activities would support students, educators, and supervisors on their journey to becoming more active and involved social change agents.

The Social Justice Toolbox

The conceptual framework for the *Social Justice Toolbox* is the ACA Advocacy Competencies (Lewis et al., 2002). These competencies, endorsed by the ACA Governing Council in 2003, are an easy to understand yet comprehensive way to conceptualize social justice. Organized in a three by two matrix, the horizontal axis identifies the level of engagement, from micro to macro. The vertical axis identifies with whom the individual engages, either on behalf of a client/student, or in conjunction with a

client/student. Each of the six domains identifies specific counselor competencies that are relevant to that domain. As such, each item included in the *Social Justice Toolbox* corresponds to a domain in the competency framework (see Figure 1). Further, each item was created in accordance with the competency standards proposed by Lewis et al. (2002). We believe that all of these items can be used in an educational or supervision setting; however, from here forward, recipients of the items described will be referred to as students, and the person handing out the toolbox items will be referred to as the educator.

Client/Student Empowerment • <i>Self-Advocacy Action Plan</i>	Community Collaboration • <i>Advocacy Opportunities</i> • <i>Personal Strengths Chart</i>	Public Information • <i>Stickers and Pins</i>
Client/Student Advocacy • <i>Resource Book</i>	Systems Advocacy • <i>Bronfrenbrenner's (1977) model</i> • <i>Personal Strengths Chart</i>	Social/Political Advocacy • <i>Sample Legislative Letter</i> • <i>Web site and Legislative Advocacy Resource Cards</i>

Figure 1. Advocacy Competency Framework with Toolbox Activities.

Introduction of the Toolbox Activity

Although instructions for use are included with each section, we encourage each individual who uses the *Social Justice Toolbox* to be creative by modifying or adding to the tools to suit his or her needs. All items can be printed on colorful cardstock to increase durability and attractiveness. Finally, we believe that there should be a container for the items. A variety of items can be used to serve this purpose (e.g., takeout containers, envelopes, bags, and cigar boxes). We suggest using anything that is readily available and cost effective.

It is important to note that discussion is an integral part of the toolbox and occurs each and every time an item is handed out. These items are not intended to be given to students in isolation as we believe that could be detrimental to the purpose of the toolbox; the lack of discussion could increase anxiety and decrease the likelihood that students will engage in social justice related activities. Some guidelines for how we conduct the discussion will be included, and these can also be tailored to the audience and to the specific situation. With each point of discussion, attempts should be made to help students take ownership of the information by participating and coming up with examples from their own lives. Active participation is highly encouraged.

Conceptual Framework of the Toolbox

ACA Advocacy Competencies. The first tool introduced is the ACA Advocacy Competencies diagram (Lewis et al., 2002). We believe this item helps students conceptualize social justice advocacy and gives a framework for the additional tools and discussion. This item is also important to help students understand the toolbox activity and gain a deeper contextual understanding of how each of the tools may be utilized. Students can be given both a full-page copy of the advocacy competencies located on the ACA Web site, www.counseling.org, as well as a small copy of the graphical representation on cardstock. (Remember to give appropriate credit to the source.) We prefer to give out both, one for detail and discussion and the other for a quick reference.

This discussion is tailored to anchor social justice in context. The Advocacy Competencies (Lewis et al., 2002) are endorsed by the ACA and can help students conceptualize all levels of advocacy. We explain the domains, drawing students' attention to the continua along the side of the graphic. If time allows, we have students talk about different examples of social justice advocacy, with the goal of highlighting a real-life example in each domain. We have also provided students with examples of social justice advocacy and asked them to determine where it falls in the competency matrix. This activity is foundational, providing the framework for understanding the complex range of social justice advocacy activities.

Social justice action continuum. The next toolbox item is an action continuum (See Figure 2). This continuum was developed collaboratively in the Social Justice Education Program of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst (R. Harro, personal communication, March 13, 2012) and can be related to the horizontal axis of the ACA Advocacy Competencies (Lewis et al., 2002). Like the Advocacy Competencies, the continuum (reviewed from left to right) can be understood to represent increasing levels of intervention. The purpose of this item is to help students expand their idea of social justice and reduce the tendency toward inaction that we believe is associated with feelings of intimidation regarding the magnitude of the task. We hope that this helps students see that even small things they do daily can work toward social justice, thus encouraging them to slowly move toward more time-intensive interventions. We have found this to be one of the ways of addressing the concerns in the literature related to people being able to find some level at which they can become active in social justice (Glossoff & Durham, 2010; Ward, 2006).

Works Against Social Justice		Works Toward Social Justice				
Actively Join in Behavior	No Response	Educate Oneself	Interrupt the Behavior	Interrupt and Educate	Support Others' Proactive Response	Initiate Proactive Response

Figure 2. Action continuum, developed collaboratively in the Social Justice Education Program of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst (Harro, 1986; McClintock, 2000).

In order to initiate such discussion and preface the handout of the action continuum, we have students identify people they think of as social justice change agents. We ask them to describe who the person is/was and what (s)he does/did. The goal is to ground the discussion in the students' real life experiences. We then guide this discussion to a focus on barriers to becoming a social change agent. Student participation is encouraged, and we ask them to reflect upon what keeps them from becoming active in social justice at the level they would like to. At this point, educators can share their own experiences of barriers they have encountered or that they currently encounter in their attempts to be social change agents. In addition we have shown video clips of well-known social change agents (e.g., Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Mother Teresa) and

centered the discussion around how, even if you cannot effect social change at that level, you can still work to promote social justice.

Following the handout, discussion is centered on determining responses to a situation presented by the educator. Students have a sheet with blanks for each level of the continuum that “works toward social justice” and work together to brainstorm responses to the situation at each of the levels of the continuum (see Figure 2). The situation should be a potential real-life situation. The goal is to help raise awareness of how they can come up with responses that work toward social justice at a variety of levels, contributing to their ability to expand their definition of social justice action.

Tools for Microlevel Intervention

After we present the two framework-related items to students, we continue to present the individual items in the toolbox, starting with what corresponds to the microlevel of intervention on the ACA Advocacy Competencies (Lewis et al., 2002). Interventions at the microlevel are performed either with or on behalf of the individual and are classified as either empowerment related (acting with) or advocacy related (acting on behalf).

Client/student empowerment: Self-advocacy action plans. The upper left-hand corner of the ACA Advocacy Competencies matrix (Lewis et al., 2002; Appendix A) represents the Client/Student Empowerment domain. Within this domain, counselors are not only able to conceptualize the social, political, economic, and cultural factors influencing client development, but also assist a client with recognizing any barriers that affect him/her. A key competency is to assist clients with developing self-advocacy action plans, which is the activity students complete in this toolbox section. According to Shepherd (2008), in order to develop an action plan, one must first understand the problem.

In the toolbox activity, the student considers a problem in his/her own life as well as the contextual factors contributing to the problem. Next, the student develops an action plan including four components: a description of what (s)he will do to address the problem, a description of how this will look when in action, a specific date with a time frame, and who will support this action (Shepherd, 2008). In this context, the final steps of the action plan will not take place. Students are encouraged to carry through with their action plan and to evaluate it after the proposed date of completion. Students are encouraged to take out their personal calendar and put in a reminder. This activity grounds the students in this first domain of the competencies and helps the students conceptualize problems differently. Students can begin to see the systemic factors that contribute to problems with which clients might present. In addition, they have a chance to practice an intervention that can be used with clients.

Client/student advocacy: Resource book. The next toolbox activity is grounded in the lower left-hand corner of the matrix, which is the Client/Student Advocacy domain. In this domain, the counselor acts on behalf of his or her client/student as opposed to supporting and assisting the client/student in self-advocacy. In addition, a counselor working in this domain conceptualizes client issues in ways that attend to contextual factors. The counselor is much more active in this stage, helping clients navigate community resources, and also advocating on their behalf. As such, the counselor needs to have a working knowledge of the existing resources.

The toolbox activity includes beginning to construct a resource book with community resources such as crisis assistance services, legal assistance agencies, employment agencies, domestic violence agencies, substance abuse treatment agencies and other treatment resources, support groups, cultural resources, community groups, and educational resources. Within the toolbox activity, one local agency per category can be identified, and the students can be encouraged to complete the resource book at a later date. Depending on the composition of the class, students can be assigned one category individually and come together to share the identified resources. Alternatively, students could create the resource book interactively via the Internet. This allows each student to have a “living” copy of the resource book that can be continually updated and easily accessed.

Tools for Community Intervention

After presenting items related to microlevel intervention, we move on to the next level of intervention in the ACA Advocacy Competencies (Lewis et al., 2002), which is related to community and systemic intervention. Like the other levels of intervention, these competencies are related to either acting with (community collaboration) or acting on behalf (systems advocacy). In this section of the toolbox students receive tools to help them move beyond individual interventions.

Personal strengths chart. The next component of the toolbox, a personal reflection on each individual’s strengths, is related to both middle sections of the Advocacy Competencies (Lewis et al., 2002). This activity helps students conceptualize their own strengths that contribute to their ability to collaborate with others and provide leadership in systemic interactions. Students are encouraged to consider a time they believe they achieved something great. Students describe the event in a group with other members listening for strengths. Having an understanding of personal strengths in conjunction with a contextual understanding of systemic processes (i.e., Bronfenbrenner’s [1977] model) will help these students realize that they do, in fact, have the skills necessary to contribute to systems level advocacy.

Community collaboration. The next activity of the toolbox is associated with the Community Collaboration domain of the Advocacy Competencies (Lewis et al., 2002), which describes counselors as allies, working with community organizations. Counselors competently engaging in advocacy join existing groups working for systemic change. Counselors are uniquely positioned to offer a variety of resources and skills to these groups (e.g., communication skills, training, and research).

Advocacy opportunities. Similar to the resource book, the toolbox contains a customized list of advocacy and volunteer outlets. This is included to show students the breadth of what is available to them in the local area, and we specify that it is not exhaustive. In fact, it is important to include blank lines and invite students to share additional opportunities from their own experiences. The list can include national organizations as well as local. Web site and contact information (phone and email when available) should be included for each organization. Some (non-exhaustive) ideas for organizations include: children’s advocacy centers; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer resource centers; homeless shelters; and food pantries. During this discussion, students are encouraged to discuss any other volunteer efforts in which they have participated and their experiences doing so.

Systems advocacy. This domain of the competencies focuses on understanding systems and the impact a counselor can have in fostering systemic change. In order to do so, the participants of the toolbox activity need to have an understanding of systems, as well as an understanding of their own personal strengths, which may be beneficial in terms of advocating for systemic change.

Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological systems model. Bronfenbrenner's model is first presented as a graphic representation. The graphic display is straightforward, and describes the different levels of systemic interaction (i.e., meso, macro, micro) and provides for the students a reference to assist them in understanding systems theory and conceptualizing social justice interventions. Further, the model is beneficial as it provides context for conceptualizing factors that influence clients'/students' development. This activity is didactic in nature, with the purpose of providing the student with a more in-depth understanding of systemic processes.

Tools for Macrolevel Intervention

The final level of the ACA Advocacy Competencies (Lewis et al., 2002) is the macrolevel. Interventions on this level include Public Information (acting with) and Social/Political Advocacy (acting on behalf). Students are provided with several activities to address these domains.

Public information: stickers and pins. The Public Information domain of the competencies presented by Lewis et al. (2002) is incredibly important as it relates to counselors. Not only are counselors effective in working with individual clients, families, couples, and groups, in a variety of different environments, counselors have strong interpersonal skills that can be used for activities beyond traditional counseling. This domain includes educating the public and fostering awareness of issues related to human dignity.

Sometimes, awareness does not need spoken words to have a large impact. For this reason, we include stickers and pins for students to display. These can help identify them as social change agents and provide a very easy way for students to feel like they are getting started with acting as agents of change. Further, although small in size, these public displays of advocacy have the potential to make a large public impact. We collect these stickers and buttons from any organization willing to donate them, but many can be purchased online. One we have used frequently is the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) stickers "racism hurts everyone," a phrase that is part of the YWCA's Stand Against Racism campaign (YWCA Trenton & YWCA Princeton, 2012). Although this activity is not something that is desirable as the only social justice undertaking that students adopt, it is designed to be a starting point or a simple addition to being social change agents. Thus, this activity highlights the ultimate purpose of the toolbox, which is to get students started in social justice activity in some way, with the hope that their involvement will grow.

Social/political advocacy. The competencies include a domain related to social and political advocacy engagement. To help conceptualize this domain, two toolbox activities are suggested. The hope is that counselors can understand the importance of seeking out allies, in addition to what it may look like to engage in political lobbying with legislators and policy makers. The competencies also emphasize the importance of maintaining an open dialogue with communities. This is important not only for

counselors advocating on behalf of clients, but also important for advocating on behalf of the counseling profession.

Sample legislative letter. Legislative advocacy is an important part of advocacy because it allows students to participate in the policymaking that affects both their profession and their clients' lives. Therefore, the *Social Justice Toolbox* contains a sample letter to a legislator and a stamped envelope. This is included as a hard copy letter, as the actual postal mail letter makes more of an impact than an email or form letter (J. Warren, personal communication, October 6, 2012). The example letter should include: headings, reference to a specific bill and what it is intended to accomplish, why it is important, and an expression of the sender's appreciation for the time, attention, and support of the bill. The following resource in the toolbox can go hand in hand with the letter to help students know whom they should contact regarding legislative issues. During the discussion about legislative advocacy, an educator might choose to call the students' attention to other ways to be involved at this level, such as making calls or appointments with legislators, as well as give specific examples of current legislation affecting counselors and/or clients.

Web site and legislative advocacy resource cards. The toolbox also includes several small resource cards that can be hooked together with a small key ring. These include the following Web sites: ACA public policy (www.counseling.org/publicpolicy), Counselors for Social Justice (counselorsforsocialjustice.net), the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (www.multiculturalcounseling.org), and a legislative advocacy contacts card (see Appendix B). Students can be shown the Web sites, encouraged to sign up for ACA's Government Relations listserv, and shown how to locate their representatives via the link from ACA's public policy site (<http://capwiz.com/counseling/home/>). We encourage students to fill out the legislative contacts card with their federal and state government contacts while making the toolbox, as it saves them from having to complete an additional step that may later prove to be a barrier to using the card. If this is not possible, they can be shown the Web site and provided the link to do it at a later time.

Closing Activities

The last three activities do not correspond to Lewis et al.'s (2002) competencies. However, we believe they are important for summarizing the entire toolbox activity. They are provided to students as pieces of encouragement and motivation. It is our hope that these activities will further promote students' movement from social justice related discussion to action.

Inspirational quotes. We believe that even the most dedicated social change agent can experience burnout, and we make sure to acknowledge this as part of the discussion. In helping students normalize this feeling and providing them with some tools for encouragement, we hope to show them that they can work through those discouraged stages and continue to act for social justice. Therefore, students are provided with a variety of quotes from which they can choose as many as they want. These quotes were selected for their ability to convey things including: importance of social justice, the meaning of social justice, or the perspective of a famous proponent of social justice.

Identify sources of support. In our discussion with participants in our presentations, we have often heard that people feel unsupported or alone in their social justice efforts. In order to address the need for support, the toolbox can include a small

card entitled “My social justice support system.” We suggest having several blanks on this card and allowing students to interpret this broadly. Some suggestions could include identifying people who can provide support, self-care activities to employ when feeling discouraged, or groups that promote social justice. Finally, we have set up a blog that we would like to see become a source of support for counselors working for social justice, <http://counselorsforchange.blogspot.com/>. This activity highlights the importance of learning from others. By having sources of support identified, students can plan out to whom/what they can turn when in need.

Commitment card. Finally, students make an active commitment to something that they can accomplish. They are encouraged to focus on making it achievable rather than lofty, as the whole point of the toolbox has been aimed at getting people to accomplish what they can, not what they wish they could. Students can write on one side of an index card “My commitment to social justice” and on the other, their specific, achievable commitment. We have also used a quote here, selecting the famous quote attributed to Margaret Mead, “Never doubt that a small group of committed individuals can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Implications

The *Social Justice Toolbox* was created as a result of our experiences as social justice change agents in training. In our work as counselors, educators, and supervisors, we have come to believe that concrete tools for doing social justice work can help counselors develop their own voice as social change agents and help those who are struggling with how to get started developing their social justice self-efficacy. Therefore, the *Social Justice Toolbox* provides an educational tool that can be used in counselor training in a variety of ways, be it personal growth, didactic instruction, or supervision.

The implications of having such tools available are unknown, but could be far-reaching. We believe the more educators and supervisors use a social justice framework in training future counselors and engage trainees in small acts to promote social justice, the more counselors will feel competent in their skills as social change agents. Because self-efficacy beliefs have been shown to play a role in social justice work (Miller et al., 2009), fostering a sense of self-confidence related to acting as social justice advocates seems advisable. Perhaps the more trainees believe in their ability to effectively do social justice work, the more they might engage in larger and more challenging social justice projects. This would hopefully lead to many positive changes for both the counseling profession and the lives of clients, dismantling systems that promote oppression.

Engaging in social justice activities would benefit clients. Counselors who are competent in and comfortable with social justice can advocate for clients who are dealing with oppressive systems. These counselors can answer the professional and ethical call to view clients more holistically within their various systems. Further, these counselors can respond on a much more effective level, by helping bring about systemic change for the good of clients.

Conclusions

Social justice has been established as a core component of the counseling profession (Ratts, 2009). Although there has been an increase in conceptual pieces concerning the importance of social justice within the profession, there has been a

relative lack of attention given to the education of social change agents. By providing the *Social Justice Toolbox* model, we hope to begin to address this need by providing counseling professionals, educators, and supervisors with the tools needed to translate desire into action at whatever level they feel capable. It is also our hope that making the *Social Justice Toolbox* available to counseling professionals could further empirical exploration of this instructional tool, and that ultimately clients will benefit from increased social justice efforts of counselors who make use of the *Social Justice Toolbox*.

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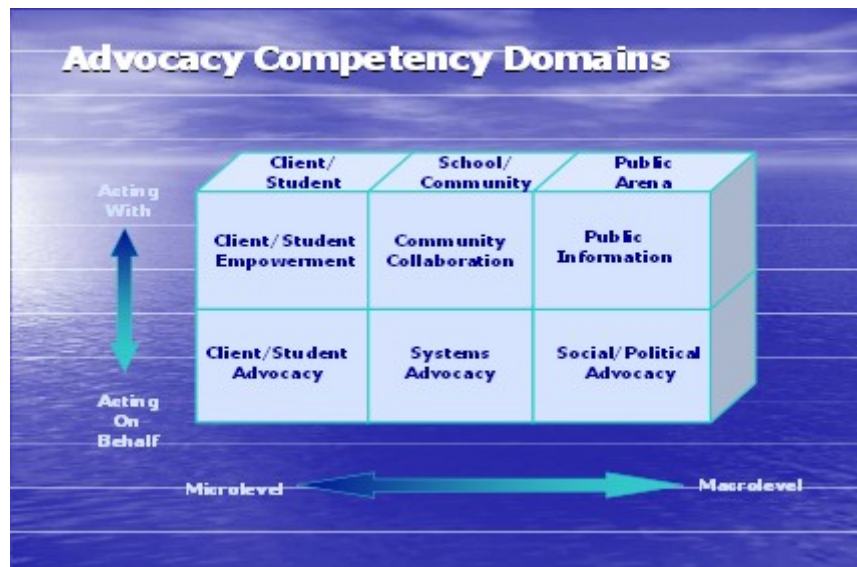
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Appendix A

Advocacy Competency Domains



ADVOCACY COMPETENCIES: Lewis, Arnold, House & Toporek

Endorsed by the ACA Governing Council March 20-22, 2003

Client/Student Empowerment

- An advocacy orientation involves not only systems change interventions but also the implementation of empowerment strategies in direct counseling.
- Advocacy-oriented counselors recognize the impact of social, political, economic, and cultural factors on human development.
- They also help their clients and students understand their own lives in context. This lays the groundwork for self-advocacy.

Empowerment Counselor Competencies

In direct interventions, the counselor is able to:

1. Identify strengths and resources of clients and students.
2. Identify the social, political, economic, and cultural factors that affect the client/student.
3. Recognize the signs indicating that an individual's behaviors and concerns reflect responses to systemic or internalized oppression.
4. At an appropriate development level, help the individual identify the external barriers that affect his or her development.
5. Train students and clients in self-advocacy skills.
6. Help students and clients develop self-advocacy action plans.
7. Assist students and clients in carrying out action plans.

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Client/Student Advocacy

- When counselors become aware of external factors that act as barriers to an individual's development, they may choose to respond through advocacy.
- The client/student advocate role is especially significant when individuals or vulnerable groups lack access to needed services.

Client/Student Advocacy Counselor Competencies

In environmental interventions on behalf of clients and students, the counselor is able to:

8. Negotiate relevant services and education systems on behalf of clients and students.
9. Help clients and students gain access to needed resources.
10. Identify barriers to the well-being of individuals and vulnerable groups.
11. Develop an initial plan of action for confronting these barriers.
12. Identify potential allies for confronting the barriers.
13. Carry out the plan of action.

Community Collaboration

- Their ongoing work with people gives counselors a unique awareness of recurring themes. Counselors are often among the first to become aware of specific difficulties in the environment.
- Advocacy-oriented counselors often choose to respond to such challenges by alerting existing organizations that are already working for change and that might have an interest in the issue at hand.
- In these situations, the counselor's primary role is as an ally. Counselors can also be helpful to organizations by making available to them our particular skills: interpersonal relations, communications, training, and research.

Community Collaboration Counselor Competencies

14. Identify environmental factors that impinge upon students' and clients' development.
15. Alert community or school groups with common concerns related to the issue.
16. Develop alliances with groups working for change.
17. Use effective listening skills to gain understanding of the group's goals.
18. Identify the strengths and resources that the group members bring to the process of systemic change.
19. Communicate recognition of and respect for these strengths and resources.
20. Identify and offer the skills that the counselor can bring to the collaboration.
21. Assess the effect of counselor's interaction with the community.

Systems Advocacy

- When counselors identify systemic factors that act as barriers to their students' or clients' development, they often wish that they could change the environment and prevent some of the problems that they see every day.
- Regardless of the specific target of change, the processes for altering the status quo have common qualities. Change is a process that requires vision, persistence, leadership, collaboration, systems analysis, and strong data. In many situations, a counselor is the right person to take leadership.

Systems Advocacy Counselor Competencies

In exerting systems-change leadership at the school or community level, the advocacy-oriented counselor is able to:

22. Identify environmental factors impinging on students' or clients' development
23. Provide and interpret data to show the urgency for change.
24. In collaboration with other stakeholders, develop a vision to guide change.
25. Analyze the sources of political power and social influence within the system.
26. Develop a step-by-step plan for implementing the change process.
27. Develop a plan for dealing with probable responses to change.
28. Recognize and deal with resistance.
29. Assess the effect of counselor's advocacy efforts on the system and constituents

Public Information

- Across settings, specialties, and theoretical perspectives, professional counselors share knowledge of human development and expertise in communication.
- These qualities make it possible for advocacy-oriented counselors to awaken the general public to macro-systemic issues regarding human dignity

Public Information Counselor Competencies

In informing the public about the role of environmental factors in human development, the advocacy-oriented counselor is able to:

30. Recognize the impact of oppression and other barriers to healthy development.
31. Identify environmental factors that are protective of healthy development.
32. Prepare written and multi-media materials that provide clear explanations of the role of specific environmental factors in human development.
33. Communicate information in ways that are ethical and appropriate for the target population.
34. Disseminate information through a variety of media.
35. Identify and collaborate with other professionals who are involved in disseminating public information.
36. Assess the influence of public information efforts undertaken by the counselor.

Social/Political Advocacy

- Counselors regularly act as change agents in the systems that affect their own students and clients most directly. This experience often leads toward the recognition that some of the concerns they have addressed affected people in a much larger arena.
- When this happens, counselors use their skills to carry out social/political advocacy.

Social/Political Advocacy Counselor Competencies

In influencing public policy in a large, public arena, the advocacy-oriented counselor is able to:

37. Distinguish those problems that can best be resolved through social/political action.
38. Identify the appropriate mechanisms and avenues for addressing these problems.
39. Seek out and join with potential allies.
40. Support existing alliances for change.
41. With allies, prepare convincing data and rationales for change.
42. With allies, lobby legislators and other policy makers.
43. Maintain open dialogue with communities and clients to ensure that the social/political advocacy is consistent with the initial goals.

Appendix B

Legislative Advocacy Contacts Card

Front

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CONTACTS		
<i>SENATOR</i>	<i>SENATOR</i>	<i>REPRESENTATIVE</i>
Phone_____	Phone_____	Phone_____
Email_____	Email_____	Email_____
Address	Address	Address
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Back

STATE CONTACTS		
<i>North Carolina</i>	<i>North Carolina</i>	<i>North Carolina</i>
Position_____	Position_____	Position_____
Phone_____	Phone_____	Phone_____
Email_____	Email_____	Email_____
Address	Address	Address
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____