

Chapter 3: Social Justice in Counseling

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Key Constructs

- Social Advocacy – the act of arguing on behalf of an individual, group, idea or issue
- Social Justice – a belief in a just world that respects and protects human rights.
- Social justice counseling – counseling that recognizes the impact of oppression, privilege, and discrimination on the mental health of individuals.

Key Constructs

- Social injustice – unequal distribution of rewards and burdens.
 - Education and achievement gaps in schools
 - Limited housing
 - Poverty
 - Child exploitation
 - Racial profiling
 - Violence towards marginalized groups

Key Constructs

- Oppression – a state of asymmetric power relations characterized by domination, subordination and resistance, where the dominating person or groups exercise their power by restricting access and by implanting in the subordinated persons or groups fear

Key Constructs

- Privilege – having power, access, advantage and majority status
 - Control, choice, autonomy and influence over others
 - Favorable treatment, entitlement
 - Inversely related to oppression
- Empowerment – equitable distribution of power (goal of social justice counseling)

Social Injustice and Mental Health Issues

- Racial, ethnic and cultural minorities experience the most discrimination and poverty, yet have limited access to mental health care.
 - Susceptibility to depression, anxiety, suicide, substance abuse, violence, chronic medical issues.
 - Stress is the primary cause of emotional disturbances.

Counselors as Social Advocates

- Paradigm Shift; Counselors must:
 - Re-conceptualize theory and practice
 - Intervene at individual and societal levels
 - Reject neutrality in counseling
 - Self-exploration
 - Explore personal life's meaning
 - Explore personal privilege
 - Explore the nature of oppression
 - Work to become multiculturally literate
 - Establish a personal social justice compass

Challenges of Social Justice Counseling

What do you think are some of the biggest challenges?

Benefits of Social Justice Counseling

What are some of the benefits?