

Social Justice Plan

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Social Justice Action Plan

Ethical decision-making can be beneficial in creating personal and professional philosophies. Many professional organizations, like the American Counseling Association, have official codes of ethics that are available as a guideline. Counselors may use these ethical guidelines to develop a professional philosophy of practice that increases awareness of ethics and addresses social justice in practice. Lee (2007) created a five-step self-reflective process so that counselors could develop a plan based on knowledge and skills. This paper, using the five-step self-reflections of Lee (2007), will present my personal experiences and knowledge that helped me develop a professional philosophy that is ethical and addresses social justice.

Explore Life Meaning and Commitment

Understanding the reasoning behind an action is just as important as the action itself. With integrity in mind, I see myself as a social justice advocate because, as a Christian and a rising counselor educator, advocacy is the right thing to do. Social justice is the concept of promoting fairness and equity, based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, physical or mental disability, education, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status (Lee, 2007). While social justice is difficult to define at times, the underlying principle is that all people have the right to equitable treatment, help for their human rights, and a fair share of societal resources (Lee, 2007). As a minister of the Gospel, I believe in advocating for social justice because the Bible admonishes us to do so. As noted,

"Defend the defenseless, the fatherless, and the forgotten, the disenfranchised, and the destitute" (Psalms 82:3, The Passion Translation). So, advocating is a serious matter to me because there are people in this world who are helpless and have no means of defending themselves.

When considering my personal and professional philosophies, my purpose is to intervene and challenge any environmental barriers that stand in the way of social justice because Jesus challenged society to advocate for social justice. I believe that oppression still exists today in society. As an immigrant, I have experienced discrimination because of the color of my skin and my accent. I have also observed people suffer oppression in many ways, such as inequality for women in their workplace, discrimination, and racial bias. Thus, as a new counselor educator and a professional counselor, I make it my aim to oppose all forms of oppression and discrimination.

Because my clients or students may experience oppression, just as I suffered social injustice, it is my responsibility to ensure that I promote access and equity.

I am convinced that as an advocate for social justice, my contribution will go a long way to oppose social injustice in society. Awareness is an excellent means to educate others on how social injustice can damage the human spirit and how it denies individuals the freedom to develop.

Explore Personal Privilege

Understanding culture and cultural differences are also essential to the development of a philosophy. I believe that in this country, there are cultures or subcultures with certain privileges. Often the cultures with fewer opportunities tend to suffer injustice. For example, in my home country, Ghana, I belong to the Akan culture, which is the most dominant culture in the country. Due to the contribution that the Akan tribe made to the abolishment of the slave trade, it gained prestige in the country. Therefore, individuals of the Akan tribe often look down upon other tribes who speak with a different dialect. For example, even now, it is complicated for people from my tribe to marry people from the Northern tribe. Our Akan tribe does not respect and

value tribe in the Northern part of the country. Hence, discrimination has led to inequality within the tribe. I think that it is not fair for one tribe to look down or show prejudice to another tribe, and as a risen counselor, I make it my aim to educate and challenge society to end cultural oppositions.

Explore the Nature of Oppression

Counseling for social justice involves an understanding of the nature of oppression. Whenever people are denied access and equity that ensure full participation in the life of a society, they experience oppression. It is essential, therefore, to consider the impact of oppression on one's life and work. Questions to consider would include, how have I been a victim of oppression? How have I contributed to the perpetuation of oppression? Have I used personal or professional authority or power in unjust ways? (Lee, 2007, p. 2)

Oppression continues in the United States today. I believe that some people experience denied access and equity in society, and that is oppression (Lee, 2007).

Being an immigrant and an African, I have had my share of oppression in America. About twenty years ago, my wife and I joined a church in North Carolina. Before that, I had been a pastor for ten years, both in Europe and Alexandria, Virginia. I went through all the membership requirements of the church, including three months of membership class, and another three months leadership class before I became a fully-fledged member. I started preaching on Wednesday nights. However, one day, while I was cleaning the church, one of the pastors said to me, "Pastor Kwame, I know you are doing everything right in this church, but some of the members are racist, and they do not like you because of your background." I did not believe it at first; however, when it was time for the church to launch me out as a church planter, the only support they gave me was a book.

Meanwhile, that church had been supporting missionaries and church planters around the world. The lack of support the church showed me was disheartening. I was unfortunate to experience this, even in the house of God.

Work to Become Multiculturally Literate

Recognizing cultural diversity is also an important consideration when contemplating personal philosophies. I believe that as a Christian, God expects me to live life in such a way that I can be the light and salt of society. However, I cannot influence society in any way without becoming multicultural literate. Lee (2007) explained that becoming a multicultural literate involves a commitment to living cultural diversity, acquiring the necessary information to interconnect globally, and embracing many-faceted realities of multiculturalism. To this end, I aim to interact with people from different backgrounds so I can understand their culture, history, and beliefs.

To accomplish this goal, I plan to travel and try new experiences so I can have the opportunity to have encounters and experiences with cultures that differ from my culture. Another strategy is to read literature from a different culture so I can familiarize myself with that culture. Finally, I plan to learn another language because language reveals a lot about a culture. Being an immigrant, traveling to the United States, and learning the English language has taught me a lot about the U.S. culture. Through new experiences, I can expand my knowledge and understanding of varying cultures.

Establish a Personal Social Justice Compass

In counseling, one should develop a set of personal principles and ideals to direct his or her commitment to social justice. These principles and ideas should provide a moral compass to guide both one's life and work. Several essential texts may influence one's thinking about such a

moral compass. Collectively, these principles embody the essence of social justice ideals (Lee, 2007, p. 2). As an emerging counselor educator, I am committed to social justice and advocacy. I make it my aim to be governed by a moral compass that guides both my life and work as a counselor educator.

To that end, I attend to the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations (United Nations, 1948), and they guide me. Moreover, I dedicate myself to the foundation of these principles that were conceived as the foundation of global freedom, justice, and peace because they are a useful compass for social justice and advocacy. Furthermore, my commitment to social justice is engrained in the ACA (2014) Code of Ethics. These principles and values help the function of counselor educators enhance human development. Additionally, I am committed to advocating competencies for both the counseling profession and for clients. Finally, as an emerging counselor educator, I strive for multicultural competencies, so I can offer appropriate interventions and treatment as well as supervision and training.

Conclusion

My personal experiences and knowledge have helped me develop a professional philosophy that is both ethical and socially just. I began this paper by describing my commitment and action plan for social justice. I also discussed my reasons for advocating for social justice. Moreover, I shared my experiences with oppression, which have helped me to fight for fairness in society. Finally, by working to become multicultural literate and establishing a social justice compass, I can begin the steps to develop an action plan for social justice that reflects my personal and professional philosophies.

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Comment Summary

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1. This to me is so important because it seems at times that the church can forget that social justice is at the heart of the Gospel!

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2. When you become aware of oppression, it really is in so many places. I appreciate your insight and sensitivity
3. This is true. At times, it is easy to look at the amount and feel like it is too big. Yet our scope of influence as counselor educators will have an exponential impact. And if nothing else, we can make a difference in the lives of those that God brings into our world,
4. Thank you for sharing your home culture when discussing this.

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5. How sad. I am sorry that happened. This again goes back to the point you made at the beginning. Social justice is at the heart of the Gospel ... as is respect for each person as an image bearer. It is sad

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6. And along with this, it makes so much sense that they expanded multicultural competence to include social justice. Not sure how a person could truly begin to embrace the culture without seeing and responding to any historic or current discrimination
7. These are do-able. Learning the language may be a challenge, but I do think that learning to ask how it would be expressed in their language as a narrative would help in the meanwhile as so many words do not have English equivalences, and often need to be explained with many words

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8. Excellent!
9. It saddens me that so much gets reduced to politics. Yet as Christians we should be in the forefront of protecting human rights given the Gospel
10. Exceptional work!!!!