

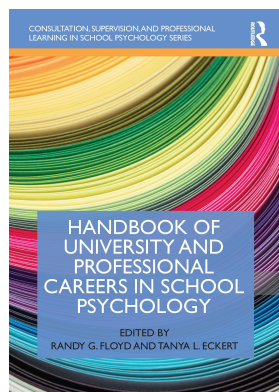
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Publisher: *Routledge*

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: 5 Howick Place, London SW1P 1WG, UK



Handbook of University and Professional Careers in School Psychology

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Fighting for Social Justice

Publication details

<https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780429330964-39>

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Published online on: 30 Dec 2020

How to cite :- David Shriberg, Erin A. Harper, Casey McPherson. 30 Dec 2020, *Fighting for Social Justice from: Handbook of University and Professional Careers in School Psychology* Routledge

Accessed on: 01 Dec 2023

<https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780429330964-39>

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28 Fighting for Social Justice

David Shriberg, Erin A. Harper, and Casey McPherson

Rooted in fields such as religion and philosophy and debated for centuries, social justice is at once both a “new” and an “old” idea. Within school psychology, while undoubtedly there have always been school psychologists engaged in actions that we might now label “social justice,” it is only within the decade of 2010–2019 that this term began to be widely used. For example, in 2017 the National Association of School Psychologists both adopted a definition of social justice and identified social justice as one of that organization’s five strategic aims (Malone & Proctor, 2019).

Thus, there is no existing research about what school psychology work based on a social justice framework looks like over the course of decades. There are also only a few studies on how an early career professional in school psychology might define social justice and seek to employ social justice principles. The research we do have from school psychology and related fields suggests that engaging in social justice work requires both taking personal responsibility to do so and being very knowledgeable in the best practices in one’s field (Biddanda, Shriberg, Ruecker, Conway, & Montesinos, 2019; Singh, Urbano, Haston, & McMahan, 2010). In this spirit, this chapter will provide a combination of research analysis and a push to personalize the concept. Specifically, this chapter will ask you to engage in reflection and application of your experiences as we share some of what has led the three of us to fight for social justice. We will begin our chapter by defining social justice and describing why we feel this concept is so critical for school psychology faculty and clinicians. As part of this overview of social justice, we will share some of our own stories—not because our stories are particularly notable—but as examples of how professionals might draw upon their own value systems and experiences to develop as agents of social justice. We will then spend the bulk of the chapter on what it might look like to “fight” for social justice in school psychology.

One of the most critical aspects of fighting for social justice is the ability to engage in honest self-reflection (Proctor & Simpson, 2016; Shriberg, 2016). Therefore, we ask that you take a moment to reflect on the following questions and compose your responses in written or electronic form before moving forward in this chapter:

- How do *you* define social justice?
- Do you see social justice as a personal value? If so, to what extent, if at all, is this value expressed in your work?
- Consider the different dimensions of your work. Based on your understanding of social justice, how might you incorporate social justice principles and practices into your future work?

Although we have sought to be advocates for social justice throughout our careers, when we were asked to write this chapter, it was a challenge to determine where to begin. This was not because we had never thought about fighting for social justice but rather because this is so

context-specific that it was difficult to wrap our minds around global “best practices” for social justice. We also recognize that what this looks like for one of us is not what it looks like for everyone else. Therefore, before writing this chapter we spent a long time thinking, what does social justice mean to us individually as professionals? Personally? What are the commonalities between our experiences and the experiences we see discussed in the research literature? The three questions we asked you to reflect upon are some of the questions we asked ourselves before we began writing. We will address these types of questions throughout the chapter.

What Is Social Justice?

Social justice, as a whole, can be a complicated concept to understand and discuss—not to mention define. The fields of education and psychology have discussed social justice simultaneously yet largely separately for many years (e.g., Ladson-Billings, 1994; Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). Despite the lack of communication between psychological and educational disciplines, common themes include equity and access to resources (e.g., Moy et al., 2014; Villegas, 2007). Those who write about social justice in education, psychology, and school psychology argue that it is our role as faculty and practitioners to ensure that people, especially children, have access to the resources needed to successfully grow and thrive (Vera & Speight, 2003; Villegas, 2007). Equity, and the related concept of respect, speaks to the right of all persons to be treated with dignity and in a non-discriminatory manner.

Through a process that began with understanding how social justice has been defined in school psychology research and ended with feedback from experts, the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) created and approved the following definition of social justice (NASP, 2017, para 4).

Social justice is both a process and a goal that requires action. School psychologists work to ensure the protection of the educational rights, opportunities, and well-being of all children, especially those whose voices have been muted, identities obscured, or needs ignored. Social justice requires promoting non-discriminatory practices and the empowerment of families and communities. School psychologists enact social justice through culturally responsive professional practice and advocacy to create schools, communities, and systems that ensure equity and fairness for all children and youth.

There are a lot of concepts within this definition. Our analysis is that social justice is at once a goal, an aspiration, a lens through which we view the world, and an action—something that we do to ensure equal rights and participation for everyone. Concepts related to social justice are already in many of our field’s practice and ethics documents. Indeed, the NASP Practice Model (2010a) and the NASP Principles for Professional Ethics (2010b) explicitly and tacitly endorsed social justice. For example, Principle 1 of the NASP ethics principles is titled, “Respecting the Dignity and Rights of All Persons.” This principle is elaborated through the following assertion:

In their words and actions, school psychologists promote fairness and justice. They use their expertise to cultivate school climates that are safe and welcoming to all persons regardless of actual or perceived characteristics, including race, ethnicity, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, immigration status, socioeconomic status, primary language, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, or any other distinguishing characteristics

(NASP, 2010b, p. 5)

This principle is further elaborated through statements in the NASP ethics code that oppose engaging in discriminatory actions and policies (Standard I.3.1). In addition, school psychologists are ethically bound to “correct school practices that are unjustly discriminatory” (Standard I.3.3).

There have been several research studies in which school psychologists have been asked to define social justice through a school psychology lens. School psychologists consistently identify the need to protect students' rights and opportunities as a core tenet of socially just school psychology practice (e.g., Shriberg et al., 2008). Additionally, school psychologists and school psychologists in training who have been interviewed about their views on social justice often indicate the need to address institutional power structures to dismantle biased and prejudicial practices (e.g., Jenkins, Shriberg, Conway, Ruecker, & Jones, 2018; Moy et al., 2014).

Now that we have provided a brief definitional overview of social justice, we invite you to look back to your response to our first question earlier in this chapter. Specifically, we invite you to think about and write out your responses to the following questions:

- To what extent does either the NASP definition of social justice or our analysis of the emerging research in school psychology on this topic match with your personal definition of social justice?
- How, specifically, does your definition differ from those presented and why, based on your personal experiences and biases, does it differ?

In presenting on this topic for many years, Dave finds that school psychologists tend to share the same broad goal of social justice, particularly as it relates to the rights of children, but have different entry points. For example, some people may see social justice primarily through the prism of different “isms” (e.g., racism, sexism, and heterosexism), while others may focus on issues of access. These and other ideas tend not to conflict with each other but represent different points of emphasis. What distinguishes social justice from a more generic desire to engage in effective practice is that social justice involves a desire to disrupt the status quo toward a vision of a more fair and just society. We find that, whether one consciously thinks of their work as being about social justice, often we do our best work when this work connects with our values.

Why Might Social Justice Matter for You?

While the core concepts—rights, respect, and resources—related to social justice are quite broad, due to every context being different and due to the relatively limited research on the application of social justice to school psychology practice, our chapter cannot answer what social justice-related processes and outcomes may be most salient to the people you are seeking to serve as a school psychologist. However, we can address more fully why focusing on social justice might matter to you as an individual. In order to facilitate this, we have reflected on why social justice in school psychology matters to each of us.

For Dave, who is in the privileged category in nearly all the areas of privilege, his interest in social justice originally stemmed from his religious (Jewish) background, especially the concept of “*tikkun olam*” (repairing the world). He knew Holocaust survivors as a child, and his parents were active in Civil Rights efforts in the 1960s. He was thus raised with the understanding that the world was not just and the belief that it is every person's role to make the world a better place. In college, he became aware of White privilege. This was a jolt, and he initially was in denial and then angry with people who pointed out White privilege. He did not deny that racism exists, just that he could be a part of it or benefit from it as he associated White privilege with the Ku Klux Klan or basically with people who were *consciously* trying to harm persons of color. Ultimately, over time, he came to realize and accept that he had—and still has—a lot of personal growth to accomplish in this area. Always oriented around a multicultural orientation to practice, when he became a professor in 2003, he became more aware of social justice organizational and advocacy efforts that were happening in other fields but not school psychology. Since then, advancing social justice in school psychology has been a major focus of his work.

This concept is something that he feels can benefit school psychology as a whole and is something that gives personal meaning to his professional work. His goal is to be an ally and an active participant in social justice change efforts.

Erin identifies as a Black (African American) woman. While being Black and a woman are only two of her many intersecting identity markers, she acknowledges that her lived experience as a Black woman has had a great impact on her interest in social justice. For example, Erin attended Spelman College, a historically Black women's college where social justice issues are central. During her graduate school experience and her time working as an early career school psychologist in predominantly African American urban public school systems, Erin's personal experiences and work experiences intersected to inform her research focused on participatory culture-specific interventions to support African American girls' positive development.

For Casey, a woman who is privileged across several of the privileged areas, her journey to depart the cycle of socialization and begin the cycle of liberation (Harro, 2018a, 2018b) began in high school when she started working with organizations that engaged her in questioning the status quo for socioeconomically disadvantaged youth and challenged her understanding of how, who, and why existing social systems reward some people and not others. As Casey transitioned into the field of school psychology, she became aware that this concept was far larger than she had ever conceived, that it had a name (social justice), and that the goals of the school psychologist are often inextricably aligned with the goals of a doer of social justice. Casey struggled with her decision to go into academia, partially because she wanted to be more involved in ground-level work to support social justice. She worried that being a faculty member would not allow her to build community and critically transform institutions because she had seen first-hand how "real life" in the schools does not always reflect the practices taught in the classrooms. While she still feels this way at times, she is bolstered by a student from her first year of teaching who told her,

I know you miss practicing in the schools because you feel as though you're not impacting students anymore. But, if you think about it, you're actually serving thousands more children than you would as an individual school psychologist because you're teaching all of us to be the best, most socially just school psychologists we can be.

This is critical to how Casey feels that she can use her role as a school psychology faculty member to support social justice.

A tenet of quality practice is to model and reflect the same values and principles that you espouse. When it comes to social justice, the question is not just, "Can you talk the talk?" It is also, "Can you walk the walk?" That is not to say that you have to be perfect all the time. People make mistakes. We grow and learn every day. It is what we *do* with that growth that impacts students. So, while only you can answer the question, "Why does social justice matter to me?" we would like to posit the following: It is your *responsibility* to determine if and why the ideas associated with social justice matter to you and how these concepts impact your life and the lives of the people you work with. Part of your professional role will be role modeling and mentoring. The people you impact will help to shape the future of our children. What values are you promoting and do these values align with your personal views and the emerging school psychology literature on key components of social justice?

What Might It Look Like to "Fight" for Social Justice in School Psychology?

Dave has been known to ask session participants to raise their hand if they are for social justice, or, conversely, to let him know if they are for social *injustice*. This is done tongue-in-cheek to highlight that nobody in school psychology—at least we hope—is explicitly for *injustice* being

done to others. This is anathema to anyone who has chosen a helping profession such as school psychology. However, the steps involved in fighting for social justice are not always clear. In this section, we seek to provide a framework for thinking about how to get engaged in social justice work as a new professional, with the full understanding that every person and every professional situation is different.

Application of Research in School Psychology and Related Fields

Over the past decade, a picture of what applying social justice principles in school psychology might look like is starting to emerge. In the first article on this topic, persons who met criteria as multicultural experts in school psychology identified several action steps, primarily in the categories of knowledge acquisition and taking personal responsibility to advocate (Shriberg et al., 2008). Subsequent studies have primarily focused on practitioners. In a qualitative study of early career school psychology practitioners, some of the most commonly expressed opportunities to impact social justice included ensuring fair special education evaluation procedures and engaging in culturally responsive practice (Jenkins et al., 2018). In a related qualitative study of more experienced practitioners who identified with a social justice orientation, participants indicated taking personal responsibility to bring about change, using political savvy to navigate power structures, modeling the changes one is seeking to bring about, and working in a culturally responsive manner across difference as key social justice action strategies (Biddanda et al., 2019).

This research by Biddanda et al. (2019), Jenkins et al. (2018), and Shriberg et al. (2008) is preliminary, and with the emergence of social justice as a strategic goal for NASP, there is likely to be additional research that continues to fill out this picture. For practice within school settings, Table 28.1, based on the 2010 NASP Practice Standards, provides a suggestion for each practice domain. Within university settings, there is growing literature specific to school psychology on ways to incorporate social justice principles into an overall training program. For example, Miranda, Radliff, Cooper, and Eschenbrenner (2014) describe a school psychology training model in school psychology based around five core areas: the mission statement, the student body, program courses, community partnering, and community-based projects. In a chapter focused on preparing school psychology graduate students to be agents of social justice, Shriberg, Vera, and McPherson (2017) highlighted three key areas: critical self-reflection, commitment to action, and thinking and acting systematically. These examples can provide a starting point. What they have in common is the idea of a comprehensive and coordinated plan that faculty discuss and are mutually invested in achieving.

A Proposed Framework for Action

In considering the different ways psychologists can develop and express their multicultural and social justice advocacy skills, Melton (2018) offers four guidelines. The first guideline is to engage in deliberate self-reflection to minimize biases and increase cultural humility and critical consciousness. The second guideline is to be thoughtful and strategic in choosing activities of allyship, activism, and advocacy. The third guideline is to hold yourself and your colleagues accountable. The fourth guideline is to have a plan to maintain competence and wellness. Adapting this model to school psychology and considering research more specific to our field, we propose three core overarching concepts: (1) develop and sustain critical self-awareness, (2) work in a participatory manner, and (3) develop and monitor your professional plan. We now discuss each in more detail.

Table 28.1 Examples of Social Justice Connections to School Psychology Domains of Practice

<i>Domain</i>	<i>General Examples of Social Justice Connections</i>
Domain 1: data-based decision-making and accountability	Conduct culturally competent comprehensive assessments to reduce disproportionate special education referrals.
Domain 2: consultation and collaboration	Conduct culturally competent collaborative consultation to reduce racial disparities in exclusionary discipline.
Domain 3: interventions & instructional support to develop academic skills	Design comprehensive culturally responsive tiered academic interventions to develop skills and reduce disproportionate special education referrals.
Domain 4: interventions and mental health services to develop social and life skills	Design comprehensive culturally responsive tiered mental health interventions to develop skills and reduce disproportionate special education referrals.
Domain 5: school-wide practices to promote learning	Take environmental issues (e.g., racial bias) into account when setting academic, social, emotional, and behavioral goals for marginalized students.
Domain 6: preventive and responsive services	Co-create preventive and responsive programs and services with and for marginalized students and families.
Domain 7: family-school collaboration services	Collaborate with students and families during all steps of problem solving and decision-making.
Domain 8: diversity in development and learning	As a universal level preventive intervention to reduce bias in decision-making, train faculty and staff on social justice and diversity issues such as the importance of addressing students' and families' individual differences, strengths, backgrounds, and needs during problem-solving and decision-making.
Domain 9: research and program evaluation	Use current social justice research to support school-based social justice advocacy.
Domain 10: legal, ethical, and professional practice	Consistent with Principle I.3 of the NASP Principles for Professional Ethics, school psychologists promote fairness and justice in their words and actions and use their expertise to cultivate school climates that are safe and welcoming to all persons regardless of actual or perceived characteristics, including race, ethnicity, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, immigration status, socioeconomic status, primary language, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, or any other distinguishing characteristics.

Core concept #1: Develop and sustain critical self-awareness. Each of us is a unique personal, professional, and cultural being. Our actions are shaped by our values, experiences, knowledge, and opportunities. There is no such thing as a “neutral” person. We all have biases, and we all have things that we will prioritize more than other people in similar roles. While perhaps no school psychologist consciously chooses to be against social justice, to be a new professional who supports social justice is a conscious choice. If this is the choice you are making, it is important to have a clear sense of yourself both culturally and professionally.

Social justice in the United States is directly tied to multiculturalism, with the key distinction being that a social justice orientation involves a critical lens focused on the roots of issues (Vera & Speight, 2003). Thus, one can work with a minoritized student who has been suspended in a way that might be judged as culturally responsive—and this, of course, is desirable—but if you are not also looking critically at this school’s overall data and culture in response to the well-established research on racial prejudice in school discipline, then you are not fully reflecting a social justice orientation. There are several models of cultural responsiveness, with many

placing self-awareness as a core competency (e.g., Sue & Sue, 2016). Some critical subareas of self-awareness include *implicit bias* and *cultural humility*.

Implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner (NASP, 2017). All people hold implicit biases. School professionals' implicit biases may influence teacher expectations of students as well as student outcomes such as special education and discipline referrals (NASP, 2017). Thus, it is critical for school professionals to reflect upon our potential implicit biases and determine how these biases may impact individual students and systems. School psychologists with a social justice orientation continually engage in self-evaluation of our personal implicit biases for the duration of our careers in order to sustain critical self-awareness and encourage others with whom we work to do the same. For example, among many other gaps, Dave has had a steep learning curve when it comes to persons who are transgender, including examining his own biases about sex and gender. Erin has had to further educate herself and evaluate her biases related to issues faced by Black nonbinary people, so she is prepared to address these issues in her work. Casey has had to learn how to address her biases when it comes to persons of other races and how the tools for dialog and learning vary across different cultures and is not reflected in today's classrooms.

The process of examining our biases and further educating ourselves has been described in the literature as cultural humility. Cultural humility is the lifelong process of intentional self-reflection, self-critique, and learning about other cultures in order to identify one's own values and biases and to increase one's cultural knowledge with the goal of facilitating the provision of equitable and just services to all (Hook, Davis, Owen, Worthington, & Utsey, 2013). Because we and the cultural contexts in which we live and work are ever changing, the process of cultural humility requires a commitment to lifelong learning about oneself and other cultures.

Core concept #2: Work in a participatory manner. A recurring theme in social justice advocacy research is that no one brings about meaningful change alone. Even for those in academia, where tenure is typically based on individual accomplishments, no one has a successful career without a lot of help. As persons in a field that largely works in multidisciplinary teams, the ability to work effectively with others should be a strength of most school psychologists.

Collaboration. Collaboration appears to be helpful even for the hypercompetitive environment of academic research. In a study of highly productive school psychology scholars, building relationships and working in mutually beneficial collaborative research groups emerged as a leading strategy for research productivity (Martínez, Floyd, & Erichsen, 2011). From a social justice lens, it is crucial that collaborative groups such as these are non-exclusionary and ever expansive to include persons from all backgrounds. We suspect that every profession, certainly including school psychology, has some version of an "old boys' club" that makes it harder for people from diverse backgrounds to break in and have their work valued. As a new professional, as part of your social justice efforts, we strongly urge you to seek mutually beneficial collaborations and then seek to pay forward any benefits you obtain from such collaborations, particularly to persons who are experiencing personal and systemic barriers to such collaborative networks.

Social justice advocacy research often utilizes principles of *participatory action research*. Participatory action research emerged from efforts to create social change by involving stakeholders in recursive integration of theory, research, and action (Nastasi & Hitchcock, 2015). School psychology practitioners and researchers use numerous participatory action research models and other closely related collaborative action research models (e.g., school action research and emancipatory research models) to empower stakeholders to generate solutions to local social problems (Song, Anderson, & Kuvinka, 2014). To illustrate, Harper, James, Smith, and Ramey

(2019) described the use of the Participatory Culture-Specific Intervention Model (Nastasi, Moore, & Varjas, 2004) to involve African American girls and families in the co-creation of preventive interventions to support African American girls' positive development. The Participatory Culture-Specific Intervention Model positions members of the local culture as cultural experts. Thus, when conducting research to generate solutions to local problems that African American girls faced in their communities, it was imperative to include them and their families in program development, implementation, and evaluation. This inclusion increases the chances that the knowledge that researchers use as the foundation for intervention development is valid. By partnering with girls and their caregivers, Harper and colleagues learned about their perceptions of strengths and challenges at the individual and family levels as well as within neighborhood schools and the surrounding community. The research team also learned about other issues that the girls and their caregivers perceived as important or interesting and wanted to see addressed in the program.

Leadership. School psychology is at its core a service profession. One does not enter the field for self-promotion, fame, or riches but out of a desire to improve the lives of children. This is a noble thing and something we hope never changes about our profession. By tapping into your leadership potential, you may increase the positive benefits of your social justice work.

As a school psychologist, you may or may not consider yourself to be a leader. Many people may associate leadership with a position of formal authority (such as a school or university administrator). However, one does not need a formal position of power to lead. Much of what is known about social power in organizations is based on a typology first developed by French and Raven in 1959 (Raven, Schwarzwald, & Koslowsky, 1998). This model of social power and influence was based on five dimensions: expert power (based on knowledge and competence), referent power (based on relationships and personal drawing power), legitimate power (bestowed by formal organization), reward power (the ability to offer and withhold types of incentives), and coercive power (the ability to force someone to comply through threat of punishment; French & Raven, 1959). In 1965, informational power (based on presentation of persuasive material or logic) was added as a sixth dimension (Raven, 1965). Informational power is related to expert power but is also distinct from it. In expert power, the person being influenced may not necessarily understand why a particular suggestion offered by the school psychologist is a good idea but may choose to follow the school psychologists' advice anyway because the person sees the school psychologist as an expert. In informational power, the person being influenced has been persuaded by the logic provided by the school psychologist.

We hypothesize that early career school psychologists are most likely to be able to influence others via a combination of informational, expert, and referent power. For example, when Dave was an early career school psychologist working in an elementary school, he once was a little harsher than he meant to be with a teacher that he really respected. When he noticed the teacher's shocked reaction and apologized, the teacher commented, "I felt like I had been lectured by Mr. Rogers!" He then came to learn that "Mr. Rogers" was his nickname among some of the teachers. This had nothing to do with wearing sweaters and changing his shoes, and the nickname was meant as a compliment because he was seen as very calm and moral. He came to appreciate that this was part of the way he led. He would never be the kind of school psychologist who led by working the room as an extrovert might or by raising his voice often, but he could make his words count as people paid attention when he did speak up as he had a certain degree of referent power. If you are respected by your peers for the kind of person you are, you may have more power than you realize to influence their views. However, referent power is significantly enhanced by being very competent in your work, as Dave realized later on that year when he devised an ill-conceived parenting group.

The parenting group had good intentions, but in retrospect, it relied too much on the parents respecting the school psychologist's referent power in place of the implementation of solid group practices. When Dave tried to move the group too quickly, things took a turn for the worse as the parents' trust in the school psychologist was not as strong as imagined. The parents generally liked Dave interpersonally, but that only went so far when he had not done a good job of working collaboratively with the group to create shared goals and expectations.

The empirical research in school psychology leadership suggests that leadership is associated with bringing about positive change. The first empirical study of leadership as defined by school psychologists was a survey completed by persons holding leadership positions in NASP (Shriberg, Satchwell, McArdle, & Mills, 2010). Specifically, study participants all held formal leadership positions in NASP at the state level, either as their state association's president, president-elect, or their state's delegate to NASP. These participants defined school psychology leadership as the ability to achieve positive outcomes for students and systems. Participants indicated that effective school psychology leaders are characterized by being competent and knowledgeable and possessing strong interpersonal skills and personal character. Finally, respondents indicated that leadership is expected of school psychologists across numerous domains of practice, particularly in academic support, behavior support, and crisis interventions.

In a more recent study of school psychology leadership, Augustyniak, Kilanowski, and Privitera (2016) surveyed 31 school psychologists, 122 teachers, and 32 school administrators in western New York State. Among the research aims were to identify what leadership models the school psychologists identified with and to obtain a sense of how the teachers and administrators view the leadership practices of school psychologists. Using a measure that tapped into transformational, transactional, and passive-avoidant (essentially, non-leadership) approaches, the school psychologists most strongly endorsed transformational leadership practices. Within this framework, school psychologists, "most highly affiliate with value-based leadership models, suggesting they place high importance on high ethical standards and enhancing the growth and empowerment of those around them" (Augustyniak et al., 2016, p. 379). The teachers rated school psychologists as particularly strong in the areas of extra effort, efficacy, and satisfaction, whereas school administrators did not rate these school psychologists as higher than normal in these or other areas. Additionally, school administrators' satisfaction with school psychologists was associated with their belief that school psychologists were engaged in transactional behaviors, whereas for teachers and school psychologists, transformational behaviors were seen as more desirable. The researchers interpreted this finding as suggesting that the school administrators in this study had a more narrow and managerial view of school psychology practice than did the teachers and school psychologists.

Whether you consciously view yourself as a leader and whether you are in a strong position as a professional to influence your work environment, tapping into elements of informational, expert, and referent power and working collaboratively with others is very likely to serve you in good stead in terms of social justice. There is a reason why so many social justice challenges—racism, classism, and homophobia, among others—have remained in place as they are deeply entrenched. If your professional work reflects your personal values, we believe that you are more likely to have the patience and drive to persevere when you meet with resistance. If you are able to tap into your leadership skills, you can maximize the tools you bring to the table. However, no one brings about meaningful change on their own. If you view diversity as a strength—not only in terms of the cultural background of others but also as a way of working collaboratively toward shared goals—you will be working in a participatory manner with those who bring different experiences and skills to the table than you do. The final step then becomes developing and monitoring your plan of action.

Core concept #3: Develop and monitor your professional plan. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, context matters greatly when it comes to social justice. A school psychologist who

works full-time in one school has a different opportunity to impact justice at that school than a school psychologist who splits time between five or more schools. A professor who is teaching four classes a semester likely has a better opportunity to bring social justice principles into teaching than a professor who is teaching only one course per term, but the professor who is teaching only one course likely is able to make a bigger research impact. Tenured professors and tenured practitioners have job security, and with that, speaking up is likely to be less risky. If you are the only person in your school or department who is coming from a social justice orientation (and particularly if you are from a minoritized group), you face more risks in speaking up than if you have allies.

Regardless of context, it is important to have a plan of attack as well as a way to monitor progress. This is not to say that, as a 1st-year professor or an early career practitioner, you should have the next 30 years of your career figured out. No one does. However, if fighting for social justice is important to you, it is also important to have a plan for how to make this goal central to your work. Table 28.2 provides a template for such a plan. The first component includes being clear on what your core topics are that you are seeking to address, considering how and why this topic connects with social justice, as well as analyzing why this topic matters to you both personally and professionally. The second component involves a self-assessment of your personal and professional strengths as well as the conditions that lead to your doing your best work. The third component speaks to the specific context in which you are seeking to bring about change. Finally, the fourth component is linked to setting goals and developing mechanisms to track your progress toward these goals.

Summary

Social justice is an emerging concept in school psychology centered around the core ideas of equity, respect, and nondiscrimination. If you are an early career professional, you may or may not have thought about social justice, and to the extent you have, it may seem daunting to think

Table 28.2 Framework for Getting Started as an Agent of Social Justice

The Topic

- What is the topic?
- What makes this a social justice topic?
- Why does this topic/issue matter to me?
- Why does this topic/issue matter to my professional work?

Myself as a Social Justice Advocate

- What are my leadership strengths?
- What implicit biases might or do I have?
- What social justice advocacy skills do I bring to the table, and where do I need to grow?
- What conditions lead to my doing my best work?

Professional Self in Relation to Work Context

- What real world barriers and opportunities impact upon this topic?
- Who are my allies?
- Who else would need to be involved in order to obtain success?

Getting Started

- What elements of social justice am I seeking to address (e.g., rights, non-discriminatory treatment, and equitable allocation of resources)?
 - What would the measurable goals and other indicators of success be?
 - How can I ensure a participatory process?
 - What should my first and second step be in light of the answers to the above?
-

about using your professional platform to bring about positive societal change, particularly in areas where the status quo is deeply entrenched. If you are a more experienced professional, you also may or may not have thought about social justice. You likely have had experiences that have led you to conclude that seeking to use your professional role to bring about change may or may not be possible. Hopefully you have had nothing but success in leveraging your knowledge, passion, and professional position to bring about the positive changes you desire in the manner and time frame that you desire. More likely, you have encountered resistance, perhaps even to the extent that you have concluded that it is better to just go along with the status quo. However, school psychology—and society—are not static. Viewed through the lens of history, change can be significant in relatively short periods, particularly if people can find ways to collaborate in an inclusive manner. Maintaining silence is not a neutral act, particularly when the status quo is unjust. Silence makes it more likely that the status quo continues. Regarding social justice topics, moving forward the world may change for the better, the world may change for the worse, or the status quo may prevail. The question is: What role will you play as this direction is being determined?

In the opening section, we asked you to jot dot your answer to three questions that parallel the arc of this chapter. Specifically, our perspective is that the first step in fighting for social justice is understanding how school psychology has been defined in school psychology research (understanding that this definition is evolving). The second step is connecting social justice with your personal values. Why is it important to advance equity? Why should *all* people be treated with respect and dignity? Finally, the most challenging aspect is translating your values as this relates to social justice into action. While every person and every professional situation is different, we encourage you to develop your self-awareness (including understanding your implicit biases and having strong cultural humility), to work in a participatory manner, and to develop and continuously monitor your professional plan.

Our final recommendation is not to do any of this alone. There are people in the field who value social justice and will care about your development as an agent of social justice. We hope that you will consider us among these people and are happy to talk with you if you would like our support or guidance. We hope you will seek out people who value social justice and be generous to others who seek out your support. While we hope that this chapter has been helpful toward advancing your capacity to fight for social justice, we know that this is a continuous journey for all of us. Push yourself but have patience and charity as there will be missteps. When you look back at your career, we think it is very likely that rooting your work in social justice and working collaboratively with and supporting others who are doing the same will not only lead to personally enhanced outcomes that matter in academia (e.g., tenure and publications) and in practice (e.g., positively impacting children) but also provide your work with a sense of purpose and connection that will multiply your personal and professional impact and satisfaction.

Resources

The most comprehensive resource on social justice and school psychology is maintained by NASP. NASP's main page on social justice links to dozens of resources related to practice and teaching, including a link to several external sites, as well as to a comprehensive listing of readings and books. In addition, Teaching Tolerance, which is affiliated with the Southern Poverty Law Center, provides copies of free resources for educators. These resources can be accessed at tolerance.org. The Social Justice Books: A Teaching for Change Project has curated lists of multicultural and social justice books for children, young adults, and educators on their website: socialjusticebooks.org/booklists. Finally, a list of media related to social justice has been included in Appendix A.

Appendix A

Social Justice Media

Documentaries

The Case Against 8—A documentary about the repeal of Proposition 8, which banned same-sex marriage, in California

The Homestretch—A documentary following three homeless youth in Chicago and the effects of poverty

13th—A look at systemic racism in America

The Hunting Ground—Exposes campus rape culture

India's Daughter—Follows the aftermath of a 2012 gang rape and murder in India

Race to Nowhere—Follows students and their families as they navigate the education system in America

Harlan County—Documents the coal worker strike in Harlan County, USA

A Dangerous Son—Shares the experiences of parents raising children with mental health issues

Independent Lens: Dolores—Portrays the work of Dolores Huerta, an activist and community organizer

Fictional Movies

The Hate U Give—Based on a book about a Black teenager who is navigating two worlds

BlacKkKlansman—Tells the true story of the first Black detective to serve in the Colorado Springs Police Department

Fruitvale Station—Tells the real life story of Oscar Grant III, a 22-year-old African American man who was shot and killed by a police officer

Dallas Buyers Club—Discusses homophobia, stigma, and miseducation about HIV

Milk—The story of Harvey Milk who was California's first openly gay elected official

Dear White People—Explores escalating racial tension at a fictional college

Short Term 12—Follows group home workers as they help the children they work with

Podcasts

SP4SJ—A podcast hosted by the NASP Social Justice Task Force

Another Round—A podcast about feminism and racial justice

Intersection—Covers social justice issues of note where intersectionality is of particular importance

Shortest Time—Covers pregnancy and being a parent across the privilege spectrum

For Colored Nerds—Best friends discuss the “nerdy” topic of their choice

Hidden Brain—A podcast about our unconscious biases and how they affect our decisions

The Hilarious World of Depression—Uses humor to destigmatize depression

Native America Calling—A live call-in program talking about national issues from a Native American perspective

Battle Tactics for your Sexist Workplace—A podcast that helps listeners fight back against sexism in the workplace

Books

- The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander—Explains how mass incarceration has been used as a tool to continually oppress Black people in America
- A People's History of the United States* by Howard Zinn—Discusses United States history through the voices of people not often heard from in textbooks
- Tell Me How it Ends: An Essay in Forty Questions* by Valeria Luiselli—Interviews undocumented Latin American children facing deportation
- Nickel and Dime: On (Not) Getting By in America* by Barbara Ehrenreich—Exposes the conditions of the “working poor”
- Blueprint for Revolution: How to Use Rice Pudding, Lego Men, and Other Nonviolent Techniques to Galvanize Communities, Overthrow Dictators, or Simply Change the World* by Srdja Popovic and Matthew Miller—A handbook for taking nonviolent action to create lasting change
- Far From the Tree: Parents, Children, and the Search for Identity* by Andrew Solomon—Interviews with parents that show the experience of difference within families is universal
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