INCLUSION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MULTICULTURAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE COUNSELING IN THE EDUCATIONAL SETTING

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Multicultural and social justice counseling is a helping model that involves both individual counseling and advocacy works. What makes them both distinct from other models of counseling is that the works encompassed are not restricted in the office setting but calls for advocacy that uplifts the marginalized groups of the society. Counseling and advocacy interventions implemented depends on the socioecological model that ranges from intrapersonal to international/global level, to provide counselors a multilevel framework for a balance practice between individual counseling and social justice advocacy. Furthermore, another unique characteristic of the multicultural and social justice counseling is that it seeks to understand client’s cultural and sociopolitical background and employs evidence-based interventions that aligns with the client’s worldview.

The multicultural and social justice counseling specializes in counselors’ thorough involvement to the client and the society. Working in communities that the client is residing in to acquire an understanding of the beliefs and biases held by the client, whether privileged or marginalized, can be observed when utilizing intrapersonal interventions of the multicultural and social justice counseling. Collaboration with the client’s family and peers who are potential sources of support to the client is practice in the interpersonal level interventions. Forming an alliance with social institution and community to create advocacy that addresses issues of power, privilege, and oppression that affect the client is exercise in the institutional and community level interventions. Engaging in social action to change laws and policies that may promote fascism and
oppression is practice in the public policy intervention. Staying informed in the current global politics and events and learning how these circumstances affect privileged and marginalized client are utilized in the international/global level interventions.

As a guidance counselor in a public high school, I intend to give emphasis on the social advocacy that the multicultural and social justice counseling calls for. These advocacies shall be implemented through seminars, symposiums, campaigns, and other-related activities. Clearly, for every guidance activities, a needs assessment must be initially conducted. A tool that assesses the students’ experiences of inequality will be utilized to determine the kinds of inequalities that are rampant in the school. For instance, most girls and members of the LGBTQ+ community in the school feel discriminated and are often bullied. To combat this issue using the social advocacy of multicultural and social justice counseling, seminars and symposiums that tackles about women empowerment, gender equality, and other-related topics should be implemented. Seminars and symposiums are not limited to the students, but all the teaching and non-teaching personnel in the school should be included to emphasize the significance of addressing such issues.

A more relevant example is today’s implementation of online classes and blended learning. Questions of its effectivity and inclusivity are being raised by most Filipinos. Evidently, not every student can manage to participate in online classes due to limitations such as poor access to internet connection. In view of such circumstances, children’s right to education is hindered. Inequality prevails. With social advocacy being implemented to address this issue, the guidance office may collaborate with institutions or organizations that will assist the students who cannot afford to go to online classes. Addressing this issue may be manifested by creating campaigns that calls for aiding financial assistance to those students in need. Another way to tackle the issue is to actively participate in the Department of Education’s planning of the current education system. Moreover, we as guidance counselors can be an instrument for the students to be more involved in the
planning and implementation of a system that directly affects them. We can represent them – be their voices.

Moreover, seeing that the multicultural and social justice counseling calls advocacy and activism – as stated by Ratts and Pedersen (2014), the weakening impact of oppression urges the need for advocacy and activism in communities. I believe that it is part of my advocacy as a guidance counselor to mold the students’ patriotism and leadership skills and produce future leaders that possess an in-depth understanding of the world and speak for those who cannot speak for themselves.

Apparently, the practice of multicultural and social justice counseling is seldomly observed in the educational setting. I believe that this model of counseling is still on the process of being recognized not only in the school setting, but in the whole field of counseling. According to Ratts and Pedersen (2014), multicultural and social justice counseling has been considered secondary or tertiary approaches in implementing interventions. Most counselors today minimize cultural background and contextual factors in the human development. This kind of attitude hinders the professions and negatively affects the clients.

I acknowledge there are concerns in the application of multicultural and social justice counseling in the educational setting such as increased workload with a limited number of counselors in school. The multicultural and social justice counseling requires an extensive involvement to the clients and their environment. With limited number of guidance counselors deployed in school, applying the concept of multicultural and social justice counseling is extra challenging. Nevertheless, counseling must be dynamic and respond to the changing needs of the society. Apparently, with the recent developments in our country, inequality and injustices are prevailing. Continuous increased of poverty and unemployment rate, threats to our freedom of speech and expression, widespread police brutality, suffocating misogynistic thinking – all these circumstances call for the need of application of multicultural and social justice counseling.
References: