

**Integrating Social Justice and Advocacy Skills Into Counseling Education: A
Comprehensive PRISMA Review**

Abstract

The intersectionality of social justice, advocacy, and multicultural and social justice counseling competencies (MSJCC) are pivotal for marginalized individuals. A systematic literature review was used to analyze the integration and implementation of the MSJCC framework, advocacy interventions, and organizations available for underrepresented communities in counseling programs. A qualitative content analysis methodology was used to identify specific strategies, such as broaching, to offer counselor educators methods of implementation of social justice and advocacy tools. Evidence of the study suggests with proper support, guidance, and advocacy marginalized individuals are better prepared to serve in leadership roles in counseling education programs and beyond, and advocate for representation for underrepresented professional counselors.

Keywords: counseling programs, social justice, advocacy, MSJCC, representation, marginalization

Integrating Social Justice and Advocacy Skills Into Counseling Education: A Comprehensive PRISMA Review

Social justice and advocacy efforts are intentional actions designed to shape sociopolitical composition, notably to support marginalized and vulnerable groups (Um & Wood, 2023). These practices, which involve collaborative strategies to address health disparities among clients, counselors in training (CIT), and practicing counselors, demand practical application beyond mere theoretical understanding (Um & Wood, 2023). There is a pressing need to weave this pedagogy into educational curriculums to foster meaningful change.

The pervasive nature of institutional racism and systemic oppression extends its impact from academic faculty to counselors in training (DeDiego et al. 2023). Integrating social justice and advocacy training into the counseling curriculum is essential for enhancing students' self-efficacy, providing better client outcomes, furthering the counseling profession, and positively impacting society. Developing competencies in multicultural counseling and embedding social justice principles into scholarship are crucial steps for incorporating these ideals into counselors' professional identities (Um & Wood, 2023). This method is part of a larger initiative to amplify the understanding and application of multicultural competencies in the field. Advocacy, rooted in social justice, is transformative, propelled by policy reform, activism, heightened awareness, and the urgent need for institutional transformation to combat deep-seated societal injustices (DeDiego et al. 2023).

The American Counseling Association's (ACA) response to the challenges faced by marginalized clients, counselors in training, and faculty has been gradual. To address these challenges and promote the integration of multicultural counseling literature, the American

Counseling Association (ACA) has established guidelines. These guidelines underscore the importance of embedding multicultural and social justice counseling competencies into the counselor's professional identity (Washington & Henfield, 2019). These competencies include fostering beliefs and attitudes, expanding knowledge, honing skills, and taking actions that champion social justice and advocacy within counseling education.

This paradigm shift aims to enhance the training of counselors by focusing on skill development and a nuanced understanding of the obstacles posed by oppression. The ACA Code of Ethics includes Section F.11 on Multicultural/Diversity Competence in Counselor Education and Training, the foundation for navigating and dismantling barriers, biases, stereotypes, and systemic oppression (ACA, 2014, F.11.c.). The overarching goal is for the counseling profession to weave multicultural competence and social justice into all facets of its domain—research, practice, curriculum, and professional identity—to acknowledge better and address the needs of oppressed groups (Washington & Henfield, 2019).

In response to counselors and the profession expressing a need for greater clarity and struggling with uncertainties, the American Counseling Association (ACA) convened a panel of experts who refined the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MSJCC). This panel initiative aimed to delineate the competencies required for effective multicultural and social justice counseling by outlining and categorizing four primary areas: (a) beliefs and attitudes, (b) knowledge, (c) skills, and (d) action (Ratts et al., 2015). The MSJCC further detailed these competencies across four key domains, which include (a) counselor self-awareness, concerning the counselor's understanding of their own cultural background and biases; (b) client worldview, focusing on appreciating and understanding the cultural perspective of the client; (c) counseling relationship, emphasizing the importance of cultural sensitivity

within the therapeutic relationship; and (d) counseling and advocacy interventions, which involve applying culturally informed strategies and advocating for social justice (Ratts et al., 2015). This comprehensive structured framework guides counselors in navigating the complexities of multicultural counseling and advocacy, ensuring a more informed, culturally responsive, effective, and contextual approach to practice and interventions.

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP) has addressed discrimination, oppression, and its impacts on individuals and various cultural groups. This initiative aligns with efforts to broaden the concept of multiculturalism to encompass diversity in race, ethnicity, heritage, socio-economic status, age, gender, sexual identity/preference, religious/spiritual beliefs, and physical, emotional, or mental abilities (CACREP, 2016). CACREP outlines essential knowledge areas for professional counselors, emphasizing ethical practices, diversity, equity, inclusion, and critical thinking skills.

Diversity guidelines are embedded across all intersectional and cultural identity facets, setting the competency standards required for professional qualification. A notable section within these standards, titled "Social and Cultural Identities and Experiences," extends the ACA's principles by delving deeper into the impacts of historical events, multigenerational trauma, and contemporary challenges faced by diverse cultural groups in the U.S. and internationally. CACREP encourages reflective consideration of stereotypes, both overt and covert discrimination, and the uneven burdens of poverty, income inequality, and health disparities in marginalized groups (CACREP, 2016).

Imagine being the only black person in the room, the only black woman, the only black male in the room, and the first black school counselor ever hired in the school. The internalized pressure that comes with being the only and the first in most situations and often feeling like it is

one's responsibility to advocate and to express the minority view. Realizing that school systems did not have 'you' in mind when creating programs specifically for their community, which often involves diverse and marginalized individuals, and encountering systematic racism within educational and professional settings. Having to be responsible for designing inclusive, equitable, and diverse plans so that the community of which includes marginalized and minority people are serviced; recognizing the reality of racist ideologies, historical injustices, and unresolved practices and policies are still rampant and in need of change.

These issues are overlooked, leading to a lack of awareness and support of Black individuals and other minority and marginalized groups who are under the constant threat of erasure. That is the personal experience of some of the authors of this manuscript. This is why the discussion of social justice and advocacy is vital regarding integration and implementation in counselor education programs. This examination of the literature is needed to explore how social justice and advocacy is being implemented to help dispel myths perpetuated in the subconscious about Black people, other minority groups, and other marginalized populations, and hopefully foster a more equitable and supportive environment. Being intentional about giving voice to those that are often voiceless is vital and the reason why this topic remains very important.

This manuscript seeks to explore the literature and uncover how social justice and advocacy skills, as outlined by ACA, CACREP, and MSJCC, have been integrated and implemented within counselor education programs. Using a qualitative content analysis, professional counseling programs are being evaluated for their effectiveness in the integration and implementation of social justice and advocacy skills/competencies. Gaps in the literature were found within academic counseling programs where intimidation and a sense of overwhelm (Chen et al., 2020; Washington & Henfield, 2019) continued in counseling programs fixated on

policymaking and processes separated from the humanistic student and faculty (Ratts et al., 2016). Rogers and Molina (2006) encourage the necessity of including more assessment of peer support through shared interests within a student-centered organization. This potentially leads to working through the overwhelm of focus on policymaking that solely relies on the organizational structure of the program without considering the people that make up the program and those the program is designed to serve, including those of marginalized and minority populations (Chen et al., 2020).

Editorials and narratives have been found regarding multicultural and social justice needs, with little research on the scholarship of social justice within counselor education specific to certain identity groups listed by CACREP (Washington & Heufield, 2019). Research gaps link the experience of minority students in counselor education (Baker & Moore, 2015) and a culturally mediated method preferred over race-neutrality (Figueroa & Rodriguez, 2015) without recognizing example models that have been implemented within professional counseling programs. Through multicultural humility and professional openness to adaptability, this manuscript will explore the integration, implementation, and barriers to the consistent and effective integration of social justice and advocacy skills in counselor education programs especially as it relates to the development of CITs.

Method

First Study

A systematic review of the counseling literature was used to determine and possibly answer the research question, “How has social justice and advocacy skills been integrated and implemented within counseling education programs?” The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta- Analyses (PRISMA) method was utilized to identify the records

included in this study and increase the trustworthiness of the process.

Data Collection

The first two authors conducted a purposeful and focused search of two databases: Academic Search Ultimate, and Sociology Source Ultimate, which contain the ACA and other counseling journals. An EBSCO journal search string for counseling journals (JN “XYZ” OR JN “ABC” etc.) was used; JN stands for journal name, so the researchers could ensure that they were only searching the database for articles in ACA or other counseling journals and that searches garnered articles within these journals dependent on information found within the metadata (title, authors, journal name, abstract, and assigned subject headings), rather than the full text of the article. Due to the tremendous amount of literature through the years concerning the topic at hand, the search was limited to articles published from 2021 to 2023. The search did not include racial terms, specific ethnicities, or cultural or multicultural as terms. In addition, the researchers wanted to specify that it was not just advocacy in counseling but how it has been implemented in counselor training. The Boolean operators “AND”, “OR” and “()” were used to combine keywords related to social justice, diversity, equity, advocacy, counselor education, counselor training, and CACREP. The following string was used to conduct the search: social justice OR diversity OR equity OR advocacy AND counselor educat* OR counselor training OR CACREP. The database search garnered 89 articles. After removing duplicates from the results, 58 articles remained. The second author downloaded each article and saved them electronically using the naming convention, first name, last name, year, and title.

Eligibility Criteria

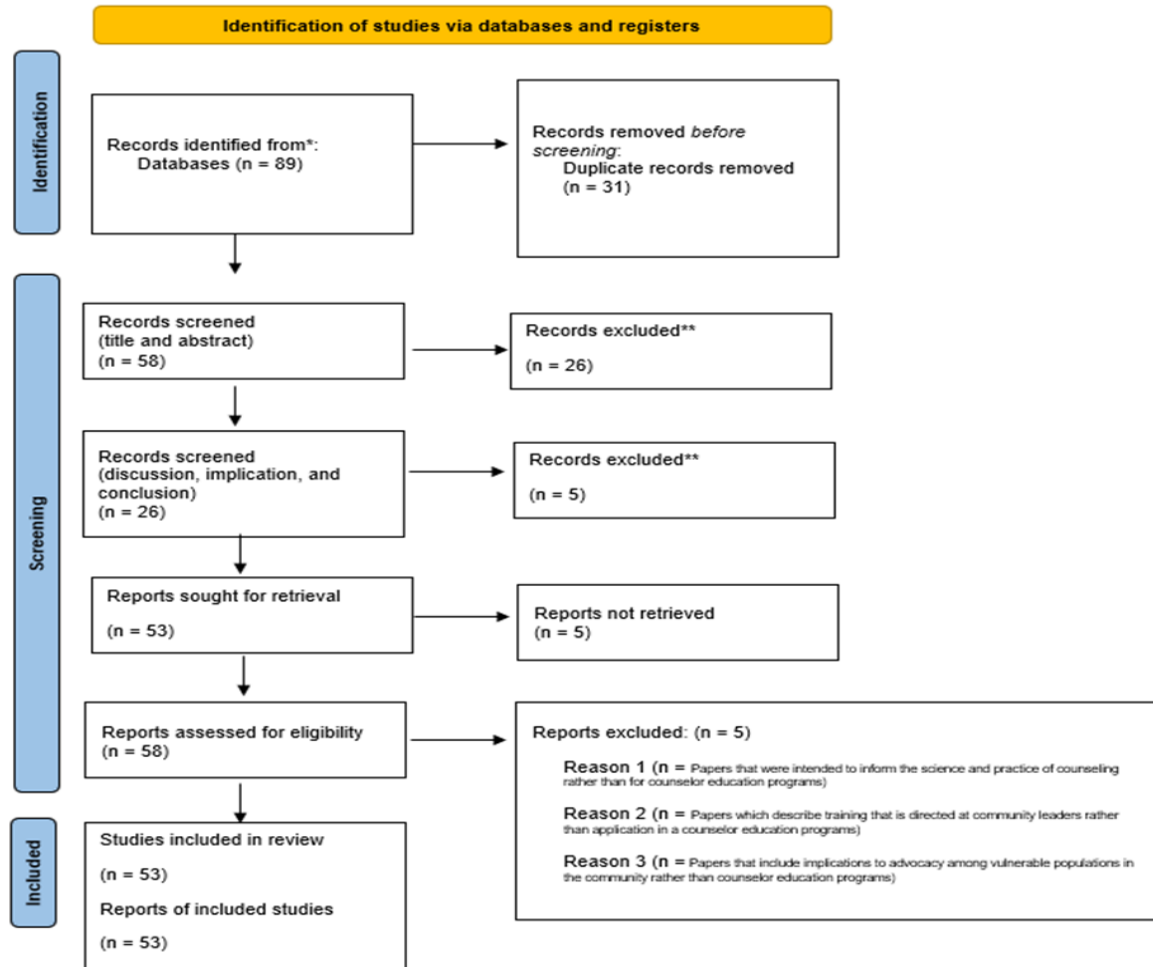
The criteria used for article selection included: (1) written in English, (2) published in a peer-reviewed journal, (3) found within counseling journals, (4) contained words related to social

justice and/or advocacy and counselor education and/or counselor training within the article title, author, journal names, abstract, and assigned subject heading (rather than the full text of the document); (4) published between 2021 and 2023. The exclusion criteria were: (1) articles intended to inform the science and practice of counseling rather than for professional counseling programs; (2) articles that describe training directed at community leaders rather than application in a professional counseling program; (3) articles that include implications to advocacy among vulnerable populations in the community rather than professional counseling programs.

Selection Process

The third, fourth, fifth, and sixth authors comprised the coding and analysis team. They reviewed each article independently and collaboratively to determine the appropriateness for inclusion in the content analysis. The abstracts of all 58 articles were divided among the coding and analysis team, who read and examined the abstracts for the following keywords: *social justice and/or advocacy and counselor education and/or counselor training*. The fourth author was primarily responsible for developing and maintaining the Excel document used to collect information pertaining to all 58 articles. This independent review of article abstracts resulted in 32 articles deemed pertinent to the analysis, and 26 articles, determined as requiring further review to ensure their appropriateness for inclusion in the analysis. Next, the researchers conducted a collaborative review of the discussion, implementations, and conclusion sections of the 26 articles determined as appropriate for further review. This review resulted in 21 articles deemed appropriate for the analysis, and five articles were determined not pertinent to the analysis. Specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were recorded in the PRISMA diagram, as seen in Figure 1. In summary, 53 of the original 58 articles garnered by the initial search string were deemed appropriate for the analysis.

Figure 1

PRISMA Diagram First Study**Qualitative Content Analysis**

Qualitative content analysis methodology was utilized to explore themes and patterns in the counseling literature. The coding and analysis team used a consensual research design (Hays & Wood, 2011) to provide a framework for discerning themes and patterns within the literature. Content analysis was chosen due to the ability to hone in on topics across multiple journals in counselor education (Hays & Wood, 2011; Gantt-Howrey et al., 2023).

Codebook Development

The researchers used a consensual research design (Hays & Wood, 2011) to guide the development of a codebook. Using this content analysis methodology, 32 of the 53 articles were divided among the research team members to code using a line-by-line approach alone. The 53 articles that met the inclusion criteria are reflected by an asterisk in the Reference section. Researchers were instructed to discern potential themes and subthemes within the articles that appeared to encompass the focus and essence of the topic. Upon completing this process, the researchers engaged in an open discussion concerning potential themes and subthemes to be included in the analysis. Upon careful consideration, it was collaboratively determined by the researchers that a codebook should be developed.

The fourth author was primarily responsible for developing the codebook, including the primary components included in the codebook. The four-member coding team (1 White male, 2 White females, and 1 Hispanic female) was comprised of doctoral students in a Counselor Education and Supervision program at [name of their university]. Due to the researchers' differing knowledge of publishing and content analysis methodology, it was collaboratively determined that a primary function of the codebook would be to accommodate the coding process. This ensured intercoder reliability and trustworthiness via cross-checks of all 53 articles. It also allowed for both deductive and inductive coding. The finalized codebook included eight components: article title, author, publication date, summary, codes, primary reader notes, secondary reader notes, and third reader notes. Finally, procedures for coding articles using the codebook were discussed.

Coding Process

The fourth through sixth research team members utilized the codebook using a line-by-line coding approach for all 53 articles selected for the analysis (Hays & Wood, 2011). A coding

unit was defined as unique and specific efforts to implement social justice and advocacy competencies into professional counseling programs and/or barriers and/or additional factors related to the implementation of social justice and advocacy competencies into professional counseling programs found within the entirety of the article. Each article was independently reviewed three times by members of the research team to ensure trustworthiness and protect against the threat of researcher bias in coding. The second, third, and fourth authors were the primary and secondary readers of 36 articles each. The third author was the third reader of all 53 articles. Following the coding process, the research team met to identify theme and subtheme definitions (Hays & Wood, 2011). Although not needed, the first author was responsible for acting as an arbitrator in resolving coding disputes. The research team collaboratively agreed upon the final codes. These codes were eventually condensed into larger themes used in the analysis.

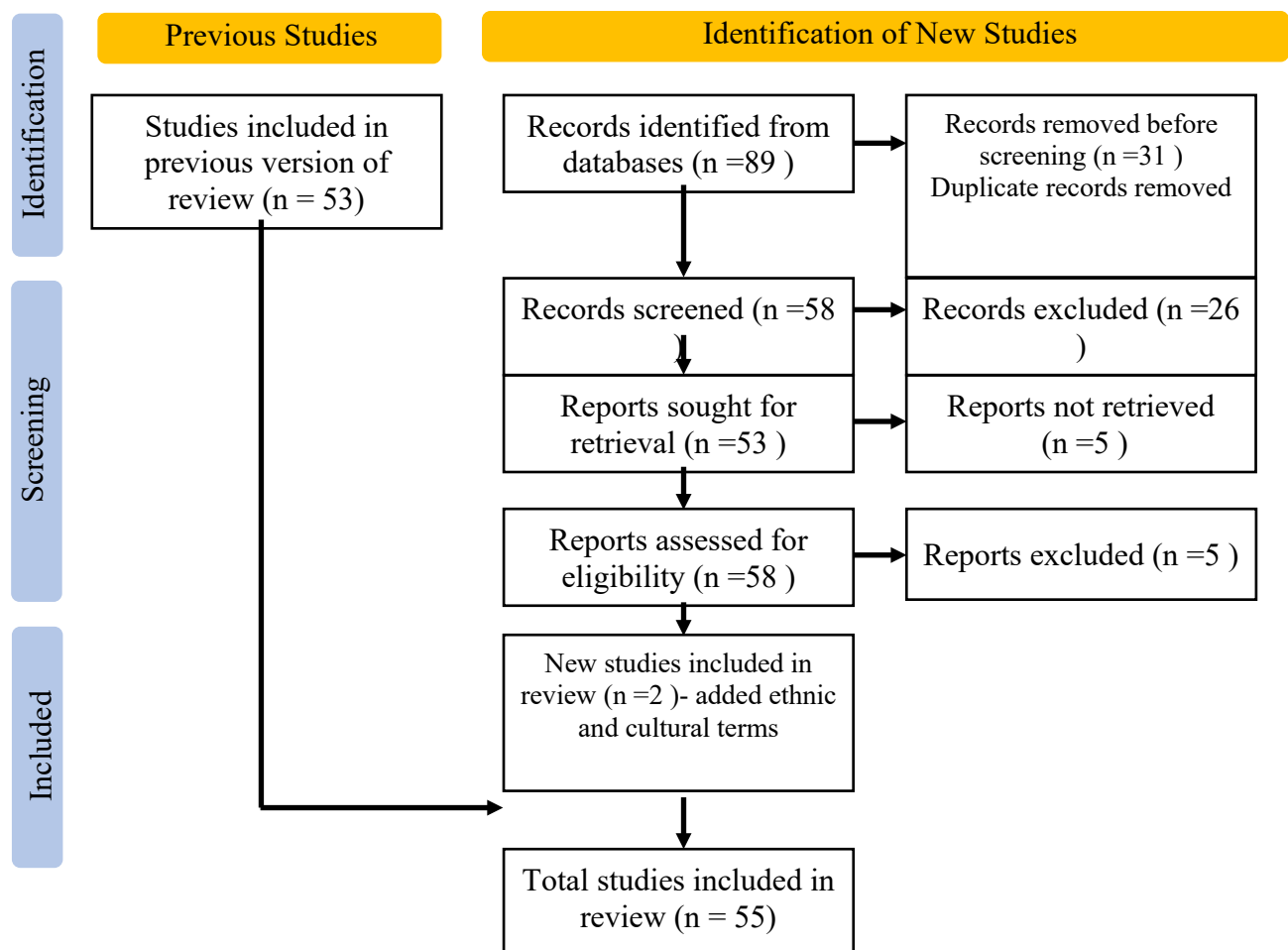
Second Study

A second study was done after receiving the first study to update the literature and address aspects that were not recognized during the first study. Keywords like multicultural, culture, and ethnicities were excluded from the original study; however, as the results of the first study were further examined, it became clear that even though these words were excluded, the results included specific cultures and ethnicities. It was determined in the second study that those excluded terms were necessary to fully explore the literature regarding the identified population and people group that resulted from the first study. To include the lived experience of those that benefit the most from the integration of social justice and advocacy, ethnicities and cultural terms were not excluded from the search criteria as further exploration of the study was conducted.

The authors met together as they examined the results of the first study and that additional search words would result in a more complete view of the integration and the question regarding ‘how’ integration is being implemented. Search words included ‘learning while black’ ‘support for black doctoral students’ in addition to the original search words from first study. The authors then assessed which articles continued to align with the original search criteria, as the authors felt the original search criteria was also sufficient. With the addition of the cultural and ethnic terms, two additional articles were added.

Figure 2

PRISMA Diagram Second Study



Results

Fifty-three articles met the inclusion criteria through the rigorous PRISMA process, which increased to fifty-five after the second study and inclusion of ethnic and cultural terms. The following primary themes were identified through a qualitative content analysis process: Integration, Barriers to Implementation, and Implementation recommendations to better integrate MSJCC into professional counselor programs. Sub themes in Integration included counselor self-awareness, the counseling relationship (which includes the client worldview), and counseling and advocacy interventions. Sub themes within Barriers to Implementation included representation in leadership.

Integration

The qualitative content analysis indicates that the MSJCC were included, infused, and integrated in professional counselor programs. The literature does demonstrate that these programs are aligned with CACREP (2016) standards of professional identity, counseling skills, advocacy, and ethical considerations for the counseling relationship, including worldview (ACA, 2014). Integration produces the following: multicultural and social justice counseling opportunities to marginalized students, helps change possible biased worldviews of counselors in training, and enhances meaningful experiences with students (Elliot & Downey, 2022). Killian et al. (2023) highlight there are effective tools that have been implemented to ensure that counselors are meeting CACREP standards as it relates to multiculturalism and social justice. Elliot and Downey (2022) discuss suggestions for educators within the professional counselor program regarding incorporating MSJCC in the curriculum through creative pedagogical techniques. To endorse the effectiveness of this integration, counselors in training must

understand how his/her own cultural and personal biases can affect his/her professional conduct (Parker et al., 2022).

Counselor Self-Awareness

The literature highlights different ways counselors have engaged in increased self-awareness to ensure this competency in MSJCC is met. One way identified deals with professional identity. A counselor's success is predicated upon the development of a professional identity, which is integrated with self-awareness and professional duties (Ewe & Ng, 2022). The counselor must become culturally sensitive to injustice and must recognize and track his/her personal biases, considering multicultural and social justice counseling competencies (Killian et al., 2023; Middleton et al, 2023). Another way deals with the counselor creating a trusting and safe environment that endorses and explores the worldview of the student/client and must work to create a genuine relationship that creates a healthy power dynamic (Killian et al., 2023; Middleton et al, 2023). Educators and mentors are instrumental in spearheading the implementation of activities that foster self-awareness and identify privileged attitudes and existing biases in counselors in training (Chapman-Hilliard & Parker, 2022; Elliot & Downey, 2022; Ewe & Ng, 2022). Through the ongoing, internal process of self-reflexivity, the counselor can develop a critical consciousness that can empower wellness for both himself/herself and for the client that is both equitable and culturally appropriate (Gibson et al., 2021).

This wellness can be realized and manifested through cultural humility, which is an essential component in counseling effects (Zhu et al., 2023). Cultural humility refers to a vulnerable mindset, where an individual realizes that he/she does not fully know a culture and is open to learning and discovering more about that culture. Cultural humility has a multifaceted importance and can be a great motivator for continued cultural discussions, as well as working

alliances (Zhu et al., 2023). The embracing of cultural humility has resulted in some of the following: improved treatment process/effects in productive working alliances, lower effects of microaggression, and an improved supervisee self-assurance (Zhu et al., 2023). Cultural humility supports equity and inclusion in our communities and must be embraced.

Counseling Relationship

Professional counseling programs can help equip CITs to incorporate their awareness, knowledge, skill, and understanding of how privilege and marginalization statuses influence the counseling relationship (Ratts et al., 2015). Therapeutic interactions are shaped by social identities, social group statuses, power, privilege, oppression, limitations, assumptions, attitudes, values, beliefs, and biases (Ratts et al., 2015). Creative interventions to promote meaningful experiences within counseling relationships were used to promote change in some professional counseling programs (Chang, 2022; Elliot & Downey, 2022). In a CACREP-accredited professional counseling program, art projects were utilized to stimulate conversations regarding marginalized and oppressed groups fostering a deeper understanding of one's lived experience (Chang, 2022). In addition, Elliot and Downey (2022) discuss how creative assignments may enhance the learning experience by offering students a simulation of biographical social injustices and systemic prejudices through viewing films. The interventions can be utilized to self-reflect and examine how CITs integrate cultural considerations into ethical decision-making (Parker et al., 2022).

Counseling and Advocacy Interventions

Social justice and advocacy for marginalized CITs assist in overcoming system barriers, navigate culturally dominant pedagogy, and progress in careers (Spellman et al., 2022) CACREP standards outline the expectation that professional counseling students are involved in leadership development activities so that they emerge from professional counseling programs as trailblazers

supporting the integrity and growth of the field of counseling (DeDiego et al., 2022). Professional counseling programs determine whether CITs view community outreach, leadership, and advocacy as essential to their professional identity (Ratts et al., 2015). Counselor educators are crucial in helping CITs to collaborate with community, school, and agency partners to implement innovative and MSJCC-aligned interventions (Prasath et al., 2023). Prasath and Bhat (2022) confirmed prior results that psychological capital (PC) has direct implications for servant leadership and that novice CITs are likely to grow in these realms over time. In addition, more experienced counselor supervisors and educators can help CITs invest professional counseling into developing servant leadership traits through experiential opportunities, coursework, and internship. Predictors of future social justice and advocacy engagement are involved in organizations and initiatives, such as Holmes Scholars Program, Minority Fellowship Program, and National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity, which promote the integration of CITs personal and professional identities and highlight the need for advocacy and social justice (Spellman et al., 2022; Um & Wood, 2022). Broaching, an advocacy and social justice technique, can also be integrated in work with CITs to address culturally sensitive issues (Day-Vines et al., 2021).

While there are initiatives that have been formulated to integrate MSJCC into counselor education programs to ensure that standards set forth by CACREP and ACA are adhered to, there are still challenges that institutions face with the implementation of these skills/competencies in counselor education programs.

Barriers to Implementation

Higher education institutions have historically been venues of classism and marginalization (Cisneros et., 2022). Professional organizations like CACREP arose from a need

to hold institutions accountable and reverse bias and racism (Cisneros et al., 2022). Spellman et al. (2022) highlight that 71.38% of Counselor Education and Supervision (CES) faculty represent the dominant culture, which has the potential to lead to programmatic barriers that prevent access and equity. This potentially leads to professional counseling programs still facing limited resources to address institutional and systemic barriers to integrating social justice and advocacy within counseling education programs (Agackar, 2022; Harrichand et al., 2021; Sami & Jeter, 2021). One of the barriers highlighted in the literature was the lack of representation in leadership. The literature indicated how representation in leadership affects issues of recruitment, admission, and retention, which is also impacted by supervision and mentorship. The literature explores how these barriers impede the integration and implementation of social justice and advocacy in counselor education programs.

Representation in Leadership

Diverse student bodies lead to increased advocacy and social justice initiatives (citation). The lack, thereof, potentiates a lack of intentionality as it relates to the integration of social justice and advocacy. Thereby, recruitment, admission, and retention are important as it relates to the integration of social justice and advocacy skills in counselor education programs. One thing that affects this is representation in faculty. Lack of diverse faculty often leads to a lack of retention and recruitment of diverse students (Cisneros et al., 2022, DeDiego et al., 2023, & Spellman et al., 2022). This also leads to lack of engagement and a desire to pursue leadership roles; thereby, perpetuating representation in leadership being majority reflective of the dominant culture.

DeDiego et al. (2023) conducted a qualitative study on the influence of representation in leadership for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) on doctoral students in CES programs. Their

study reflected how the lack of representation negatively affected doctoral students who identified as minority students. The study highlighted feelings of internalized pressures (feeling the increased need to advocate for themselves or feeling like ‘tokens’), lack of a desire to strive for leadership roles, and feeling disconnected from the program due to a lack of identity and connection to faculty (DeDiego et al., 2023). This study further emphasized how the lack of representation in leadership leads to barriers in integrating social justice and advocacy. Part of the internal pressure for these doctoral students in this study possibly were the results of poor integration of social justice and advocacy due to lack of representation in leadership.

Spellman et al. (2022) also highlight another barrier to potential integration of social justice and advocacy: supervision and mentorship. Again, when there is diversity in the student body there is more intentionality in the integration of social justice and advocacy (citation). Supervisory and mentorship relationships have been shown advantageous in mitigating the issues of retention and recruitment specifically as it relates to those of marginalized and minority populations (Cisneros et al., 2022). The lack of representation in supervisors and mentors creates lack of engagement and retention of students (Spellman et al., 2022), leading to decrease students of marginalized populations becoming faculty in CES programs (Spellman et al., 2022). Without representation it can be harder to fully grasp the importance of integration of social justice and advocacy despite the standards set forth by CACREP and ACA.

The key is to identify these barriers and develop plans of actions to combat the natural tendency of dominant culture to negate the importance and vitality of successfully implementing MSJCC competencies. Having a theoretical understanding is not sufficient, practical application of implementation is mandatory if there is to be effective integration of these competencies/skills.

Implementation

In the context of Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MSJCC), the therapeutic relationship is influenced by an interplay of power, privilege, and oppression, affecting the privileged or marginalized statuses of both counselor and client (Ratts et al., 2016; Mitchell & Butler, 2021). The MSJCC framework outlines a paradigm incorporating social justice and developmental domains such as self-awareness, understanding the client's worldview, the counseling relationship, and counseling and advocacy interventions. Within this framework, 'privileged' identities are those with inherent societal advantages (e.g., male, heterosexual, White), while 'marginalized' identities are those typically lacking systemic societal benefits (e.g., female, LGBTQ+ identities, people of color, immigrants) (Mitchell & Butler, 2021).

This dynamic is also present in supervisory relationships, where addressing these interpersonal dynamics is crucial for growth. As described by Day-Vines et al. (2021), the concept of 'broaching' involves addressing the contextual dimensions of race, ethnicity, and culture in counseling. Discussing oppression and its impact on the counseling relationship is vital for understanding the marginalized individual's internal frame of reference. It requires acknowledgment of one's own developmental domains, including attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, skills, and actions (Day-Vines et al., 2021).

Broaching serves as a tool with the MSJCC framework, facilitating meaningful exploration of complex identities impacted by psychological distress. Self-awareness and its impact play a crucial role in fostering culturally responsive counseling discussions, a process further enhanced by the MSJCC framework (Mitchell & Butler, 2021). Through self-awareness, relationships can develop and deepen, emphasizing the importance of recognizing and discussing the salient values, beliefs, and identities within the privileged-marginalized paradigm.

Culturally sensitive communication skills in cross-cultural settings can empower those who are marginalized to understand and navigate the impacts of oppressive forces on their mental health. These skills also promote advocacy efforts from those in positions of privilege (Day-Vines et al., 2021). The journey toward effective advocacy and support begins with self-awareness, including understanding one's own social identities and the dynamics of marginalized and privileged groups and recognizing one's values and biases (Mitchell & Butler, 2021). MSJCC framework focused on the importance of cultural identities and perspectives within counseling. A more profound comprehension of the challenges faced by oppressed groups can significantly enhance outcomes in social justice and advocacy efforts (Mitchell & Butler, 2021). Despite ethical standards and models that incorporate multicultural and social justice concepts, there needs to be more consistency in integrating these into the curriculum of professional counseling training programs. This inconsistency affects the ability to effectively serve clients from diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds (Mitchell & Butler, 2021).

Discussion

In this PRISMA systematic review, this manuscript sought to answer how social justice and advocacy competencies have been implemented and integrated into professional counseling programs. As CACREP has strengthened its influence on CES programs, accreditation requires curricula to integrate MSJCC framework to instill cultural acceptance and to educate CITs on the lived experience of the oppressed client (Dollarhide et al., 2021). Racial tensions continue to grow, and as a result, professional counseling programs have been striving to integrate the MSJCC framework so that CITs are better trained to conduct therapeutic interventions with clients who reside in a marginalized and oppressed reality.

Through the qualitative content analysis of 53 peer-reviewed journal articles, several

themes were documented, demonstrating that educators have responded to the call to implement the MSJCC framework and have advocated for conceptual frameworks into the central work of professional counseling programs. However, the literature also indicates that there are inconsistencies in the implementation and integration of these competencies/skills and that continues to affect the ability to fully and effectively serve clients in marginalized communities (Mitchell & Butler, 2021).

The literature highlighted different skills and programs that counselor educators are engaging in to implement social action and advocacy competencies as set forth by MSJCC: creative techniques to increase and bolster the counselor relationship (Chang, 2022; Elliot & Downey, 2022); incorporating self-reflexivity (Gibson et al., 2021) and cultural humility (Zhu et al., 2023) to ensure counselor self-awareness; and different approaches (i.e. broaching) and programs (i.e. Holmes Scholars Program, Minority Fellowship Program, and National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity) that counselor educators and supervisors can engage in to ensure CITs are engaging in leadership and advocacy specifically as it relates to social justice (Spellman et al., 2022; Um & Wood, 2022).

When MSJCC is implemented in the classroom, CITs tend to have an emotional response that elicits examining their social systems and accepting the movement of privileged versus marginalized. Subsequently, CITs become more mindful of the client's worldview and how racial discrimination impacts their daily lives. Many articles suggested that by implementing experiential activities, CITs begin to empathize with the client's lived experience. Through the new-found lens of self-awareness and the client's worldview, the maturing CIT can assess the health of the counseling relationship by recognizing the power differentials that undoubtedly exist. According to MSJCC, the culturally evolved CIT will demonstrate the ability

to utilize advocacy interventions, which is indicative of a clinician who has exhaustively explored their biases and sought to understand the perspective of minorities. A culturally minded CIT has been encouraged by faculty to sharpen their leadership skills through experiential coursework and exposure to real-world oppression through creative endeavors within the curriculums (Thacker & Minton, 2021).

Though the research yielded various MSJCC implementations within educational structures, barriers were found in the literature that included a lack of representation in leadership including supervisors and mentors often resulting in issues with recruitment and retention. Professional counseling programs are inundated with meeting criteria of accrediting associations and the demands of administrations who also dictate their advancement. These same administrations controlling new professional counseling program funding may be those who covertly hold old-fashioned prejudices against minorities (Cisneros et al., 2022), possibly leading to the lack of representation in faculty and within the student body.

Another barrier that may hinder the application of competencies is the health of the supervisor-trainee relationship. CITs of a minority background reported that having a strong mentor improved their educational journey, and in the authenticity of that mentor-mentee relationship, their self-assurance grew (Cartwright et al., 2021; Cisneros et al., 2022). To conclude, there is an insufficient amount of research on the topic of curricula implementation of social justice and advocacy. Without training and proper guidance, counselor educators are left to create classroom interventions in an academic world that rarely supports social justice and advocacy teachings.

In this review, the findings suggest that professional counseling programs have integrated MSJCC and advocacy competencies in their curricula; however, faculty are left wondering if

these integrations are being implemented consistently to prepare their CITs for being the culturally sensitive clinician needed when working with minority and marginalized individuals.

The literature identifies how the use of creative interventions the ensuing battles. Using creative interventions, such as art projects music and expressive art, in the classroom, stimulates interest of CITs while eliciting an emotional response needed for authentic change and exploring their personal worldviews; how. Promoting self-examination exploration to identify biases and cultural differences is the foundation of a culturally sensitive counselor; Being empathetic to oppressed clients who are marginalized and being aware of their' lived experiences informs the therapeutic treatment and builds a secure relationship between the counselor and the client; and . foundationally speaking, fervent safe mentorships can increase the success of marginalized students and will ultimately help clients. Though professional counseling programs are not where they need to be, awareness of barriers and what is being done is the beginning of the change that is necessary for lasting and consistent implantation. it is an optimistic beginning of change.

From this content analysis, there were several recommendations given for counselor educators and their institutions. It was apparent that substantially more research on MSJCC instruction is needed to prepare faculty for the task effectively. In addition, there appears to be pedagogical challenges within the academic structures that hinder educators' ability to engage in MSJCC teachings actively. This appears to indicate a need for institution-wide training. Antiquated ideas of social systems should be dismantled so that oppressive environments can begin to mend the damage of academic marginalization. Curriculum metamorphoses can be useful to the educational microcosm that exists within a classroom. Furthermore, having these incremental deviations from ancient teachings can lead to real-world changes by exposing new counselors to diversities, ethnicities, and cultures that dwell beyond the universities' walls.

Implications

This literature review provides several implications as it relates to integrating and implementing social justice and advocacy into counselor education programs specifically for CITs. One of the implications is the expressed need for more universal formation of curricula that specifically addresses how social justice and advocacy will be integrated into counselor education programs. Social justice and advocacy should not be left to one class and only theoretical discussion. The ideas presented by MSJCC involve cultivating the counselors' identity, awareness, and relationship with and to the client with cultural sensitivity. Relegating this competency to one class is not sufficient. The literature indicates that there is a need for these competencies to be integrated throughout the entirety of the counselor education program and intentional training be conducted on how.

Another implication addresses the need of representation in counselor education programs, specifically in leadership roles, mentors, and supervisors. As previously addressed in the manuscript the counselor educators primarily consist of the dominant culture, which influences the 'how' of which social justice and advocacy is integrated and implemented. This review shows indication for the need of more recruitment and retention of faculty and leaders in counselor education programs to reflect more diversity including more minority and marginalized individuals. This would also help with increasing the level of research also conducted in this area. This review highlighted the deficits in the literature regarding social justice and advocacy competencies being integrated and implemented especially considering more inclusion of marginalized populations. Often, the literature speaks to marginalization specifically addressing culture and ethnicity, but not enough is included regarding other marginalized groups (i.e. gender, disability, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, etc....).

Additional research is needed to also include other marginalized groups and specific ways to address social justice and advocacy in counselor education programs for a more complete view of minority groups and those included in marginalized populations.

Lastly, another implication of this review indicates a need for exploring how this integration and implementation affects the vulnerable communities that these CITs will ultimately serve. The literature separates these two ideologies: social justice and advocacy in CES programs and vulnerable populations in the community. While the separation helps to distinguish the literature, the primary reason for having these accommodations through CACREP, ACA, and MSJCC, is to affect change efficiently and effectively within vulnerable communities. There is room for research to be done regarding how the effective and consistent integration and implementation of social justice and advocacy within CES programs affect the vulnerable communities these counselor educators are looking to serve. It reinforces the need to break down the continued systemic oppression, discrimination, and racist practices that continue to plague and seeks to silence those who often do not have voice, do not trust, and has been harmed by the ignorance and continued whitewashing of the history of education, counseling, and supervision.

Conclusion

Though barriers still exist, socially conscious instructors and researchers continue striving to improve the educational system and the client's treatment and well-being. Utilizing creative art techniques can enrich the CITs learning milieu and produce an empathic response causing a deeper understanding of the enduring biases that shape the client's lived experience. Having culturally sensitive creative writing prompts can assist the CITs awareness of personal preconceptions of ethnic groups and their privilege. Additionally, CITs who shared engagement

and identification of worldviews and lived experiences in supervision and mentorship reported a more fulfilling academic experience. The health of the supervisory relationship should be strong enough to handle difficult conversations that include broaching subjects of racism, oppression, and marginalization. For culturally sensitive supervision, a safe space for the supervisee's emotions is needed.

In summary, the research question of this PRISMA qualitative content analysis was answered clearly. Regardless of the societal circumscription, this analysis demonstrated that MSJCC core competencies and advocacy are being integrated at the graduate level and indicate that developing professional counselors are exposed to progressive thoughts and the harmonious treatment of the oppressed and marginalized; however, the answer of implementation was inconclusive as the literature also suggests there is disparity in the consistency of the implementation.

References

- *Agaskar, V. R. (2023). Behavioral health workforce education and training (BHWET) funding: Forging the future of the counseling profession. *Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation, 14*(1), 15–27.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/21501378.2022.2074291>
- American Counseling Association. (2014). *ACA code of ethics*.
<https://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/2014-code-of-ethics-finaladdress.pdf>
- Baker, C., & Moore, I. (2015). Experiences of underrepresented doctoral students in counselor Education. *Journal for Multicultural Education, 9*, 68– 84. <https://doi:10.1108/jme-11-2014-0036>
- Cartwright, A. D., Stark, M. D., Boswell, J. N., & Oller, M. L. (2021). Black female doctoral students' mentorship experiences in counselor education. *Journal of Counselor Leadership and Advocacy, 8*(2), 87-99. [https://doi.org/ 10.1080/2326716X.2021.1961642](https://doi.org/10.1080/2326716X.2021.1961642)
- *Chang, V. (2022). Advocacy and creativity in community: A social justice project for counseling students. *Journal for Social Action in Counseling and Psychology, 14*(1), 2-16. <https://doi.org/10.33043/JSACP.14.1.2-16>
- *Chen, S., Basma, D., Ju, J., & Ng, K. (2020). Opportunities and challenges of multicultural and international online education. *The Professional Counselor, 10*(1).
<https://doi.org/10.15241/syc.10.1.120>
- *Cisneros, D., Anandavalli, S., Brown, E. M., Whitman, J. S., & Chaney, M. P. (2022). Anti-racist mentorship: A multicultural and social justice approach to mentoring students identifying as Black, Indigenous, and persons of color in counselor education. *Journal of Counselor Leadership and Advocacy, 9*(2).

<https://doi.org/10.1080/2326716X.2022.2162462>

Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs. (2016). 2016

CACREP Standards. <http://cacrep.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/2016-Standards-with-Glossary-5.3.2018.pdf>

*Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs. (2016). *CACREP annual report 2015*. <http://www.cacrep.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/CACREP-2015-Annual-Report.pdf>

*Day-Vines, N. L., Cluxton-Keller, F., Agorsor, C., & Gubara, S. (2021). Strategies for broaching the subjects of race, ethnicity, and culture. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 99*(3), 348-357. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcad.12380>

*DeDiego, A. C., Chan, C. D., & Basma, D. (2022). Emerging leaders: Leadership development experiences of counselor education doctoral students. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 61*(3), 262–275. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ceas.12241>

*Dollarhide, C.T., Hale, S.C., & Stone-Sabali, S. (2021). A new model for social justice supervision. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 99*: 104-113. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcad.12358>

*Elliott, J. A. & Downey, L. E. (2022). Broaching intersectionality and social justice: incorporating Fruitvale Station into multicultural counselor education. *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health, 17*(1), 1-12.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/15401383.2022.2035294>

*Ewe, E. & Ng, K. M. (2022). Relationships between ecosystemic variables and professional identity of master’s counseling students, *Journal of Counselor Leadership and Advocacy, 9*(2), 142-154. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2326716X.2022.2053245>

- Figueroa, J., & Rodriguez, G. (2015). Critical mentoring practices to support diverse students in higher education: Chicana/Latina faculty perspectives. *New Directions for Higher Education, 171*, 23–33. <https://doi.org/10.1002/he.20139>
- Gantt-Howrey, A., Becnel, A., Shi, Y., & Lau, J. (2023). Use of the MSJCC: A content analysis of ACA journals. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 62*(1), 40-51. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ceas.12259>
- **Gibson, D. M., Pence, C., Kennedy, S. D., Gerlach, J., Degges-White, S., & Watson, J. (2021). Development of the counselor wellness competencies. *Journal of Counselor Leadership and Advocacy, 8*(2), 130-145. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2326716X.2021.1925997>
- *Harrichand, J. S., Thomas, J. C., Mwendwa, J. M., & DiLella, N. M. (2021). Leadership and burnout: An analysis of counselor educators in CACREP-accredited programs in the United States. *Journal of Counselor Leadership and Advocacy, 8*(1), 56-70. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2326716X.2021.1887008>
- Hays, D. G., & Wood, C. (2011). Infusing qualitative traditions in counseling research designs. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 89*(3), 288-295. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6678.2011.tb00091.x>
- *Killian, T., Peters, H. C., & Floren, M. (2023). Development and validation of the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies-Inventory. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development, 56*(4), 329-346. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481756.2022.2160357>
- *Middleton, T. J., Toole, K. M., Culpepper, D., Hughes, D. C., Parsons-Christian, E., & Dollarhide, C. T. (2023). Decolonizing & decentering oppressive structures: practical

strategies for social justice in school and clinical counseling. *Journal of Counselor Leadership and Advocacy*, 10(2), 112- 122.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/2326716X.2023.2237023>

*Mitchell, M.D. & Butler, S.K. (2021). Acknowledging intersectional identity in supervision: The multicultural integrated supervision model. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 49, 101-115. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jmcd.12209>

*Parker, M. M., Attia, M., & Lee, L. (2022). Utilizing experiential activities to facilitate multicultural understanding within ethical decision-making *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*, 17(4), 533-545.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/15401383.2021.1921645>

Parker, M. M., Opiola, K., Subhit, A., Kelly, C. T., & Pezzella, A. (2022). The role of adverse childhood experiences in counselor trainee's burnout and wellness and the moderating role of social support. *Journal of Counselor Leadership and Advocacy*, 9(2), 126-141. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2326716X.2022.2076265>

Prasath, P. R., & Bhat, C. S. (2022). Psychological capital as an antecedent to servant leadership in the counseling profession. *Journal of Counselor Leadership and Advocacy*, 9(1), 71-85. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2326716x.2022.2036269/>

*Prasath, P. R., Steen, S., & McVay, K. (2023). A creative strengths-based group counseling intervention for African American boys. *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*, 1-12.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/15401383.2023.2166184>

*Ramirez, S. (2023). Cultural exposure as a creative experiential learning intervention. *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*, 18(1), 118-133. DOI: [10.1080/15401383.2021.1949420](https://doi.org/10.1080/15401383.2021.1949420)

*Ratts, M., Singh, A., Nassar-McMillan, S., Butler, S., & McCullough, J. (2015). *Multicultural*

and social justice counseling competencies. <https://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/competencies/multicultural-and-social-justice-counseling-competencies.pdf?sfvrsn=20>

*Ratts, M, Singh, A., Butler, S., Nassar-McMillan, S., & McCullough, J. (2016). Multicultural and social justice counseling competencies: Guidelines for the counseling profession. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, 44*(1): 28-48.
doi.org/10.1002/jmcd.12035

*Rogers, M., & Molina, L. (2006). Exemplary efforts in psychology to recruit and retain graduate students of color. *American Psychologist, 61*, 143–156.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.61.2.143>

*Sami, W. Y. & Jeter, C. (2021). The political economy and inequality's impact on mental health. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling, 43*(3), 212–227.
<https://doi.org/10.17744/mehc.43.3.04>

*Spellman, K., Dillenbeck, J., & Edwards, N., & Bohecker, L. (2021). Supporting Marginalized Students in Counselor Education and Supervision Programs. *Journal of Counselor Leadership and Advocacy, 9*, 32-44. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2326716X.2021.2007429>

*Thacker, N., & Minton, C.A. (2021). Minoritized professionals' experiences in counselor education: A review of research. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 60*, 35-50.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/ceas.12195>

*Um, B. & Wood, S. M. (2022). Professional identity and social justice engagement in counseling trainees, *Journal of Counselor Leadership and Advocacy, 9*(2), 115-125. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2326716X.2022.2052204>

*Washington, A., & Henfield, M. (2019). What do the AMCD multicultural and social justice counseling competencies mean in the context of black lives matter? *Journal of*

Multicultural Counseling and Development, 47, 148-160.

doi.org/10.1002/jmcd.12138

Zhu, P., Luke, M. M., Liu, Y., & Wang, Q. (2023). Cultural humility and cultural competence in counseling: An exploratory mixed methods investigation. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 101(3), 264- 276. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcad.12469>