

Supervisor Series: From Awareness to Action

CHAMPIONING MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

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TASP Conference Presentation

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Introductions



Krystal T. Simmons, PhD, NCSP

- *Licensed School Psychologist*
- *Licensed Psychologist*
- *Student Clinical Experience Coordinator, Texas Southern University*



Denika Y. Douglas, PhD

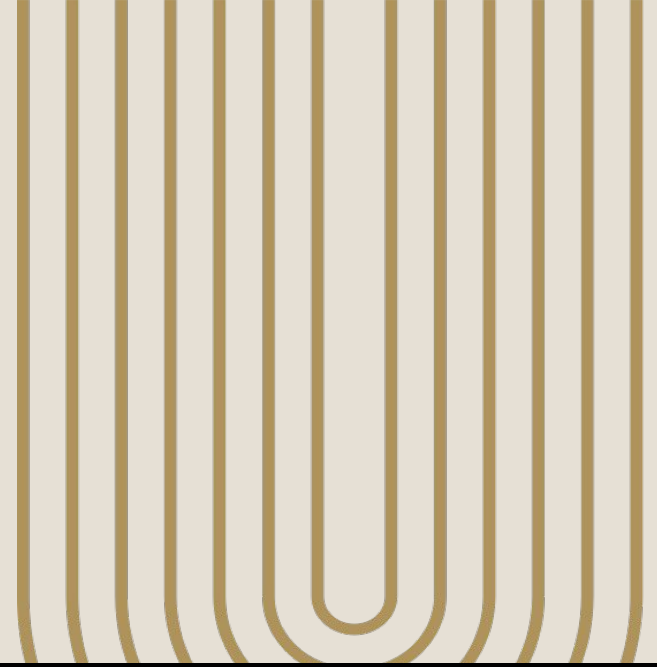
- *Licensed School Psychologist*
- *Licensed Psychologist*
- *Department Head, Associate Professor, Texas Southern University*



Lauren K. Chapman, MEd

- *LPC-Associate, supervised by Audrey Zatopek, PhD, LPC-S, LCDC, NCC*
- *Doctoral Student, School Psychology Program, University of Houston*

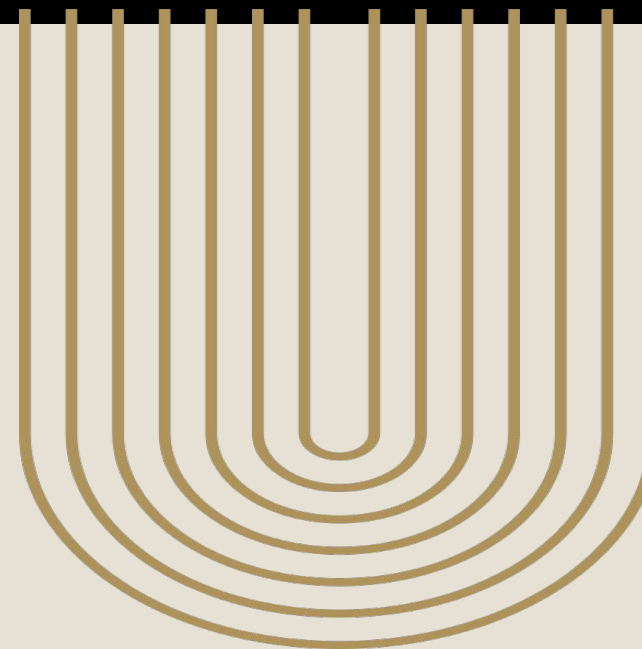
Supervisor Series: From Awareness to Action



LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OVERVIEW:

Championing Mental Health Advocacy for the Next Generation of School Psychologist

Krystal T. Simmons, PhD



Learning Objectives

The Supervisor

Act as advocates

Clarify Role &
Responsibilities

Practical strategies &
case examples

The Trainee

Advocate for self and others
in supervision and training

Practical strategies & case
examples

The Early Career School Psychologist

Advocate for self

Advocate for students with-
in the school system

Practical strategies & case
example

Overview of Session Structure

- *Rationale and Literature*
- *Framework*
- *Practical strategies & Case Examples*
- *Advocacy in Supervision*
- *Advocacy as a Trainee*
- *(Break)*
- *Advocacy as an Early Career School Psychologist*
- *Small-Group Discussion*
- *Q&A*

- *Social Justice Framework*
- *Grounded in professional ethics, not politics*
- *Respect for a range of personal values and beliefs*
- *Emphasis on inclusive supervision & training, fairness, and student well-being.*

Creating a Respectful, Ethical Space for Dialogue

Ground Rules for Discussion

- *Assume good intent, attend to impact.*
- *Speak from your own experience.*
- *Respect confidentiality.*
- *Discomfort ≠ harm.*
- *No blame or shame.*
- *Stay grounded in ethics and student outcomes.*
- *Follow ISD, State, NASP, and APA guidelines/laws.*

Supervisor Series: From Awareness to Action

GUIDING ADVOCACY THROUGH SUPERVISION & LEADERSHIP

Krystal T. Simmons, PhD

OVERVIEW AND SUPERVISING STUDENTS: DEVELOPING ADVOCACY SKILLS EARLY IN TRAINING

Advocacy

Advocacy is a process of “informing and assisting decision-makers . . . who promote the interests of clients, health care systems, public and welfare issues, and professional psychology.” (Lating et al., 2009, p. 106)

- *Collective responsibility*
- *Can naturally occur in supervision and training*

OVERVIEW AND SUPERVISING STUDENTS: DEVELOPING ADVOCACY SKILLS EARLY IN TRAINING

“SUPERVISION is a distinct professional practice employing a collaborative relationship that has both facilitative and evaluative components, that extend over time.” (APA, 2025, p. 2)

“[The goal is to] seek to enhance the professional competence and science-informed practice of the supervisee, monitor the quality of services provided, protect the public, and provide a gatekeeping function for entry into the profession.” (APA, 2025, p. 2)

OVERVIEW AND SUPERVISING STUDENTS: DEVELOPING ADVOCACY SKILLS EARLY IN TRAINING

Supervision

- *Ethical and Competency Considerations*
 - *APA (2016) and NASP (2020)*
 - *Maintain self-awareness and model ethical decision making*
 - *Gatekeeping responsibilities*
- *Challenges & Tensions for Supervisors*
 - *Dual roles*
 - *Power dynamics*
 - *Balancing critique and support*
 - *Cultural dynamics*

GUIDING ADVOCACY THROUGH SUPERVISION & LEADERSHIP

Role of the Supervisors in Advocacy (Cohen et al., 2012, Lating, et al., 2009)

- *Modeling advocacy as part of professional identity*
- *Creating supportive environments for supervisees*
- *Required in multiple circumstances*
- *Current Challenges*

GUIDING ADVOCACY THROUGH SUPERVISION & LEADERSHIP

Literature & Models of Advocacy in Supervision

- *Social Justice Focus*
 - *Integrating social justice into supervision, aligning supervisee's clinical and advocacy orientation (Glosoff & Durham, 2010)*
 - *Grounded theory on how supervisors embed social justice advocacy into supervision (Rodgers, 2022)*
 - *Examining the emotional toll of advocacy and supervisory support (Farkas, 2021)*
 - *Supervisor cultural humility & nondisclosure (Ertl et al., 2023)*

GUIDING ADVOCACY THROUGH SUPERVISION & LEADERSHIP

Why does Advocacy Matter in Supervision?

- . Clients are embedded within systems (schools, communities) with inequities; supervisees need support to raise systemic issues*
- . Supervisors are positioned to influence policies, resource allocation, and culture*
- . Supervision can be a vehicle for instilling an advocacy ethic in trainees*
- . Without supervisory support, advocacy might feel risky or unsupported*

GUIDING ADVOCACY THROUGH SUPERVISION & LEADERSHIP

Key Principles for Advocacy-Oriented Supervision

- . Modeling advocacy (e.g. speak up in organizational meetings, challenge inequities)*
- . Normalizing systemic discussion*
- . Scaffolded developmental approach*
- . Cultural humility and reflexivity (engage their own biases and intersectionality)*
- . Support for advocacy-related stress (recognize own stressors, too)*

GUIDING ADVOCACY THROUGH MENTORSHIP & LEADERSHIP

Practical Strategies

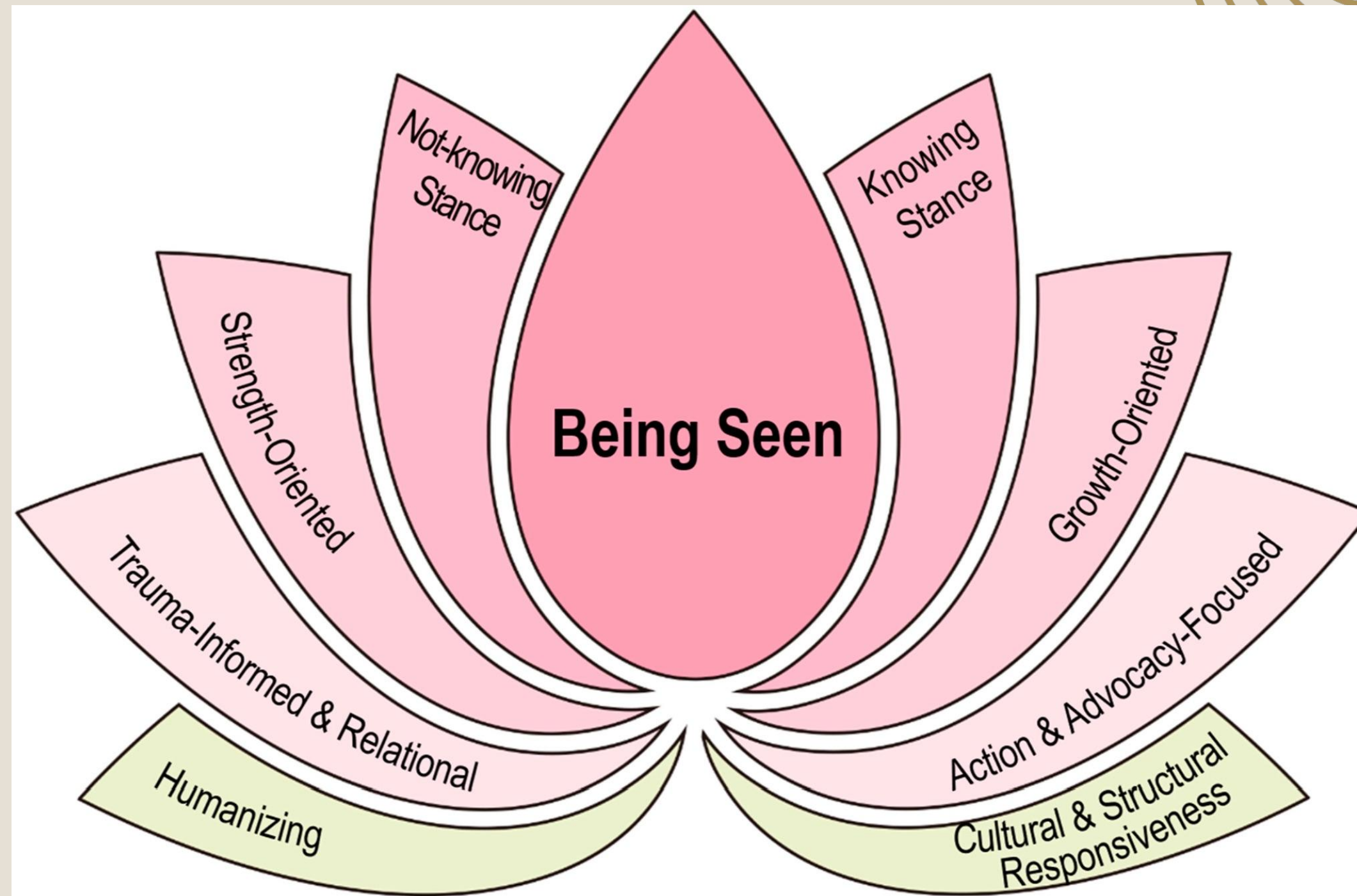
- *Embedding advocacy discussions in supervision.*
- *Encouraging supervisees to engage with policy, families, and community contexts.*
- *Case examples:*
 - *Supervisors championing equitable workload distribution*
 - *Supporting students with significant needs for growth*

Supervisor Series: From Awareness to Action

STUDENTS: DEVELOPING ADVOCACY SKILLS EARLY IN TRAINING

Lauren Chapman, MEd

STUDENTS: DEVELOPING ADVOCACY SKILLS EARLY IN TRAINING



(Speight et al., 2024)

STUDENTS: DEVELOPING ADVOCACY SKILLS EARLY IN TRAINING

Balancing Demands w/ Professional Identity Formation

- “extra work,” → **professional competency**

(Gibson, Dollarhide, & Moss, 2010).

- “Advocacy competence” --> professional identity and self-efficacy.

(Swank, Lambie, & Witta, 2012).

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
8:00	Individual Therapy	Notes/Prep	Individual Therapy	Notes/Prep	Notes/Prep
9:00	Initial Consult	Individual Therapy	Seminar	Seminar	Crisis Coverage
10:00	Initial Consult	Seminar			
11:00	Notes/Prep		Individual Therapy	Individual Therapy	
12:00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:00	Individual Therapy	Provide Supervision	Relationship Therapy	Facilitate MHPE Seminar	Research / Professional Development
2:00	Individual Therapy	Individual Therapy	Receive Supervision	Individual Therapy	
3:00	Clinical Team	Individual Therapy	Co-facilitate Group	Receive Supervision	
4:00	Notes/Prep	Individual Therapy	Notes/Prep	Receive Supervision	

Shriberg & Moy (2022): Students who see advocacy as part of their professional identity report greater ethical clarity and confidence.

STUDENTS: DEVELOPING ADVOCACY SKILLS EARLY IN TRAINING

- Trainees often experience the “advocacy paradox”

(Miller & Sendrowitz, 2011)

- **Supportive mentorship** increases advocacy engagement *(Reese & Crabtree, 2012)*

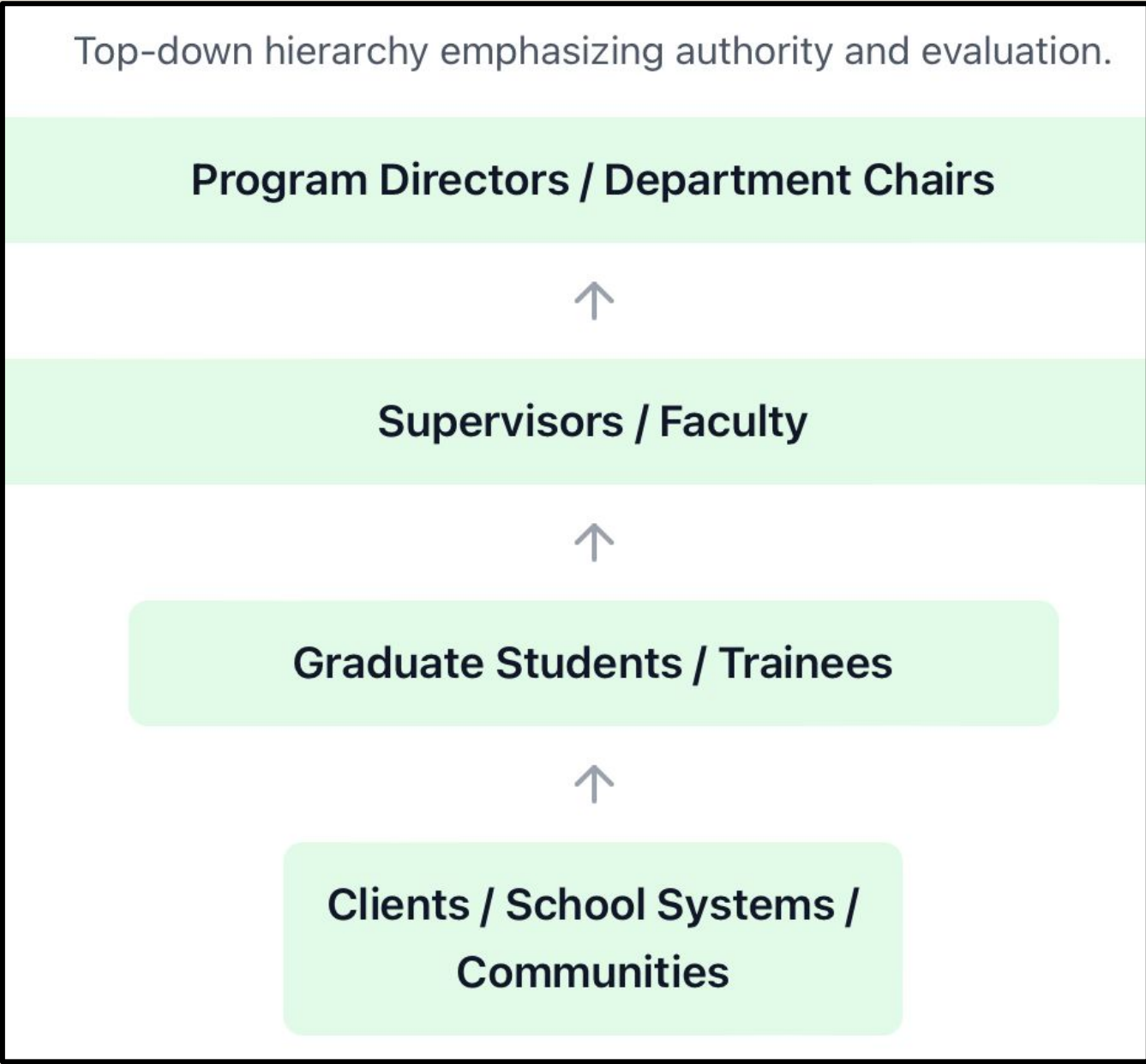
- Supervisory environments that emphasize empowerment and **open dialogue** foster stronger self-advocacy skills in trainees

(Bogo et al., 2017)



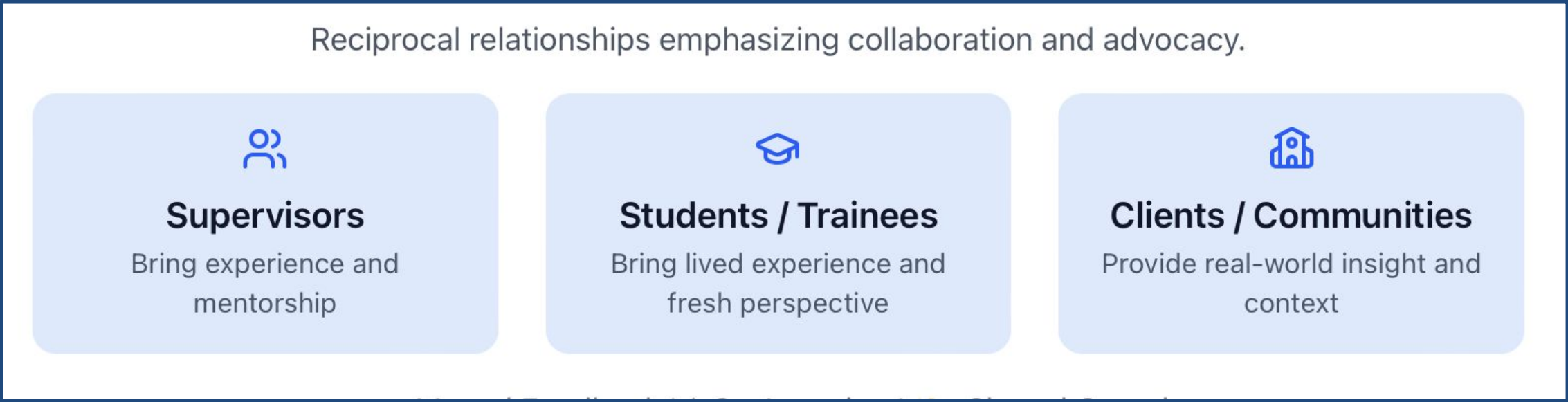
STUDENTS: DEVELOPING ADVOCACY SKILLS EARLY IN TRAINING

Traditional Training Structure



(Jordan, 2010; Miller & Sendrowitz, 2011).

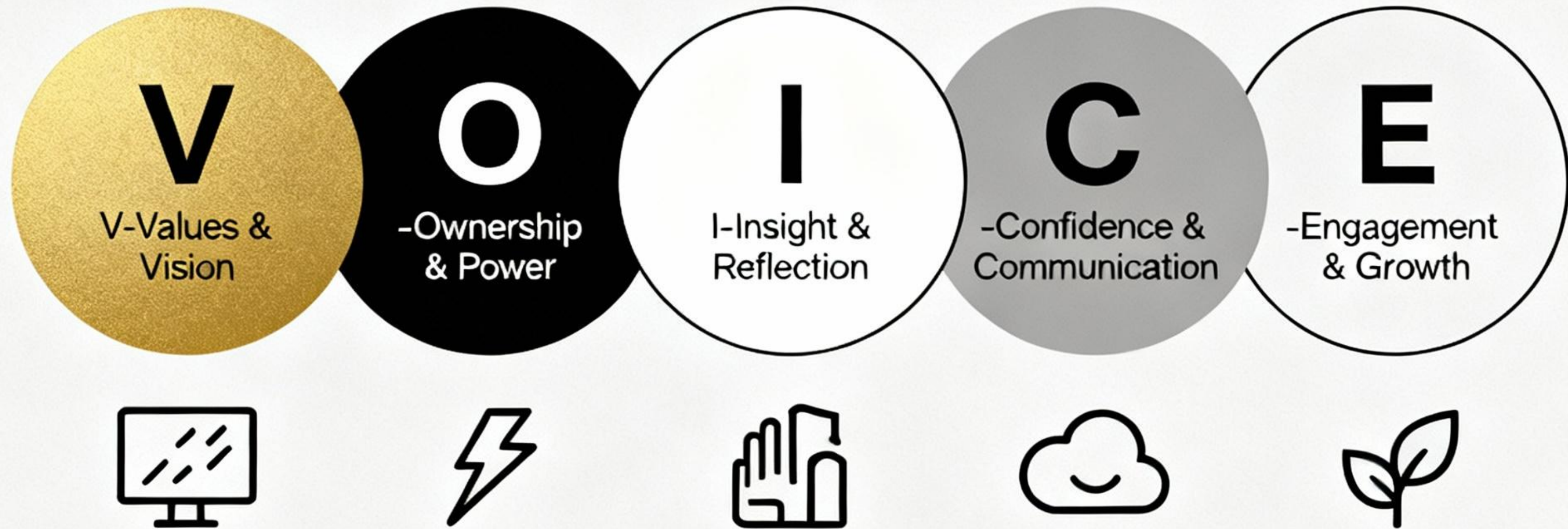
Shared Learning Experience



Speight, Vera, & Velez (2024)

STUDENTS: DEVELOPING ADVOCACY SKILLS EARLY IN TRAINING

Finding one's V.O.I.C.E. as a Supervisee



STUDENTS: DEVELOPING ADVOCACY SKILLS EARLY IN TRAINING

V – Values & Vision

- Research shows alignment of personal values with advocacy identity predicts stronger engagement (*Kozan & Blustein, 2018*).
- Acknowledging why advocacy matters to you and what goals you hope to achieve

O – Ownership & Power

- Recognize your role and influence within clinical and systemic settings. (*Glossoff & Durham, 2010*).
- Own your unique experiences, backgrounds, and authority. Embracing your potential agency

I – Insight & Reflection

- Reflective practice strengthens self-awareness and resilience (*Bogo et al., 2017*).
- Use supervision actively to explore doubts, make mistakes, and build confidence.

C – Confidence & Communication

- Practice clearly expressing concerns and values (*Lewis et al., 2002*).
- Develop your voice through practice and feedback, feeling empowered to speak up.

E – Engagement & Growth

- Commit to lifelong learning, networking, and integrating advocacy into your professional identity
- View advocacy as evolving, energized by relationships and ongoing self-improvement.



Survey Question Responses: Supervisee Lens

STUDENT FEEDBACK

IN WHAT WAYS DOES YOUR OWN CULTURAL IDENTITY SHAPE HOW YOU EXPERIENCE SUPERVISION?

“My cultural identity shapes how I experience supervision in several ways. It influences my communication style, how I perceive authority, how comfortable I feel giving or receiving feedback, and affects how I interpret feedback and expectations.”

“I feel like I can bring a different perspective as the only Hispanic person at my practice. I feel like my opinion is valued on cultural topics.”

“I am honestly not sure.”

HOW COMFORTABLE DO YOU FEEL BRINGING ADVOCACY OR SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES INTO SUPERVISION?

Likert Scale: 1 “Very Comfortable” → 5 “Very Uncomfortable”

- WIDE RANGE OF COMFORT LEVELS
- **NOTABLE PEAKS AT BOTH MODERATE (2) AND HIGH (5) COMFORT LEVELS.**
- DIFFERING LEVELS OF READINESS AND CONFIDENCE AMONG PARTICIPANTS, SUGGESTING A NEED FOR ONGOING DIALOGUE AND SUPPORT IN INTEGRATING ADVOCACY INTO SUPERVISORY PRACTICE.

WHAT WOULD MAKE IT EASIER FOR YOU TO DISCUSS SOCIAL JUSTICE OR ADVOCACY TOPICS IN SUPERVISION?

- If my supervisor initiated the conversation or modeled openness.
- **If supervision explicitly included space for cultural reflection.**
- If I saw advocacy valued by the organization or program.
- If there was more trust and mutual vulnerability in the relationship.
- **I already feel comfortable discussing these topics.**

WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU FEEL SAFER OR MORE EMPOWERED TO SPEAK UP IN SUPERVISION?

- A supervisor who explicitly invites feedback or disagreement.
- Knowing advocacy is a normal and valued part of supervision.
- **Feeling respected and treated as a collaborator, not a subordinate.**
- More cultural responsiveness and awareness of power dynamics.
- Support from peers or faculty encouraging self-advocacy.
- **More training on what healthy advocacy looks like in supervision.**

MORE STUDENT QUOTES

“My cultural identity and approaches closely align with my supervisors allowing more comfortability for advocacy.”

A large part of my cultural identity (being Black in America) is shared with my supervisor, which has made acclimation to the supervisory relationship a breeze. The power dynamics are stable considering we both have the experience of being oppressed and marginalized in some settings while receiving benefits in others.

I hold back because I don't want to be seen as “difficult”.

STUDENTS: DEVELOPING ADVOCACY SKILLS EARLY IN TRAINING

Key Themes

1. Cultural Identity as a Lens in Supervision
2. Varying Comfort Levels w/ Advocacy
3. Representation & Relational Parallels
4. institutional and Programmatic Validation

Existing Literature

Supervisees also reported that **multicultural considerations** led them to feel more comfortable, increased their self-awareness, and spurred them on to discuss multiculturalism with clients.

(Ancis & Ladany, 2001; Ancis & Marshall, 2010)

Social Justice Focus: Your Advocacy, Your Impact



STUDENTS: DEVELOPING ADVOCACY SKILLS EARLY IN TRAINING

Practical Strategies (Ecological Framework)

- Map Your Systems
- Engage Multiple Contexts
- Leverage Relationships
- Adapt to Power Dynamics
- Create Feedback Loops
- Use Cultural and Contextual Awareness
- Build Resilience Within Systems



Break

(15 minutes)

Supervisor Series: From Awareness to Action

EARLY CAREER SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS: SUSTAINING ADVOCACY IN THE TRANSITION TO PRACTICE

Denika Y. Douglas, PhD

EARLY CAREER SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS: SUSTAINING ADVOCACY IN THE TRANSITION TO PRACTICE

Role of Early Career Practitioners

Navigating professional autonomy and institutional constraints

Professional Ideals

- Ethical practice
- Best practices & evidence-based interventions
- Professional identity, growth & autonomy
 - Systemic impact
 - Social justice

Institutional Constraints

- High caseloads
- Time constraints/competing demands
- Role ambiguity/narrow expectations
 - emphasis on reactive rather than proactive work
- Limited administrative support
- Lack of training & role-modeling
 - Funding, staffing, policy

EARLY CAREER SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS: SUSTAINING ADVOCACY IN THE TRANSITION TO PRACTICE

Disconnect between
ideals & reality



Can lead to...

- Role strain
- Burnout
- Erosion of professional identity
- Inflexibility
- Compromised student outcomes
- Disengagement from advocacy
- Perpetuated inequalities
- Attrition

EARLY CAREER SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS: SUSTAINING ADVOCACY IN THE TRANSITION TO PRACTICE

Real Feedback from EC's

Survey Questions

1. To what extent do you feel that your own cultural identity and worldview are acknowledged and valued in your current workplace?

(Likert scale: 1 = Not at all valued → 5 = Highly valued)

1. In what ways does your cultural identity shape how you approach your role as a school psychologist?

1. How comfortable do you feel advocating for your own professional needs (e.g., fair workload, ongoing supervision, professional development)? *(Likert scale: 1 = Very uncomfortable → 5 = Very comfortable)*

4. What barriers, if any, have you experienced when attempting to advocate for yourself?

5. How comfortable do you feel bringing advocacy or social justice issues to colleagues, supervisors, and administrators? *(Likert scale: 1 = Very uncomfortable → 5 = Very comfortable)*

6. What would make it easier for you to discuss social justice or advocacy topics with colleagues, supervisors, and administrators?

7. What would make you feel safer or more empowered to speak up with colleagues, supervisors, and administrators?

EARLY CAREER SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS: SUSTAINING ADVOCACY IN THE TRANSITION TO PRACTICE

Translating training into sustained advocacy in schools

- Build relationships & interdisciplinary coalitions
 - Build credibility (micro-advocacy)
 - Negotiate role
 - Leverage data
 - Embed social justice in everyday practice
- Connect with mentors & professional networks

EARLY CAREER SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS: SUSTAINING ADVOCACY IN THE TRANSITION TO PRACTICE

Practical Strategies

Build relationships & interdisciplinary coalitions

- Join relevant school committees
- Partner with general education teachers, nurses, counselors, etc.
- Provide short, accessible professional development

Build credibility

- Start with small, evidence-based projects & Single-case/small n interventions
- Share success stories
- Develop “micro-policy” skills
 - contribute to school improvement plans
 - recommend specific, measurable policy changes

Negotiate role

- Communicate professional identity early
- Discuss your full scope of practice
- Use data to demonstrate value & negotiate time

EARLY CAREER SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS: SUSTAINING ADVOCACY IN THE TRANSITION TO PRACTICE

Practical Strategies

Leverage data

- Link data to district priorities
- Present pre and post data
- Collect qualitative data
- Reframe advocacy as evidence-based problem solving rather than moral argumentation
- Publicly present data

Embed social justice in everyday practices

- Use culturally appropriate assessment and intervention
- Include family & community voices
- Integrate SEL with cultural competence
- Identify inequalities in referral and discipline patterns

Connect with mentors & professional networks

- Join & become active in professional organizations
- Take part in legislative efforts
- Seek structured mentorship
- Participate in peer consultation groups

EARLY CAREER SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS: SUSTAINING ADVOCACY IN THE TRANSITION TO PRACTICE

Case Example:
Early Career Psychologist Advocate for Statewide Policy Change



Interactive Activity

(15 minutes)

Small Group Discussions

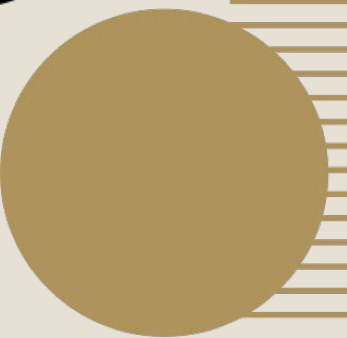
**Break into mixed
groups**

*(students, supervisors,
early career)*

**What advocacy
challenges do
you face in your
role?**

How can you
use a **social
justice lens** to
address them?

Share back 2-3 key points per group. _____





Call to **Action** & Resources

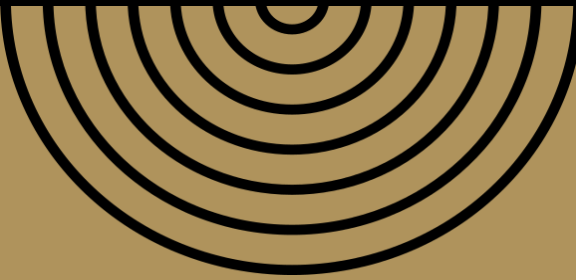


Collective Comments

info here

info here

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Resources

Closing Statement

Advocacy is not optional—it's central to ethical and socially just school psychology practice.

Q&A

(15 minutes)