

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS AS SOCIAL JUSTICE CHANGE AGENTS: MOVING FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

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What Am I in For? A Roadmap

- **Presentation Objectives**
- **Introduction**
- **Warm Up Activities: Your Social Justice Story/Peak Performance**
- **Defining Social Justice**
- **Steps to Developing As an Agent of Social Justice**
 - Cultural Humility
 - Implicit Bias
 - Recognizing Microaggressions
 - Putting Yourself in a Position to Succeed
- **Creating a Personal Action Plan**

Presentation Objectives

- **Objective 1:** Greater knowledge of the conceptual frameworks underlying social justice.
- **Objective 2:** Greater knowledge of research directly related to bringing social justice principles into school psychology practice.
- **Objective 3:** Enhanced understanding of one's personal and professional strengths as an agent of social justice.

About Me

- Personal experience/upbringing
- “Waking up” to privilege as an undergraduate
- Practitioner days
- Move to professor
- Current status



Warm Up Activity #1: Your Story

What are 1-2 things that have most impacted your development as an agent of social justice?

Warm Up Activity #2: Peak Performance

Describe a time that you were performing at your peak:

- 1) What did this feel like physically and psychologically?
- 2) What were the precursors?
- 3) What were the outcomes?
- 4) What lessons from this experience, if any, might be incorporated into your practice?

DEFINING SOCIAL JUSTICE



What is the most socially just way to divide this?

Social Justice Definition for School Psychologists

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 obscured. 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.

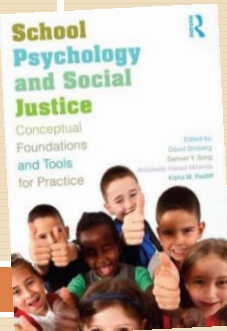
□ Adopted by the NASP Board of Directors, April 2017.

Sub-Categories: Meta-Themes About Defining Social Justice in School Psychology

- Comes from three studies of practitioners, one study of multicultural experts in school psychology, and two studies of school psychology graduate students
- Recurring themes of **access to resources, treating students equitably and respectfully, engaging in culturally responsive practice, and taking personal responsibility** (often through advocacy)

Diaz (2014)- Forms of Social Justice

- **Distributive justice:** how are resources allocated in society?
 - Example: school funding
- **Procedural justice:** the process through which decisions are made
 - Example: special education procedures
- **Relational justice:** how are people being treated?
 - Examples: tolerance of homophobic bullying, racial prejudice in school discipline practices



Shriberg, Song,
Miranda, &
Radliff, 2013

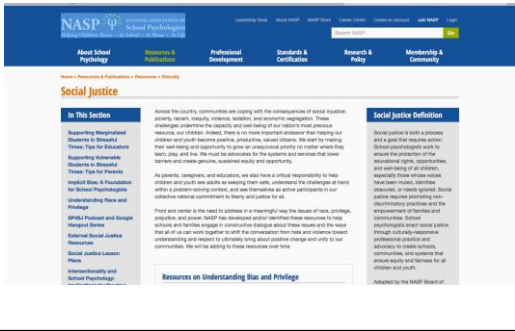


Miranda, Radliff, Shriberg, & Song (2013; 2019)

- Vision for what society can/should look like
- Mindset: the “goggles” we wear when we examine practice, research, ethical issues in field
- Skillset: commitment to advocacy, the ability both to support justice and to be a “constructive irritant” when it comes to injustice

Acting As a School Psychologist For Social Justice

NASP Social Justice Resources



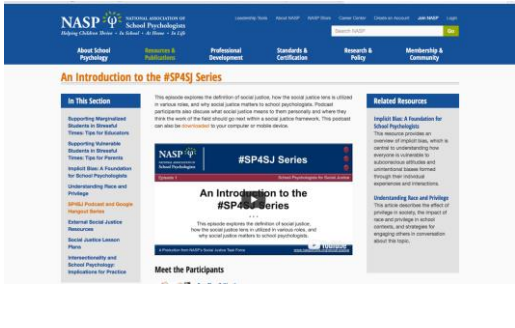
Social Justice

In This Section

- Supporting Marginalized Students in Schools
- Supporting Multicultural Students in Schools
- Social Justice Definition

Resources on Understanding Bias and Privilege

#SP4SJ Podcast



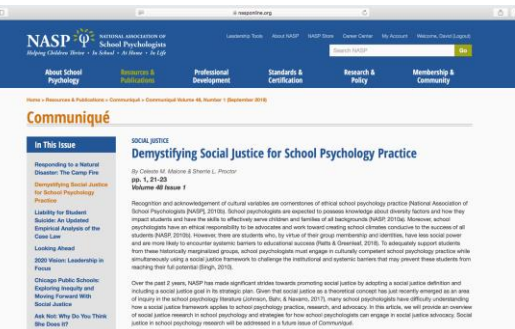
An Introduction to the #SP4SJ Series

In This Section

- Supporting Marginalized Students in Schools
- Supporting Multicultural Students in Schools
- Social Justice Definition

Meet the Participants

Communiqué articles



Communiqué

In This Issue

- Demystifying Social Justice for School Psychology Practice
- Supporting a Natural Disaster: The Camp Fire

Social Justice

Social Justice Comes From a Multicultural Framework

- & Self-awareness
- & Awareness of others/ surrounding environment
- & Translation to action

Social Justice as an Outgrowth of Multiculturalism



Example of Social Justice Orientation

- & Overrepresentation of students who are ELL in requests for cognitive evaluation
- & Can work with each student in a “culturally competent” way, but if do not question high referral rate, status quo/disproportionality continues

School Psychologists as Ideal Social Justice Advocate

- 🔗 Start off with passion to support all children and families
- 🔗 Trained as psychologists
 - + Listeners
 - + Observers
 - + Active questioning
 - + Self-awareness
- 🔗 Know how to use data
- 🔗 Unique access to the ecology of schools

Action Steps: Practitioner Interviews (Biddanda, Shriberg et al, 2019)

Starts with taking personal responsibility

- 🔗 Being politically savvy
- 🔗 Modeling the change you are seeking to bring about
- 🔗 Being culturally responsive

Help me/us to fill out the picture! Interview opportunity

Five Step Process to Developing as an Agent of Social Justice

Initiating Change as an Agent of Social Justice: Five Key Action Steps

Self-Examination

- Step #1: Who are you?
 - Leadership, cultural humility, and implicit bias

Self within System

- Step #2: Awareness of context- what single stories are being told?
 - Micro and macroaggressions
- Step #3: What are your leverage points within the system?
- Step #4: Who are your allies?
- Step #5: How can you facilitate getting ideas/projects off the ground?
 - Philosophical framework: Participatory approaches

Step #1: Self-Awareness

- What social change/social justice topics are you most energized by?
- WHY do these topics matter to you?
- What are my personal leadership and cultural strengths (Mr. Rogers example)?
- What are my personal leadership and cultural gaps?
- Where can I make the biggest potential positive impact?

CULTURAL HUMILITY AND IMPLICIT BIAS

Cultural Humility

"Cultural humility reflects an other-oriented stance, which is marked by openness, curiosity, lack of arrogance, and a genuine desire to understand clients' cultural identities" (Hook et al, 2013)

- *Platinum Rule Concept*: follow the lead of those you are seeking to serve/support

Cultural Humility (Waters & Asbill, 2013)

- Intrapersonal aspects
 - + Lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and self-critique
- Interpersonal aspects
 - + Desire to fix power imbalances
 - + Develop partnerships with people and groups that advocate with others

Implicit Bias- Dual System Theory

- **System 1:**
 - Unconscious processing
 - Automatic
 - Extremely Fast
- **System 2:**
 - Conscious processing
 - Requires concentration
 - Effortful, deliberate
- Systems work together to make sense of the world

Implicit Bias

- Attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner
- Activated by identities we perceive in others:
 - Race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, weight, sexuality, disability, etc.
- Automatically associate characteristics with stereotypes
- May not align with explicit beliefs

Implicit Bias in Education

- Non-black teachers of Black students demonstrated significantly lower expectations than black teachers (Gershenson, Holt, & Papageorge, 2015)
- Pre-service teachers held negative/neutral attitudes toward racial minority students (Glock & Karback, 2015)
- Teacher rated Black students who showed more imaginative play as less well-adjusted compared to non-Black children (Yates & Marcelo, 2014)
- Early educators were more likely to expect Black boys to misbehave than White boys (Gilliam et al., 2016)

Implicit Bias and Special Education

- Students with disabilities are more than 2x as likely to receive out-of-school suspensions (CRDC, 2014)
- Black students over-represented in SpEd Emotional Disability and Intellectual Disability categories but under-represented in Autism category (The Equity Project, 2015)
- Latino students under-represented in SpEd in childhood but over-represented in high school (The Equity Project, 2015)
- Symptomatology of autism may predispose individuals to activate negative implicit biases (Yull, 2015)

More on Implicit Bias

- [Implicit.harvard.edu](http://implicit.harvard.edu)

Step 2: Awareness of System- The Danger of a Single Story

http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story

Single Story Discussion

- What “single stories” are commonly told in schools?
- What are some single stories that educators can work against?
- To what extent might these single stories be impacted by implicit biases and/or a lack of cultural humility?

Definition of microaggressions (Sue, 2010)

Microaggressions are the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership. In many cases, these hidden messages may invalidate the group identity or experiential reality of target persons, demean them on a personal or group level, communicate they are lesser human beings, suggest they do not belong with the majority group, threaten and intimidate, or relegate them to inferior status and treatment.

Macroaggressions: systemic aggression

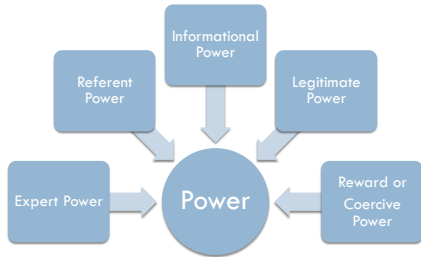
Five Principles To Avoid Committing Microaggressions (Sue, 2010)

- Learn about people of color, women, persons who are LGBTQ, etc. from sources within the group
- Learn from healthy and strong people of the group
- Learn from experiential reality
- Learn from constant vigilance of biases and fears
- Learn by being committed to personal action against all isms

Step #3: What are your leverage points?

- Do I have any power or influence?

Sources of Power- French & Raven (within school psychology, see Erchul)



Sources of power (French and Raven, 1962)

- **Expert power:** based on presumption of knowledge (Is there a doctor in the house?)
- **Informational power:** based on the power of your argument (e.g., being the person in the room who knows the law)
- **Referent power:** based on relationship and personal drawing power (e.g., charismatic or moral leadership)
- **Legitimate power:** bestowed by the formal organization (e.g., the power to have the final say in a decision)
- **Reward/Coercive power:** ability to provide incentives and/or punish through praise, threats

Step #4: Who Are Your Allies?

- Not always found in traditional places and not always found among the “professionals” or within school walls

Step #5: Getting Ideas/Projects off the Ground

Philosophical Framework: Grounded in Participatory Approaches

What do I mean by participatory approaches?

- Central premise: those affected by any proposed actions should have a real say in the development, implementation, and assessment of these actions

How to Design and Implement the PAR Process: (Stringer, 2014)

- **Setting the Stage:** Planning a change process (building relationships, laying the groundwork for action)
- **Look:** Gathering Data
- **Think:** Reflection and Analysis- what does your data indicate?
- **Act:** Action Plans- Implementing Sustainable Solutions

USING A PAR PROCESS TO COMBAT BULLYING: A CASE EXAMPLE

Our starting point

- Middle school was engaged in many anti-bullying efforts
 - The Bully Hotline
 - The Peace Summit
 - Be a Buddy Not a Bully slogan
 - The Intervention Room
 - Student Advisory
 - Anti-bullying skits
- School leadership wanted to develop a better understanding of which efforts were most effective.

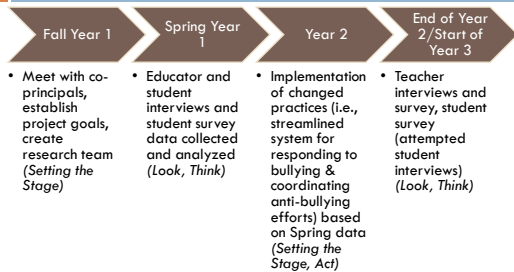
Project Team Plans and Parameters

- Started by bringing multidisciplinary group together and discussing shared vision and goals
- The initial goal was along the lines of the maxim to work smarter, not harder.
- Structural agreement
 - Monthly
 - Clear goals
 - Task-oriented
 - More ownership/responsibility on part of school as time progressed: do not want to become dependent on Loyola or a grant for work to continue

Our Process: Social Justice Framework

- Relational Justice:
 - Child Rights perspective: students have a right to have input into what is happening to them in school and to be able to go to school without being bullied or witnessing bullying. Bullying harms all involved.
- Procedural Justice:
 - Is bullying being handled consistently and fairly by teachers and school administrators?
 - Is our data collection process respectful to all involved and all that would be impacted by any proposed changes?

Project Steps



(Shriberg, Burns, Desai, Grunewald, & Pitts, 2015)

Spring of Year 3: Creation of Student Leadership Groups

- 7th graders nominated by teachers as kids not believed to be involved in bullying and either already are leaders or have strong leadership potential
- 10 week group co-led by myself and four Loyola school psychology graduate students
- Group thematic areas: leadership development/team building, bullying 101 education, training on the problem solving model, development of action strategies to combat bullying
- Outcomes: student/educator dialogues; changes in adult supervision patterns (especially in locker rooms)
 - Shriberg, Brooks, Jenkins, Immen, Sutter, & Cronin, 2017

Final Activity: Moving Forward on Your Social Justice Action Plan

Some Closing Thoughts on Leading for Social Justice

1. Critically examine your own definition of "socially just practice" and the degree to which your professional work supports (or perhaps works against) this aspiration.
2. Show humility, culturally and otherwise. Listen closely to and seek to draw out the voices of those with less power, particularly students and families.
3. Examine reports of student "misbehavior" or "disability" critically. Is a single story happening? Is there implicit bias? Microaggression? When you feel that individuals are being singled out for blame and/or pathology without a concomitant examination of the role of social, political, financial, legal, and/or educational structures in creating this "problem", reframe the narrative to present a more just picture.

Closing Thoughts: Continued

4. Choose your battles, playing to your personal passions, **leadership strengths**, and the needs that you see. When taking on a social justice challenge, think big but start small, focusing on short-term goals and plans that are both achievable and, if met, can serve as springboards to larger action. Trying to achieve your **peak performance**.
5. Collaborate, collaborate, collaborate, including reaching out to students, families, communities, school leaders, and other educators and also including networking with other professionals who share a commitment to social justice. Very few, if any, social justice challenges can or should be solved by one individual.

What Can We Do? (Johnson, 2013)

- Little risks: Do something- “You can subvert the assumption that everyone’s going along with the status quo by simply not going along. When you do this, you stop the flow, if only for a moment, but in that moment other people can notice and start to think and question” (p. 613)

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THANK YOU!!!
