

Defining Social Justice

In a just society, opportunities, resources, and worth are distributed equally and fairly, with no individuals or groups holding particular advantages or disadvantages in access or advancement (Fouad et al., 2006).

Clients from nondominant populations (as defined by ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, or socioeconomic status) are most likely to present with issues that reflect unfair practices, policies, and other systemic barriers.

Social justice is defined as “collaborative, action-oriented, socially relevant, community focused and initiated” activities (Helms, 2003, pp. 205-206) that seek to eradicate inequities in society (Vera & Speight, 2003) and enhance the health of marginalized groups.

Social justice is a human rights issue that impacts professional practice in career development and career counselling, particularly since access to and attainment of education and work provide a central means for ensuring social equity (Fouad et al., 2006; Hargrove et al., 2003).

History of Social Justice

Vocational psychology has traditionally played an important role in advocating for social justice, through the work of individuals like Frank Parsons, Donald Paterson (and others?) (Fouad et al., 2006; Hargrove et al., 2003).

In the last few decades, the emphasis on social justice has been overshadowed by other professional issues (Fouad et al., 2006; Hargrove et al., 2003).

However, the shifting demographics of Canadian society and increased systemic barriers to career and life success (Arthur & Collins, 2005b) are bringing social justice back to the forefront (Arthur & Collins, 2005a; Fouad et al., 2006), particularly in the area of career development (Toporek & Chope, 2006).

The focus on career development is specific in a new article I read, so I added a comment in here.

This article provided some new ideas about the importance of social justice, so I have created a new heading. For now, I insert it here, because it seems to fit best. If I come across other supporting arguments, I will add them in.

Importance of the Social Justice Agenda

Although the prospect of tackling issues related to social justice may seem overwhelming, McWhirter et al. (2005) pointed to the “moral imperative underlying the application of a social justice lens to vocational psychology” (p. 215).

Principles of Social Justice

Much of the current writing in the area of social justice has been focused on identifying the problems associated with current approaches to career theory and practice. However, as McWhirter et al. (2005) pointed out, it is time to move from a denunciation approach to an annunciation approach in which principles and processes for embracing a social justice agenda in vocational psychology are articulated.

The article also introduced a call to the profession to identify the principles involved in social justice. This could be another broad topic area. However, I am careful not to copy headings from the article, because that could also constitute plagiarism.

Implications for Practice

Social justice is considered an emerging area in psychology generally and in career practice specifically.

As a result, professional training has typically not placed adequate focus on enhancing the competency of practitioners to address systemic-level change or the expanded roles of advocate, social activist, and consultant (Arthur & Collins, 2005a; Toporek & Williams, 2006).

Fassinger and Gallor (2006) suggested that we expand our traditional models from *scientist-practitioner* to *scientist-practitioner-advocate* to emphasize the inclusion of training for social justice roles and that emphasis be placed on both preservice and continued professional development training.

Attention to social class is highlighted in the literature (Blustein et al., 2005; **Liu & Ali, 2005**). It is important to understand the way in which social class forms a cultural schemata that impacts career development values, beliefs, assumptions, aspirations, and goals (Blustein et al., 2005; **Liu & Ali, 2005**).

Blunstein and colleagues add some ideas related to social class that I decided might fit best in this section for now. I use bold, red font for the Liu & Ali citation, because I have not actually read this article yet. It was mentioned in the Blunstein et al. paper. Once I read it, I will decide if the citation really fits here, and I will add it to my reference list. If I cannot find the article to read myself, I'll later delete the reference. The bold, red font is a flag to myself to ensure that I do not engage in academic misconduct by forgetting to review the original source of these ideas.

Relationship to Multicultural Counselling and Diversity

Recent writings in the area of multicultural counselling have encouraged practitioners to attend to both the influence of culture on identity and healthy development and the impact of systemic racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, and other forms of oppression.

As a result, sets of multicultural counselling competencies have emerged to provide guidance to practitioners in working with members of nondominant groups (Arredondo et al., 1996; Collins & Arthur, 2005; Hanson et al., 2000; Sue et al., 1982; Sue et al., 1992).

Global Social Justice

I'm not sure if I will put forth a global focus, but I save this point just in case. Again, I have not read the Borgen article yet, so I have used red, bold font to remind me to read it later to assess whether the reference is appropriate.

Some extend the call for social action to the global level (**Borgen, 2005**; Dworkin & Yi, 2003).