

Counseling Psychology Training Values Addressing Diversity¹

Respect for diversity and for values different from one's own is a central value of counseling psychology training programs. The valuing of diversity is also consistent with the profession of psychology as mandated by the American Psychological Association's (APA's) Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct (2002) and as discussed in the guidelines and Principles of Programs in Professional Psychology (APA, 2005). More recently, there has been a call for counseling psychologists to actively work and advocate for social justice and prevent further oppression in society. Counseling psychologists provide services, teach, and/or engage in research with or pertaining to members of social groups that have often been devalued, viewed as deficient, or otherwise marginalized in the larger society.

Academic training programs, internships that employ counseling psychologists and espouse counseling values, and postdoc training programs (herein "training programs") in counseling psychology exist within multicultural communities that contain people of diverse racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds; national origins; religious, spiritual, and political beliefs; physical abilities; ages; genders; gender identities; sexual orientations; and physical appearance. Counseling psychologists believe that training communities are enriched by members' openness to learning about others who are different from them as well as acceptance of others. Internship trainers, professors, practicum supervisors (herein "trainers"), and students and interns (herein "trainees") agree to work together to create training environments that are characterized by respect, safety, and trust. Furthermore, trainers and trainees are expected to be respectful and supportive of all individuals, including, but not limited to, clients, staff, peers, and research participants.

Trainers recognize that no individual is completely free from all forms of bias and prejudice. Furthermore, it is expected that each training community will evidence a range of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Nonetheless, trainees and trainers in counseling psychology training programs are expected to be committed to the social values of respect for diversity, inclusion, and equity. Furthermore, trainees and trainers are expected to be committed to critical thinking and the process of self-examination so that such prejudices or biases (and the assumptions on which they are based) may be evaluated in the light of available scientific data, standards of the profession, and traditions of cooperation and mutual respect. Thus, trainees and trainers are asked to demonstrate a genuine desire to examine their own attitudes, assumptions, behaviors, and values and to learn to work effectively with "cultural, individual, and role differences including those based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status" (APA, 2002, Ethics Code, Principle E, p. 1063). Stated simply, both trainers and trainees are expected to demonstrate a willingness to examine their personal values and to acquire and utilize professionally relevant knowledge and skills regardless of their beliefs, attitudes, and values.

Trainers will engage trainees in a manner inclusive and respectful of their multiple cultural identities. Trainers will examine their own biases and prejudices in the course of their interactions with trainees so as to model and facilitate this process for their

trainees. Trainers will provide equal access, opportunity, and encouragement for trainees inclusive of their multiple cultural identities. Where appropriate, trainers will also model the processes of personal introspection in which they desire trainees to engage. As such, trainers will engage in and model appropriate self-disclosure and introspection with their trainees. This can include discussions about personal life experiences, attitudes, beliefs, opinions, feelings, and personal histories. Assuming no one is free from biases and prejudices, trainers will remain open to appropriate challenges from trainees to their held biases and prejudices. Trainers are committed to lifelong learning relative to multicultural competence.

Counseling psychology training programs believe that providing experiences that call for trainees to self-disclose and introspect about personal life experiences is an essential component of the training program. Specifically, while in the program, trainees will be expected to engage in self-reflection and introspection on their attitudes, beliefs, opinions, feelings, and personal history. Trainees will be expected to examine and attempt to resolve any of the above to eliminate potential negative impact on their ability to perform the functions of a psychologist, including but not limited to providing effective services to individuals from cultures and with beliefs different from their own and in accordance with APA guidelines and principles.

Members of the training community are committed to educating each other on the existence and effects of racism, sexism, ageism, heterosexism, religious intolerance, and other forms of invidious prejudice. Evidence of bias, stereotyped thinking, and prejudicial beliefs and attitudes will not go unchallenged, even when such behavior is rationalized as being a function of ignorance, joking, cultural differences, or substance abuse. When these actions result in physical or psychological abuse, harassment, intimidation, substandard psychological services or research, or violence against persons or property, members of the training community will intervene appropriately.

In summary, all members of counseling psychology training communities are committed to a training process that facilitates the development of professionally relevant knowledge and skills focused on working effectively with all individuals inclusive of demographics, beliefs, attitudes, and values. Members agree to engage in a mutually supportive process that examines the effects of one's beliefs, attitudes, and values on one's work with all clients. Such training processes are consistent with counseling psychology's core values, including respect for diversity and for values similar to and different from one's own.

References

- American Psychological Association. (2002). Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct [electronic version]. *American Psychologist*, 57, 1060-1073. Retrieved February 9, 2009, <http://www.apa.org/ethics/code2002.html>.
- American Psychological Association. (2005). Guidelines and principles for accreditation of programs in professional psychology. Washington, DC: author.

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