Developing Critical Consciousness: Transforming Psychology by Resisting Complacency and Leading with Integrity

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Learning Objectives

Participants will learn:

1. Why cultivating one’s critical consciousness is essential to personal, professional, and collective growth and liberation
2. How to identify and address barriers to critical consciousness
3. Steps to advance critical consciousness toward collective liberation from oppression
What is Critical Consciousness and why Cultivate it?
Critical consciousness: the development of awareness of oppression and action that have the potential to create systemic change.
The Process of Critical Consciousness (Paulo Freire, 1973)
Transformative Potential

Transformative Consciousness

Critical
Blame
Denial

Transformative Action

Critical
Avoidance
Destructive

Alexis Jemal (2017)
Intersectionality Theory

1. Identities are Mutually Constitutive (Simultaneity)
   a. Belong to multiple groups
   b. Identities are linked; interlocking system

2. Multilevel Power Differential
   a. Individual identities (e.g., race x gender) reflect sociostructural inequalities (e.g., racism x sexism)
   b. Privilege and marginalization at the individual and societal levels

3. Contextual Social Constructions
   a. Historical and geographical contexts
   b. Hegemonic ideologies maintain inequity
“Intersectionality is not and has never been just about subjects, identities, and/or attitudes.”

Richard Q. Shin, Ijeoma Ezeofor, Lance C. Smith, Jamie C. Welch, & Kristopher M. Goodrich (2016, p. 3)
Matrix of Domination

Patricia Hill Collins
“The nature of one's action corresponds to the nature of one's understanding.”

Paulo Freire (1973, p. 83)
Barriers to Critical Consciousness
Barriers to Critical Consciousness

- Passive Acceptance of Psychology
- Professional Ambassador
- Expecting Acceptance from the Wrong People
- Claiming Innocence
Advancing Critical Consciousness Toward Social Change
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1. Personal Development of Critical Consciousness
   - Transformative Self-Care

2. Disciplinary
   - Identify & Challenge Key Assumptions & Values
   - Introduce Decolonized Methods & Practices

3. Advocacy & Policy
   - Examine Links Between Observations & Policy
   - Disseminate Your Understanding
Advancing Critical Consciousness Toward Social Change

Personal Development of Critical Consciousness
Transformative Self-Care
Process 1: Personal Development of Critical Consciousness

1. Perceive, (Re)cognize, Understand, Respond
2. Connect with a Community for Support, Accountability, and Solidaridarity
3. Educate Yourself to Uncover Disinformation
4. Inspire and Model by Developing Personal Integrity
5. Support Others on their Journey

Raúl Quiñones Rosado (2010, 2020)
"...adapting to the cyclical, self perpetuating, viral processes of oppression is dehumanizing and creates a society of mutated beings, infected from our minds to our epigenome, divided from our true selves, isolated from others, and disconnected from the creative, healing, and survival power of human relationship."

Alexis Jemal (2017)
Self-Care and Oppression

Self-care:
1. Has been trivialized and commodified
2. Has been disconnected from context; oppression and marginalization

1. Is expanded as an act of resistance, defiance, and obstruction
2. Is a political stance with social justice implications
3. Is collective care

Janan Wyatt & Gifty Ampadu (2021)
Reclaiming Self-Care

1. Expand opportunities for engaging in communal self care (e.g., partnerships with community organizations)
2. Assess and balance our cultural value of collectivism because it may leave us feeling guilty and selfish
3. Watch for competing priorities and productivity pressure because they will reduce motivation for self-care

Janan Wyatt & Gifty Ampadu (2021)
Reclaiming Self-Care

4. Take a holistic view that considers physical, emotional, social, spiritual, occupational, financial, and environmental wellness

5. Use mindful self-awareness to observe all of these areas and identify what we need to be well

6. Make a personal plan

Janan Wyatt & Gifty Ampadu (2021)
Advancing Critical Consciousness Toward Social Change

2 Disciplinary

- Identify & Challenge Key Assumptions & Values
- Introduce Decolonized Methods & Practices
Process 2: Disciplinary - Transforming Psychology Practices

Examine the problematic assumptions underlying psychological research and practices

Recognize and confront Western hegemony

Resist reinforcing existing systems of oppression
Underlying Assumptions in Psychology

Psychology

Objectivity
Neutral
Psychological Universals
Individualism

Latinx Psychology

Objectivity
Contextualized
Modified Psychological Universals
Personal Responsibility

Caveat
### Tracing Antiblackness in Latinx Cultural Socialization Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1) Cultural socialization is associated with psychological adjustment</th>
<th>(Rivas-Drake, 2011; Schwartz et al., 2007; Wang et al., 2020).</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2) Racial identity and phenotype have important implications for Latinx socialization</td>
<td>(Adames et al., 2020, Bonilla-Silva, 2014; López et al., 2018; Quiñones-Rosado, 2020)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Tracing Antiblackness in Latinx Cultural Socialization Literature cont.

| 4) Cultural socialization produces a collective identity and tools to cope with oppressive social structures | (Kulish et al., 2019). |
| 5) Must examine the influence of power and oppression on cultural socialization and identity development in research | (Adams et al., 2015; Prilleltensky, 2012; Quiñones-Rosado, 2020). |
Tracing Antiblackness in Latinx Cultural Socialization Literature: A Summary

Primarily quantitative, focused on individuals, interpersonal, and less so schools and community

Heavy concentration on culture and Latinx identity

Near silence about antiblackness

Limited discussion of historical, political, economic, and social, and power and oppression
Decolonized Reinterpretation

1. Assumption that stronger ethnoracial identities reflect psychological adjustment and are always desirable
   a. Essentializing

2. Group positionality is determined not by self-identification, self-empowerment, and self-determination, but established by the power structures (Fanon, 1986)
Antiblackness
- Structure of Humanity
- Violence (Physical & Psychological)
- Transdisciplinarity

Psychology
- Cultural Socialization
- Ethnic Identity
- Racial Identity
- Colorism
- Anti-racism
- Bias

Wellbeing
- Self-Perception
- Self-Esteem
- Mental Illness
- Quality of Life
- Wellbeing
- Relationship Quality
- Academic Perseverance
Intersectionality and Interpretation?

1. Who is included within this category?

   “No group’s findings are interpreted to represent a universal or normative experience”

2. What role does inequality play?

   “Differences are interpreted in light of groups’ structural positions”

3. Where are the similarities?

   “Sensitivity to nuanced variations across groups is maintained even when similarities are identified”

Elizabeth Cole (2009)
Advancing Critical Consciousness Toward Social Change
Counseling Center Website LGBTQ+ Friendliness (%)

- Confidentiality: 89.6%
- Support Statement: 37.7%
- Individual: 30.7%
- Informational: 29.2%
- After Hours: 22.6%
- Group Counseling: 21.7%
- Peer Group: 19.8%
- Counselor Training: 17.9%
- Educational: 9.4%
- Couples Counseling: 6.1%
- Counselor Pronouns: 3.8%

LGBTQ+ Structural Stigma & Counseling Center Website Friendliness (Campbell & Mena, 2021)
Advancing Critical Consciousness Toward Social Change: Reflection Questions

Personal
- What can I do next to further develop my critical consciousness?
- What can I do in service to transformative self-care?

Disciplinary
- What are the key assumptions & values that underlie my actions?
- Is there anything I can do differently in my research/practice?

Advocacy & Policy
- How might historical, political, and economic issues help to explain what I see?
- With whom can I talk about needed policy changes?
Thank you