LIBERATION AS THE COMMITMENT OF CRITICAL TRANSFORMATION: HOW

"WAKING UP" TO INJUSTICE INFLUENCES MULTICULTURAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

COMPETENCY OF COUNSELING TRAINEES

by

FALON NICOLE THACKER

(Under the Direction of Anneliese Singh)

ABSTRACT

Graduate counseling programs across the United States have made commitments to prepare counselor trainees to work with diverse clientele (Lewis, Ratts, Paladino, & Toporek, 2011; Chung & Bemak, 2013; Brown, Collins, & Arthur, 2014). A strong focus on multicultural competence training has existed for over twenty-five years (Bemak, Chung, Talleyrand, Jones, & Daquin, 2011), however, few counseling graduate programs have integrated both multiculturalism and social justice training as part of the curriculums (Bemak et al., 2011; Chung & Bemak, 2013). Existing literature on graduate counseling programs suggests gaps exist between instructing students to use and integrate social justice principles and applying these skills in counseling roles (Bemak & Chung, 2011; Collins, Arthur, Brown, & Kennedy, 2015; Sue & Sue, 2016). Current scholarship does little to address how master's level counseling programs can develop both multicultural and social justice competence among counselor trainees'. Additionally, there is limited research addressing social justice issues in counseling related to power, privilege, oppression, and how they relate to liberation in the therapeutic process (Chávez, Fernandez, Hipolito-Delgado, & Rivera, 2016).

This study engages Liberation Psychology (Martín-Baró, 1991) and the Cycle of Liberation (Harro, 2013a) as the theoretical frameworks with the qualitative participatory action methodology of collective memory work (Haug & Carter, 1987) to research counselor trainees experiences of "waking up" within critical incidents and how critical incidents influenced them to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling. This study provides a deeper understanding regarding how experiences of "waking up" influenced counselor trainees' to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling. Utilizing collective memory work, the participants and researcher engaged in collective analysis of seven stories written by the participants regarding their experiences of "waking up." This research explores the influence of recognizing injustice and experiences of privilege and oppression and also provides recommendations for the field of counseling to increase resources for counselor educators and counselor trainees to develop the self-awareness and critical consciousness needed to be an effective multicultural and social justice counselor. This study concludes with personal reflections and reflexivity regarding the process of the research and the experience of conducting collective memory work.

INDEX WORDS: Counseling, Counselor Education, Counselor Trainees, Multicultural and
                Social Justice Competence, Liberation, Liberation Psychology, Collective
                Memory Work

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DEDICATION

For my dear friend Matthew—thank you for helping me see the world differently by being you. Your courage, bravery and spirit has taught me more than I deserve. I love you dearly. "*We're soaring, flying, there's not a star in heaven that we can't reach—if we're trying—so we're breaking free.*" – *Gabriella Montez and Troy Bolton*

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The first time I began to reflect on the last four years instantly brought me to tears. I was overwhelmed with emotions of joy, anguish, anxiety and peace. If I had to choose two words to capture the last four years, I would characterize them as four years of transition and love. There is not nearly enough space here to capture the gratitude of everyone who has loved me throughout the past four years, a time of constant transition.

To my mom and dad—thank you for never giving me any other option but to go to college. You both emphasized the importance of education and hard work. For this, I am grateful as education has become my life's work. The sacrifices you made for me will not be forgotten. To my parents, stepmom and grandparents—thank you for your love and support throughout this process. Your unwavering support for my decisions in my personal life allowed me to persist through this degree. I love you all!

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Liberation is the practice of love. It is developing a sense of self that we can love, and learning to love others with their differences from us. Liberation is finding balance in our individual lives and in the agenda of our communities. Liberation is the development of competence, the ability to make something happen consistent with a goal. It is taking charge of our own destiny and creating a world we want to live in, together with all the others we need to survive. Liberation is the belief we can succeed, a sense of confidence in ourselves and in our collectives. Liberation is joy at our collective efficacy and at surviving in a world that sometimes tries to kill us. Liberation is the knowledge that we are not alone. It is mutual support, encouragement and trust that others will be there if we fall, and that we need to be there for others too. Liberation is commitment to the effort of critical transformation, to the people in our community to the goal of equity and justice and to love. Liberation is passion and compassion, those strong and motivating feelings that we must live by our hearts as well as our minds. It is a about a force that is defined differently by every spiritual belief system but which binds us by the vision that there can be a better world and we can to create it (Harro, 2013, p. 469).

My commitment to liberation came through the consciousness-raising experiences created by faculty throughout my doctoral program. After beginning my first full-time job post-master's, I realized within the first two weeks of work that I lacked adequate self-awareness and training to work with culturally diverse communities; this led me to learn about and investigate

multicultural and social justice competency in counseling graduate programs. This study examines master's-level counseling students and the influence that critical incidents of "waking up" as an aspiring social justice advocate have on their learning experiences in the multiculturalism and social justice classroom. For the purpose of this study, as Harro (2013) outlined in the cycle of liberation, waking up is defined as an intrapersonal change in the core of someone about what they believe about themselves and the world (Sue, 2015; Wendt, Gone, & Nagata, 2015). A key aspect of liberation is self-reflection (Freire, 1972) and researchers have long suggested the need for counselor trainees' to engage in self-reflection as a vital component in the development of multicultural and social justice competence (Arredondo et al., 1996; Goodman, et.al, 2004; Horton-Ikard, Munoz, Thomas-Tate, & Keller-Bell, 2009; Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, & McCullough, 2016; Robinson, 2013).

Counseling and psychotherapy are grounded in histories of teaching in which counselors serve as instruments of cultural oppression rather than therapeutic liberation (Sue, 2015; Wendt, Gone, & Nagata, 2015). Counselor educators can and should play a critical role in creating classrooms and spaces in which master's level counseling students have a safe but challenging environment for self-exploration, and using intervention strategies that facilitate difficult dialogues on race, gender, sexual orientation, and other topics in the areas of multiculturalism and social justice (Sue & Sue, 2016). Counseling graduate programs can help to link experiences and signify processes with transformative discourses; the kind of discourse that empowers individuals to aid social change (Veugelers, 2017). This theoretical change from the reproduction of knowledge to the possibility of critical transformation is relevant to making it possible to think about giving people chances and to creating a dynamic and democratic society. According to Paulo Freire, education plays a crucial role in this transformation (Veugelers, 2017). Although

counseling graduate programs are supposed to liberate and convey truth and knowledge, we have seen how it has oftentimes been the culprit in perpetuating false stereotypes and misinformation about groups in society (Sue & Sue, 2016).

In this chapter, I will provide an overview of this manuscript-style dissertation. I will review history and current practices in graduate counseling training programs related to multicultural and social justice competency training. I will also introduce key concepts such as privilege, oppression, social justice, and liberation. Liberation and liberation psychology are the guiding theoretical frameworks for this study and collective memory work will serve as the study methodology.

The Sociopolitical Landscape of Counseling and Counselor Education

Currently, leaders at the highest level of the United States (U.S.) government are openly expressing hateful speech in a manner that has created great tension and fear in the educational system (Freedom du Lac, 2016; Ratts & Greenleaf, 2017). The current White House administration holds extremist and right-wing views towards marginalized groups (Ratts & Greenleaf, 2017). Therefore, historically marginalized communities are experiencing additional minority stress and counselors can play an important role in alleviating this stress in the counseling environment (Brubaker, Harper, & Singh, 2011; Ratts & Greenleaf, 2017). Considering the historical context of, and the current U.S. sociopolitical environment, there is an urgent need for counselors to be prepared to become strong multicultural and social justice advocates. However, most counseling professionals have not been trained to work with anyone other than dominant culture individuals and communities (e.g., White, straight, Christian, cisgender, able-bodied) and the historical origins of counselor education have strong roots in

Euro-American and Western cultures (Arredondo, Gallardo-Cooper, Delgado-Romero, & Zapata, 2014).

According to the American Counseling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics (2014), "honoring diversity and embracing a multicultural approach in support of the worth, dignity, potential and uniqueness of people within their social and cultural contexts" (p. 3) is a core professional value of members of the counseling profession. Based on the United States Department of Education (USDE) statistics and the ACA Code of Ethics, it is reasonable to assert that counselors should possess at the very least strong multicultural counseling competency (Minton, 2017). For instance, between 2003 and 2013, the percentage of students enrolled in U.S. public elementary and secondary schools decreased for students who were White and Black. In contrast, the percentage of students enrolled in public schools increased for students who were Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American, and Multiracial (United State Department of Education [USDE], 2017). According to the USDE website and National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) between fall 2013 and fall 2025, the percentages of students enrolled in public schools are projected to continue to decrease for students who are White and Black. The percentages are projected to increase for students who are Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial (USDE, 2017). Indeed, the increasing diversification of P-12 populations supports the notion that educators, particularly counselors, should be trained to engage diverse populations in counseling (Minton, 2017).

Although the numbers of students of color are increasing in the P-12 educational system, White students continue to make up the majority of graduate students in programs accredited by the Council of Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) in the majority of counseling fields. Ethnic minorities represent just over forty percent of students in

CACREP accredited programs (CACREP, 2017). Additionally, in 2016, the majority of full-time faculty members in CACREP-accredited programs were White and ethnic minority groups made up around twenty-six percent of full-time faculty (CACREP, 2017). Given these racial/ethnic demographics, it is necessary to examine how graduate programs are training master's level counseling students to engage across difference, as it is critical students understand their own view of multicultural and social justice counseling competence (Minton, 2017). One method counselor educators are using to train graduate students in multicultural and social justice competence is the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MSJCCs) (Ratts, et al., 2016).

Although liberation per se is not included in the current MSJCCs, these competencies are an important first step to understanding social justice and liberation. Using the work of Freire, Harro (2013) defines liberation as a critical transformation; an experience in which one can name systemic assumptions, structures, rules, and roles that are oppressive. Therefore, it is important to review the history of how the multicultural and social justice counseling competencies came to be what they are today.

History of the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies

The Multicultural Counseling Competencies (MCCs) were first created in response to a request from the president of the Association of Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD) (Minton, 2017). The MCCs were called into action because of the increasing diversity of the US population, higher birthrates of ethnic minority groups, the increase in counselors self-designating as multiculturally competent counselors with no specific standards, and the longstanding use of and focus on monocultural frameworks in counselor education (Arredondo, 1999; Sue, Arrendondo & McDavis, 1992).

The MCCs included focus of a counselor's awareness of own cultural values and biases, awareness of a client's worldview, and culturally appropriate intervention strategies. Within the three areas, there was an additional focus on beliefs/attitudes, knowledge, and skills (Sue et al., 1992). According to Sue et al. (1992), when counselors achieve awareness, hold specific knowledge about cultural differences, and understand how to use relevant research in practice, they may be seen as culturally competent counselors in practice.

Multicultural counseling competence is intimately linked to the values of social justice (Koch & Juntunen, 2014; Ratts et al., 2016). In 2015, the MCCs were revised and updated to become the MSJCCs. The revisions included intersectionality and how counselors' multiple identities connect to power, privilege, and oppression in relation to how they influence the counseling relationship (Ratts et al., 2016). Building upon the MCCs, the MSJCCs offer domains aligned with the previous domain areas and also focus on the developmental nature of the new domain areas and the layers that may lead to multicultural and social justice counseling competence (Ratts et al., 2016). A fourth domain was added to include counseling and advocacy interventions. Additionally, action was added to the focus areas of attitudes/beliefs, knowledge, and skills (Ratts et al., 2016). Because counselors bring their unique identities into counseling, it is necessary to understand how the dynamics of power, privilege, and oppression have been encountered throughout their own development; this self-exploration must begin in counseling graduate preparation programs.

Multicultural competence training in graduate programs allows counselors to possess awareness and knowledge of their own and clients' culture(s), which allows them to be skilled at tailoring counseling interventions to align with clients' cultural background (Sue et al., 1992). Social justice competence training calls on counselors to explore client problems within the

context of an oppressive society and to intervene systematically (Ratts & Greenleaf, 2017). Liberation and liberation psychology training calls on counselors to focus on and commit to clients and the transformation of clients and their communities. Engaging in consciousness-raising experiences can help counselors avoid unintended harm to clients (Ratts & Greenleaf, 2017). However, the process of self-exploration is time-intensive. When counselor trainees' have the opportunity to fully engage, they will begin to see how their identities, theoretical orientation, and scholarly research can be directly connected to their multicultural and social justice counseling competence (Minton, 2017). Self-exploration and self-awareness are best honed in training; therefore, it is imperative graduate training programs are intentional and strategic about the consciousness-raising experiences provided.

Implementation of Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competency in Counselor Education and Supervision

For decades, counselor educators have asserted the major reason for ineffectiveness in working with culturally diverse populations is the lack of cultural competence training in graduate programs (Chen, 2005; Mio & Morris, 1990; Sue, 2010). Counselor education programs typically offer only one course related to multiculturalism and social justice; these courses often do not include consideration of race, culture, or ethnicity (Arrendondo, 1999; Bemak & Chung, 2011). Course offerings continue to lack a non-White perspective and portray cultural groups in stereotypical ways; creating an academic environment that does not support the concerns, needs, and issues of culturally diverse groups (Turner, Gonzalez, & Wood, 2008).

Becoming culturally competent in counseling demands counselor trainees explore the embedded emotions associated with race, culture, gender, and other sociodemographic differences be openly experienced and discussed; it is these intense feelings that often block the

ability to hear the voices of those oppressed and disempowered (Sue, 2011). For example, White counselor trainees' often fear open dialogues on race; afraid they may ultimately reveal unpleasant secrets about themselves (Sue & Sue, 2016). Insights about one-self can be very disturbing and anxiety inducing because it directly challenges the self-image of themselves as good, moral, and decent humans (Sue & Sue, 2016). Therefore, counselor educators must understand the nature of resistance, from all students, both with privileged and marginalized identities, and creating safe and challenging environments for consciousness raising experiences that aid in the development of multicultural and social justice counseling competence (Sue & Sue, 2016).

Using a traditional classroom format for multicultural and social justice counseling competence training may not allow space for understanding difference on an experiential level (Lee, Rosen, & McWhirter, 2014). Minton's (2017) phenomenological study, aimed at understanding master's level counseling students' experiences with cultural competence training in their graduate program, found that experiential activities, deeper engagement with some of the content, and real world experience were beneficial to their preparation. Sue and Sue (2016) recommend each course have a consciousness raising component, an experiential component, a knowledge component, and a skills component.

In training counselors on multicultural and social justice issues, counselor educators need to begin with a discussion of knowledge and awareness of multicultural issues (Sheely-Moore & Kooyman, 2011). This emphasis enables students to better understand their own cultural identities, biases, and misconceptions (Arredondo, Tovar-Blank, & Parham, 2008). Counselor educators must stress the importance of self-reflection in the understanding of self and allow for discussion and processing of new knowledge and recollection of memories of waking up and

critical incidents. Students should understand that multicultural and social justice competence is a lifelong journey and will not end in the classroom; much literature supports the belief that engaging across difference, engaging in honest dialogue, and acknowledging and integrating differing perspectives leads to the expansion of one's critical consciousness (Gurin, Dey, Huratdo, & Gurin, 2002; Jayakumar, 2008).

Key Constructs in Liberatory Counseling

Liberatory counseling scholars use several foundational constructs in framing liberation: (a) framework of privilege and oppression; (b) process of waking up to social injustice; and (c) actions to challenge oppression and support resilience of the oppressed (Harro, 2013; Tate, Rivera, Brown, & Skaistis, 2013). In the first foundation, privilege and oppression frameworks refer to the difference in access to resources for various groups in society. For instance, privilege is defined as the numerous systemic and unmerited benefits within the culture for members of the dominant group (Crethar, Rivera, & Nash, 2008) while oppression is defined as the pervasive nature of social inequality woven throughout social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness (Adams et al., 2013; Bell, 2013). Oppression creates unfair advantages for some individuals and disadvantages for others; and it is possible that many problems of mental health are truly systemic problems caused by issues like racism, sexism, and homophobia (Ratts & Greenleaf, 2017; Sue & Sue, 2016). To be culturally competent means to understand the history of oppression experienced by marginalized groups in society (Sue & Sue, 2016). Additionally, counselors are expected to address oppression in the context of intersectionality (Ratts et al., 2016). Intersectionality focuses on the intersections of identities and the overlapping experiences of oppression related to social identities such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, and religion (Ratts, 2017). Although we understand the experiences

of people of color and racism as a singular construct, we know less about the experiences of people who are multiply marginalized (Grant & Zwier, 2011).

The second foundational principle of liberatory approaches in counseling includes the processes of waking up to social injustice. Waking up is defined as an intrapersonal change in the core of someone believes about themselves (Adams et al., 2013; Harro, 2013). A person may experience some form of cognitive dissonance, where something that used to make sense to us, ceases to make sense. Additionally, a person could experience something different they have never questioned and now begin to question (Adams et al., 2013; Harro, 2013). Counseling and psychotherapy do not take place in vacuum are not isolated from the larger sociopolitical influences of society (Constantine, 2006; Katz, 1985; Liu, Hernandez, Mahmood, & Stinson, 2006). Social justice counseling includes social and political action that seeks to ensure that all people have equal access to the resources, employment, services, and opportunities they require to meet their basic human needs and to develop fully (Goodman et al., 2004). Freire (1972) spoke of the "great humanistic and historical task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well" (p. 21). Veugelers (2017) analyzed Freire's work and developed a list of what he called the *Pedagogical Principles of Paulo Freire*. The pedagogical topics are as follows:

1. Reading the world, not the word

2. Education as dialogue

3. Social, cultural and political context

4. Making the pedagogical political, and the political pedagogical

5. Liberation and empowerment, social justice and humanization

6. Emotions like love and passion

7. Critical engagement

8. Movements, not individuals

9. Future-oriented imagination (Veugelers, 2017).

In connecting oppression, counseling, and liberation, it is important to pay particular attention to principles 2, 3, 4, and 5. Counselors must be aware of the social, cultural, and political contexts of their own and clients' lived experiences. Thus, counselor educators must move away from the banking method of education and create dialogue in classrooms in which students are allowed to be open to new ideas and insights, and are willing to change their ideas of themselves and the world (Freire, 1972). Freire (1972) was adamant there is a strong link between the sociopolitical nature of oppression and the lived experiences of individuals. Liberation is not simply removing the obstacle but true empowerment requires transforming the social and political conditions and relationships in which we exist (Veugelers, 2017). Counselors have a direct role and responsibility in navigating these relationships and conditions through the counselor-client relationship. Social justice counseling and liberation both recognize that problems do not necessarily reside in individuals but are externally located in social systems (Sue & Sue, 2016).

The third foundation of liberatory counseling includes the actions counselors may take to challenge oppression and support resilience of the oppressed. Multicultural and social justice counseling and liberation are connected through action. A basic premise of social justice counseling is that culturally competent helping professionals must expand their perspectives beyond individual treatment and be able to intervene effectively at the professional, organizational, and societal levels (Sue & Sue, 2016). Freire (1972) was clear that knowing and understanding was not enough and action is required to establish liberation. More recently,

counseling has also been clear that action oriented steps must be taken to create change in our society and multicultural and social justice counselors are called to create justice by challenging oppression in its many forms (Brubaker, Harper, & Singh, 2010). Counseling is an avenue in which educational, political, empowerment, giving voice, and social justice are all interconnected (Veugelers, 2017).

Current Study

The research question that guided this study is: How does the experience of waking up to injustice within a critical incident influence master's level counseling students to study multicultural and social justice competence in counseling? Using the key constructs of privilege and oppression, waking up, and liberation, collective memory work was the methodology used and undergirded in the theories of liberation and liberation psychology.

Collective memory work is a feminist social constructionist method in which strives to remove power differentials between the subject and object of research (Onyx & Small, 2001). In nature, collective memory work is a liberatory research method by which provides an opportunity for the participants to maintain a role in both generating and analyzing data throughout the research process (Haug & Carter, 1987). There are three phases to collective memory work: (a) participants write a story about a particular memory; (b) a focus group where participants reflect on the memories and stories written; and (c) the data generated from the focus group is further analyzed and theorized by the researcher (Onyx & Small, 2001). Chapter 3 will outline and describe collective memory work and the research study in further detail.

Structure of Manuscript-Style Dissertation

In an effort to engage in research and potential publication highlighting the necessity of increased understanding about critical incidents and the memories that influence master's level

counseling students to become multicultural and social justice oriented counselors, this dissertation follows a manuscript format. The current chapter provides an introduction of the existing concepts and issues related to multicultural and social justice counseling. In Chapter 2, I write a manuscript that is a call to the field of counseling to infuse consciousness raising experiences into counselor graduate preparation programs. Chapter 2 also reflects on relevant literature, research, and practice within the field of counseling. In Chapter 3, I describe a study of collective memory work and the influence memories of waking up have on counselor trainees. Chapter 3 also includes the methodology and findings, and future implications for practice, research, and advocacy (Eaker, 2015). Finally, in Chapter 4, I conclude with a description of my researcher reflexivity, insight on using liberation theoretical frameworks and collective memory work methodology, as well as personal reflection and reflexivity (Eaker, 2015).

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CHAPTER 2

COUNSELOR TRAINEES EXPERIENCES OF WAKING UP IN CRITICAL INCIDENTS

WITHIN THE CYCLE OF LIBERATION: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND CALL

TO THE FIELD OF COUNSELING

Abstract

There has been a growing movement in counselor education to expand the counseling role from its traditional emphasis on solely psychological issues and concerns to a broader focus on social justice and the systemic circumstances that effect one's intellectual, social, and psychological development (Ratts, DeKruyf, Chen-Hayes, 2007; Singh, Urbano, Haston & McMahan, 2010; Sue, Arredondo, McDavis, 1992). However, master's level counselor trainees' are entering graduate counseling programs with an emphasis on multiculturalism and social justice but do not fully understand the principles of multiculturalism and social justice in counseling, nor can they apply advocacy strategies upon graduation (Singh et al, 2010). This article provides an overview of the historical development of multicultural and social justice competence in counseling, how multiculturalism, social justice and liberation are linked in counseling, an overview of multiculturalism and social justice in graduate preparation programs as well as suggestions for counselor educators.

INDEX WORDS: Counseling, Counselor Education, Counselor Trainees, Multicultural and Social Justice Competence, Liberation, Liberation Psychology, Ally Identity Development

Introduction

Social inequities, such as access to educational opportunities, healthcare, housing, employment, and salary, exist based on individual differences in socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, age, religion, immigration status, sex, physical and mental ability or disability, and sexual orientation; these injustices continue to be pervasive the United States (U.S.) and create further mental health disparities (Lee & Waltz, 1998; Linnemeyer, Nilsson, Marszalek, & Khan, 2018; Toporek, Gerstein, Fouad, Roysircar & Israel, 2006). To respond to these injustices, counselors and mental health professionals are urged to develop strategies directed toward changing the more deep, systemic causes of injustice, and to align their practice with social justice advocacy principles and techniques (Goodman et al., 2004; Linnemeyer et al., 2018; Prilleltensky & Prilleltensky, 2003; Vera & Speight, 2003). There has been a growing movement in counselor education to expand the counseling role from its traditional emphasis on solely psychological issues and concerns to a broader focus on social justice and the systemic circumstances that effect one's intellectual, social, and psychological development (Ratts, DeKruyf, Chen-Hayes, 2007; Singh, Urbano, Haston & McMahan, 2010; Sue, Arredondo, McDavis, 1992). However, master's level counselor trainees' are entering graduate counseling programs with emphasis on multiculturalism and social justice but do not fully understand the principle of multiculturalism and social justice in counseling, nor can they apply advocacy strategies upon graduation (Singh et al, 2010).

Graduate curriculums should encourage conscious reflection and self-understanding with counselor trainees' (Wilson & Meyer, 2010). The Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MSJCCs) provide counselor educators with guidelines to transform how counseling is taught and practiced (Ratts, 2017). The MSJCCs suggest that becoming a self-

aware counselor is critical to the first step in becoming a culturally competent counselor. A self-aware counselor takes action to learn about their assumptions, biases, privileged identities, values, and beliefs (Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, & McCullough, 2016). Additionally, the construct of liberation plays a critical role in social justice counseling as liberation is defined as "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (Freire, 1970, p. 79). Social justice counseling should be centered in advocacy and creating liberating spaces for clients. While social justice advocacy and liberation are considered separate constructs, both overlap in many ways; most importantly, the primary goals of these two constructs is the actualization of clients and creating empowering spaces for individuals to create or re-create their own realities (Linnemeyer, et al., 2018). These constructs are also inseparable because marginalization is the main process by which social injustice is maintained, and both constructs are deeply rooted in combating oppressive structures (Motulsky, Gere, Rakhsanda, Trantham, 2014; Vera & Speight, 2003). In order for counselors to be effective at social justice counseling, they must develop a critical consciousness, a principle of liberation psychology, to become aware of and involved in an action related to understanding truth (Martín-Baró, 1994). The cycle of liberation is a framework and tool counselor educators can use to help master's level counseling students understand their own experiences of liberation; specifically what it means to "wake up" within a critical incident. Typically, an individual enters the pathway to liberation through a critical incident in which an individual begins to see themselves differently in the world than they have before (Harro, 2013). The cycle of liberation teaches an individual how they can play a role in liberation and social justice advocacy. This understanding connects the importance of self-awareness, critical consciousness, and social justice advocacy in counseling.

This conceptual article utilizes an integrated theoretical framework that highlights principles of liberation psychology and the cycle of liberation as a perspective from which counselor trainees are developing their multicultural and social justice competence within their counselor identity. More specifically, liberation psychology draws attention to the systemic issues within society and their impacts on mental health. The cycle of liberation provides an organized approach for an individual to map their own liberation process. Finally, this article will suggest recommendations for counselor educators and related professionals who wish to support the exploration of waking up within critical incidents and the development of counselor trainees' multicultural and social justice counseling competence in relation to the construction of their counselor identity. Recommendations in terms of concepts, practices and teachings are highlighted.

Liberation, Multicultural, and Social Justice Counseling

Counselor trainees need to engage in ongoing self-evaluation because it is critical to discover strongly-held values different from those of the community members they serve and determine how they navigate those differences (Goodman et al., 2004). Using course curriculum as an opportunity to explore counselor trainees' experiences of waking up within critical incidents will help students better understand and become self-aware of their own marginalized and privileged identities and how their experiences may shape interactions with clients. Teaching the cycle of liberation will help them understand their motivations to be social justice advocates in counseling and also contribute to the development of their counselor identities and identities as a scholar-advocate-practitioner.

Acquiring multicultural knowledge does not necessarily come from studying in a graduate program but can be learned and experiences through other avenues, such as one's

personal experiences. A broad social justice foundation instills a sense of sociopolitical consciousness and attentiveness to positive social and cultural identities (Wilson & Meyer, 2010). Counselor educators have a critical role in helping students understand the importance of their personal experiences and how they shape their counselor identity and development as counselors in training. In Wilson & Meyer's (2010) study, they found participants struggled to identify when an individual realized they had an understanding of social justice. This reinforces the need for counselor educator's to teach the cycle of liberation and explore students' experiences of waking up within critical incidents.

While there is a growing amount of research on social justice advocacy in counseling, more research is needed to understand how liberation interactions with this construct. Research has not addressed the importance of exploring the experiences of waking up within a critical incident and the impact it has on counselor trainees' competency skill building and counselor identity development. Within exploring a student's experiences of waking up within a critical incident, it is also important to explore privilege, for example, particularly for White folks. Kendall (2006) suggests that white school counselors may ignore their White identity because they see it as not salient to their own identity. Privilege is not granted by earning it but by unearned qualities given to us, such as race and gender (Kendall, 2006). White counselor trainees' cannot ignore their White identity and how their privilege interacts with the systems around them.

The experiences counselor trainees have within their various systems both in and outside of school settings may also play in a role in their critical incident and motivation to become counselors, but the literature does not discuss this either. Ally identity development may have something to do with counselor trainee motivation to strive for multicultural and social justice

competence. Ally identity development is connected to liberation as a social justice approach to counseling as both allyship and liberation have the best interest of all members of society, not just those who are from marginalized groups and the direct targets of the system of oppression (Edwards, 2006). Social justice allies are defined as "members of dominant social groups who are working to end the system of oppression that gives them greater privilege and power based on their social-group membership" (Edwards, 2006, p. 41). Students who want to be social justice change agents must first acknowledge and attend to their own worldviews and biases combined with an aspiration to become culturally competent in order to effectively promote empowerment and liberation with their students and clients (Ratts et al., 2007).

Liberation Psychology

The roots of liberation psychology are often traced back to the work of Ignacio Martín-Baró, who posited several foundational components of a new branch of psychology, which was intended to be of, and for the oppressed (Torres Rivera, Brown & Skaistis, 2013). In order to understand his initial construction of liberation psychology, it is helpful to understand his theological roots in the broader framework of social action within the Christian church. Many theologians in the twentieth century rediscovered the liberatory themes of the Bible and its focus on the poor and oppressed (Tate et al., 2013). During this time, there was a growing sense that theologians should not just be academics serving the institutional church, but also agents of theological reflection and action in service of the oppressed (Tate et al., 2013).

Martín-Baró (1994) argued that Western psychology had very little to offer in terms of the South American region's severe and oppressive circumstances. He argued in order for psychology to be relevant to the mental health concerns it seeks to address, it must be reoriented toward the lived experience of those who experience the most extreme conditions of poverty and

oppression (Martín-Baró, 1994). Martín-Baró also brought attention to history and that for oppressed populations in particular, history is written from the perspective of the oppressor. This is a critical component of liberation psychology in that, without an understanding of the actual etiology of oppression and subsequent conditions, true understandings from the oppressed cannot be attained. He stated a key step in achieving a socially just and mentally healthy context for oppressed groups was to investigate the dominant messages and embrace the lived experiences of the oppressed (Martín-Baró, 1994). Martín-Baró pointed out it is crucial to utilize the virtues of oppressed peoples when working to improve their lived experiences; this strengths-based approach allows the social scientist to depend on those who are oppressed to produce the tools and energy that may lead to liberation. Additionally, he considered problematization a critical aspect of his theory and is best described as a method for understanding a particular issue faced by oppressed populations from their own perspective (Martín-Baró, 1994).

The primary goal of liberation psychology is the awakening of critical consciousness in a person or group (Tate et al., 2013). Martín-Baró (1994) credited Paulo Freire (1996) with creating the notion of critical consciousness. Martín-Baró (1991) suggested that critical consciousness "is not simply becoming aware of a certain fact but rather it is a process of change" (p. 227). To become conscious of reality is to become aware of, and involved in, a process of continual discovery and action related to "truth." Through rediscovering historical memory, de-ideologizing understandings of cultural truths, discovering the virtues of the people, and applying this knowledge to specific contexts and lived experiences through problematization, the process of critical consciousness emerges and is maintained (Martín-Baró, 1991). Praxis is another core foundation of liberation psychology; the confluence of theory and action (Tate et al., 2013). The critical consciousness that arises from reclaiming one's history,

de-ideologizing understandings of cultural truths, discovering the virtues of the people, and using

that as a method for making sense of current oppressive circumstances is only made "real" when

it is applied in action to current lived experiences in effort to liberate an individual and others

from oppressive circumstances (Tate et. al, 2013).

Lastly, underlying all of these principles of liberation psychology is the call, and

necessity, for the psychologist, counselor, or other social scientists to be engaged in these

liberating processes on a personal level. This requires the researcher's role to become that of a

witness, co-participant, and a mirror for process through those who have been oppressed so they

may discover their own capacities for historical memory, critical analysis, and transformative

social action (Tate et al., 2013). Researchers operating from a liberation psychology perspective

are primarily focused on the participants and the transformation of themselves and their

communities. Martín-Baró (1991) suggested that social scientists and practitioners critically

reflect and act on the oppressive set of higher education structures and norms that prioritize

building credentials over pursuing liberatory change for oppressed populations.

Multicultural Counseling Theory

To understand the evolvement of social justice counseling and how multiculturalism,

social justice, and liberation are connected, it is important to understand the historical contexts of

the theories. Multicultural counseling theory/therapy (MCT) is seen as the fourth force and the

social justice counseling perspective is seen as the fifth force in mental health counseling (Ratts,

2011). MCT is a foundational theory that aided the development of the original MSJCC's

(Kiselica, 2005). MCT is an approach that encourages counselors to see culture deeply imbedded

in the consciousness of all human beings and basic to all human functioning (Jones-Smith,

2012).

MCT has six primary tenets and asserts that a counselor or client's racial/cultural identity influences how problems are defined and dictates or defines appropriate counseling goals or processes (Sue, Ivey, Pederenn, & Paul, 1996). This tenant provides a rationale of the importance in understanding one's own racial and cultural identity as a counselor. Additionally, an important tenant of MCT discusses the importance of the client-counselor experience and how the counselor-client relationship must become the focus of the treatment (Sue et al., 1996).

Lastly, MCT states that each Western and non-Western theory represents a different worldview (Sue et al., 1996). Worldviews are critically important to understand from both the counselor and client perspectives. Worldviews are the way people construct meanings about their worlds and they develop as a result of cultural and historical upbringings (Sue et al., 1996). It is often challenging for counselors who are not culturally aware to learn how to view client's issues apart from their own worldviews; counselors often assume that a client shares a similar worldview (Sue et al., 1996).

Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies

To understand how liberation can be actualized in social justice counseling, counselors must be familiar with and utilize the MSJCCs. The MSJCCs are aspirational standards for the mental health profession and they provide a framework that acknowledge the different ways identity, marginalization, and privilege intersect (Ratts, 2017). At the core of the competencies are multicultural and social justice praxis; the assumption that counselors should use strategies and techniques that align with clients cultural background and their work should promote social justice (Ratts, 2017).

New language was introduced in the 2016 revision, particularly related to intersectionality and action (Ratts et al., 2016). Within the framework, quadrants represent the

interactive nature of power, privilege, and oppression between the counselor and client (Ratts, 2017). Domains signify the developmental sequence needed to understand intersectionality: counselor self-awareness, client worldview, counseling relationship, and counseling/advocacy interventions (Ratts, 2017). Additionally, a new competency of action was developed for the MSJCCs. Aspirational competencies are highlighted in the domains identified above: attitudes and beliefs, knowledge, skills and action (AKSA). These competencies build upon one another, ultimately leading to action (Ratts, 2017).

Counselor Self-Awareness

A self-aware counselor takes action to learn about their assumptions, biases, privileged identities, values, and beliefs (Ratts et al., 2016). Counselor trainees' must engage in ongoing self-evaluation because it is critical to discover strongly held values different from those of the community members we serve and determine how we navigate those differences (Goodman et al., 2004). Psychological oppression ensues from practices that result in various forms of injustice typically inflicted unintentionally by counselors who are genuinely interested in helping clients form diverse groups and backgrounds to realize new and untapped dimensions of their humanity (Duran, Firehammer & Gonzalez., 2008). Therefore, counselors should always remain cognizant of power differentials that exist when working with individuals from disenfranchised groups (Goodman et al., 2004). Multicultural counseling theorists urge counselors of color and White counselors to become aware of the role racism, discrimination, and White privilege play in the problems they do or do not face on a daily basis (Goodman et al., 2004). They also challenge the notion that the therapeutic relationship should be objective, asserting that cultural worldviews, values, and beliefs create power differentials within each counseling interaction (Sue, et al., 1992).

Client Worldview

Privileged and marginalized counselors take action to increase self-awareness and knowledge around clients' worldviews (Ratts et al., 2016). Counselors must seek to understand clients' worldviews and how they influence their interactions with society. One common thread that multicultural, feminist, and social justice counselors share is that clients exist within and are constantly affected by environmental systems (Crethar, Rivera & Nash, 2008). It is important that counselors understand how history affects the present mental well-being of persons from marginalized racial/cultural groups in general and how intrusions by the counseling profession, if not done with cultural competence and respect, will predictably contribute to the soul suffering already pandemic in societies across the world (Duran et al., 2008). An important goal is to validate the experiences of clients of color and other marginalized groups to help them cope successfully with racism and micro-aggressions (Nadal, Griffin, Wong, Hamit, & Rasmus, 2014).

Counseling Relationship

Privileged and marginalized counselors take action to increase their understanding of how client and counselor worldview, values, beliefs, identities, and oppression influence the counseling relationship (Ratts et al., 2016). For example, the relationships counselors have with clients around current events is integral and most critical to the success of a counselor. There are many important factors and considerations to keep in mind when developing and maintaining culturally competent relationships.

Individuals who are able to have effective relationships with people from various backgrounds might be better equipped to make sound and equitable interpersonal, social and policy decisions as they participate in an increasingly diverse world (Banks, Murry, Brown, &

Hammond, 2014). Developing mutual empathy in the counseling relationship is critical and happens when a counselor effectively expresses their connection with clients' expressed thoughts and feelings, but also when clients acknowledge being affected by the impact they have had in generating an empathetic response in the counselor (Comstock, et al., 2008).

Discussing multicultural issues in the counseling relationship can be challenging and bring up many strong emotions, for both counselor and client, which may be enhanced by the similarities and differences between them in the therapeutic relationship (MacLeod, 2013). However, engaging in honest dialogues about racial micro-aggressions and racial dynamics with students of color may demonstrate that practitioners are addressing a component of multicultural competence that leads to an effective counseling relationship (Nadal et al., 2014).

Counseling and Advocacy Interventions

Privileged and marginalized counselors intervene with, and on behalf of clients at the intrapersonal, interpersonal, institutional, community, public policy, and international/global levels (Ratts et al., 2016). Social justice counselors use the counseling relationship to support clients' empowerment (Crethar et al., 2008). They assist clients in becoming more empowered by helping them develop specific skills necessary to gain control over their lives and life context with the constraints of their environments (Crethar et al., 2008). The empowerment process enables them to secure support from other allies who are committed to constructively confronting institutional barriers to their health and well-being. Clients are able to develop and exercise aspects of their newly developed consciousness and behaviors without infringing on the freedoms and rights of others; and counselors help them develop the critical consciousness and skills that underlie a person's empowerment (Crethar, et al., 2008).

When successfully developing advocacy and counseling interventions, counselors and clients freely and respectfully come to a mutual agreement about the intervention strategies that are likely to promote the sort of counseling outcomes that are consonant with culturally different clients' worldviews, beliefs, and values (Comstock et al., 2008). Counseling interventions continue to be implemented by practitioners who are not respectful of nor responsive to worldviews, expectations, values, or needs of persons in culturally diverse communities (Duran et al., 2008). When individuals are not permitted to participate in processes that influence their lives, they often lose a sense of control. This lack of power can result in a loss of hope, a sense of helplessness and an increased sense of personal and collective disenfranchisement (Crethar et al., 2008).

Allyship and Ally Identity Development

Allyship and ally identity development help to understand how liberation is important in social justice counseling as counselors must be committed to understanding and advocating with and for clients who share different identities. Broido (2000) defines social justice allies as "members of dominant social groups who are working to end the system of oppression that gives them greater privilege and power based on their social group membership" (p. 3). Edwards (2006) provides three stages for practitioners seeking to develop effective, consistent, and sustainable allies in themselves and students. First, the ally for self-interest is primarily motivated to protect those they care about from being hurt and typically ally with an individual with whom they have a personal connection rather than to a group or issue (Edwards, 2006). In the second stage, aspiring ally of altruism, an awareness of privilege begins to develop; seeking to engage in ally behavior as a means of dealing with the guilt becomes a primary underlying, often unconscious motivator (Edwards, 2006). Lastly, the ally for social justice works with those

from the oppressed group in collaboration and partnership to end the system of oppression

(Edwards, 2006).

The three stages align with the MSJCC's competencies and can be used together to

develop an ally identity in the liberation process. A component of ally development is

understanding that allies seek out critique, are open to feedback, and know they will make

mistakes (Edwards, 2006). The MSJCCs call for counselors to become aware of their own

knowledge and attitudes about their own privilege and groups who are different from them

(Ratts, et al., 2016). They also have a dimension that allows helpers to work with their clients

rather than on behalf at the individual, community, and systems levels (Ratts, et al., 2016). These

are similarities between liberation, the Ally Identity Development Model and the MSJCCs as

counselors must take similar steps to become allies and multicultural and socially just counselors

in order to create liberating spaces for clients in counseling. Within their experiences of waking

up, graduates students might find themselves in one of the three stages of the Ally Identity

Development Model.

Recommendations for Counselor Educators

Liberation psychology, multicultural and social justice counseling all take a holistic

approach and contextual perspective where meaning, purpose, values, choice, spirituality, self-

acceptance, and self-actualization help form the entire person who is able to take action (Chávez,

Fernandez, Hipolito-Delgado, & Rivera, 2016). A major objective of actualizing the counseling

profession's commitment to social justice entails educating and training graduate students to

become social justice advocates (Arredondo & Perez, 2003; Caldwell & Vera, 2010; Goodman et

al., 2004; Helms, 2003; Ivey and Collins, 2003; Speight & Vera, 2004; Vera & Speight, 2003).

Counselor educators play a critical role in the development of master's level counseling students

and counselor trainees, yet there is very little literature on pedagogical approaches to incorporating social justice awareness or competencies across graduate curriculums (Motulsky et al., 2014). Additionally, classroom teaching is a key component of transforming counseling curriculum and developing a student's awareness of social justice perspectives (Llera, Saleem, Roffman, & Dass-Brailsford, 2009; Motulsky et al., 2014).

Counselor educators must create a space in curriculum and classroom settings for students to explore their identities, motivations, and worldviews that play an integral role in developing their counselor identity. Burnes & Singh (2010) suggested three effective teaching strategies: (a) examination of social justice issues in the literature and course readings, (b) self-examination and reflection exercises, and (c) experiential learning activities around system. This conceptual work specifically calls for a focus on self-examination and reflection exercises. Counselor educators must create spaces for students to explore their racial and cultural identities so they may understand how their racial and cultural lens will influence how they view and interact with clients. Until students understand themselves, they may not be successful in the relationships they attempt to build with clients, particularly clients who are different from them.

Within and across differences, liberation is connected. Counselor educators have a responsibility to help counselor trainees understand how their liberation is connected to the liberation of their clients within and outside of counseling. Within the classroom, students must connect their own liberation experiences to the reasons why they work with their clients. This is accomplished through knowledge, application of their clients' identities, and advocacy skills (Singh, 2016). Faculty must capitalize on all opportunities within the classroom to connect liberation across differences.

As many traditional theories of psychotherapy tend to view the counselor as the expert, counselor educators must create a learning environment in which students understand the importance of the counseling relationship in relation to their diverse clients. Viewing the counseling relationship as center to treatment may seem obvious, however, it is not. As counselors, we are trained to be experts on helping, and we often give little credit to or have little faith in the help the client holds for themselves. Students must be able to view themselves as the expert of their own experiences which will in turn help them understand their clients' experiences.

Classrooms must create spaces of critical thinking and reflection to allow students to understand, decipher, critique, and explore their own worldviews. Students need to understand their liberatory experiences and how they can become liberated in the process of liberating others. This begins with exploring the cycle of liberation, including where, how, and why they entered. By creating opportunities for learning in classrooms and curriculum, counselor educators can expect that master's level counseling students will better understand themselves, their worldviews, and how who they are and their experiences shape their counselor identities in hopes they will be better counselors and advocates for their clients. Counselor educators have the opportunity to lead the way in developing both liberating and affirmative environments by creating spaces for students to explore critical incidents and liberatory motivations and processes. There are a number of strategies counselor educators may find helpful when working with counselor trainees to explore their critical incident and liberatory processes.

First, counselor educators can use liberation psychology as a framework and approach for students to recover their historical memories about their critical incidents surrounding their experiences. A key aspect of recovering historical memory is a deep self-reflection on personal

experiences of oppression and on systems of oppression in general (Singh, 2016). This is accomplished by using a reflection process and asking students questions to explore deep personal experiences. Examples of reflection questions include: When did I first become aware of my race? When did I first learn my own gender? What has been lost and found in the development of your identities (both privileged and marginalized)? Students can then use the cycle of liberation to understand and narrow down their experiences of waking up with their critical incidents.

Second, opportunities for self-reflections on the system of oppression are necessary. New perspectives expand counselors' ability to identify necessary action as well as understand how these actions relate to their own experiences (Lewis, Ratts, Paladino, & Toporek, 2011). Students must look at the roots of systems of oppression that exist within society and around the world. Additionally, they must concurrently explore their own beliefs, norms, and structures of oppression that exist within and outside of their own communities. Doing so allows students to weave their understandings of their own experiences and systemic structures. This may be achieved by having students explore each other's stories, stories of those who have been disadvantaged by oppressive systems over time, and counter narratives of people and marginalized groups (Singh, 2016). Counselor educators should ask students to consider how their practice could change as a result of understanding the stories and counter narratives of people – rather than have their approach be driven by dominant narratives (Singh, 2016).

Third, using another principle of liberation psychology, counselor educators must create consciousness-raising experiences both inside and outside of the classroom. Part of the course requirements could be completing a community advocacy project or volunteering with an organization that serves marginalized populations. One graduate program requires students to

participate in "stepping out" experiences where students write a reflective response to attending a public event in a setting markedly different from their own experiences (Motulsky, et al., 2014). This strategy allows counselors to create new ways of acting towards their own liberation as the liberation of others (Singh, 2016).

Fourth, students need to practice how to name oppressive structures and systems within our society. Students must be comfortable with broaching and naming power differentials, societal barriers and other dynamics that may create hesitancy for clients to fully engage in the therapeutic process (Motulsky et al., 2014). Using role playing as a part of courses gives students an opportunity to practice and receive feedback from faculty and peers. For example, a White counselor who works with a client of color will need to name the power structures that exist around racial injustices in society and how they play out in counseling. One strategy used in a graduate program includes encouraging students to reflect on their personal histories as they relate to the clients in the role-play; they are asked to focus reflectively on their reactions to the salient aspects of the client's identity such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, class background, sexual orientation, religion/spirituality, physical ability/challenge, and experiences of privilege and oppression (Motulsky et. al., 2014). Faculty must create spaces to safely debrief role-plays – unpacking the experiential exercise may allow the students access to understanding their areas of development and growth differently (Motulsky, et al., 2014). Students must be able to communicate their commitment to countering injustices and how they wish to work alongside their client(s).

Lastly, using the MSJCCs with students is a helpful tool to promote consciousness-raising experiences and name what knowledge, awareness, and skills are needed to create liberating spaces for clients. Through this, students can begin to name existing oppressive

structures and possible affirming structures. Students will learn to discuss and re-frame what their clients futures may look like (Singh, 2016). Ratts (2017) developed an assessment form, the MSJCC-AF, in order to help chart counselor and client identities. Additionally, this form charts marginalized and privileged statuses and helps frame interventions (Ratts, 2017). While this form is intended to be used with clients, counselor educators can use this form with students by asking students to chart their own identity and the identities of their peers. The form can provide a means for students to practice initiating discussion with clients regarding the salience of identity, marginalization, and privilege (Ratts, 2017). This dialogue is important to understanding how power, privilege, and oppression dynamics influence the counseling and advocacy relationship (Ratts, 2017). Before using this form, students should have a firm grasp and understanding of the new competencies (Ratts, 2017). Additional integration of the MSJCCs course requirements can include an advocacy project or a culminating experience in which students must choose a setting to apply an intervention through the lens of the competencies.

Conclusion

Liberation and social justice counseling are principles of counseling that were developed in two distinct geographic regions (Chávez, et al., 2016). Despite these different developments, they all share the vision that mental health should focus on human potential and growth (Chávez, et al., 2016). While these constructs have frequently been studied separately, it is still not well known how the combination of liberation and social justice counseling and counselor trainees' experiences of waking up within critical incidents influence counselor identity development in relation to their multicultural and social justice counseling competence. Counselor trainees must consider how their experiences of waking up and their critical incidents may influence the work they do with clients.

While scholars and counselor educators have begun to unpack the topic of self-awareness in the field of counseling in general, they have not thoroughly considered the implications of waking up within critical incidents and the influence on multicultural and social justice counseling competence. Particularly as it relates to counselor trainees' understanding of liberation and how liberation is actualized in counseling. Counselor trainees may wish to take actions to increase their self-awareness around their own experiences of liberation, consider how these experiences of liberation influence the counselor-client relationship, understand how their experiences help them understand the broader context of the sociopolitical world we live in, and find reason to work toward the liberation of their clients. Through further research and analysis, researchers may begin to piece together more structured recommendations for counselor educators who aspire to teach counselor trainees the importance of understanding one's liberation experience in order to best serve clients and actualize liberation practices in social justice counseling.

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CHAPTER 3

UNDERSTANDING THE INFLUENCE OF "WAKING UP" IN COUNSELING TRAINEES

THROUGH COLLECTIVE MEMORY WORK

Abstract

A strong focus on multicultural competence training has existed for over twenty-five years

(Bemak, Chung, Talleyrand, Jones, & Daquin, 2011). Existing literature on graduate counseling

programs suggest gaps exist between instructing students to use and integrate social justice

principles and being able to apply these skills in counseling roles (Bemak & Chung, 2011;

Collins, Arthur, Brown, & Kennedy, 2015; Sue & Sue, 2016). Current scholarship does little to

address how master's level counseling programs can develop both multicultural and social

justice competence among counselor trainees. This qualitative study utilizes a type of

participatory action research (Hays & Singh, 2012) referred to as collective memory work (Haug

& Carter, 1987) in an effort to deeply understand counselor trainees experiences of waking up in

critical incidents and it's influence to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling.

This article provides an overview of the literature regarding liberation psychology and the cycle

of liberation as well as the details of this qualitative study, including methodology and findings,

followed by discussion and implications of the research.

INDEX WORDS: Counseling, Counselor Education, Counselor Trainees, Multicultural and
                Social Justice Competence, Cycle of Liberation, Liberation Psychology,
                Participatory Action Research, Qualitative Research, Collective Memory
                Work

Introduction and Rationale for Study

Existing literature on graduate counseling programs suggest gaps exist between instructing students to use and integrate social justice principles and actually being able to practice and apply these skills in counseling roles (Bemak & Chung, 2011; Collins, Arthur, Brown, & Kennedy, 2015; Sue & Sue, 2016). Yet, current scholarship does little to address how master's level counseling programs can develop both multicultural and social justice competence among counselor trainees. Additionally, there is limited research addressing social justice issues in counseling related to power, privilege, oppression, and how they relate to liberation in the therapeutic process (Chávez, Fernandez, Hipolito-Delgado, & Rivera, 2016).

Graduate counseling programs across the country have made commitments to prepare and train students in the helping professions to work with diverse clientele (Brown, Collins, & Arthur, 2014; Chung & Bemak, 2013; Lewis, Ratts, Paladino, & Toporek, 2011). A strong focus on multicultural competence training has existed for over twenty-five years (Bemak, Chung, Talleyrand, Jones, & Daquin, 2011). However, few counseling graduate programs have integrated both multiculturalism and social justice training as part of the curriculum or provide standalone courses; and ever fewer have integrated these values into their mission statements (Bemak et al., 2011; Chung & Bemak, 2013). Professional documents like the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MSJCCs) call for counselor educators to integrate multiculturalism and social justice training into coursework in order to train counselors how to establish safe, supportive, and affirming counseling relationships with culturally diverse clients and communities (Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, & McCullough, 2016). The most recent update of the MSJCCs merged the current multicultural and social justice counseling constructs and literature to better address the therapeutic relationship in the counselor-client

relationship (Ratts et al., 2016). Additionally, a fourth competency of *action* was added as a way to operationalize the competencies within individual and group counseling (Ratts et al., 2016).

There is a need for counselors to be adequately prepared to operationalize the MSJCCs in order to create liberating spaces in counseling. The process of developing multicultural and social justice competence begins with knowing oneself (Ratts et al., 2016). Therefore, the researcher of this study used the methodological approach of collective memory work to understand the influence of counselor trainees' experiences of "waking up" within a critical incident in the cycle of liberation. Often the process of liberation begins when a person begins to experience themselves differently in the world then they have in the past – the waking up phase (Harro, 2013a). The MSJCCs provided the researcher with a clearer understanding of how experiences of waking up in critical incidents shape multicultural and social justice oriented counselors.

The Integration of the Cycle of Liberation and Liberation Psychology

Goodman et al. (2004) describe social justice as "scholarship and professional action designed to change societal values, structures, policies, and practices, such that disadvantaged or marginalized groups gain increased access to tools of self-determination" (p. 795). Paulo Freire (1996) defined liberation as a "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (p. 79). The constructs of social justice counseling and liberation psychology are intertwined as they both share the vision that people should be liberated through counseling and psychotherapy and that counseling should focus on human potential and growth (Chávez et al., 2016). The integration of social justice and liberation is connected to the training of counselors and the preparation of master's level counseling students. The revised MSJCCs set an expectation that counselor educators are competent in providing this training (Ratts et al., 2016).

The growing cultural diversity of the United States (U.S.) has prompted calls for a systemic infusion of both multicultural counseling and social justice objectives in counselor education programs (Durham & Glosoff, 2010). Attention to cultural identities and experiences in the therapeutic process is critical because counselor's personal and cultural identities are constructed through the social interactions and messages that they receive which in turn influences a clients' behavior (Sinacore et al., 2011). It is critical to consider clients' multiple identities and social contexts in framing client concerns and working with the client to design culturally appropriate interventions (Brown, et al., 2014). Therefore, it is important to consider how we prepare counselor trainees for this responsibility in their future roles. Ultimately, counselors should be adequately prepared for working directly with clients, on their behalf, and for changing the systems and social structures that adversely impacts mental health (Brown et al., 2014).

This research utilizes liberation psychology and the cycle of liberation as the core theoretical frameworks of this study. Martín-Baró (1994) developed liberation psychology in response to traditional psychology's perspective which ignored social structures and historical contexts in understanding individual behavior and concerns. Liberation psychology invokes an individual's inseparability from sociopolitical structures and asserts that the political has an impact on the psychological (Russell & Bohan, 2007). Liberation psychology was selected as a principal theoretical framework for this study due to the emphasis it places on spaces of liberation being created through counseling and the counselor-client relationship.

Harro (2013a) developed the Cycle of Liberation in response to transforming the Cycle of Socialization. The cycle of socialization explores how one can play a role in oppression (Harro, 2013b). Inversely, the cycle of liberation discusses how one can play a role in liberation. Harro

(2013a) noted like socialization, the paths towards liberation were not always the same and certainly not linear, but had cycle like traits in common that characterized the socialization process; there were also certain skills, processes, and ways of thinking and acting that were also present in every successful liberation effort.

The cycle of liberation enhances liberation psychology because it provides a framework for organizing and naming the process of liberation, thereby helping individuals understand their pathway to liberation and creating liberating spaces. Together, liberation psychology and the cycle of liberation create an epistemological lens that recognizes oppression impacts mental health and counseling and psychotherapy can therefore be a liberating experience for individuals. Additionally, liberation psychology and the cycle of liberation help provide an understanding of the ways to create liberating spaces in the therapeutic relationship and that liberation for both counselor trainees' and clients begins through understanding a counselor's own motivations, processes, and pathways toward liberation.

Multiculturalism, Social Justice, and Oppression in Counseling

The multicultural and social justice counseling movements allege they speak for all marginalized groups. Both movements contend they are about promoting inclusion, embracing diversity, and ending oppression in all forms (Ratts, 2017). However, social justice as the fifth force in counseling is not a commonly shared perspective as multicultural counseling is as the fourth force in counseling; the social justice perspective is still gaining momentum (Ratts, 2009; Ratts, 2017; Ratts, D'Andrea, & Arredondo, 2004). Pedersen (1999) explored and coined multiculturalism as the fourth force in counseling. The label of the fourth force emphasizes that multiculturalism is relevant throughout the entire field of counseling and is applicable to multiple groups not just an exotic perspective about one group (Pedersen, 1999). The social justice

counseling perspective is seen as the fifth force in mental health counseling and this paradigm has critically shaped the field of counseling (Ratts, 2011). Based on this perspective, social justice follows psychodynamic, behavioral, humanistic, and multicultural forces that currently exist in the profession (Ratts, 2009). Social justice as the fifth force in counseling serves several purposes. This force provides counselors with a framework in regards to how oppression plays a role in shaping human behavior and that oppression can have a debilitating impact on mental health (Ratts, 2009).

There is a growing recognition that people's health and well-being may be positively or adversely influenced through economic, social, and political structures, as well as educational and organizational systems (Arthur & Collins, 2014). Additionally, access to services, resources, and social capital is most often tied to membership in dominant groups, typically associated with race, gender, age, ability, sexual orientation, religion, and socioeconomic status (Arthur & Collins, 2014). Society often places unfair constraints on individuals, creating barriers to their development and hindering them from achieving their goals (Lewis, 2011). When counselors begin to value and recognize the importance of social justice counseling, the nature of their work takes a different turn to understanding and valuing their own experiences and culture as well as the experiences and culture of their clients (Lewis, 2011).

Understanding culture is imperative to the counseling and helping process as oppression impacts mental health in culturally diverse communities (Collins et al., 2014). Ignoring a client's identities and cultural values can be detrimental to the counseling and helping relationship and in turn may adversely affect their client's mental health (Collins et al., 2014). Not attending to the various dimensions of a client's environment, including their culture and identities can be more harmful than helpful (Ratts, 2009). Both multicultural and feminist perspectives have helped to

re-conceptualize the understanding of mental illness from being an internal problem to a social problem (Ratts, 2009). As counselors and helpers, we can no longer view clients problems within a vacuum; counselors must consider the sociopolitical factors and implications in the counseling and helping relationship (Ratts, 2009).

The U.S. Census Bureau reported in 2012 that racial and ethnic minority populations constituted 37% of the U.S. (U.S. Census, 2012). Additionally, in 1999, The U.S. Surgeon General's Office Report identified stigma and discrimination as the largest barrier to seeking treatment for mental health concerns (Bahm & Forchuk, 2008). A recent example related to oppression's impact on mental health is the U.S. Military's recently repealed "Don't Ask Don't Tell" (DADT). In the years following the repeal, research assessing the impact of DADT, specifically on the LGBT community, revealed feelings of depression, rejection, anxiety, increased substance abuse, and victimization (Mount, Steelman, & Hertlein, 2015). In general, research has also revealed that concealing one's sexual identity has resulted in mood disorders, anxiety, increased substance abuse, and risk of suicide (Mount et al., 2015).

The multitude of systemic, communal, and individual barriers marginalized groups encounter can have a deep and lasting impact on ones' mental health. Subsequently, identity, marginalization, and privilege are intertwined. The complexity of identity combines to create a web of privilege and marginalization that influences access to resources such as employment opportunities, quality educational experiences, and equitable access to healthcare (Ratts, 2017). Addressing the complexity of identity, including privileged and marginalized identities in counseling, while incorporating advocacy within counseling requires new structures and approaches (Ratts, 2017). The newly revised MSJCCs are a tool for counselors to help address these new expectations for counselors and counselor trainees'.

The systemic barriers clients face may also be the same barriers counselors face in our their own lives. In a study on counseling psychology doctoral students, Caldwell & Vera (2010) found that exposure to injustice accounted for the majority of critical incidents for the participants. Therefore, it is imperative researchers explore master's level counseling students experiences of waking up within critical incidents to develop a working knowledge of their motivations to actualize their commitment to social justice in counseling.

The Cycle of Liberation

Social justice advocacy in counseling involves the empowerment of individual clients in terms of working for and with them to challenge institutional barriers and societal injustices (Linnemeyer, Nilsson, Marszalek, & Khan, 2018). As counselors come to a critical level of understanding the nature of oppression and their own roles in maintaining the systems of power and privilege, they seek new paths for creating social change and taking themselves toward empowerment and liberation (Adams et al.; Harro, 2013a). In the cycle of socialization, Harro (2013b) believed if there is an identifiable pattern of events that repeats itself, becomes self-fulfilling, and leads us to a state of unconsciousness about issues of oppression, then there may be another identifiable pattern of events that leads us towards liberation. Using the language of Paulo Freire (1996), Harro (2013a) defines liberation as "critical transformation" (p. 79).

Little empirical work exists on the understanding of how counselor trainees understand their own experiences of liberation and critical transformation. Furthermore, research lacks an understanding of how these experiences influence them to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling. Caldwell & Vera (2010) suggest it may be life experiences, such as those of discrimination, that catalyze a commitment toward engagement in social justice advocacy. Nilsson, Schale, and Brown-Khamphadky (2011) concluded that the experience of being a

witness to someone else's discrimination seemed to inspire students to develop a stronger social justice orientation. However, the mechanisms by which experiences influence social justice advocacy are still relatively unexamined (Linnemeyer et al., 2018).

Many counselors who want to overcome oppression in counseling do not start in the critical transformation stage, but as they proceed in their efforts, it becomes necessary to move to that level (Adams et al., 2013; Harro, 2013a). The cycle of liberation describes a cyclical process that seems to occur in most successful social change efforts, leading to some degree of liberation from oppression for those involved, regardless of their roles (Harro, 2013a). One can enter the cycle at any point, through evolution or critical incident, and will repeat the cycle numerous times. There is no specific beginning to end as one is never finished working to end oppression (Adams et al., 2013; Harro, 2013a).

Within the cycle of liberation, all levels will occur at some point but liberation often begins when a person begins to experience themselves differently in the world than in the past. The entry point is marked by a critical incident; an intrapersonal change in the core of someone about what they believe about themselves (Adams et al., 2013; Harro, 2013a). Harro (2013a) also refers to this phase as *waking up.* A person may experience some form of cognitive dissonance, where something that used to make sense to us ceases to make sense. Additionally, a person could experience something that is different that we have never questioned and begin to question (Adams et al., 2013; Harro, 2013a). Goodman et al., (2004) identified six themes drawn from feminist and multicultural literature important in counselor training. Two of the themes include ongoing self-examination and facilitating consciousness-raising. Understanding the experiences of waking up create a space for counselor trainees to engage in these two themes and draw

connections to their own experiences of liberation and how they shape their desire to be social justice advocates in counseling.

The next phase of the cycle of liberation is *getting ready* (Harro, 2013a). This involves consciously dismantling and building aspects of ourselves and our worldviews based on our new perspectives. Following *getting ready* is *reaching out.* This phase provides us with feedback about how our new worldviews will be met by others. We may get pressure from some to stop and accept the status quo; and we may get encouragement and new friends as a result of taking a stance on something about which we were quiet before (Harro, 2013a). The interpersonal phase of the liberation process is marked by *building community* and consists of two steps: dialoguing with people who are like us for support and dialoguing with people who are different from us to gain understanding and build coalitions (Harro, 2013a). *Coalescing* involves both seeing our reality and naming ourselves differently. The oppressed and oppressor are a "we" now, rather than adversaries. We are on the same side as those in our coalition and that often surprises and confuses the system. We refuse to "play our roles" and "stay in our places" (Harro, 2013a). Next, *creating change* includes operating from a shifted worldview, where the values of a diverse and united community shape the system. It involves forming partnerships across differences to increase shared power. This often manifests in influencing structure, policy, and management of organizations and systems of which we are a part (Harro, 2013a). Lastly, in order to succeed, *maintaining* must occur wherein change needs to be strengthened, monitored, and integrated into the ritual of daily life (Harro, 2013a). The cycle of liberation is important to this study as it provides a framework in which counselor trainees may begin to map their own pathways towards liberation and understanding how liberation plays a role in social justice counseling.

The Use of Collective Memory Work in Qualitative Research Studies

Collective memory work is a research tradition derived from the larger umbrella of participatory action research (Johnson, Singh, & Gonzalez, 2014). Participatory action research methods in general require collaboration between the researcher and participants and have the goal of consciousness-raising and social justice awareness (Hays & Singh, 2012). Collective memory work is a relatively new research methodology and was first introduced to qualitative research in 1987 (Onyx & Small, 2001). Collective memory work allows participants to recall, examine, and analyze their earliest memories and experiences within a broader, cultural context to see how their individual experiences link to collective, shared experiences of similar and/or different groups in society (Kivel & Johnson, 2009). This methodology differs from interviews, case studies, and focus groups because the process "allows people to evoke experiences and feelings without being specifically directed by an interview" (Kivel & Johnson, 2009 p. 115). The effect of some experiences may be at the level of the subconscious so that individuals would find it difficult to articulate them in a different interviewing situation (Kivel and Johnson, 2009).

Johnson et al. (2014) used collective memory work to study the experiences of transgender, queer, and questioning youth in efforts to highlight their unique circumstances confronting the gender binary in relation to their sexual identity. The findings of this study contributed to and remained consistent with the literature that transgender, queer, and questioning youth experience high rates of bullying and hostility at school and greater support is needed in schools (Johnson et al., 2014). Implications from this study also draw attention to the importance of including the voices of transgender, queer, and questioning youth in the research. By engaging the youth in the process of data collection and analysis, it brought a deeper and meaningful understanding of their experiences (Johnson et al., 2014).

Kivel and Johnson (2009) used collective memory work to study media consumption of young men to understand how they created and maintained their masculinity. Ultimately, they found a correlation between media consumption and identity construction through understanding their stories related to their first memory of a media experience (Kivel & Johnson, 2009). Additionally, the process of collective memory work during this study allowed the participants to gain awareness of the extent to which they have been influenced by media products and challenge their own hegemonic thoughts on what it means to be a man (Kivel & Johnson, 2009).

Eaker (2015) used collective memory work to understand the impact of parental responses in relation to their children's gender nonconformity. Through the participants written stories and focus group discussions, themes were identified that provided insight on how parents contribute to their child's ability to live their life as a gender non-conforming person (Eaker, 2015). Overall, this study gave voice to the experiences of gender non-conforming individuals and their childhood experiences. This also provided the author with the necessary insight to call for increased research, support mechanisms, and advocacy strategies for gender non-conforming individuals (Eaker, 2015).

In an effort to understand the influence of waking up within critical incidents, this study aims to explore memories of counselor trainees' critical incidents through the recollection of master's level counseling students' memories of waking up. Recognizing the importance of waking up within a critical incident as a catalyst for multicultural and social justice competency and advocacy, this study will explore the influence of waking up within critical incidents on counselor identity development as reflected in memory construction. The author will utilize collective memory work to explore the experiences of master's level counseling students and their experiences of waking up within critical incidents. The following research question will

guide this study: How does the experience of "waking up" to injustice within a critical incident influence master's level counseling students' to study multicultural and social justice competence in counseling?

Method

The purpose of this collective memory work study is to explore the influence of waking up within the critical incident and how it influenced participants to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling. Collective memory work is a feminist social constructivist method in that it strives to remove power differentials between the subject and object of research (Onyx & Small, 2001). In nature, collective memory work is a liberatory research method by providing an opportunity for the participants to maintain a role in both generating and analyzing data throughout the research process (Haug & Carter, 1987).

Liberation Psychology and Collective Memory Work

Liberation psychology espouses history and memories are written from the perspective of the oppressor (Martín-Baró, 1994). Many cultures have been subjected to colonization, therefore true narratives and understandings of many groups of people are unknown (Tate, Rivera, Brown, & Skaistis, 2013). The development of collective memory work was specifically liberationist in its intent (Onyx & Small, 2001). The research methodology of collective memory work allows the researcher to engage and participate in the theory of liberation psychology through the rediscovery process of the shared history and memories of oppressed groups.

There are five principles of liberation psychology that was first articulated by Ignacio Martín-Baró. The first principle of liberation psychology is *re-orientation of psychology*; Martín-Baró (1994) argued that in order for psychology to be relevant to the mental health concerns it claims to address, it must be reoriented toward the lived experience of those who experience the

most extreme conditions of oppression. The second principle is *recovering historical memory;* without an understanding of the actual etiology of oppression and its conditions, true understandings from the perspectives of the oppressed cannot be attained (Martín-Baró, 1994). The third principle is *de-ideologizing everyday experience;* Martín-Baró (1994) indicated that a key step in achieving a socially just and an emotionally and psychologically healthy context for oppressed populations was to investigate the dominant messages in light of the lived experiences of those living in the margins of oppression. The fourth principle is *virtues of the people;* Martín-Baró (1994) pointed out it is critical to utilize the virtues of the oppressed when working to improve their lived experience. This approach allows the researcher to depend on the oppressed to produce the tools and energy that may lead to liberation (Martín-Baró, 1994). The fifth and final principle of liberation psychology is *problematization;* this is a method for understanding a particular issue faced by oppressed groups from their own perspective (Martín-Baró, 1994). What is critical for this process is the use of information and shared knowledge that is discovered during the process of recovering historical memory, the de-ideologizing of every day experience and capitalizing on the virtues of the people (Martín-Baró, 1994).

The primary goal of liberation psychology is the awakening of *concientization.* (Tate et al., 2013). Martín-Baró (1994) suggests that critical consciousness is necessary to become aware of and involved in a process of continual discovery and action related to truth. Additionally, *praxis* is also a foundational construct of liberation psychology (Tate et al., 2013). Praxis is the intersection of theory and action; one cannot exist without the other. Martín-Baró (1994) viewed praxis as a way to describe truth in every moment that critical consciousness is experienced during a particular point and time. A liberation psychology perspective emphasizes that

prevailing understandings of everyday experience are not the neutral or natural reflection of objective truth (Adams & Kurtis, 2012).

There are three phases of collective memory work. In Phase 1 individuals write their memory or memories (Onyx & Small, 2001). Haug and Carter (1987) developed five basic rules for writing of a memory: (a) write one to two pages about a particular episode, action or event; (b) write in the third person using a pseudonym; (c) write in as much detail as possible, including even what might be considered to be trivial or inconsequential; (d) describe the experience; and (e) do not import interpretation, explanation or biography. The essence of Phase 2 involves a collective examination of the memories by participants and the researcher (Onyx & Small, 2001). Haug and Carter also developed six procedural steps for Phase 2: (a) each memory-work group member expresses opinions and ideas about each written memory from participants; (b) the collective looks for similarities and differences between the memories; (c) each member identifies clichés, generalizations, contradictions, cultural imperatives, and metaphors; (d) the group discusses theories, popular conceptions, sayings, and images about the topic; (e) the group examines what is not written in the memories; and (f) the memory may be rewritten. This process of collective analysis by the participants and the researcher aims to uncover the common social understanding of each memory (Onyx & Small, 2001). In Phase 3, the information collected from both the written memories and the participants is further analyzed and theorized by the researcher.

Collective memory work is the best method available to study the experiences of master's level counseling students' experiences of waking up within the cycle of liberation because of the value of historical memories in both the research methodology and liberation psychology. When critical consciousness arises from reclaiming one's history and memories, individuals can make

meaning of circumstances and apply it to action or current lived experiences in an attempt to liberate the self and others (Tate et al., 2013). Everyday experience takes shape within larger narratives of society that are rooted in memories and stories of the past, gives meaning to present events, and proposes course of future action consistent with interpretations of the present (Adams & Kurtis, 2012). Through this framework, participants can make meaning of their experiences of waking up within critical incidents, how these experiences have influenced their own path towards liberation, and how their experiences relate to the liberation of others through social justice advocacy in counseling.

Researcher Subjectivity

Subjectivity is the personal view of an individual and the lived experiences of that individual in historical, political and physical contexts and also the emotions that occur in and around a qualitative research project (Johnson & Parry, 2015). On a Sunday evening during my sophomore year of college, my best friend invited me to dinner to a dining hall on campus. This would have been any normal dinner as we ate together often, and little did I know that this random Sunday evening would change my life forever. As we sat and ate he said "Falon, there is something I need to tell you. I know you already probably know this, but I am gay." I said, "Okay? Well I did not know that. I did not want to make any assumptions and I knew you would tell me when you were ready." He said, "Do you hate me? My parents do." I said, "Of course not, there is not anything you could do to keep me from loving you and I will love you unconditionally forever, no matter what." It was that day in my life, at nineteen years old, that would change me forever, as I was never going to let anyone make him feel the way his parents did. I was going to love him for who he was and learn what I needed to know to make that happen. This was my moment of waking up within my critical incident.

I am a White, heterosexual, cisgender, woman. I am intertwined with this study because I believe the experience of waking up within the critical incident significantly influences counselor trainees' choices to be multiculturally-competent counselors and social justice allies for their clients. My experience of waking up influenced me to pursue a career in helping and creating spaces for individuals to show up in the world as they are. Additionally, my experience motivated me to explore the experiences of master's level counseling trainees' waking up within critical incidents through collective memory work. Specifically, I want to understand how their experiences of waking up relates to their understanding and experiences of their liberation and the liberation of others as a counselor.

I aspire to be an ally for social justice every day. As an ally for social justice, I have accepted the reality of my privilege, and see the escaping, impending, amending, redefining, and dismantling systems of oppression as a means of liberating us all (Edwards, 2006). This understanding process began with waking up within my critical incident, yet was not easy to reach, discuss, or believe. Particularly, it was difficult to recognize my attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors were in conflict with the identity of my best friend. However, it was easy to assert my love for him, no matter whom he chose to love. While at the time I did not have this language, I instantly knew my liberation was forever connected to his liberation. I could not actively participate in certain activities or engage with a society that did not fully accept him nor provide him the same rights I have as a heterosexual ciswoman. This is a process I find myself growing and learning within every day.

Participants

The overall sampling strategy used in this study was criterion-based selection, also known as purposeful sampling because the researcher developed specific criteria in selecting

people or groups (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The researcher conducted this study at a large, public, four-year research institution located in the Southeastern U.S. The institution sampled from has a master's program in counseling that focuses on several components of multicultural and social justice training. Purposive sampling was used for this study by contacting faculty via email to allow the researcher to recruit for the study in their courses. The researcher asked the course instructor to provide contact information for the master's counseling students who may be interested in participating in the study. Purposive sampling is when the researcher identifies a specific set of characteristics and seeks to find individuals who have said characteristics (Johnson & Christensen, 2013). Once the researcher established contact with 6-8 participants interested in participating in the study, the course instructor assisted in setting up a time for the focus group that did not coincide with classes or internships. This study followed all ethical guidelines established by the Institutional Review Board for the state of Georgia, study #00006155.

The study includes the collective analysis of seven stories written by the seven recruited participants. There were two criteria needed to participate in this collective memory work study: (a) enrolled in master's level counseling program with an emphasis on social justice, and (b) have a memory (story) in which they believe influenced their decision to study counseling through the lens of multiculturalism and social justice. The researcher facilitated one informal semi-structured focus group, involving six of the seven participants who submitted stories. During the recruitment process, the researcher spoke with the potential participants to explain the study and how to complete the writing prompt and provided an example of a memory of waking up.

Simultaneous Data Collection and Analysis

Prior to the focus group, the researcher asked the participants to write a one to two double-spaced pages about a specific memory, their critical incident, or moment of waking up that influenced them to enter a counseling program with a social justice emphasis. Participants were instructed to write in the third person and to write as much detail as possible about their critical incident, including what might be considered trivial or inconsequential. Participants were instructed to write in the third person using a pseudonym and describe their experience, not import interpretation, explanation, or biography (Onyx & Small, 2001). The stories describing their experiences served as the first level of data generated. Stories varied in length and detail, describing memories from childhood and young adulthood when they remembered waking up to injustices that influenced them to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling.

The participants were asked to email their stories to the researcher prior to the second phase, the focus group session. The researcher brought copies of each participant's story to the focus group. During the focus group, there was insufficient time to discuss every story. The researcher anticipated not being able to review each story and stated this at the beginning of the focus group. The researcher informed the participants of the option to disclose their identities along with the discussion about the stories since the students are in courses and cohorts together. The group collectively opted to not disclose their identities and proceed with using the pseudonyms.

The researcher facilitated the focus group that lasted approximately an hour and a half. In collective memory work, the participants and the researcher are considered the research team (Onyx & Small, 2001). The group engaged in conversation about the similarities and differences between the stories and identified themes and meaning regarding the experiences of waking up

within their critical incidents (Onyx & Small, 2001). Members identified clichés, generalizations, contradictions, cultural imperatives, metaphors, etc. to assist in making meaning of the critical incidents (Onyx & Small, 2001). The researcher asked participants to explore the content shared in stories using the memory facilitation worksheet (see Appendix A). Participants engaged in the written stories to identify larger themes through discourse and conversation leading to a consensus (Hays & Singh, 2012). The group also examined what was not written in the memories (Onyx & Small, 2001).

The researcher took notes and audio-recorded the focus group to compile all of the data to reflect the consensus themes developed by the group. The researcher also had a co-researcher who is experienced in facilitating collective memory work and assisted with the facilitation of the focus group and data analysis following the focus group. The researcher provided worksheets for all participants to take their own notes and many did. The worksheets were collected at the end of the focus group. The researcher used an expanded version of the memory facilitation worksheet to conceptualize detailed notes of participants' memories.

After the focus group, the researcher compiled all of the transcribed data and all the written data into a table and outline to reflect the discussion and consensus of the group. The table and outline reflected meanings made throughout the stories and meanings were grouped into broader themes. The researcher shared the final identified themes with the participants via email and provided the option to share feedback of the group's findings.

Trustworthiness

Because the researcher used a qualitative research method and used the research and participants as the instrument, the researcher must consider issues around trustworthiness (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The researcher's subjectivity plays a role because the research

study is directly related to their own experiences and is also in a counselor education program, though at the doctoral level. The following strategies were used to ensure trustworthiness in the study.

Due to the nature of qualitative research, and specifically collective memory work, adequate researcher notes and reflections throughout the research were imperative. The first strategy involved the researcher keeping a reflexive journal. A reflexive journal includes thoughts about how the research process and study impact the researcher both personally and professionally (Hays & Singh, 2012). Using a reflexive journal helped to minimize bias and positionality.

The second strategy used was member checking. Member checking is built into the use of collective memory work. During each phase, the researcher consults and collaborates with the participants regarding the experience but also the findings (Onyx & Small, 2001). Member checking helps ensure accuracy in making-meaning of the participants' memories and experiences.

Third, although the participants are considered co-researchers of the study in the methodology of collective memory work, another researcher was brought into the research team in order to establish further trustworthiness. The researcher is experienced in the use and facilitation of collective memory work, allowed for assistance in keeping the focus group focused on the research question, and assisted with the collective analysis of the data generated.

Lastly, triangulation was used to ensure trustworthiness. Also a part of the process in collective memory work, triangulation involves using multiple forms of evidence at various parts of the study to better support and describe findings (Hays & Singh, 2012). In this study, the

researcher collected various sources of data through written reflections, focus group responses and member checking.

<div align="center">

Findings

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The following section describes the major themes identified through the collective analysis of the participants during the focus groups and further analysis by the researcher. Based on the research question and the stories written by each participant, the findings reflect specific elements that characterize the memories of waking up to injustices that influenced participants to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling. Specific themes were identified in their critical incidents and were reflected through the recollection of memories of waking up. The themes reflect waking up through (a) recognizing inequity and injustice and (b) experiences of privilege, oppression and difference. Additionally, through analysis of the stories, the participants identified a theme of the importance of multicultural and social justice training. Lastly, during the focus group, the participants were asked to reflect on their experience of participating in the study. The group identified that participating in the study in itself was a critical incident. Each of these themes has specific characteristics and/or experiences identified by the group. The following section provides descriptions and examples of each theme.

Recognizing Inequities and Injustices

The participants identified witnessing and noticing experiences of inequities and injustices as moments of waking up within critical incidents. For example, in Kayla's memory, she reflects on being a White woman working in an urban public school as a sixth grade teacher in which all of her students were students of color except for one. Kayla reflects on noticing that the advanced sixth grade class held all of the White students. She described the injustices and inequities she noticed in this way:

There were noticeable differences as well between the students in the advanced work

and the regular classes—the students in the advanced work classes were often from

higher income, their parents were more easily able to come to the school for events, they

lived closer/didn't have to take public transit to get to school, etc. From these

observations and others, the trainings I was given, and getting to know my students'

backgrounds and experiences throughout the year, I was able to see a lot of systemic

issues related to race at play in education as well as recognize a lot of my own privilege

and how it had benefited me and helped me without me having done anything to earn it.

Another example of noticing inequities and injustices can be drawn from Susan's story in which

she describes growing up believing the world was fair. She saw her parents work hard and reap

the benefits and her parents often helped people who were not as well off. Susan believed that

maybe they did not work as hard as her parents did. Susan wrote she had this mindset until she

became a tutor in a youth outreach program at her church:

Susan had her work cut out for her as many of the children were failing most, if not all

classes. Susan was happy to help, but she subconsciously placed blame on the students,

their parents, and the schools her student went to for their current academic state. As

time went on, Susan formed bonds with the children and learned more and more about

them each day. She learned some of her students were homeless. She learned that some

often went without electricity or hot water. She learned that some only ate full meals at

school. She learned that some had never been to the doctor because they did not have

health insurance. She learned that some of their parents worked three jobs to make ends

meet. She realized that the students had real issues to deal with and everything started to

make sense. Susan finally learned that everyone does not start life off the same, and some

people have many barriers to overcome. She saw that working hard does not always get everyone to the same end point. Susan became dedicated to working to "level the playing field" for all students.

Participants in all of the stories describe elements of noticing and witnessing injustices as a moment of waking up. During the focus group the participants also connected the author's memories of witnessing and noticing inequities and injustices to larger contexts and systems in society, particularly in schools. Below are direct quotes from the focus group demonstrating such connections:

Kat: *I think it's a tangible example of the gaps in education and the gaps between different students of different races.*

Christy: *And just realizing that there is an issue and that – like it is something that needs to be changed and worked on and no longer just seeing – just going forward and not even investigating it further but understanding that this is a larger issue and being able to witness that firsthand and I think using that knowledge going forward to benefit other places that he or she might work at. I think if you don't see something as an issue you won't have the passion to go and try to change it. And so I think them sitting down and realizing like there is – there are disparities and there are issues in the education system at a school level and like at a higher level as well and then like that kind of fuels their passion to pursue an actual career and find a job that they can integrate these things that they're learning and that they're realizing.*

Mary: *I guess kind of just that not everyone in a school has the same experiences and is like – we tend to see education as being equal but recognizing that education isn't actually equal for all students in the building.*

Collectively, participants agreed that there are injustices and inequities in schools and witnessing injustices and equities influenced the participants to pursue a degree in counseling with a multicultural and social justice emphasis. For example, Brian stated the following in response to Kayla's story:

> Brian: *So I remember one of my classes learning about how social justice is not just identifying inequities and the disparities that are going on but taking action and I can tell from this persons story that they intentionally chose a program where thy would have emphasized that kind of action in this program.*

These examples demonstrate the influence of witnessing injustices and inequities on counselor trainees' decision to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling. These examples also illustrate waking up with the cycle of liberation a point in which the participants were seeing the world differently, the typical entry point.

Experiencing Privilege and Oppression

While witnessing injustices and inequities influenced the participants to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling, experiences of privilege, oppression, and difference also largely and often simultaneously influenced the participants' educational pursuits. Throughout the focus group, there were many instances where participants identified how the authors began to see themselves differently due to their own experiences of privilege, oppression, and difference. This also illustrates waking up in the cycle of liberation.

Privilege. One of the most frequently used words in the stories and focus groups was privilege. Participants described moments of recognition of privilege and how that led them to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling. They also discussed how recognizing

their own privileges allowed them to see their biases. In Kayla's memory, she simultaneously

recognizes injustices and her privilege as described in the section above:

> *This experience and relationships I built with my students, as well as my increased*
>
> *education on social justice issues through professional development led me to want to*
>
> *continue to work in education but in the field of counseling and to make sure I went to a*
>
> *program with an emphasis on social justice, so I can use my privilege to advocate for and*
>
> *empower others.*

In the focus group, the participants reflect on Kayla's moment of waking up and understanding

her privilege:

> Mary: *To me it seems like they understood that they were kind of different from other*
>
> *people in the school and they saw where people that were – like those people that were*
>
> *different from them were treated, they weren't advancing the same way as other students*
>
> *were, that they were in lower classes and didn't have the same advantages as a lot of the*
>
> *students in the school that they were working in and so they saw that as an opportunity*
>
> *for them as a person with privilege to be able to move into a field where they can work*
>
> *with those students and help give – like help them be in those classes and have other*
>
> *opportunities that they just don't have.*
>
> Falon: *Right, it's like seeing the tangibility of privilege helped her learn about her own*
>
> *privilege, and seeing how privilege played out in the school in turn helped her recognize*
>
> *her own privilege and begin to think about how she could use her privilege differently.*
>
> Catherine: *I think that the author kind of started to talk about almost noticing from what*
>
> *their job was and then kind of their eyes kind of being opened to that [injustice] and then*
>
> *kind of used that to then kind of talk about how they wanted to then go out and impact*

from that new I guess developed knowledge [privilege] or experience of seeing that

[injustice].

Christy: *I think I noticed more the end part where it talks about the author recognizing*

their privilege and how it's benefited them in the past and like using this experience to

kind of look back on that and realize how that shaped and molded that person and maybe

the kind of advantages that it brought them in education that some of their kids that

they're working with are not given the same opportunity.

Another example in which the participants identified how recognition of privilege influenced the

participants to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling was in Susan's story.

Similar to Kayla, Susan simultaneously wakes up to recognizing injustice as well as her own

privilege by serving as a tutor in a youth outreach program:

Susan wanted to help students have the same opportunities and privileges she had

growing up. She wanted to help support them when they were stressed about things going

on outside of school so that they could focus on their work. She became interested in

social justice and looked for ways to advocate for students. She also realized the

importance of mental health and wellbeing in schools. This realization that happened

over the course of a semester led Susan to want to become a school counselor.

The participants reflected on Susan's experience of waking up to her own privilege and also

connected her experience to Kayla's:

Catherine: *It sounds kind of like Susan, the author, kind of started with these ideas in her*

head and kind of wasn't sure where they came from but had these kind of set ideas that

were kind of established [bias]. And then from having this experience where she was

tutoring children kind of then – the verbs started to become like learned and kind of

formed and thought and kind of realized and kind of this realization her [privilege]– kind of rethought of her, of what she had been assuming and kind of figuring out and kind of trying to learn maybe where her assumptions are wrong or where those were just assumptions that she had from like growing up privileged.

Kat: *I think also similar to the first story, like the students and the experience served as a catalyst for change, seeing things that were different from your own experiences and this person's case, Susan's personal worldview and beliefs and then seeing where that wasn't the case and realizing that she may have certain privileges that these students that she worked with didn't and then seeing all these barriers that were in the way of their success that maybe she didn't have and then that like leading her to then want to do something about it.*

Hillary: *Kind of piggy backing off of that, the author seemed to be focused – like they were open to building the relationships with the students which was also mentioned in the first story and how those relationships and like being open to those students is kind of what facilitated them to like learn from them and change their perspective.*

One participant also began to make connections of how privilege and oppression were intersecting in Susan's story.

Kat: *And I think too kind of like the – and with the first story too, like not necessarily – like when you have privilege it's a lot easier to not be aware of it and how that may have benefitted or helped you. And then I think like a thing too is like through experiences and being able to understand or interact with people, that's how you develop empathy and the ability to recognize your own privilege and how it not only benefits you but like can adversely impact others [oppression].*

Oppression. Adverse to privilege, the stories also reflected experiences of oppression that influenced the participants to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling. One particular memory, written by Veronica reflects on growing up as a Mexican-American girl in a diverse neighborhood with people from all over the world but was also in the only family who spoke Spanish. Veronica than moved to the South where she was in a mostly White neighborhood and school. Veronica felt very disconnected from the school but never thought it had to do with her ethnic identity. She wrote:

Veronica had been having issues with her friends because she was trying to fit in with the "popular" girls and her actual friends didn't like that. The tension kept rising and one day a girl said, "Are you illegal?" Veronica had a very strong reaction and yelled at the girl. Veronica couldn't figure out why she was so upset. She didn't have the words at the time to express why exactly that question made her so angry and feel so rejected. Those same feelings persisted throughout high school. Veronica never spoke Spanish, rarely listened to music from her culture, and tried to fit in where she could. It wasn't until college when she began to explore and accept her identity did she understand her confusion, anger and "other-ness" throughout her teen years.

Veronica's experience of confusion and frustration within oppression eventually allowed her to see herself differently and accept her cultural identity. The participants reflect on Veronica's story and how her experience with oppression influenced her to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling and also how her story conflicts with the previous stories of waking up to privilege.

Kat: *I think it's also like probably one of the author's first maybe and like most salient first experiences of like directed micro-aggressions or racism and like Catherine was*

saying, not realizing why the reaction and emotions came and like starting kind of a journey of cultural identity that led to like in later years like being able to reflect on this incident and realize where those emotions and reaction came from.

Falon: *So what do you all think Veronica's understanding is of her critical incident?*

Christy: *I think in the time that it happened the author was very confused and just like didn't have the knowledge that they probably do now to kind of evaluate what happened and like really I guess deconstruct what occurred then. But then now it's later, you know, being enrolled in a program that is focused on social justice they might be able to understand like why they were having those issues or what was causing them, just like having more knowledge to be able to look back on it.*

Christy: *I also think it's just a good contrast to the story we read before because it was almost like the teacher looking in but this would be like the student that they were looking in at and I think a good example of like a personal story of how someone was first hand effected by this multicultural issues that they're dealing with.*

Kat: *And I think too that even though it doesn't necessarily directly say like what encouraged the person to want to look into a program or like counseling, I can see like that there is still even a lot of emotion around the incident now and that it could be possible that the author wants to be a support for students who may be experiencing similar things that the author went through.*

Brian: *Well I think just the struggles and the confusion that she went through is something that like Kat said would be something that she would want to help others and other minority students struggling with their identities during this stage, whether it's middle school or high school, it helped her get that social justice aspect.*

Jessica: *And I also think that being able to look back on your own experiences and start to understand your own culture and the way you identify yourself within your culture can help you then to better interact with other people and understanding their culture.*

Catherine: *I feel like the author kind of talks about too just feeling a lot especially after the incident happened with the girl, Erin, kind of just the author not knowing how she was feeling and just feeling angry and feeling rejected but not – kind of not being able to name that and I feel like a lot of students may be going through that too of just not knowing how to express or words to talk about how they're feeling but just having those feelings and being able to kind of have the empathy like Mackenzie was saying and just like sit with them in that – even them not knowing and not trying to – maybe trying to help them figure it out but also just letting them sit in that space and work through that on their own and just being a safe space for that.*

Overall, participants collectively agreed that in experiences of privilege and oppression, the authors had humanizing experiences that allowed them to build empathy, listen, and believe the narratives of each other and that interactions with people of difference helped them understand their own experiences situated in privilege and oppression that influenced them to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling.

This understanding of privilege and oppression also illustrates a principle of liberation and liberation psychology in which counselors who operate from this perspective work to discover the virtues of the people. Participants described the process of beginning to understand the importance of truth in one another's stories and how this was connected to their roles as counselor trainees.

Importance of Multicultural and Social Justice Training for Counselor Trainees

Waking up to injustices and inequities and experiences of privilege and oppression were the overall themes participants identified as influencing them to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling. Within the process of analyzing the memories, participants also identified a theme of the importance of multicultural and social justice training for master's level counseling trainees. In the focus group, various sub-themes related to multicultural and social justice training for counselors were generated as exhibited in the table below.

Table 1

Sub-Themes Related to Importance of Multicultural and Social Justice Training for Counselors

Sub-Theme	Quotes Demonstrating Sub-Theme
Multicultural and social justice training teaches counselors to see inequities that you otherwise would not recognize	Catherine: *You would think or if you hadn't had this training [multicultural and social justice] you may think that education is very based upon like what you know and being in advanced classes meaning that your knowledge was higher but then noticing that kind of is not the case and race is kind of playing a huge factor in that and kind of realizing that. And then wanting to then impact that through counseling.*
Understanding and learning multicultural and social justice competence leads to action on behalf of clients and students.	Kat: *So I think the students were – like the way in which the author could like realize – like the way that in which the incident like occurred, so the students – like seeing experiences with the students was like in which the author like could put what was like learned [training] into reality.*
Knowledge of multiculturalism and social justice competence has helped them deconstruct and understand experiences and has overall led to greater self-awareness.	Catherine: *I definitely think there is a bigger picture and the bigger picture of like not making assumptions about people before getting to know them and just being open to asking them and learning and not kind of going into a situation thinking that you already know what the answer is or know – or how they're going to respond but just taking that time to just sit there and listen to people.* Hillary: *And also like, in addition to that, also like being able to reflect on yourself and growth from those experiences.*

	Catherine: *I agree with that, like just being able to like acknowledge especially like personal biases and where they are and being able to be aware of those especially entering into the counseling field.*
Learning the importance of language and being mindful of language used and that every student or client may not have the language to describe their feelings or experiences accurately and that does not take away from their truth.	Christy: *I think the line where Veronica – or Erin asked her the question and how that affected her and just like the lesson of how words really do matter and it matters what you say to people and it affects them for longer than you might think and so just like really being sure that like we're knowledgeable [school counselors] and that we're being kind to others and that we're showing that respect to people even when we don't know entirely what's going on.*
It is especially important for school counselors to have multicultural and social justice training so they may understand themselves in order to understand others and recognize others worldviews as unique.	Jessica: *I think that part of it might be that you have to kind of get to know people and understand the experiences they went through and not just looking at people and immediately judging them based on what you already think or believe or what you went through. And just giving them that chance to show you who they are.*
Waking up in critical incidents leads to change in behavior.	Christy: *I wrote down the phrase where everything started to make sense and it seemed to me that the author like was looking for something and was finally able to find the answer to the question that she had had for a while and then that kind of like helped open up her eyes to see things differently and take action.* Mary: *She also moved from judging to being understanding and listening to the students.*
School counselors are responsible for equity in schools.	Brian: *She's dedicated to working to leveling the playing field for all students and I think that's something that we're supposed to do as counselors who are emphasizing social justice to, yeah, level that playing field and take down barriers to help students who are not getting the same opportunity.*

The participants' value of multicultural and social justice training in counseling was evident through their reflection and analysis of the stories during the focus group. The participants were clearly engaged in developing their critical consciousness, the primary goal of liberation

psychology. The participants identified the components of multicultural and social justice training they feel is necessary to be effective counselors. Their points illustrate their critical consciousness; they are not simply aware but are committed to engaging in a process of change. In the last section of the focus group, the participants also reflected on the overall experience of participating in the study.

Participation in the Study as a Critical Incident

The final questions of the focus group (see Appendix A) involved the participants reflecting on their overall experience of participating in the study and recalling memories of waking up within critical incidents and how those memories influenced them to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling. The participants identified several instances in which they had moments of waking up as a direct result of participating in this collective memory work study.

Overall, the participants identified appreciation for the opportunity for reflection and that continuous reflection leads to greater self-awareness.

Brian: *For me, I really enjoyed writing the critical incident, it's always something I replay in my head to continue to remind myself why I am in this program and why I'm doing certain things for mental health advocating and so – and just, yeah, it was a good reminder and – yeah, I was excited to come here.*

Christy: *I think for me like I've realized that like everyone has their own story and they're entitled to that story and their experiences and you have no idea – like you weren't them and you didn't experience that. And so just like taking that even from this [study] into our school counseling program and like when you're sitting down with a student, like knowing that they've had these things happen and you have to respect that and you have*

to hear them out and listen like we've been listening in the stories and then you can go forward like with once you've shown them time and that respect and you can go and like work on like changing things but you first have to appreciate the person and their story.

The group also felt that participating in the study was an important reminder of their individual purpose, common purpose, and the value of one another's individual stories and experiences. The group agreed that although they have participated in similar reflections about their multicultural and social justice development, it was often focused on understanding themselves and not each other; this study gave them the opportunity to listen to and further understand one another.

Christy: *I was nervous coming into this and well one, the act of having to write the paper really made me sit down and like reflect on myself and be like, you know, well what caused me to wake up, what has played into like why I am where I am today. And then it's cool getting to talk to other people and Brian and I are from a different cohort and so we don't know the stories of the other people participating so it's neat to get that insight too and just we're all like rooting for the same goal here, the end goal is the same, we have the same passions, so it's cool to be among people that are similar in that way.*

Hillary: *I was also kind of nervous coming in but I thought it was really cool to hear the different stories and I'm part of this cohort, the second year cohort, so – but still some of the stories I don't know whose was whose in all of them but just getting to hear that was pretty cool and I appreciate everyone sharing personal experiences and have us like go through this experience.*

Mary: *And I think one thing is like some of these stories that we have heard before just because we do know each other but when we've talked about some of this stuff before we*

always – I feel like it's always been more of reflecting on just ourselves and thinking

about our own things and just listening to everyone else's and so it's interesting to

actually really sit down and have to think about what someone else's story does actually

mean.

Catherine: *Yeah, I echo that like I guess just maybe was unsure of like what this*

experience would be like not kind of having done anything like this before and kind of

hearing bits and pieces of people's stories and how they got to here and it's cool to kind

of connect that to like why because I think we hear, why do you want to be a school

counselors and then like kind of your multicultural journey and then kind of connecting

the two, I don't think I've heard a lot of people's even in our own cohort and so that was

really cool to kind of see that especially because I feel like – yeah, they were just cool to

kind of then I guess analyze them further and kind of get to talk through them and hear

how people's are so different and then kind of like what Christy was saying, that we're all

heading to the same journey but like that we can celebrate other people's stories of how

they got there too.

Additionally, the participants felt participating in this study also helped them understand the

importance of how people's stories influence waking up, particularly as it relates to individual

experiences of privilege and oppression.

Kat: *I think for me it was like with the authors like relating to the – both the like*

recognition of like privilege and that other students that they're working with, wanting to

help advocate for and empower the students to overcome the barriers they're facing and

like utilizing my own privilege to do that. And I also think like wanting to be that person

like in the second story, wanting to be the person there for students who like might be

experiencing things that you went through or who are going through different things. So like wanting to be someone who is helping to change the system and being there for the students.

Mary: *I guess kind of like reading through these a lot of them kind of seemed to still have the like underlying message of listen to that student's individual story and remember that they are individual students and individual people and I think just thinking back on that, like being in a school it's really easy to – you hear a lot of stories about kids and it can be I think easy to take the stories you hear from teachers or anyone else and think of the student in that way and just remembering that what you hear from someone else isn't necessarily the student's story and having to remember you need to get – like listen to them too.*

Catherine: *Yeah, I think for me just – like I'm very – maybe because of the nature of the program but I'm very ecologically minded – and so like reading through that, these different – the three stories that we read and kind of seeing that and that there's so many different factors and different family factors and different environments that are coming into play and just kind of taking that in with the – kind of the lens of listening and kind of not taking those assumptions or not – I guess taking – I guess from the first story, like noticing where there are issues of race, being able to kind of – I guess privilege, being able to take that and getting better schools or better resources and kind of taking pieces of these stories and being able to kind of use them and help further I guess counseling in schools.*

Christy: *For me I think just sitting down and listening to different perspectives and they were pretty different stories and like you were saying, like how that does connect to like –*

you don't know that student's story or what they lived through, like you were saying, all these different other outside factors, when they come into your office you don't necessarily always know those things and just sitting down and listening to them and being open to that too.

Brian: *Yeah, for me I think a lot of these stories were very affirming for me because they were – because we all – it seems like there's one theme and goal of targeting different systemic issues or listening to a student's perspective that may be different than yours, I think that's exactly why I went to counseling in the first place, the whole idea of multiculturalism is we need to be able to listen to another person's perspective even if it's different from yours and how you can apply that in their school setting with all of the other multicultural lenses that are going on and with the teachers or students.*

Lastly, participants collectively expressed having a new understanding of how experiences of waking up and becoming aware changed how they navigate the world differently. They noted that being able to make meaning of past experiences and memories helps them in the present and how they have been influenced for their chosen careers.

Christy: *I think it shows that like there are certain experiences and instances that can completely change the path that your life goes and like everyone takes a different path to get to where they are. And then also just like really understanding that like not everyone is at the same place and it takes people longer to – you might have had this awakening but not everyone has had that and they have a different path and a different experience and like being empathetic and understanding and encouraging people and helping them get to where you might be or where they should be and just like – I don't know, our past*

experiences have so much to do with who we are as a person today and I think that plays out in people's stories.

Kat: *And I think that it can – like being able to make meaning from both specific incidents and also overall experiences and that even if we're not able to understand the impact or the full incident and that we can still make meaning of it and reflect on it and use that incident to better understand ourselves later in life and that like we – like a whole overall experience or incident may mean something at the time and then lead to something completely different or impact us in ways that we aren't aware of at the time.*

Catherine: *I think for me it's really easy to kind of get so focused on what's happening right now and like trying to focus on even the future of – especially being in the second year, kind of focusing on being in this school and figuring out what I need to do at school kind of and then also trying to balance that out with internship projects and just a lot going on and the over looming job search. The fact that we have to start applying for jobs and all that stuff that's going on and kind of think – like sitting down and maybe then writing our own journey and hearing other people's memories and journeys is a really good kind of a stop and remind ourselves of like why we do – why we are where we are and kind of why we're doing what we want to be doing and why the homework and stuff is all worth it and it's for these stories and for our students' stories that we get to even have the chance to be able to sit in with our students and help them. And so I think that, just having these memories to serve as reminders of why we – why we're in the field we are in.*

Mary: *I guess what I was thinking was also very similar to what Catherine said, just that – especially with it being right now and we're doing this, at least us are in our internship*

year and it's really stressful and there's so much going on and it's getting really hard to

have that moment where you have to think back on what led you to where you're at and I

think it can be important to think back on those things so you do remember like why

you're there and why you chose to do what you're doing and how what you are doing can

actually be impactful on students.

In closing the focus group, I asked the participants for any final thoughts on their overall experience and two participants spoke to how participating in the research helped them connect the importance of their academic experience in ways beyond the classroom.

Catherine: *I think for me it's just I saw the importance, especially like even just taking it*

down to like participating and participation in like doc level research that's going on

around social justice and that like we can – yes, we need to advocate at our schools and

in our place that we're working, in our internships, but also like be participants in

helping on different systemic levels and different micro and macro levels of like that's

also helping to further social justice and multiculturalism is being active and

participating in that so that like research is furthered I think is really important. The

reason that I was like, oh yeah, it's so important to participate in what's going on at the

research level as well.

Christy: *For me, I know we're at a very different place in our – like we just started this*

summer and so we're not yet in the schools, but we have taken a multicultural class and

the more we've been discussing about it the more I see like how it impacts every facet of

my life and like not even just like when I'm in the school working with kids, it like

motivates me to make certain decisions in all other areas and I think like I now can no

longer like separate my multicultural and social justice lens from everything else because

> *that's like – it's like engrained in my life now which is great, my opinion is like that so everyone should be but – so it's just – it's interesting that it's like no longer – like I learned it in an academic setting but it's like effecting people I interact with and other things other than just academia.*

This discussion demonstrates the importance of creating consciousness-raising experiences in which counselor trainees can begin to connect their co-curricular experiences both inside and outside of the classroom. It illustrated how the cycle of liberation works, beginning with the participants identifying their moments of waking up in critical incidents and moving through other points of the cycle. Lastly, their discussion illustrated an underlying principle of liberation psychology in that counselors operating from this perspective are primarily focused on the transformation of themselves and their communities. By recognizing the importance of consciousness-raising experiences and the importance of this study, it is clear the participants understand the value of and are committed to their multicultural and social competence justice development.

Discussion

In their written stories and throughout the focus group discussion, the participants identified elements of their experiences of waking up and how their memories influenced them to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling in various ways. The two components that emerged from collective memory work were experiences of witnessing injustice and inequities and experiences of privilege and oppression that influenced participants to pursue a master's degree in a counseling program that emphasizes multiculturalism and social justice. Additionally, participants recognized the importance of self-awareness and consciousness-raising experiences within their multicultural and social justice counseling training experiences. The

findings in this study support current research regarding multicultural and social justice training for counselor trainees – focusing on the importance of counselor educators creating classroom experiences that create spaces for consciousness-raising experiences that lead to self-awareness and the development of multicultural and social justice competence (Bemak & Chung, 2011; Bemak et al., 2011, Brown, Collins & Arthur, 2014; Caldwell & Vera, 2010; Collins et al., 2015, Linnemeyer et al., 2018; Ratts et al., 2016; Sue, Pedersen, & Ivey, 1996).

In an effort to explore how experiences of waking up influences master's level counseling trainees to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling, the identified themes provide insight into how critical incidents and moments of waking up contribute to the development of multicultural and social justice competence. The themes are characterized by recognizing injustices and inequities and experiences of privilege and oppression. These themes reflect the tenets of liberation and liberation psychology (Freire, 1970; Martín-Baró, 1994), which suggest a key step to achieve a socially just and mentally healthy society for oppressed groups is to investigate the dominant messages of the oppressor and embrace the lived experiences of the oppressed. Additionally, Freire (1996) coined the term critical consciousness and Martín-Baró (1994) suggested in liberation psychology that becoming aware is not simply knowing but being committed to engaging in a process of change. This study emphasized the important role critical incidents and experiences of waking up have as they shape a counseling trainee's commitment to justice in counseling and psychotherapy. Results from this study are significantly important for counselor educators responsible for training master's level counseling students experiencing dissonance or seeing themselves differently for the first time.

Also illustrating the principles of liberation psychology, the participants rediscovered their memories and de-ideologized many of the truths they had learned in life in their critical

incidents as they wrote about experiences of privilege and oppression. They discussed how recognizing injustices helped them discover the virtues or truths of the people in their stories and the things they once believed were likely not true. Throughout the focus group they discussed how their memories and experiences were connected to the larger context of oppressive systems and problematized their lived experiences. They also reflected on their development of a critical consciousness, while simultaneously continuing the development of their critical consciousness through participation in the study.

The participants also emphasized the importance of multicultural and social justice training in counseling throughout the focus group. This theme echoes the call to action outlined in the MSJCCs (Ratts et al., 2016). At the core of the competencies are multicultural and social justice praxis, the assumption that counselors have a responsibility to promote social justice and should use strategies and techniques that align with clients' cultural backgrounds (Ratts, 2017). The first principle in the MSJCCs outlines the importance of counselor self-awareness. A self-aware counselor takes action to learn about their assumptions, biases, privileges identities, values, and beliefs (Ratts et al., 2016). The participants highlighted and emphasized their understanding of the importance of understanding their own experiences of privilege, their biases, and the stories of their clients. As outlined by Goodman et al. (2004), counselor trainees must engage in ongoing self-evaluation because it is critical to discover strongly held values different from those of the community counselors serve and understand how to navigate those differences. The participants spoke of the importance of exploring their differences and also wrote about experiencing differences in their stories that served as catalysts to their critical incidents. The second principle of the MSJCCs highlights the importance of the client worldview meaning counselors take action to increase self-awareness which allows them to understand and

gain knowledge of client worldviews (Ratts et al., 2016). The participants also emphasized and connected the importance of self-awareness and how their own experiences of waking up allows them to better empathize, understand, and believe their clients' stories and experiences.

Much of the focus group discussion regarding the elements that characterize critical incidents and waking up provided thought-provoking reflection as the participants shared their thoughts about the stories. For example, both Kayla and Susan wrote about times when they recognized their own privileges and became aware of their own assumptions and biases. They both admitted they previously held strong beliefs and assumptions about marginalized communities until they were witness to the injustices and inequities their students faced in the educational system. Veronica wrote about experiencing oppression and marginalization from her peer group at school and not being able to understand or communicate why she was so hurt by her peers until later in life. In discussing and analyzing these stories the participants were able to differentiate the author's experiences of recognizing privilege and experiencing oppression while also making the connections and intersections of privilege and oppression and how experiences of privilege and oppression influenced the authors to pursue a counseling degree with an emphasis in multicultural and social justice training. The participants identified that although the experiences were different, they led them to the same place.

Reflecting on this collective memory work study as a critical incident in itself aligns with the tenets of liberation psychology, specifically on the belief that recovering historical memory to understand systems of oppression and its conditions is necessary in order to have a true understanding of the experiences of the oppressed. In the focus group, the participants recognized the value and importance of the research and engaging in reflection of their memories to understand how their experiences and identities have influenced them in the present. They also

articulated that engaging in the analysis of one another's stories helped them understand the importance of listening, believing, and validating their clients' experiences and stories. These examples highlight how the process of engaging in memory reflection can assist counselor trainees in developing multicultural and social justice competence in counseling.

The main themes of recognizing injustices and inequities and experiences of privilege and oppression existed in most of the participants' stories. The themes of the importance of multicultural and social justice training in counseling training programs and this collective memory study serving as a critical incident were demonstrated primarily in the focus group discussion. These findings reflect principles of both liberation psychology and the MSJCCs, both of which focus on the development of a self-awareness and a critical consciousness to become aware of and involved in processes of change (Martín-Baró, 1994; Ratts et al., 2016). Additionally, the findings reinforce that the cycle of liberation is not linear, a principle emphasized by Harro (2013a) and not unlike the cycle of socialization. A person can enter the cycle at any point, can experience the cycle multiple times, and enter at different points of life. As seen in this study, counselor trainees experienced critical incidents and moments of waking up that influenced them to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling, and the process of engaging in memory recollection and reflection during their training also served as a critical incident.

Reflecting on the findings in this study provided an opportunity to acknowledge the powerful influence that critical incidents and moments of waking up have on counselor trainees' decision to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling. Additionally, it also reinforced the importance of creating consciousness-raising experiences for counselor trainees in graduate preparation programs. For counselor trainees, experiences of waking up play a critical

role in their ability to develop multicultural and social justice competence in counseling. Multicultural and social justice competence training provides counselor trainees the opportunity to promote inclusion, embrace difference, and work against systems of oppression alongside and on behalf of their clients.

Practice, Research and Advocacy Implications

Recognizing the experiences of counselor trainees' moments of waking up and critical incidents and how they influenced their decisions to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling yields multiple opportunities to improve practice, research, and advocacy. Continued research should be conducted on exploring critical incidents and memories of waking up for counselor trainees who have multiple intersecting marginalized identities. Several participants reflected on recognizing their privilege as White women in their stories while other participants who identified with ethnically diverse communities wrote about experiencing oppression as reflections of waking up. Research indicates those who identify within the margins and intersections of multiple marginalized identities have remained inadequately prepared to effectively work with marginalized communities (Ratts, 2017). Additionally, research also indicates that simply because a counselor trainee holds a marginalized or multiple marginalized identities multicultural and social justice competence is not automatic (Sue & Sue, 2016). Research exploring the experiences of counselor trainees of color and ethnically diverse communities is needed in order to better support their multicultural and social justice development.

More research is also needed to understand how faculty are creating consciousness-raising experiences in counselor trainee courses and the impact of those teaching strategies and interventions. Additionally, assessing the faculty members' perceptions and assessment of

teaching multicultural and social justice competence and comparing it to the experiences and perceptions of counselor trainees could also provide insight to the experiences and congruency of trainers and trainees (Singh et al., 2010). New research continues to provide insight into the experiences of counselor trainees' and the influence of waking up and critical incidents; this research helps increase awareness about the influence of waking up and the importance of multicultural and social justice competency training in graduate preparation programs. This research is relatively new, requiring continued exploration of counselor trainees' experiences of waking up.

Continued research allows for continued advocacy. When counselors feel equipped to embrace difference and work with diverse communities, they are more likely to advocate for the needs of their clients by working with families, teachers, and administrators in schools (Sue & Sue, 2016). Exploring counselor trainees' experiences of waking up in graduate preparation programs can also equip faculty and trainers to better prepare and create effective co-curricular consciousness-raising strategies in the classroom (Bemak et al., 2011). The integration of consciousness-raising experiences and reflection of consciousness-raising experiences in counselor trainee programs as a way to empower counseling trainees to move through and overcome their own experiences of privilege and oppression is an important aspect in the work of liberation psychology (Martín-Baró, 1994). If counselor trainees feel equipped to navigate their own experiences of oppression and marginalization they will be able to teach, effectively help, and advocate with and on behalf of their clients (Singh et al., 2016). Increased opportunities for self-awareness and increased intentional multicultural and social justice competency training all contribute to better equip counselor trainees to be effective counselors and advocates for an increasingly diverse world.

Study Limitations

Qualitative research provides opportunity to understand the depth of life experiences (Hays & Singh, 2012). Limitations in this particular study include the number and length of focus group sessions with the participants. More sessions with this group or with other master's level counseling trainees could improve the benefits of this study. Because the participants are full-time students, the researcher had to be mindful of the time commitment to ask of the students that (a) did not conflict with courses, practicums and internships and (b) did not make them feel like they were participating in another class. Since collective memory work involves writing a story in phase one, the participants could easily feel as if they were being asked to write another paper in a course assignment (Johnson, 2018). Originally, 12 individuals expressed interest in participating in the study. The six participants represent half of the original number of people who wanted to participate. Course requirements, scheduling, and having to complete the writing prior to the focus group presented challenges for participation.

The participants in the this study were primarily White individuals living in the south, which may not reflect the same experiences of counselor trainees from ethnically diverse communities or those living in other geographical regions of the U.S. The participants voiced insecurity around participating in the focus group knowing that they all had existing relationships with one another. It was evident the participants feared judgement from one another despite the researchers acknowledging and validating their concerns. One participant of color commented that they were concerned about offending certain members of the group at times but tried to remember to be honest because it was a research project. These insecurities could speak to larger issues within group dynamics or the history of group development across coursework and may

have potentially created challenges to authentic engagement in the focus group or one's decision to participate in the study altogether.

Conclusion

Collective memory work provided a unique opportunity for participants to engage in memory reflection about their experiences of waking up in critical incidents. The alignment of the research methodology and theoretical frameworks created an opportunity within this study that few research methodologies offer. Acknowledging the limitations of this study and reflecting on the power of the study as a consciousness-raising experience in itself is an important reminder for the work counselor educators and researchers do to continue the growth and development of multicultural and social justice competency training in counselor graduate preparation programs.

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APPENDIX A

Memory Work Facilitation Sheet*

Writing Prompt Instructions:
1. Write 1 to 2 pages about a particular memory that influenced you to study counseling and become a culturally competent and socially just counselor.
2. Write in third person using a pseudonym.
3. Write as much detail as possible, including what may seem irrelevant or unnecessary.
4. Describe the experiences, do not interpret or explain the experiences.

1. What is this story about – what does it mean?
2. What is the author's understanding of their critical incident?
3. After gaining consensus from the group on these two questions, the facilitator moves on to the literal interpretation of the text. Participants are now asked to underline verbs (actions) and circle adjectives (emotions).

Activity of the author (verbs)	Emotions of the author (adjectives)	Interests/wishes of the author	Activity of others	Emotions of others	Contradictions	Empty spaces/silences	Observations about the use of the language

Once the group completes the list, the facilitator then asks these questions:
4. How has the author/narrator been created in the story?
5. How have others in the text been created in the story?
6. What does the story mean?
7. How can the author's understanding of their critical incident based on their experiences be applied to how counselors

develop culturally competent and socially just counseling skills as part of their counselor identity? What is the larger message of the story beyond the author's individuals experiences?

At the end of the analysis of the narratives, ask the participants the following questions:

1. What was the overall experience of participating in this group like?
2. As members of a group that is studying multiculturalism and social justice in counseling, how does this relate to you individually or as a group? Specifically as you reflect on the actions and emotions of the authors identified in the stories.
3. How do you make meaning of participating in this experience as you study multiculturalism and social justice as a counselor in training?
4. How does reflecting on memories impact how you make meaning of studying multiculturalism and social justice in counseling?

*Adapted from Kivel & Johnson, 2009

CHAPTER 4

WAKING UP WHILE WRITING ABOUT WAKING UP: THE PROCESS OF

RESEARCHING AND WRITING ABOUT CRITICAL INCIDENTS OF

WAKING UP IN COUNSELOR TRAINEES WHILE BEING A COUNSELOR TRAINEE

Abstract

This chapter chronicles the process of researching and writing a dissertation about liberation and how it connects to my own experiences of liberation. Qualitative research involves a more personal connection between the researcher and the study (Hays & Singh, 2012) which allows for a more in depth understanding of the experiences of the participants and the researcher. This chapter provides a reflection of my journey that began in early childhood and through the doctoral process, connecting those experiences to the research process utilizing Pillow's (2003) four reflexive strategies. Reflecting on the method, theory, and findings, the research makes connections with personal experiences of liberation and the process of research on liberation.

INDEX WORDS: Counseling, Counselor Education, Counselor Trainees, Multicultural and Social Justice Competence, Cycle of Liberation, Liberation Psychology, , Qualitative Research, Collective Memory Work, Reflexivity

Introduction

When I began the application process for this doctoral program, a mentor was advising me through the process. He told me that throughout the doctoral journey, it was more important to focus on whom I wanted to become because of the doctoral experience than it was to focus on what job I wanted on the other side of the doctorate. As I have engaged throughout this process, I have replayed that moment in my head repeatedly. Through the experiences in the doctoral program and experiences in my life, I am in awe and often overwhelmed when I reflect on how my life and I, myself have changed over the past four years. I knew that qualitative research was often personal and researchers often choose their topics based on personal experiences and narratives (Hays & Singh, 2012). However, I did not realize how deeply personal, emotional, passionate, and liberated I would feel because of this research. While this study primarily focused on research regarding critical incidents of waking up within counselor trainees, my experience as the researcher captured its own set of findings. This chapter describes the journey of how my life experiences simultaneously intersected the process of my dissertation, a process Hays and Singh (2012) call researcher reflexivity.

Researcher reflexivity serves as a process by which the researcher maintains a continual inner dialogue, a critical self-evaluation, and an active acknowledgment that their position and connection to the research may affect the process of the research as well as its outcome (Berger, 2015). As a researcher who does not share the same life experiences of the participants but shares the experience of waking up, it is even more important to spend time engaged in deep self-reflection in order to more accurately capture the experiences of participants (Fawcett & Hearn, 2004). This chapter outlines my process and reflection as the researcher based on Pillow's (2003) four reflexive strategies: (a) reflexivity as recognition of self; (b) reflexivity as

recognition of other; (c) reflexivity as truth; and (d) reflexivity as transcendence. These four strategies work together and provide the researcher with the tools to complete an effective personal evaluation and increased self-awareness (Pillow, 2003).

Pillow (2003) describes the first reflexive strategy as recognition of self, which involves the researcher acknowledging their own capacity to be known and reflected upon. When I reflect on the last four years, I have woken up in many ways both within the doctoral process and in my personal life. I recognize the consciousness-raising experiences and growth I have experienced. This chapter provides insight into my personal growth and its impact on my research.

The second reflexive strategy Pillow (2003) described is the recognition of other. To conduct effective qualitative research, it is important to capture and understand the subject of research in a way that truly reflects their experiences (Pillow, 2003). This chapter also contains my personal reflection on the data collection and analysis process and the ways in which I am connected to the participants' stories and their discussion in the focus group.

Pillow (2003) describes the third strategy as reflexivity of truth. This strategy reflects the idea that the researcher can communicate a form of truth throughout the research process. Participating in the process of reflexivity allows for increased validity (Hays & Singh, 2012). This chapter includes an examination of self, the stories of my participants, and the truth embedded in the findings of this study.

The fourth and final strategy is reflexivity as transcendence (Pillow, 2003). When the researcher allows for authentic self-examination as it connects to their research, a recognition of the truth and experiences of the participants, and the truth of the research findings, a wholeness forms (Pillow, 2003). Within the process of reflexivity, the researcher is able to move beyond their own subjectivity that allows for more representation of the research study (Pillow, 2003).

This chapter provides a deep reflection on the process of the overall research in relation to the described strategies of reflexivity.

<div align="center">**Reflexivity and Researcher Positionality**</div>

Love and Growth

When I began the doctoral journey, I was a newlywed. When I officially started the program, we had been married for one year and one month. My partner was also a doctoral student and had been a full time doctoral student for about three years. I thought starting a doctoral program while my husband had three years left of his six-year degree was a great idea because he would understand what I was experiencing although he was studying biomedical sciences and I was studying counseling. I was in the third year of my first full time professional position and I felt it was also a great time to begin my doctorate because I was good at my job and knew what I was doing. I can remember writing about this in my personal statement for admission in to the program.

I thought that while my love grew in my marriage that we would also grow together as scholars. We would be able to both challenge and support one another to keep pushing through the tough days and nights of being doctoral students. He was experiencing all of the "firsts" and "steps" of a doctoral degree before I was, so he would be a great support to me when my turn came around. He would then finish his degree, about a year before me and he would begin job searching and would likely relocate our family of our dog and us. That would leave me in my final year of dissertating and likely create a scenario where he would finally have a full time job in which I could then quit my own full time job and focus solely on being a doctoral student when it mattered most: writing the dissertation. We could continue to seamlessly grow professionally together, without interrupting the growth of the love in our marriage outside of

our educational and professional experiences and goals. I convinced myself that if we stuck to this plan, everything would gracefully fall into place.

Becoming Self-Aware

Before I could be admitted into my current doctoral program, I had to complete two pre-requisite courses I lacked from my master's program. One of those courses was a career development course in which we had a final project of exploring our own career development across our individual lifespans and connecting that to career development theory and research. My earliest memory of a career goal was to be a singer and a performer. For as long as I can remember, I have always loved and been inspired by music. However, I decided to ask my mother what my earliest career goal was that she could remember. When I prompted my mother with the question, "What is the first thing you can remember me saying I wanted to be when I grew up and how old was I?" Without hesitation my mother responded, "Oh. When you were four, you were determined to be a ninja turtle." I instantly burst into laughter because I had no memory of this goal but remembered loving the ninja turtles and the recent live action film. I asked my mother, "Why in the world did I want to be a ninja turtle?" She again quickly replied and said, "Because you loved that they ate pizza and helped people." While this response also prompted laughter among us, I was also completely fascinated as to how this early childhood career goal, one that I could not even recollect, was parallel to my life in the present day. I had wanted to be a helper for even longer than I could remember, am a helper today, and chose to pursue another degree in a helping profession.

During this course, I also started to become aware of how gender played a role in my career development and how internalized sexism has shaped how I view myself and molded my perfectionist complex. While it would later take more time in my doctoral program and many

therapy sessions to deeply understand and work through my internalized sexism, this class was the first time I woke up to the experiences with important men in my life and how their opinions and thoughts about my life choices influenced my career development choices.

Growing up in rural Appalachia, it is uncommon to be part of a family in which both of your parents went to college. I am privileged to be part of a family in which both of my parents graduated from college and my mother's parents went to college, even though they did not finish. In my high school class, many of my peers had no intention of going to college or pursuing higher education in any form. However, I always knew I was going to college as I could not remember my parents giving me any different option.

Also growing up in rural Appalachia did not provide the access to participate in activities involving extensive music training. Through my own commitment to my growth as a singer and a performer, I trained myself to get better through singing in church, singing the national anthem before my volleyball and basketball games, and practicing on my many karaoke machines throughout the years. When in high school, the first season of American Idol aired. You had to be sixteen years old to be on the show and I was fourteen. I remember watching the show and falling in love with Kelly Clarkson, who went on to win the first season, and telling myself, "when I grow up to be sixteen years old, I'm going to be just like her and find a way to convince my parents to take me to audition." Being a singer and a performer was still my ultimate career goal.

As it came time to apply for college, my family began to tell me that it was time to "get serious" about choosing a career path and a major for college. They told me that being a singer was not a real career goal and I needed to pick something like law or pharmacy. I believed them and chose to declare my major as pre-pharmacy for college even though I had no interest in

natural science or medicine. For one of the two colleges I applied to, I saw they had a music major. I asked my mother if I could audition to be a part of the music program and that I needed to order a book in which you had to sing specific musical pieces. I remember the excitement when I received the book in the mail and opening the book to realize everything about the music was foreign to me and I had no idea what I needed to do to prepare for the audition, so I told my mother to cancel. I continued with my pre-pharmacy major and also decided I would someday figure out how to integrate music into my life as a pharmacist.

My high school class president recorded a video and asked all of us where we hoped to be in ten years when we came together for our first reunion. My response was, "I hope that in ten years, I will have been on American Idol and will have a singing career." I still believed I would become a performer. I quickly learned my first semester of college that science was not my strength and decided to change to pre-law because I enjoyed my political science course. My family was happy with this decision because being an attorney was also a good career. I was happy as long as they, particularly my father and grandfather, were happy with me.

When a series of experiences led me to learn that law school was also not a passion area of mine, I told my family I had learned about student affairs and wanted to pursue that instead. I vividly remember a conversation with my father who told me, "Law school was probably not a good choice. You might have ended up being the breadwinner for you and your husband and he may not be okay with that. Have you thought about being a kindergarten teacher?" I remember telling my father that I did not care about making more money than my husband and feeling very confused about the entire conversation.

Fast-forward to my master's graduation and my father wrote in my graduation card, "you are now more educated than I am." Similar to my memory in college, I was not quite sure what

he meant by his statement and felt confused by his words. However, I felt resolved because I had finally found something that I loved doing. Up until pursuing my master's degree, I had only loved singing and performing and I had finally found something that put me at peace of giving up my lifelong dream of singing and performing.

My teenage years and most of my 20s were characterized by making choices for my career that made the men in my life happy; albeit my dad, husband or first professional supervisor at work. I found myself often wrestling with a deep internal conflict of wondering if they will be proud of my choices and praise me for my decisions yet wishing I did not care about any of these things. The process of resolving this conflict became a deep emotional burden that overwhelmed me at every major decision I had to make.

Discovering these deep roots of internalized sexism came in the early semesters of coursework in the doctoral program. Learning about sexism and the messages women receive from men and connecting these messages to my own stories and my own memories of confusion were painful and overwhelming. I realized that in choosing how I pursued the doctorate was even a part of my mess. I worked to make starting a doctoral program and educational journey easy on my husband and minimally impact his doctoral experience and future career. I made sure that he understood the plan would be to establish roots with his career post-doctorate and I would follow. I was proud of myself for finding a way to make it all work. I had finally woken up to the injustices of the sexism I had faced and began the process of unlearning.

When Waking Up Changed my Worldviews

Waking up is not a singular moment; it is cyclical process that can occur at any point and within various contexts (Harro, 2013). My experience in my first professional position at Georgia State University (GSU) was an also an experience in which I woke up rather quickly to

my privileged identities, particularly my racial identity as a White woman. When I began

working at GSU, I experienced culture shock in a way like never before. My previous life and

educational experiences were mostly White spaces. At GSU, on my very first day of work, I

became one of, and often, the only White person in the room. I felt my master's education

prepared for me everything I needed during the first year of my new position except for one.

Although my graduate program had a diversity course and I became aware of White privilege

and other identities that were different from my own, it was not integrated throughout the

curriculum nor was I challenged to think differently in my graduate assistantship.

Within my first two weeks of work, I realized I was unprepared to work with mostly

Black students who were untrusting and unsure of a White, southern woman who suddenly

became their boss. I remember feeling scared, overwhelmed, and incredibly out of place. There

were days during the first few weeks of my new job that I would come home and cry. There were

other times I would cry in the middle of a training session and I even once cried in the dining

hall. I became so emotionally overwhelmed that I could not hold myself together and the

slightest moment triggered my emotions. In the beginning weeks, I could not put my finger on

why my students distrusted and despised me, until one day, a fellow colleague of color said,

"Honey, to most of them, all they see is a White woman who represents every bad experience

they have ever had with a White person and you just need to accept that." It was at that moment,

everything changed.

I was forced to examine my White privilege immediately in my new position. Seven

years later, I have an understanding and awareness of my White privilege in a way that allows

me to be successful with students. Although graduate school could not have fully prepared me

for this experience, it required more intentional preparation and training than what was in the curriculum.

During the first year, I experienced a lot of emotional turmoil. The usage of the word turmoil sounds dramatic; but it was a dramatic time in my life. There were a lot of tears, questions, self-degradation, reflection, and conversations with my colleagues who were White and of color that offered multiple perspectives. It was not just about my feelings, it was also about the oppression, inequities, and challenges I saw my students facing on daily basis. The pursuit of higher education should not require young adults to risk their basic livelihood on a daily basis and I had become a regular witness of such an experience. After attending two relatively privileged institutions, I was exposed to a campus in which students were dealing with situations I had never seen before in college.

These experiences motivated me to pursue my next degree with an emphasis in social justice as my master's degree did not adequately prepare me to work with culturally diverse communities. I am linked to this research because I feel strongly about the lack of multicultural and social justice competence training in my master's program and felt compelled to explore multicultural and social justice competence in counselor graduate preparation programs. I have seen and felt how oppression and the inequities of our society do not allow marginalized communities to thrive in schools. I believe this has to change; and as members of a helping profession, we must take on this responsibility.

It is imperative for counselor trainees to understand how privilege and oppression influence the work of counseling. I did not fully understand this until my first job. In this doctoral program, I acquired language to talk about multiculturalism and social justice in a way that was not taught to me in my master's program. I am mindful of my Whiteness and White

privilege and how it has influenced this study, similarly to the way I must consider my White privilege at work. Being White in my setting requires me to have a constant self-awareness, particularly as it relates to what I say, how I say it, and to whom I am speaking. Furthermore, this self-awareness was not exclusive from my research; I was mindful of my space, language, and approach to my research when interacting with my participants.

I have witnessed many well-intentioned White folks, myself included, perpetuate the cycles of oppression. As counselors we are looked to and taught to be interventionists, leaders, and the persons our students and clients can turn to "pick people up when they are down." However, we are often the ones pushing individuals down because we lack multicultural and social justice competency training and unknowingly and ignorantly do more harm than help. At times, this has left me frustrated and angry at my White peers.

Because I had a strong reaction to my own lack of multicultural and social justice competence training, I have found myself making assumptions about other White folks' multicultural and social justice competence. I was cognizant of this during the study as the majority of my participants were White women. I was conscious to consistently reflect on my reactions, bias, thoughts, and feelings so as to not make assumptions about my participants. One way I did this included not reading any of the stories prior to the focus group. I read them with my participants in order to manage my subjectivity as part of the trustworthiness and reflexivity process.

It was also important for me to reflect on my racial identity development throughout the process of this research study. Helms (1995) identified *pseudo-independence,* when aspiring allies attempt to separate themselves from privileged groups by their ally efforts. I have felt myself existing in this space before and I was careful to not operate within this context during

this study, especially while engaging with my mostly White participants. In this study, I strived for *autonomy* in order to be a truly effective ally and continually sought to understand my own oppressive socialization as a means of liberation and understand the complexity of the intersecting nature of all forms of oppression for both participants of color and White participants (Edwards, 2006).

It is easy to take the attitude that I am a "good White person," who looks at other White people and calls them "bad," because they have not reached the same level of allyship, understanding of privilege and oppression, or multicultural and social justice competence. For example, social media is often a space where I take this attitude, particularly toward the folks from my hometown in rural Appalachia. I am challenged by this within my family too, as they often exhibit oppressive mentalities and behaviors, particularly against people of color and people not born in this country, even though my family are immigrants from the Middle East. Although my family has kept it no secret that my great-great grandparents were desperate to become American and live the American way, it often creates internal conflict for myself when I think about the conflicting cultures present in my upbringing.

Throughout the study, I reminded myself I was once a graduate student who had no knowledge of privilege and oppression. I remained reflective of how my own consciousness-raising experiences influenced my decision to study counseling through the lens of multiculturalism and social justice. My intrinsic motivation to add to the research landscape regarding the influence of the experiences of waking up to injustices of counselor trainees is rooted in my own experiences of love, liberation, and growth. My aspiration is the findings of this research advances the work of multicultural and social justice competency training in graduate preparation programs.

When Experiences of Waking Up Found My Research

I never realized how much the word and action of love was important and influential to me until I had to do an exercise at work. I was participating in a professional development activity that asked me to name one word that captured who I was as a person. The word that immediately came to my mind was "love." I have always felt that if I live my life and do my work through a framework of love, I will be the best version of myself and others will feel loved and cared for to do the same.

While in doctoral coursework, I had an experience of waking up when reading bell hooks' book, *Teaching Community: a Pedagogy of Hope*. The book describes her philosophy for teaching community and the role love has played in her life as a scholar, advocate, and educator. It was not until I read her work that I made the connection as to how love was playing a role in my desire to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling. bell hooks' work has influenced my research and theoretical orientation as a therapist and motivation to study multicultural and social justice competence training of counselor trainees.

As I have read much of her work throughout this process, I found myself strongly aligning with her thoughts and values. More importantly, I felt liberated through her writing. I felt connected to her pedagogy and I am constantly inspired and re-inspired to do the work of social justice in counseling through a lens of liberation and love. Learning about her philosophy on building community and how she views love at the center of teaching, advocacy, and community speaks to me in a way that is difficult to articulate at times. However, her work did give me the words to articulate how my love for my best friend allowed me to see the world differently and wake up when he came out to me as gay. Her writings gave me the language to

understand why I cared so much about researching the multicultural and social justice competence training of counselor trainee's; it was because of my deep love and care for him.

In four years, much can change. In my four years, a lot *did* change. Four years later, I am constantly reminded of the wise words of my mentor who told me to focus on who I wanted to be, rather than what I wanted to be. The truth is, I had no idea who I would become during this process. I had no idea I would become a woman liberated from the injustices of a lifetime of sexism; a woman who would have the skills to evaluate her Whiteness and White privilege; a woman who discovered the language of love and how having the language of love would bring me to a moment over ten years ago that helped me craft a research topic in which was both deeply personal and needed in the field of counseling. Lastly, I had no idea that in year three of the program, I would find myself in the midst of an unraveling marriage and my plan to be a full-time student and follow my husband to his next destination would cease to exist.

Although the plan for my husband's and my love to grow alongside our educational journey's did not come to fruition, the plan I worked so hard to perfectly craft, I found myself in a place where I had grown to love myself, my educational was journey was flourishing, and I was finally making choices for *myself.* For the first time in my life, I made a major life decision without consulting a man in my life. I chose to study my research topic without their opinions and without their approval. Love, liberation, and growth have characterized the past four years of my life and participating and engaging in this research about liberation and growth have been consistent reminders of my own progress.

The Process of Research

During the first semester of coursework, I was introduced to the then, Multicultural Counseling Competencies and the Advocacy Competencies. I found myself fascinated with the

frameworks and took every opportunity in coursework to study and write about the competencies. In reflection, I was searching for a way to reconcile my frustration and guilt with my lack of multicultural and social justice training; I was searching for guidance on how to grow and learn as a helper.

During the second semester of coursework, I considered a class project in which I would teach my colleagues at work about the competencies. I was insecure about doing this because I was not an expert on the competencies and wondered what would happen if I did not explain them well or could not answer their questions. I worried no one would show up to my seminar and I would be unable to successfully complete the project. With the encouragement of my coworkers, professor, and classmates, I decided to pursue the project. The project surpassed my expectations of success and the experience gave me the confidence and permission to submerge myself in multicultural and social justice competency training literature and research.

By the third year of my doctoral studies, my knowledge and understanding of the research and my own subjectivity had grown into a love for liberation and a commitment to study the influence of waking up in critical incidents with counselor trainees. I had been paired with my dissertation chair, who was the second author of the newly revised Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MSJCCs) and an expert who could and would support my research interests. My goal included conducting research that would help counselor educators understand the importance of exploring and facilitating consciousness-raising experiences inside and outside of the classroom; just as the experiences I had inside and outside of the classroom influenced me. I wanted to tell every counselor educator I knew how important this was. I felt so compelled to share this that I decided to explore how moments of waking up and critical

incidents influence counselor trainees' decisions to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling.

Method

Once I determined what my overall topic would be, I began to consider the various methodologies I could use to study the experiences of waking up in critical incidents. I had two very strong qualitative research courses and I felt confident in my knowledge of the various methodologies I could use, however, there was one methodology that repeatedly kept coming to the forefront of my mind.

I remembered reading an article about a constructivist methodology called collective memory work. The study focused on the stories and memories of women who remembered being treated differently for wearing a hijab, post September 11, 2001. It was deeply saddening to read how 9/11 changed the lives of these women and the discrimination they faced. It was also powerful to read how the women found community and support in one another as they were finally in a space where they could understand each other's experiences, were not alone, and were *liberated*. I too wanted this experience for my participants. I wanted to understand their experiences of waking up in critical incidents but I also wanted my research to be an act of social justice, for them to find community in one another and to feel liberated through the research process.

During the study, I faced the anticipated challenges of collective memory work. Collective memory work requires two phases of engagement from the participants. I knew that working with master's students who are very busy in the midst of coursework, practicums, internships, and other life commitments would be difficult to coordinate logistically. I became

discouraged and worried when my first attempt to conduct the study with my first sample only yielded two stories from phase one and one participant for the focus group.

With redirected recruiting strategies and the assistance of a committee member, I was able to yield enough stories and participants to conduct a focus group with my second sample. As I saw the emails of stories coming into my inbox with confirmation of attendance to the focus group, my feelings of discouragement shifted to excitement and anticipation. During the focus group, I thanked my participants repeatedly for their time and energy for my study. Listening to their stories about the experiences that have influenced them to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling and their commitment to social justice in education was humbling and inspiring.

Collective memory work gave me the outlet and opportunity to engage with my participants throughout the research process more than other traditional research methods (Onyx and Small, 2001). When we made it through the first story and they began to get into a flow of the research process, I watched them become confident in their reflection and analysis. Without me or my co-researcher's prompting, they began to make connections across the stories and how their individual experiences were also reflective of larger contexts. Their ability to speak about their appreciation for the space to be together and reminder of their collective goal and purpose as counselor trainees reflected the essence of collective memory work as well as the importance of this research.

Theory

The moment when I realized how well my research methodology of collective memory work paired with my theoretical frameworks was exciting and motivating. Liberation psychology and the cycle of liberation helps us understand how memories of waking up within critical

incidents influence counselor trainees' decision to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling – primarily because the goal of liberation psychology is the development of a critical consciousness (Martín-Baró, 1994). Additionally, liberation psychology highlights the importance of recovering historical memory of oppressed communities and the connection of these memories to commitment to liberation and critical transformation (Martín-Baró, 1994).

Selecting liberation psychology and the cycle of liberation was a choice I never questioned. First, my personal experience of waking up within a critical incident, the typical entry point of the cycle of liberation, gave me the language and a framework to understand my own process of liberation and commitment to a critical transformation. Second, the premise of liberation psychology that systems of oppression have an impact on mental health aligned with my own philosophy of why counselors need to understand and embody multiculturalism, social justice and liberation in their practice; liberation psychology recognizes a counselor's responsibility to possess multicultural and social justice competence. Liberation psychology's call to action of counselors to be prepared to advocate on behalf of and with their clients is a call I answered and wanted to illustrate through my research.

Martín-Baró (1991) suggested that critical consciousness "is not simply becoming aware of a certain fact but rather it is a process of change" (p. 227). To become conscious of reality is to become aware of, and involved in, a process of continual discovery and action related to "truth." The experience of becoming aware and engaged in a process of change was a salient part of my multicultural and social justice competence development. It was through my classroom experiences and the consciousness-raising experiences my professors created in order for me to understand my own liberatory experiences of waking up that I became passionate about

multicultural and social justice competence. Thus, the principles of liberation psychology were a natural fit for my study.

Additionally, the way liberation psychology connects well with my study involves the phases of collective memory work. Through rediscovering historical memory, de-ideologizing understandings of cultural truths, discovering the virtues of the people, and applying this knowledge to specific contexts and lived experiences through problematization, the process of critical consciousness emerges and is maintained (Martín-Baró, 1994). Participants in this study were able to engage in these principles of liberation psychology through the experience of writing their stories and participating in the focus group. The methodology and theories used in this study collectively coupled with my experiences and the participants' created the cohesion I desired for my research.

Throughout the process, the frameworks of liberation psychology and the cycle of liberation served as a reminder that all my participants' memories included memories of liberation—even if they lacked the language to describe it that way in the moment. In the focus group, the participants essentially described moving through the cycle of liberation beginning with their memory of waking up to discussing their learned understanding and responsibilities as future school counselors. The participants discussed their understanding of systemic issues their students are facing and how they know as school counselors it is their responsibility to look beyond behavioral issues or narratives they receive from teachers and other administrators. They reflected on their new beliefs that they are responsible for understanding someone's truth and lived experiences and then advocating with and on behalf of them.

When I began data analysis, I was not sure how I would integrate and synthesize the various data points of the stories, the focus group, my co-researcher's notes and observations, the

memory facilitation notes, and my own researcher notes. I was anxious that my themes might not align with what I anticipated from reading literature and my own experience. I had to work to remove my own bias with this subjectivity and remind myself the participants were part of the research team and their stories and discussion held the themes. As the researcher, I needed to synthesize and articulate the data to reflect the participants' voices.

Findings

When initially reviewing the various data points, re-reading, and listening to the stories and discussion of my participants, I noticed four broad themes that were repetitive through the data and particularly within the focus group discussion. After further reflection and analysis of the data, I came to recognize that some of the themes were not exclusive of each other and were inherently connected. Therefore, I identified two major themes in the findings, recognizing injustices and experiences of privilege and oppression. For example, although experiences of privilege and oppression were two separate broad themes, it would not make sense nor be consistent with the literature to separate experiences of privilege and oppression (Crethar, Rivera & Nash, 2008). However, it was important to spend time highlighting through the focus group data how these constructs are related and how they influenced participants to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling, yet it was also important to show the ways in which the participants experienced these constructs differently.

It was also important to recognize how the participants were experiencing the participation in the study as its own critical incident while discussing their memories of waking up that were critical incidents that influenced them to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling. While the participants did not have the language to articulate this experience as I just did—they became aware and articulated in the focus group that they were surprised about what

they learned about each other during the group and the importance of understanding the experiences of each other as they move through the program together.

My Privilege in the Research Study

Crethar, et al. (2008) defined privilege as the numerous systemic and unmerited benefits within the culture for members of dominant groups. Many areas of privilege existed throughout the process of this research. As a heterosexual, cisgender, White woman, my experiences of waking up and critical incidents are likely different from the experiences of people of color, specifically women of color who hold multiple intersecting marginalized identities. Most of my experiences and the experiences of my mostly White women participants were rooted in waking up to experiences of privilege while the people's of color memories and experiences were rooted in waking up to the experiences of oppression.

The opportunity to pursue a doctoral degree reflects the ability to afford the education needed to explore one's critical incidents and become critically aware of my own experiences of privilege and oppression. Another area of my class privilege that impacted the experience was the ability to incentivize my study and provide each participant in my study a gift card they could use. Many doctoral students do not have the ability to highly incentivize their studies while simultaneously financing their education. Class privilege provided me this opportunity thereby easing the process of recruiting participants.

Experiencing Moments of Waking Up while Researching and Writing

The last four years are comprised of a series of moments of waking up and experiencing critical incidents. The end of this doctoral process has merged with the beginning of this program when I was a newlywed. The decomposition of my marriage did not begin until about half way

through the degree, but waking up to the injustices of the sexism I faced throughout life began immediately.

Almost instantly after beginning the program, I realized how my pursuit to be the perfect daughter, sister, wife, and employee was deeply rooted in the many messages I received about my womanhood, body, career, and what was expected of me from the important men in my life. Throughout the last four years, I have gradually given myself permission to live authentically as the woman I desire to be, outside of the confines of the opinions and desires of men. I have grown in understanding who I am and learning to love myself for who I am and not who the men in my life want me to be.

While I continue to struggle with the role of men in my life, this research has empowered me to make decisions and choices that are for me and only me. One of those decisions included the decision to end my marriage, which I am not sure I would have ever done without the experience in this program. Additionally, I am not sure I would have ever been able to write publically and authentically about this experience without the experiences of this program, the support I received from my faculty, classmates, and my own therapist.

During my third year of this program, I visited a therapist for the first time in my life almost every week for about eleven months. I estimate I engaged in about 40 sessions of therapy while beginning to write my dissertation and moving through the process of ending my marriage. Through the experience of therapy, I had countless moments of waking up related to all aspects of my life including this research process. My therapist often encouraged me to view writing my dissertation and preparing for prospectus as a coping mechanism and not a barrier. She challenged me to find how this process could be liberating for me while also writing about liberation.

There were many weeks when I was so emotionally drained and incapable of viewing this process as anything but a barrier. Not being able to shift my mindset, my therapist then asked me to give myself permission to be okay with needing to take some time to regroup and step away from what felt like the insurmountable goal of beginning my dissertation. Once I gave myself that permission, I felt a sense of relief and growth that I would move through this and find my own liberation through writing.

Eventually, I began writing and I felt liberated that I had grown in my journey and that I was ready to write while still navigating the difficult circumstances of ending my marriage. I vividly remember sitting at my laptop and feeling proud of myself for the self-work I had done and investing in myself to begin the final steps of the doctoral process. I had accomplished so much already, both within the program and in my personal life; I knew in that moment that this was only the beginning of a research study that would validate, shape, and mold me into the scholar-practitioner-advocate I am today.

Conclusion

The plans I developed almost five years ago to finish and move through this program clearly did not come to fruition. I am reminded of something I often tell students when I am coaching them through changing their major or choosing a different career path than what their parents chose:

> I have learned throughout my life that every time I make a plan to attempt to control the outcome of my future, it usually never works. You never know what opportunities you might miss out on because you wouldn't allow yourself to open different doors.

My own advice and experience continues to be true and I am learning to trust myself as much as my students do. This program has helped me learn to trust myself and be confident in my own voice and decisions.

As this journey ends, I am excited and look forward to the opportunities to use my skills to create authentic consciousness-raising experiences for individuals in the field of counseling. I am thankful for my support systems who encouraged me to not give up on myself and this process and helping me find resiliency in the most difficult time in my life. I am thankful for the opportunity to be in a program that gave me the language and tools I needed to liberate myself in coursework, my research, and my life. This program and my research held and grounded me in a time of great fear, change, and growth. I hope that my experience and my participants' experiences ground future counselor trainees' in their own liberatory moments of waking up in their journey to multicultural and social justice competence as counselors.

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APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
CONSENT FORM

LIBERATION AS THE COMMITMENT OF CRITICAL TRANSFORMATION: HOW "WAKING
UP" TO INJUSTICE INFLUENCES MULTICULTURAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
COMPETENCY OF COUNSELING TRAINEES

Researcher's Statement
I am asking you to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it
is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. This
form is designed to give you the information about the study so you can decide whether to be in
the study or not. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Please ask the
researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information. When all your
questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process
is called "informed consent." A copy of this form will be given to you.

Principal Investigator: *Anneliese Singh*
                                Education Counseling and Human Development
                                (706) 542-8884
                                asingh@uga.edu

Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this collective memory work study is to explore the impact of waking up within
the critical incident and how it influenced participants to study counseling and social justice.
There are 3 phases of this study; beginning with individual memories and participants describing
a critical incident (writing), a focus group discussion on memories of critical incidents (group-
talk), and researcher analysis following the focus group.

Study Procedures
If you agree to participate, you will be asked to write a 1-2 page paper about a critical incident
that influenced you to pursue a master's degree in counseling with an emphasis in multicultural
and social justice competence. This reflection paper will not contain your name or any
identifying information, however confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if your paper is submitted
by email or the internet. The next phase involves participating with a small group of participants
(10-12) who will read each other's anonymous papers and explore any similarities, differences,
or meaningful themes (1.5 hours). While the researcher will keep your comments confidential,
we can't promise that other focus group participants will keep the information confidential. The

researcher will ask all participants to respect the confidentiality of others by not revealing who participated in the focus group and by not discussing what was said in the group.

Risks and discomforts
The risks associate with this study are minimal. While the researcher will keep your comments confidential, we can't promise that other focus group participants will keep the information confidential. The researcher will ask all participants to respect the confidentiality of others by not revealing who participated in the focus group and by not discussing what was said in the group.

Benefits
The anticipated benefits of this study include exploring the role of critical incidents and how they impact counselor identity development. This study will also provide an opportunity to creatively share your story along with other participants. The findings from this study may help provide information on the role of critical incidents in developing multicultural and social justice competence as a counselor in training.

Incentives for participation
Participants will receive a $50 gift card to Amazon.com ($25.00 for each phase) for participation in this study, along with snacks and beverages during the focus group.

Audio/Video Recording
The focus group will be audio recorded so the researcher may transcribe the data and identify additional findings. The recording will be destroyed after 1 year.

Please provide initials below if you agree to have this audio focus group recorded or not.

              _____I do not want to have this interview recorded.
              _____I am willing to have this interview recorded.

Privacy/Confidentiality
The results of the research may be published, and the names or identifying information from participants will not be used. The researcher will not release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent unless required by law. While the researcher will keep your comments confidential, we can't promise that other focus group participants will keep the information confidential. The researcher will ask all participants to respect the confidentiality of others by not revealing who participated in the focus group and by not discussing what was said in the group.

Taking part is voluntary
Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop at any time without penalty. If you decide to withdraw from the study, the information that can be identified as yours will be kept as part of the study and may continue to be analyzed, unless you make a written request to remove, return, or destroy the information.

If you have questions
The main researcher conducting this study is Anneliese Singh, Associate Dean and Falon Thacker, doctoral candidate at the University of Georgia. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Anneliese Singh at asingh@uga.edu or at (706) 542-8884. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chairperson at 706.542.3199 or irb@uga.edu.

Research Subject's Consent to Participate in Research:
To voluntarily agree to take part in this study, you must sign on the line below. Your signature below indicates that you have read or had read to you this entire consent form, and have had all of your questions answered.

_____   _____   _____

Name of Researcher   Signature   Date

_____   _____   _____

Name of Participant   Signature   Date

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.