Maryland Counselors for Social Justice

A Message From the 2020-2021 MCSJ Preisdent

Anti-Racist Lingo & A Spoken Word Corner

COVID-19 Impact on Clients and Families

Decolonizing Work Culture & Productivity

Maryland Counselors for Social Justice

NEWSLETTER

March 4, 2021

Mission of MCSJ

Our mission is to work to promote social justice advocacy in our society, through confronting oppressive systems of power and privilege that manifest in a lack of equal access, benefits, resources, and opportunities to large segments of our population. We work to address mental health issues caused by social marginalization, and oppressive issues that affect professional counselors, students, and the clients we serve. Our goal is to work to assist in positive change in our community and society, and call attention to additional ways counselors could be better advocates in their work with diverse, marginalized, and disenfranchised clients, through professional development.

Land Acknowledgement

Maryland Counselors for Social Justice recognizes the genocide, forceful removal, and displacement of tribal communities from this land. In particular, we honor the diverse Indigenous peoples connected to this territory that we now occupy in Maryland, District of Columbia (DC), Virginia, and surrounding areas, including the Nacotchtank (Anacostan), the Piscataway, the Massawomeck, the Accomack, the Manahoac, the Powhatan, and the Pamunkey tribal nations. This land acknowledgment is read to recognize and honor the indigenous people, their ancestors and elders, and the genocide, forceful removal, and displacement of the peoples whose lands and territories were stolen from them.

If you are interested in learning about which Native land(s) you're residing in, text your city and state to (907) 312-5085.

MCSJ President's Remarks

Dear MCSJ community,

Welcome to our Spring Newsletter! We are so grateful that you are here with us. My appreciation and awe of you has only grown stronger in the past year, knowing all that we've all had to endure, and seeing how we keep persisting as a community to care for each other. 2020 was relentless, and 2021 continues to follow in its footsteps. Yet, we've seen that when we protect each other, stand up for each other, and love one another, we can weather any storm. I honor your commitment to social justice, and invite you to continue with us on our journey in rising against the racial, environmental, and systemic injustices that have plagued our nation since before its inception.

In this second newsletter of my presidency year, I am humbled to reflect on the educational workshops and healing spaces that MCSJ has been offering, in conjunction with counselors, educators, and members of our professional community. We have been committed to providing spaces for community healing by offering Restorative Justice Circles (RJCs) for Black and BIPOC therapists on an alternating monthly basis. We have offered a number of workshops, including an educational session entitled *Education & Civil Rights for Persons with Disabilities during the COVID-19 Pandemic*, led by Dr. Sabrina Taylor, our *Day of Wellness Symposium*, led by Kris Wright & Dr. Kizzy Pittrell, and a workshop entitled *Anti-Racist Pedagogy to Practice*, led by Dr. Nouf Bazaz and School Counseling graduate students from Loyola University Maryland.

MCSJ Executive Board - Leadership (2020-2021)

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In our Fall 2020 newsletter, we shared our theme for the year: *Decolonizing our Minds*. To us, the term *decolonizing* means to uplift the voices of communities that have typically been silenced and placed on the sidelines. It means to emphasize and center the narratives of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), queer and trans folks, immigrants and refugees, individuals with disabilities, and others who experience discrimination and disenfrachisement.

Decolonizing our minds means to allow us to recognize and break free from the systems that have been used to oppress us, and return to our roots in order to find healing and justice, with love, authenticy, and self-compassion. For mental health practitioners, decolonizing may look like de-centering the Western/Eurocentric frameworks that the fields of psychology and counseling have been built upon, and allowing our notions of mental health and therapy to expand beyond pathology and the DSM-5 to address the historical impact of systems of

oppression on the health of our clients. The more we've learned and endured this year, the more we've recognized how embedded white supremacy is in the framework and foundation of this nation. To achieve equity, justice, and liberation for all, we need to not only be against racism, we need to be anti-racist; we need to not only be allies, we need to be accomplices and co-conspirators.

I am now thrilled to introduce you to our 3rd annual conference, which will be held virtually on Friday & Saturday, June 25-26, 2021, entitled ***Decolonizing our Minds: Uplifting Minoritized Voices***. We hope you will join us and submit your proposals here: https://forms.gle/AAJLiiQSBhiJbio27 by March 31, 2021. We aspire to create a platform to hear from voices and perspectives that have typically not been heard or honored in our profession, as we embark on a new path forward in bringing decolonization to the counseling field. We encourage submissions from students, scholars, educators, clinicians, community members, activists--*all are welcome*! Finally, we will be passing the torch to our new leadership team for 2021-2022 at our conference.

Thank you for growing, resisting, and persisting with us. We look forward to continuing on this journey with you.

In solidarity,

Kshipra Jain, LPC, NCC
President, Maryland Counselors for Social Justice

Interested in being more involved with MCSJ?

Become a member!

Website: https://mdcounseling.org/mcsj
Email: MCSJ@mdcounseling.org

Follow us on social media!

Facebook: @MarylandCSJ
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Tired

By Langston Hughes

I am so tired of waiting,
Aren't you,
For the world to become good
And beautiful and kind?
Let us take a knife
And cut the world in two –
And see what worms are eating
At the rind.

2021 MCSJ CONFERENCE

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

A VIRTUAL CONFERENCE HELD ON JUNE 25-26, 2021

The theme of our conference "Decolonizing our Minds: Uplifting Minoritized Voices" is an opportunity to refocus on diverse and inclusive ways of understanding, serving, and advocating for BIPOC communities.

Maryland Counselors for Social Justice (MCSJ) is a Division of MCA, Inc, a 501(c)3 non-profit.

The deadline for proposals is **March 31st.**

DECOLONIZING OUR MINDS:

Uplifting Minoritized Voices

Maryland Counselors for Social Justice

SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL HERE:
https://forms.gle/AAJLiiQSBhiJbio27

Anti-Racist Lingo: Key Concepts and Terms

Compiled by Desvan L. Moody, Emily Thaceu, and Justin T. White, *graduate students in School Counseling at Loyola University Maryland as part of a workshop titled, "Putting Anti-Racist Pedagogy into Practice," on February 19th, 2021 sponsored by Maryland Counselors for Social Justice and Nouf Bazaz, Clinical Assistant Professor at Loyola University Maryland.*

"In *Between the World and Me*, Ta-Nehisi Coates exposed the longstanding and ongoing destruction of the Black body in America. That destruction will continue until Americans of all cultures and colors learn to acknowledge the inherited trauma of white-body supremacy embedded in all our bodies. We need to metabolize this trauma; work through it with our bodies (not just our thinking brains); and grow up out of it. Only in this way will we at last mend our bodies, our families, and the collective body of our nation. The process differs slightly for Black folks, white folks, and America's police. But all of us need to heal - and, with the right guidance, all of us can."

--Resmaa Menakem, *My grandmother's hands: Racialized trauma and the pathway to mending our hearts and bodies*

Race

A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance, ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the political needs of a society at a given period of time. (Adams, Bell and Griffin) A specious classification of human beings created by Europeans (whites) which assigns human worth and social status using "white" as the model of humanity and the height of human achievement for the purpose of establishing and maintaining privilege and power. [ACRL EDI Symposium, "Identifying and Deconstructing Dominant Privilege in Libraries and Archives"]

Source: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Academic Libraries by Tiffany Esteban (*https://guides.uflib.ufl.edu/edi/keyterms*)

Racism
A system of intersecting, overlapping, and codependent institutions, policies (laws), practices, norms, ideas, and behaviors that provide an unjust amount of resources, rights, and power to white people while denying them to people of color. Exists on conscious and unconscious levels, and is manifested at individual, cultural, and institutional (systemic) levels. [ACRL EDI Symposium, "Identifying and Deconstructing Dominant Privilege in Libraries and Archives"]

Source: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Academic Libraries by Tiffany Esteban (https://guides.uflib.ufl.edu/edi/keyterms)

White Supremacy Culture
The idea (ideology) that white people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of white people are superior to People of Color and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions. White supremacy culture is reproduced by all the institutions of our society. The media, the education system, western science (which played a major role in reinforcing the idea of race as a biological truth with the white race as the "ideal" top of the hierarchy), and the Christian church have played central roles in reproducing the idea of white supremacy (i.e. that white is "normal," "better," "smarter," "holy" in contrast to Black and other People and Communities of Color.

Source: https://www.dismantlingracism.org/racism-defined.html

Oppression
The systematic subjugation of one social group by a more powerful social group for the social, economic, and political benefit of the more powerful social group. Rita Hardiman and Bailey Jackson state that oppression exists when the following 4 conditions are found: 1) the oppressor group has the power to define reality for themselves and others; 2) the target groups take in and internalize the negative messages about them and end up cooperating with the oppressors (thinking and acting like them); 3) genocide, harassment, and discrimination are systematic and institutionalized, so that individuals are not necessary to keep it going; and 4) members of both the oppressor and target groups are socialized to play their roles as normal and correct. Oppression = Power + Prejudice

Power is the ability to influence, help, or harm. There are multiple forms of power; two main categories include: Positional power is the authority that one has based on a position in a structural group (e.g., an organization, a team, etc.). Personal power is one's skill and ability to influence people and events whether or not you have any formal authority.

Source: Teach and Transform (http://www.teachandtransform.org), The Bases of Social Power by French and Raven (1960)

Intersectionality
A concept first advanced by Black feminist critical race theorist, Kimberle Crenshaw, and now often used in critical theory, intersectionality argues that classifications such as gender, ethnicity, race, class, sexual orientation and others cannot be examined in isolation from one another...[because] they interact and intersect in individuals' lives, in society, in social systems, and are mutually constitutive. Intersectionality describes the ways in which oppressive systems (e.g. racism, sexism, heterosexism, etc.) are interconnected and cannot be examined separately from each other, and also applies to how individuals live within these

interconnected systems and therefore can experience multiple forms of oppression or "can simultaneously experience privilege and oppression."

Sources: Racial Equity Tools (http://racialequitytools.org/glossary) and Kimberle Crenshaw, Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics

Privilege
Unearned benefits conferred upon members of mainstream or dominant groups (in the US, these include male, white, heterosexual, affluent, young, able-bodied, and/or Christian) at the expenses of others. Privilege exists when one group has something of value that is denied to others simply because of the groups they belong to, rather than because of anything they've done or failed to do (Peggy McIntosh). Privilege can manifest through visible advantages such as access to wealth, professional opportunities, and social status, as well as more subtly through, for example, freedom of behavior and setting the standard of normality against which others are judged. Dominant group members may be unaware of their privilege or take it for granted.

Source: Power, Privilege, and Oppression – Models and Definitions (http://www.opensourceleadership.com/resources.htm)

Anti-Racism
Anti-Racism is defined as the work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Anti-racism tends to be an individualized approach and set up in opposition to individual racist behaviors and impacts.

Source: Race Forward, "Race Reporting Guide" (2015).

"The beauty of anti-racism is that you don't have to pretend to be free of racism to be an anti-racist. Anti-racism is the commitment to fight racism wherever you find it, including in yourself. And it's the only way forward." --Ijeoma Oluo

Anti-Racist
An anti-racist is someone who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing antiracist ideas. This includes the expression of ideas that racial groups are equals and do not need developing and supporting policies that reduce racial inequity.

Source: Ibram X. Kendi, How To Be An Antiracist, Random House, 2019.

Allyship, Co-conspirator, and Co-accomplice
Allyship is not an identity—it is a lifelong process of building relationships based on trust, consistency, and accountability with marginalized individuals and/or groups of people. Allyship is not self-defined—our work and our efforts must be recognized by the people we seek to ally ourselves with. Oftentimes used as a more active form of allyship, co-conspirator and co-accomplice mean "to deliberately acknowledge that people of color are criminalized for dismantling white supremacy" and to take on the consequences themselves of also participating in efforts to dismantle racism, all while supporting and centering people of color in anti-racism and the movement to upend racial inequity and oppression.

Source: The Antioppression Network, Violet Rush, If/When/How Legal

The Impact of COVID-19 on Black Families

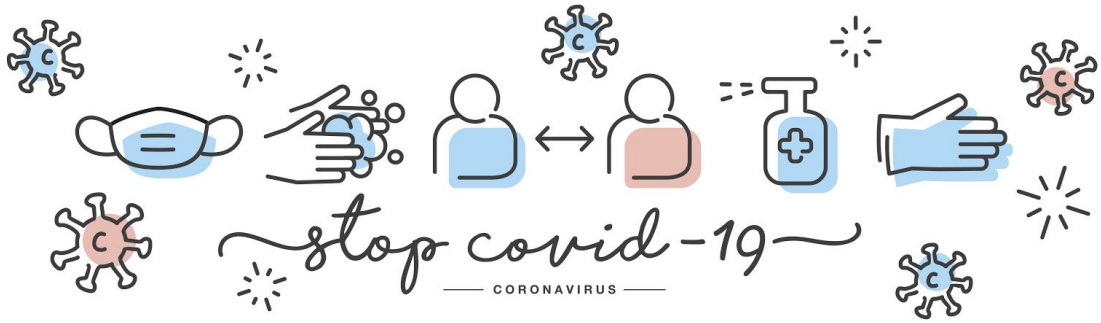
By Donnette Deigh, MA, LCPC, NCC

Unfortunately, people in the United States are still being gravely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, there has been a lasting amount of social inequalities and challenges as working class individuals struggle to make it through. Many individuals from Black communities and other marginalized groups have been at risk across various factors. Black families are affected by COVID-19 in regards to the inequalities of healthcare access, discrimination, occupation/educational gaps, housing and more.

While many of us are adjusted to social distancing and working from home, some individuals are not as lucky. Many Black and African American parents and caregivers do not have the same luxury of staying home, which contributes to being at higher risk and getting sick from COVID-19. Historically, these individuals have had difficulty with having fair opportunities of economic, physical or emotional health (US DHS, 2020). Parents and caregivers struggle to prevent putting their lives at risk as well as their loved ones in exchange for survival. In addition to avoiding COVID, families are experiencing increased feelings of depression, anxiety and loneliness. During this time, the priority of the Black working individual is to provide for the family. Those within the community can actively recognize these struggles and provide support.

There are many different ways that the communities can connect and support each other. The pandemic has made it difficult for physical and emotional fitness due to school and workplace closures and social isolation. Community and faith based organizations can provide these families with resources to increase physical and mental health to maintain support and connections among each other. As the weather breaks over the country, outdoor social distancing will be more convenient and safe compared to the few months of staying indoors and dealing with the dampers of daylight savings time. Hope is on the horizon.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2020) Social Determinants of Health. Retrieved from https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-of-health



The Impact of COVID-19 on Substance Use

By Dr. Ann Diona Emmanuel, PhD, MPH, LPC, NCC

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increase in substance use, relapse, and overdoses. COVID-19 has had a significant impact on one's mental and physical health. Stresses resulting from COVID-19 have increased the risk of substance use. The risk of using substances as a coping strategy and a method of escaping an uncertain time continues to grow as a result of increased reporting of anxiety, depression, stress, fear, trauma, and grief and loss; quarantining, isolation, and social distancing; lack of social connectedness; and housing and financial instability. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 13.3% of adults reported starting or increasing substance use as a method for coping with stress or emotions associated with COVID-19 (Mental Health, Substance Use, and Suicidal Ideation During the ...).

Individuals diagnosed with substance use disorders (SUDs) face an increased risk of COVID-19 and negative outcomes due to suppressed immune systems; many are more vulnerable to infection. Among individuals with SUDs, access to health care may influence treatment of COVID-19. Individuals may lack access to health care or might delay or refuse treatment due to stigma associated with their diagnoses. COVID-19 has also led to an increase in relapse and overdose rates. Disruption in treatment has been stressful among individuals diagnosed with SUDs, especially among those in recovery. Although virtual 12-Step program meetings like Narcotics Anonymous are available, individuals may not have access to the internet or may not want a virtual option.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (Resources to Help Your Patients with SUD During the COVID-19 Pandemic), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA Coronavirus (COVID-19)), and the CDC (Alcohol and Substance Use During COVID-19) provide some helpful resources and information for supporting individuals during COVID-19. Additional suggestions/resources include staying in contact or connecting with one's health care provider, treatment program, and/or mental health services; continuing to develop and utilize healthy coping strategies; reaching out to support systems; and attending virtual meetings if possible (Your Recovery is Important: Virtual Recovery Resources).

Decolonizing Work Culture & Professionalism

By amanda friday, LPC, NCC & Abigail Cawley, BS

In our second installment of decolonizing career, and therefore career counseling, I'd like to take a critical eye to "professionalism." We will begin with examining multiple definitions of professionalism, which definition has historically and pervasively been used in the workplace, and how professionalism has been used as a tool to perpetuate white supremacist culture and ideals. From there, we will discuss some examples of how this has historically been done and strategies for how we as counselors can empower our clients as they navigate their career journey and how we can honor our clients and the cultures, identities, and experiences they carry with them.

Definitions of Professionalism

One definition of professionalism, according to Oxford Languages, is "the competence or skill expected of a professional." That definition makes sense when we consider being hired for a job because the focus is on *our level of skill or competence* for that job. But this definition is either not often used when considering candidates for a job or is not the *only* definition used for evaluating candidates. Problematic career culture has deemed this definition of professionalism is not a necessary and sufficient condition for employment.

Merriam-Webster defines professionalism as "the conduct, aims, or qualities that characterize or mark a profession or a professional person." This definition comes with a critical question: What and who dictates whether a quality, aim, or behavior of a person is "professional" or not? The answer here is: the dominant culture and those that are in power. These individuals are the ones that dictate what is "appropriate" or normative particularly in the case of a "good fit". It is this latter definition that has been used in the workplace to refuse access and opportunities to those that exist outside of these "norms." To clarify, the idea of having professional standards of competence and skill that act as a guide to measure how qualified one is for a

particular job can be useful. However, when a person's ability is not the main focus of how they are evaluated, when the emphasis is put on elements wholly unrelated to one's ability to do the job, a candidate is being measured for something else entirely - their ability to conform to white dominant culture. More often than not, behavioral and fit interviews are assessing our ability to conform to white dominant culture and how well we use white language to articulate our experiences.

How Professionalism Perpetuates White Supremacy

Writer Chika Ekemezie eloquently depicts how "professionalism" is used to perpetuate white culture: "*I've long been a believer that professionalism is just a synonym for obedience. The less social capital you have, the more you are tethered to professionalism. It's why Mark Zuckerberg can wear the same T-shirt to work while Black women are punished for wearing braids. The rules are different for different people depending on wealth, race, or class. Professionalism is often used as an amorphous term designed to uphold a single [read: white] standard. So, while it may seem objective to expect people to look, act and, work a particular way, enforcing these standards can be an undue burden on marginalized identities.*" --Ekemezie, 2020

As Ekemezie notes, professionalism has been used for centuries in U.S. culture, under the guise of etiquette and professional standards, as a tool used to enforce and impose the dominant, white culture. Professionalism has been used as a means to gatekeep and prevent systematically marginalized folks from positions of power. It has been used as a barrier to education, justice, systemic and institutional reform, and social, political and economic capital. Professionalism has been a tool used to actively discriminate against those that do not assimilate, do not fit the "white culture" mold, or that actively fight against the dominant culture.

Ultimately, as writer Aysa Gray notes and expands upon the work of Tema Okun and Keith Jones, professionalism has become codified language for white favoritism in the workplace (Gray, 2019). This favoritism readily privileges and elevates the values of white and Western individuals, often rejecting and abandoning marginalized folks, particularly people of color.

Examples of White Supremacy at Work

How and in what ways has professionalism been discriminatory or privileged white culture? Let's open up this can of worms and talk through some examples of how white supremacy and discrimination are ubiquitous in our career culture.

Who you are: Queer, Trans, Black, Indigenous, and People Of Color (QTBIPOC) names and experiences

A few years ago, the Harvard Business School published an article discussing research that found evidence to support what many of us already knew: that those of us in the margins had a better chance at getting an

interview, and therefore an opportunity, if we whitened our resume. More specifically, this study found that Black and Asian job applicants had better success getting a job interview if they removed information from their resume that would suggest the applicant's racial and cultural identities. One study conducted in Canada found that individuals with Asian (e.g. Indian, Pakistani, and Chinese) names on their resume were 28% less likely to receive job interviews than those with white (read: Western) names.

Every time we meet someone or apply for an opportunity, QTBIPOC individuals must question ourselves: *is my name white enough? Am I showing "too much" of myself on my resume?* Neither of those questions focus on our ability to accomplish our work. Both of those questions are a result of the dominant culture's white favoritism and unwillingness to include all cultures, all ways of being as "professional".

How you Sound: Voice & Language

While there are many languages to be found across the United States, the dominant language since the genocide of Native and Indigenous peoples and the colonization of this land has historically been English. White supremacist culture has a biased preference for individuals who speak English. Furthermore, in workplace hiring, this preference extends not only to those who have learned and speak English but also to syntax, vocabulary, and an accent that obeys white "standard," "professional" English. Important to note, there are numerous ways English exists--there is not a monolith conception of English. One such example of this reality of the plurilithic nature of English is African American Vernacular English (AAVE), which exemplifies the existence of both differing accents and dialects within the English language. When preparing for an interview, non-English speakers, those still working on fluency in English, and those fluent in English who have a non-Western or non-white accent experience heightened anxiety and fear around being evaluated by how well we speak white standard English -- because anything other than that particular version of English is discriminatorily seen as lesser, unprofessional, or unqualified.

In an interview, attention is focused more on the extent to which we can "pass" in white culture and less on our ability to accomplish the work we are qualified to do or the skills we have that could benefit the organization. This form of white supremacy goes further in that it also disparages and devalues the use of other languages in the workplace. Let's call it what it is: blatant xenophobia. Non-english speakers conversing in the workplace are seen as "unprofessional" or "threatening" when the diversity in American cultural and ethnic backgrounds makes such an occurrence commonplace outside of the office. The expectation is to perform for white society outside of the workplace and conform to white society within the workplace; to be fluent in English and use an "acceptable" dialect when called upon to convey the needs and interests of a "market segment"; to conceal and reframe our identities so that those in the dominant culture are comfortable and the status quo is maintained. This is the reality of our world of work.

Workplace culture needs to respect, value, and appreciate the diversity of languages that exist and the variations within each language. In the context of the United States, we must rid ourselves of the false superiority (read: professionalism) of "Standard American English" (read: white dominant culture English), value all forms of communication, and recognize that an individual's use of language involves culture, lived experience, geography, and above all power.

How you Look: Appearance

Our appearance includes everything--from our hair, our mannerisms, our clothes, our shoes, our smell, our accessories, weight, body type, dis(ability), to the shape, color, and features of our body. Discrimination on employee or candidate appearance is gravely commonplace in the workplace. The expectation with appearance in current career culture (read: white culture) is to yet again conform and abide by rules of "professionalism" for what's acceptable to wear and look like. If we do not look like the "professional standards" (read: white supremacist) want us to, then we are seen as unfit for work or the assumption is that we are too "different" to fit in and contribute to an organization or team. The U.S. has a deep history of policing QTBIPOC people for how they look, particularly Black folks and their hair. Hairstyles natural to Black folks and Black identity -- locs, braids, and natural curls -- are defined by white culture as less professional. Discrimination based on hair has been heavily used in the workplace as a means to refuse opportunities, and thereby a means of supporting oneself. Only two years ago did state legislatures begin to address this discrimination with the passing of the CROWN Act in California, a law that prohibits discrimination based on hair texture or style. As of this year, 2021, a total of ***only seven*** states have passed the CROWN Act. We still have a *long* way to go.

There are many ways in which our appearance is policed in the workplace. Another example of note is what is considered "appropriate" clothing for work. Historically, there are set "acceptable" binary gender-based work clothing. If an individual wears clothing outside of oppressive gendered norms, such as wearing a socially-defined "masculine" suit and tie if a person identifies as a woman, they are seen as abnormal, different, weird, and are otherized. Just by the basis of how we might dress and express our gender we may be seen as "unfit" for a job -- when how we dress has nothing to do with our ability to perform our job. These are only two examples of a myriad of ways our appearance and authentic selves are policed and oppressed to conform to white culture and what they deem as "appropriate" or "professional."

Conclusion

None of these discriminatory measures of "professionalism" evaluate one's ability to do their job. *None.* And yet, these are often consciously or unconsciously biased methods used to assess a candidate's qualification, when in actuality it is measuring their "likability" and "fit" for the workplace (read: adherence and conformity to white culture).

We are examined, judged, scrutinized on the ways we look, dress, communicate and sound, and in what experiences we share. In short, career culture strips us down to nothing if we do not conform. White supremacist culture does not see us, value us if we don't fit into or conform to a very chiseld, very suffocating box. Professionalism prevents us all from being our authentic human selves. The only individuals who are able to their fully human selves are those the system, the workplace was designed for: wealthy, white, cis, het, able-bodied men. The workplace was colonized by white culture just as our society and country has been dominated and colonized by white culture. As we move to decolonize, we must bring awareness to the ways in which our workplace has been a space white culture sought to "conquer" by defining the standards.

How Can We Change These Cultural Biases and "Standards?"

As career professionals, we are aware of the aforementioned pressures placed on ourselves and on our clients as they seek to grow in their career journeys. So identifying and equipping ourselves and those we work with with the tools to navigate and challenge white dominant work culture is vital. We'll talk through a couple of ways that we can bring awareness to these issues and empower our clients, and we'll note that we're not experts in this work and invite you to examine and explore what we're sharing with you.

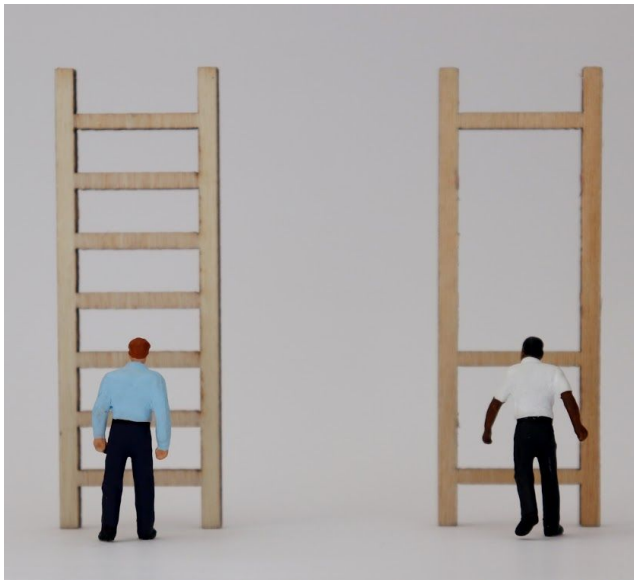
Awareness & Confronting the Issue. Discussing how professionalism standards are discriminatory and white supremacist is just the start *because* we need to be talking about this ***more***. The more we talk about this, the more folks will realize change is needed and the more ideas for change will arise.

In our first newsletter, we shared a resource that illustrates so many of the ways in which career culture has historically perpetuated white supremacy. This resource also articulates and provides examples for other ways of being, acting, and operating. Take a look. It is empowering to have more language around this issue. It is also incredibly empowering when shared with our clients. Tools from that resource include specific examples of how career culture has been infested with toxic white culture. One toxic feature that plagues career culture is avoidance culture. When the workplace avoids discussions about discrimination, racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, xenophobia, etc., this directly affects our ability to affect change. These discussions need to be had and employers need to confront their complicity. This avoidance only perpetuates discrimination and eliminates critical opportunities for growth.

Action. We need to evaluate our own hiring practices and our internalized beliefs around professionalism and make changes where necessary. We need to create interviews that assess solely skill and ability. We need to reevalute "fit" criteria for racist, sexist, ablist, homophobic, and more discrimination. We need to create inclusive workplace environments that celebrate our identities, experiences, and authentic selves. Is there a workplace practice you wish to implement or evaluate in your own organization?

What should you do to work within this system until the system is adapted, adjusted, or replaced?
(This goes for our clients too...)

- DO NOT feel ashamed for trying to "assimilate" or present a version of yourself. You and your clients are working to survive and thrive in a society that did not have us in mind in its design.
- Validate that imposter syndrome is real and challenge those doubts.
- Talk to your peers, friends, and consult with other counselors - any trusted folks in your circle - about workplace stress/oppression and tensions you're experiencing.
- Co-conspiratorship is incredibly powerful. Being a co-conspirator means to move beyond allyship. To be a co-conspirator means to be an



active participant in supporting and centering QTBIPOC, to be an active participant in dismantling white supremacy.

- DO NOT be a bystander in an instance of discrimination
- DO speak up and defend someone, or push for change, if you have the opportunity to do so without harming yourself
- DO have conversations with friends/colleagues with minoritized identities about their experiences
- DO find opportunities to fight against toxic white culture in the workplace (within and outside of it)

Inspiration for this article comes from the following sources:

- Balarajan, B. (2020, December 13). *Professionalism standards uphold WHITE Supremacy: Brammhi's Ballot*. https://emorywheel.com/professionalism-standards-uphold-white-supremacy/.
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- Gray, A. (2019, June 4). *The Bias of 'Professionalism' Standards (SSIR)*. Stanford Social Innovation Review: Informing and Inspiring Leaders of Social Change. https://ssir.org/articles/entry/the_bias_of_professionalism_standards.
- Uddin, S. (2020, August 4). *Racism runs deep in professionalism culture • The Tulane Hullabaloo*. The Tulane Hullabaloo. https://tulanehullabaloo.com/51652/intersections/business-professionalism-is-racist/.

Deconstructing Productivity: Self-Reflections

By Sahaj Kohli, BA

"The origins of racism cannot be separated from the origins of capitalism… the life of capitalism cannot be separated from the life of racism. Our country was founded on the basis of capitalism, and this desire to conquer and gain more utilized racialized slavery as the means to that end."
--Ibram X. Kendi, How To Be An Antiracist

Our need to be "optimal," to devote ourselves to work, to be perfect, and this sense of urgency we feel to respond or be available are ALL white supremacist values that we've adopted and internalized as individuals and as systems in this country.

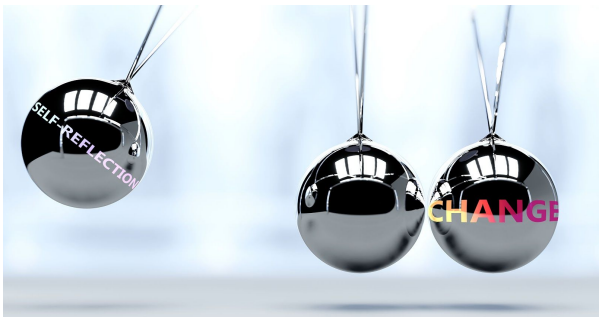
Productivity culture benefits off of the labor of the marginalized. Productivity culture is rooted in colonization, racism, white supremacy, and capitalism. Productivity culture enforces the belief that our value is tied to what we produce and that the more we produce, the more worthy we are as humans. This is erroneous. Productivity culture is isolating, ultimately forcing those who are struggling to do so in silence and in secret.

We must dismantle this thinking and pressure. We must ask: *WHO is benefiting from this? HOW is this serving us as individuals? WHAT narrative is this centering?*

To encourage your reflection and reframing of productivity, we've created a brief guide with questions and considerations.

Remember: You are worthy of rest. You are worthy of being.

Reflections



"Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare."
--Audre Lorde

To me, "productivity" means...

_____
_____
_____

My relationship with productivity is...

_____
_____
_____

I feel enough when I...

_____
_____
_____

When I am not good at something, I...

_____
_____
_____

I am motivated by...

_____
_____
_____

When I am not "doing," I feel...

_____
_____
_____

Intersectionality

"A lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects"
--Kimberlé Crenshaw

What is the intersection of your identities?

_____
_____
_____

How is value placed on your productivity or work in the different systems you exist in? How does the intersection of your identities impact this?

_____
_____
_____

How was productivity and work modeled to you in your family?

_____
_____
_____

Who has the power in your story to determine and place value on your productivity levels? How can you take it back?

_____
_____
_____

Right now, I feel pressure to:

_____
_____
_____

Instead, I want to:

_____
_____
_____

Intention: A guiding principle, a goal, a plan, a way of living, a commitment

What is an intention you have for Spring 2021?

_____
_____
_____

How will this intention serve you?

_____
_____
_____

What do you think will be a struggle with this intention?

_____
_____
_____

How can you work through this struggle?

_____
_____
_____

What, if anything, has come into greater awareness by taking this time for yourself to pause and reflect?

_____
_____
_____

Farmers' Protest in India

Introducing an International Human Rights Issue | By Preet Kaur, LPC

What is the biggest protest the world has seen of late, yet has only received scant media attention worldwide? Since September 2020, masses of people have been protesting in India in response to three new agricultural reform laws that were passed by the government, without consultation or consensus from their farming unions. These laws, in essence, aim to deregulate the Indian agricultural industry, expand corporate interests and erode most government safeguards that are currently afforded to farmers.

Farmers make up a massive percentage of India's workforce and these farming reforms are expected to have detrimental effects on their livelihoods as it exposes them to exploitation by corporations. Many see these new laws as the final straw that will destroy their livelihoods, which have already been struggling in recent years due to skyrocketing agricultural costs followed by an economically crippling pandemic.

There is a longstanding history of maltreatment and oppression of Indian farmers, especially those at the intersections of religious and other minority status identities, which has led to high suicide rates amongst this population. These reforms only serve to further oppress this minoritized group.

In recent months, the protesters have been subjected to military violence, resulting in several fatalities. They have also been labeled 'terrorists' and there have been internet shutdowns and media blackouts, which have gone unreported. Images and videos have since emerged of unarmed famers being met with police brutality, reminiscent of last year's Black Lives Matter protests. These images have incited outrage among the Indian diaspora. This is especially true of those with ancestral, cultural, and/or religious ties to these protesting communities, as these events evoke echoes of a traumatic past of state-sanctioned violence against these ethnic and religious minorities.

Why should it matter to you?

This is not India's fight alone. We live in an interconnected world and these events matter for a number of reasons.

- This is a movement by the people and for the people, and their rights over corporate interests. This is about a global reckoning with escalating authoritarianism, rising nationalism and anti-democratic forces resulting in human rights violations. To not pay attention to these events is to not pay attention to issues of continued disenfranchisement and oppression affecting a large proportion of the global population.

- India is one of the world's largest producers of spices, rice, wheat, healing herbs, and more. Simply put, *no farmers means no food*, and the shockwaves will certainly reverberate across the world.
- As therapists and providers, it is critical for us to be aware of how societal events, policies, and systems (local, national, and/or international) may be potentially affecting our clients. If you work with clients from the Indian/South Asian diaspora, it is especially important for you to be educating yourself about these issues as they may be activating generational trauma and/or heightening pre-existing vulnerabilities relating to marginalized status.

Ways to Take Action:

- [Take Action] Stand with the #FarmersProtest!
- [Take Action] Tell Congress To Condemn Indian Government Response To #FarmersProtest

Additional Learning:

- The Farmers' Protests Are a Turning Point for India's Democracy—and the World Can No Longer Ignore That
- India's farmer protests: Why new farm laws have sparked outrage
- Indian Farmer Protests – If You Don't Know, Not You Know | The Daily Social Distancing Show https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w5mnuCHyYaY

Maryland Counselors for Social Justice

Spoken Word Corner

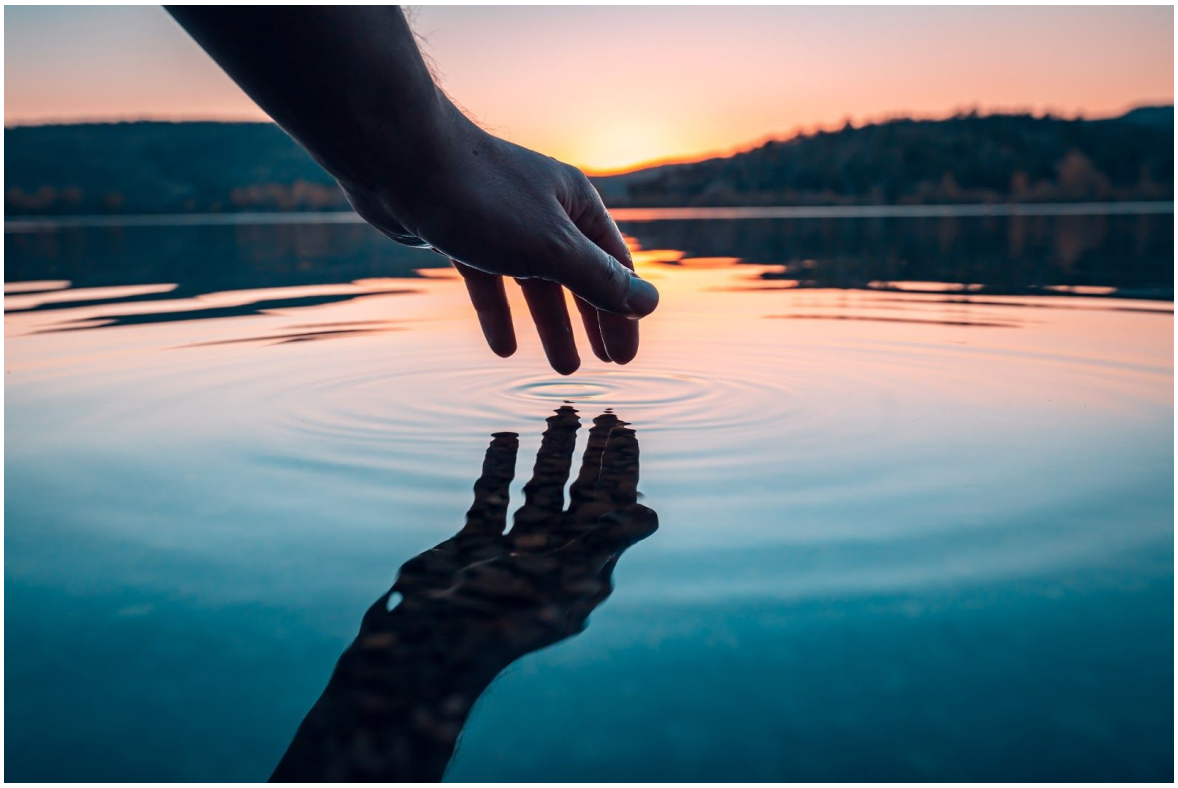
Justin T. White is a graduate student in School Counseling at Loyola University Maryland. He wrote a spoken word piece in response to Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum's book, Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria*, as part of an assignment for his Cross-Cultural Counseling course. He later performed the piece at a virtual MLK celebration hosted by the American Visionary Arts Museum. The text of the piece appears below. For a link to the performance, please visit:*
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1isMHmC7aPKbXVnMkfOIVtNujFxdUJnlK/view?usp=sharing

I Know Why

By Justin T. White

This is personal for me…
See I too was a Black kid that sat at the table with the other Black kids
As stereotypes were attacking, we sat reciting lines from our favorite rapping
While faculty members walked around us
And those who were cool teachers would check in on us
While the ones that weren't cool were beckoning us to be quiet
But our laughter caused riots...of a different kind
A chance to be outside of the confined lines of acceptable behavior
In that cafeteria we added the flavor
Not knowing the whole time we were asking the question, "what does it mean to be Black?"
And compared to today, we didn't have to deal with all the crap
See we were shaped by towers falling
Today kids are shaped by on camera calling out for a gun to not be fired by those in black and blue

A knee on the neck, as the nation views
Launching young people from an identity of diffusion
While others hear "Black Lives Matter" and respond with confusion
Or worse yet hate
See we sat at that lunch table and talked about prom dates, and I know you do too
But you scroll through IG and wonder if the next dead Black kid will be you
And 10 years later my desk was in that space
The place you came to see your life reflected in another face
And I'd close my laptop and sit back as we discuss Marvel movies, dress code, and common apps
Lunchtime and in between classes, y'all would come up and dap me up
Or just sit at the conference room table quiet when life really sucked
All those moments, I wish I had more of them
Because I saw it in your eyes, the movement from moratorium
To y'all achieving empowerment and pride
Hugging each other on retreats as we cried, because this life is hard
Trying to hold it together when you just want to fall apart
Teachers get your names wrong, over discipline you, and always suggest testing
And your white peers say the "n-word" and then tell you to stop stressing
Your trauma can go unseen and misunderstood
So you talk about cars and what you would put under the hood
Because despite all the crap, you have a clear eye view
Put that thing in drive and look at all the nonsense in the rear-view
But I'm sorry to say it will follow you
To dorm rooms, computer labs, and your professors' lectures just to name a few
And you will question the perception you have of yourself
Racial messaging that will either strengthen or harm your mental health
When this happens, please remember what you do
Find community, make many out of a few
Listen, I wish I could stop every microaggression, and Dr. Kendi actually calls it abuse
But I can't, but here's what I'll do for you
I promise as an educator and counselor I'll work for you
I'll confront my bias and help other do the same
I will call out the educational system when it's too focused on maintaining financial gain
I will learn to speak Spanish, which is something long overdue
Because the injustices in the Black community, Latinx folx face them too
To my young women of color dying at alarming rates everyday
"She's difficult," will be words never again will I say
And to my transgender, queer, and non-binary folx, there's so much I need to learn
One thing I know for sure, no institution, no church, or state should your dignity need to be earned
So in closing, we all need to know that the road has and will be tough
But with our commitment and the ancestors' hope, I believe it will be enough



Desvan L. Moody is a graduate student in School Counseling at Loyola University Maryland. The following piece is an excerpt from his journal.

Black Joy: Rest and Resistance

By Desvan L. Moody

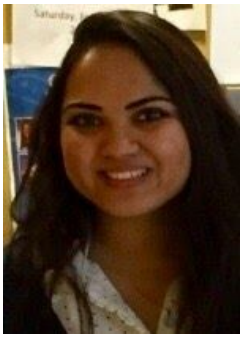
"Love Liberates" --Maya Angelou

The work required for black liberation historically has been tedious, characterized by sacrifice and pain. In recent months, the possibility of black joy has seemed more like a fairytale than a daily experience. Lately, my heart, mind, and soul have led me to the realization that it is my job to *REST*.

Rest IS my activism.
Rest is combatting white supremacy culture by operationalizing the time and space required to repair and heal from the daily battles.
Rest is my way to repair my armor, and enjoy the fruits of my labor - which is unapologetic, black joy.
Rest is my commitment to a constant struggle of reimagining a world of true liberation and is my tool to persevere until that day comes.
Rest is my way to accept burdens for an entire space, without harming myself.
Rest is how I cultivate, reclaim, and protect my black joy.

So, I ask you Black folx, *what if your job, right now, is to rest*?

MCSJ 2020-2021 Executive Leadership Bios



Kshipra Jain, LPC, NCC, *President*

Kshipra Jain (she/her) is a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and Supervisor in Washington, D.C., and a board certified counselor (NCC). She graduated with her Master's in Mental Health Counseling and Behavioral Medicine from Boston University School of Medicine in 2013. Kshipra currently works at a private practice in D.C., and is a Doctoral Candidate in the Counseling (CES) program at the George Washington University. Kshipra is also a recipient of the 2018-2019 NBCC Minority Fellowship Program-Doctoral Cohort award. She is passionate about serving and advocating for individuals with marginalized intersectional identities, such as immigrants and children of immigrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, LGBTQ+ folks, women, racial/ethnic minorities, and others who endure sociopolitical/socioeconomic disadvantages.

Kshipra approaches counseling by integrating her Western/Eurocentric education and training with intersectional and social justice lenses, such as by addressing systems of oppression, power, and privilege in the counseling session. When appropriate, she helps her clients explore the impact of historical and ancestral trauma, cisheteropatriarchy, capitalism, and White supremacy on their mental health and wellness, and empowers them to find restoration and revolution through self-love, authenticity, self-compassion, community, and healing, particularly for BIPOC and LGBTQ+ communities.

Through her service as 2020-2021 President of Maryland Counselors of Social Justice (MCSJ) and Student Representative at Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ), Kshipra is consistently attempting to increase her engagement in social justice and advocacy efforts to empower and uplift the voices of those who endure systemic oppression and societal discrimination. To her, social justice is a movement that strives for equity, acceptance, and liberation for all members of society. Social justice asks that we take action towards eradicating racism, oppression, and the mere concept of dehumanization by embracing both our similarities and our differences. Social justice requires us to have awareness of our privileges and the power that each of us may hold, by taking a deeper look at our assumptions and biases. Social justice means that we must take into account the ever-changing sociopolitical environment, and reflect on how we can be anti-racist and anti-oppressive on a daily basis.

Dr. Kizzy Pittrell, Ed.D., LCPC, ACS, *President-Elect*

Dr. Kizzy Pittrell, Ed.D. (she/her) is a graduate of Argosy University, Washington DC from the Counseling Psychology program. Dr. Pittrell received her Masters of Counseling from Towson University and Bachelors of Science in Psychology from Bowie State University. Dr. Pittrell is a Licensed Professional Counselor, an Approved Drug and Alcohol counselor, a Master Addiction Counselor, and an Approved Clinical Supervisor in Maryland. Dr. Pittrell has worked in the community sector providing mental health and addiction counseling and treatment to adults and adolescents for 15 years. Currently, Dr. Pittrell is owner of Ross Counseling, a private practice providing therapy to individuals, families and couples and manages a community mental health facility in Baltimore. More recently, Dr. Pittrell along with her husband opened a psychiatric rehabilitation program in Baltimore county called Strengthening Families Building Communities. In addition, Dr. Pittrell has conducted several discussions and trainings related to grief, trauma, COVID, and effective ways to cope with mental illness. Dr. Pittrell is passionate about educating the community about mental health and reducing the stigma of mental health. In her spare time Dr. Pittrell loves blogging, spending time with family, reading and she is certified Zumba instructor. She is also an author of a children's book about maternal depression.

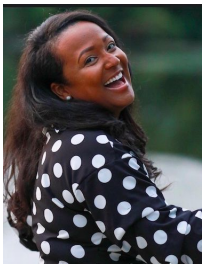
When I think about social justice, what comes to mind is service and advocacy for those marginalized persons and communities who otherwise cannot support and advocate for themselves. It means that everyone deserves equal economic, political and social rights and opportunities. As a mental health clinician, my role is to help clients manage disturbing emotional issues, but often times it involves understanding deeper societal issues that impacts ones' emotional and mental health; it involved being a space for those communities inflicted by racism, sexism, colorism and advocating to remove systemic barriers that impact individuals from receiving adequate healthcare. As a clinician, my work is to continue to use my voice to support my clients and minority communities to seek the appropriate treatment and mental health services needed.

Dr. Ann Diona Emmanuel, Ph.D., MPH, LPC, NCC, *Secretary*

Diona Emmanuel is a licensed clinician in D.C., clinical supervisor, and adjunct faculty at The George Washington University. She holds her Ph.D. in Counseling, Master of Public Health in Maternal and Child Health, and a Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. Her research interests revolve around linking public health to mental health, and includes various topics like bullying, cyberbullying, the impact of social media on adolescents and emerging adults, substance use, HIV/AIDS, human trafficking, and the role of employment. There are so many components to social justice, and it involves working towards a just society, and raising awareness about and advocating for equality and fairness among all.

Bahar Alagheband, *Treasurer*

Bahar is a higher education manager with broad experience across multiple student services platforms including xissions, academic advising and financial aid. She began her career at the Kuwait Cultural Mission advising International Students from Kuwait. This role sparked her interest in Higher Education administration. For the last 11 years Bahar has worked in various roles at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, where she is currently a Student Affairs Specialists. In addition to advising graduate students, Bahar is the chair of the diversity committee for events on campus where she organizes the annual Diversity Week and various other events. Bahar is committed to providing the campus community with opportunities to explore and engage in discussions that bring new perspectives, and celebrate the presence and contributions made by people of all identities and experiences. Bahar is enrolled in the Master of Science in Clinical Mental Health Counseling at the Johns Hopkins School of Education. She has an interest in individual and couples counseling, as well as addictions and substance abuse counseling. Bahar received her Bachelor of Arts in Communications from the American University. She was born in Tehran, Iran, and very connected to her roots while she grew up in Maryland. Bahar currently lives in Washington, DC where she enjoys biking, museums, and everything else DC life has to offer.
To her, social justice means: providing access, opportunities, resources and a voice. It means reducing and eliminating inequalities for those who have been historically marginalized.



Dr. Sade Dunn, Ed.D., NCC, LPC, LCPC, *Counselor Representative*

Dr. Sadé Dunn is an approved supervisor and Licensed Professional Counselor/Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor in Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia. She is a graduate from Governors and Bowie State University. Dr. Dunn is the counselor representative for the Maryland Counselors for Social Justice board and a Maryland Counseling Association Emerging leader for the 2020-2021 year. She previously served as the secretary for the MCA ALGBTQ board from 2015 until 2018.

Dr. Dunn is a Reiki Level I Practitioner and registered yoga teacher at the 200 level. Reiki is a holistic energy healing practice that promotes balance by helping to free the chakras of any blockages. It promotes clarity, is very relaxing and clients feel restored afterward. Dr. Dunn is continuing her yoga studies in order to become a registered yoga teacher at the 500 level.

"What social justice means to me is being able to fight and advocate for not only myself but others as well. Creating opportunities to educate those who may have a faulty depiction of what justice may look like for others while also continuing to educate and research social justice and injustices as they occur to others. I hope that we are able to facilitate a change and get others on board with the vision of our board and help continue fighting for social injustices as they occur."

Ursula Cerro, LCPC, *Student Representative*

Ursula Cerro (she, her, ella) is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor. She holds a master's degree in clinical mental health counseling from Johns Hopkins University and earned her bachelor's degree from Marymount University. Ursula's experience includes working for an outpatient clinic as a bilingual therapist with adolescents and adults from the Latinx community. Outside of the clinical world, she enjoys spending time with family and friends, going hiking, local events, and reading. For Ursula, social justice means to stand in solidarity with the marginalized, challenge the roots of oppression and injustice, and build a community for collaboration and action.

Donnette Deigh, LCPC, NCC, *Membership Chair*

Donnette Deigh is a PhD student in Liberty University's Counselor Education and Supervision program. Donnette is currently an Education Services Specialist, National Certified Counselor and a provisional therapist working on her independent license in the state of Maryland. Donnette has been dedicated in helping underserved populations increase their quality of life. Her areas of specialization include anxiety, adjustment difficulties/ life transitions, job dissatisfaction/career counseling, and depression. Donnette's research interests include social justice and advocacy for counselors of color, multiculturalism, minority professional identity development, clinical supervision and academic achievement. She has a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Bowie State University and a Master of Arts in Rehabilitation Counseling with a concentration in Substance Abuse and Psychiatric Disabilities along with a graduate certificate in Counseling and Life Transitions focusing on Counseling Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Individuals from The George Washington University.

"I believe being an advocate for social justice is a lifelong task. Sometimes social justice is not what you THINK it is but what it has the potential to be. Everyone has the potential to be a gatekeeper. It is what you decide to do with that privilege is what makes you an advocate."

Sahaj Kohli, *Public Relations Chair*

Sahaj Kohli (she/her), a first-generation Indian American, holds the Public Relations Chair at MCSJ. Sahaj is currently a second-year master's student at The George Washington University where she studies clinical mental health counseling and interns as a supervised mental health counselor in training. Sahaj is also a 2020-2021 NBCC Minority Fellow and founder of Brown Girl Therapy (@browngirltherapy), the first and largest mental health and wellness community organization for children of immigrants. With a 7-year career in journalism under her belt, Sahaj's passion lies at the intersection of narrative storytelling and mental health.

"Social justice is actively working towards an equitable society where everyone has access to quality education, resources and care. Through that process, we must also be actively and internally dismantling the oppressive systems that are harmful and disadvantageous to BIPOC."

Amanda Friday, LPC, *Professional Development Chair*

Amanda is a LPC, with a particular focus in career counseling, and has lived in the DMV area most of their life. They currently work at Georgetown University as a career counselor and Assistant Director at the career center. Prior to Georgetown, Amanda earned their Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University of Tennessee, a Master of Education from Virginia Commonwealth University, and a Master of Arts in counseling from The George Washington University. They are currently completing their Doctor of Philosophy in counseling with a focus on athletic retirement, career narratives during transition, and social justice from the George Washington University. Their career journey has been a winding one. Formerly a college coach and team-building facilitator, Amanda found their calling in the mental health field. They have a passion for creating communities, teaching students and clients ways to discover meaningful work, empowering and lifting up the voices of historically marginalized communities, and decolonizing career and therapy. Amanda also teaches undergraduate career courses at Georgetown University and is an adjunct professor at George Washington University.

Preet Kaur, LPC, *Human Rights Chair*

Preet Kaur (she/her/hers) is a Licensed Professional Counselor working in private practice in the DC metropolitan area, and a doctoral candidate in the Counseling department at the George Washington University. She strives to maintain a balance between providing direct clinical services, conducting applied research on mental health disparities, and engaging in advocacy efforts to challenge oppressive systems of power and privilege and the ways in which these affect access and delivery of mental health care to minoritized or otherwise marginalized communities. To this end, Preet has served in various advocacy and leadership capacities in professional mental health associations. Additionally, she has also served on the boards of two DC area-based non-profit organizations, providing accessible direct mental health services as well community-based educational programming. In her role on the MCSJ board, she is passionate about unifying and empowering a community of students and professionals at various career stages, to learn together and develop an ecological understanding of mental health in BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ communities, including the influence of oppression and colonization.

To her, being a counselor committed to social justice means to question the systems of knowledge and power that frame dominant narratives on mental health, and to instead seek out contextualized and community-based knowledge and practices for health and healing.

Grace Abraham Lewis, LCPC, NCC, *Social Justice Advocacy Chair*

I am an LCPC board-certified mental health therapist in Maryland and I am also licensed with the National Board of Certified Counselors (NCC). I am equally certified in Telehealth for mental health professionals, and I've been in practice for the past 6 years. I graduated from Walden University in 2014 with an MSc in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and I am presently a doctoral student in Counselor Education and Supervision (CES) at the PhD ABD (All but Dissertation) level. Hopefully, I'd complete the program by the end of 2020.

As a mental health counseling professional, I worked in methadone clinics where I saw clients with substance abuse and co-occurring disorders. Using the therapeutic community (TC) model, I also worked in the jail system at a male maximum security correctional facility with clients incarcerated for drug-related crimes who were getting ready to be released. When I worked in an out-patient mental health clinic, I saw clients from all cultural backgrounds including those within the LGBTQ+ community, and my clients had all kinds of mental health disorders and illnesses including anxiety, depression, relationship and blended family issues, OCD, ADHD, PTSD, as well as physical and emotional trauma. Presently, in my private practice, my clients include those in PRP programs as well as clients dealing with all kinds of mental health and substance abuse issues. My dissertation interests include: Causes of Infertility in Women in

Cameroon; Spirituality as an Influence on African American Women: What Counselors need to know; Spiritual Healing and Out-Patient Mental Health Treatment of African American and other Christian Pentecostal Black Women: A Qualitative Phenomenological Study.

Social justice means equal distribution of wealth, empowerment, and opening of doors of opportunities and privileges to everyone so they can be the best expression and fulfillment of themselves. Social justice means economic justice whereby everyone in the society enjoys the fruits of the nation's economic growth and has equal access and opportunities to create wealth. Social justice means ensuring everyone has direct access to basic necessities like fresh products, grocery stores, banks, clean streets, good roads. Social justice means social rights where political and economic opportunities are available to everyone irrespective of their cultural backgrounds. Social justice means respecting everyone's cultural beliefs and outlook on life. Social justice means political justice whereby everyone is able to speak up and cast their votes without discrimination. Social justice means police reforms. Social justice means restorative justice which acknowledges the need for alternative approaches in our criminal justice and school educational systems. Social justice means people taking responsibility to play their roles at their different levels in order to ensure positive social change in their communities. Social justice means not only advocating for the increase of access to educational and occupational opportunities, but also advocating for the marginalized, disadvantaged, helpless, hopeless, homeless and voiceless population.

Sabrina Taylor, PhD, CRC, CVRC, CWIP, *Newsletter Chair & MCA Emerging Leader*

Dr. Sabrina Harris Taylor is an Assistant Professor at Coppin State University and serves as the undergraduate program coordinator for the Undergraduate Rehabilitation Services Program. She also serves as the co-coordinator of the Comprehensive Post-Secondary Education Program for Transitioning Youth at Coppin State University, and teaches in the Graduate Rehabilitation Counseling Program.

Dr. Taylor graduated from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University with a PhD in Rehabilitation Counseling and Rehabilitation Counselor Education in 2016. She has a Masters Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University and a bachelor's degree from Elon University in Human Services. Dr. Taylor is also certified as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, Work Incentives Practitioner, and Certified Veterans Rehabilitation Counselor. Dr. Taylor has certifications in Vocational Evaluation and Work Adjustment, Work Incentives Counseling, Behavioral Addictions, and online teaching.

For the past four years, Dr. Taylor has taught graduate level counseling courses geared towards rehabilitation and addictions counseling majors at Coppin State University. Prior to working in academia, Dr. Taylor worked for the Department of Veteran Affairs as a rehabilitation counselor. She served over 200 veterans with service-connected disabilities and addictions during her tenure at the VA and assisted 65 veterans with obtaining a college degree and career. She has also owned and operated an adult care home in North Carolina.

Dr. Taylor serves her community by serving as a 2020-2021 Emerging Leader for the Maryland Counseling Association and a reading tutor of the Anne Arundel Literacy Council. In addition, she provides work incentives counseling services to consumers with disabilities privately. Dr. Taylor enjoys spending time with her husband, Whitney, and fur-baby, Seabreeze.

Social justice is a movement to eradicate injustices within the legal system, education, housing, law enforcement, banking, and any system in which the 14th amendment is not upheld. Advocates of social justice are responsible for educating the public about injustices against persons of color, members of the LGBTQ community, and vulnerable populations such as persons with disabilities. Through education and advocacy, vulnerable groups will be able to finally experience unalienable rights such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Dr. Don Trahan, Jr., PhD, DBA, LPC, NCC, ACS, *Past President*

Dr. Don Trahan, Jr., is a licensed professional counselor (LPC), national certified counselor (NCC), approved clinical supervisor (ACS), professor of counseling, and international consultant. He is recognized as a global leader in diversity, equity, and inclusion change management, with a demonstrated history of working in the higher education and professional industries.

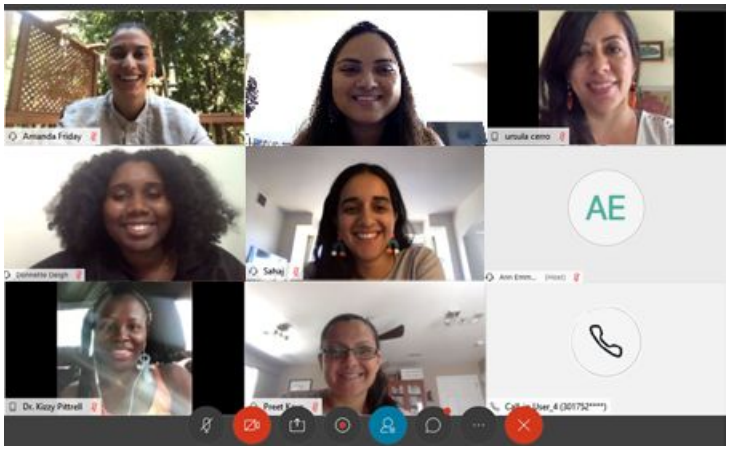
As a research-driven practitioner, Dr. Trahan focuses his scholarly work on advocacy and culturally responsive leadership, which has led to the publication of several peer-reviewed articles, nationwide conference presentations, and international speaking engagements. His research and unique content delivery have enabled him to develop partnerships with organizations such as the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, the United States Department of Education, and the United States Department of Justice.

Dr. Trahan holds a B.A. in Psychology and a M.A. in Clinical Psychology from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi; a M.A. in Educational Leadership and Ph.D. in Counseling from the University of New Mexico; and he recently successfully defended his dissertation at the University of Maryland Global Campus and will be graduating in March 2021 with a doctorate in business administration (DBA).

Dr. Chioma Anah, Ed.D., ATR, LCPC, NCC, ACS, *Executive Director*

Dr. Chioma Anah holds a Doctorate of Education (EdD) in Counseling Psychology, is a Registered Art Therapist (ATR), a National Certified Counselor (NCC), a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC-Maryland), an Approved Clinical Supervisor (ACS), and a Board-Approved Supervisor in the state of Maryland. Her interests and research agenda primarily focuses on racial microaggressions, psychology of racism, and many social & racial justice issues. Dr. Anah has worked with adults and adolescents with mental health issues for over 20 years, and is the Founder & CEO of PerceptA Therapeutic & Training Center, LLC located in Baltimore City, where she primarily focuses her practice on resiliency and coping interventions for race-related stress and trauma with clients. Given her passion for social justice advocacy, Dr. Anah is the founding member and the first president (2018-2019) of Maryland Counselors for Social Justice (MCSJ). Currently, she serves as MCSJ's Executive Director. Dr. Anah is a proud alumna of the Johns Hopkins University School of Education.

Thank You, MCSJ 2020-2021 Leadership Team!!!



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