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Praxis: Gender Matters in Counselor Education and Training: Increasing Gender Awareness in Counselor Education and Training

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Western society defines male and female sex from physiological attributes (e.g., genitals and chromosomes), this dichotomous view of gender is referred as gender binary.

Problems with Gender Binary

• Variations in sex and gender do not fit in the male/female, masculine/feminine dichotomy (Wiseman & Davidson, 2011).
• Diamond (2002) defined, “gender” is the social and cultural expectation of how females and males should identify themselves, how they think, behave (e.g., “typical female/male acts in a femininity/masculinity manner.”)

This gender binary socialization pressure restricts individuals potential.

• “Behavior does not have gender, but in today’s society, behavior is interpreted through the ingendeous notion of what is appropriate (for male and female) and what is not” (Aspy & Sandhu, 1999, p. 7).

This binary discourse is deeply rooted within society and affects nearly all aspects of life, including professional and the systems they learn, work, and socialize. This narrow view in gender contributes to gender stereotypy, role expectation, and bias, all of which perpetuates the status quo – an oppressive system of power, patriarchy.

• Gender binary socialization contributes to the lack of legitimacy of diversities in family structures (e.g., single-mother, same-sex households).
• Femininity and women’s subordination is socially constructed (Zinn, Hondagneu-Sotelo, & Lutz, 2009).

Influence of Gender Binary on LGB and TGNC youth (GLSEN, 2013)

• 55.5% of students reported hearing negative remarks about gender expression from teachers or other school staff.
• Compared to other LGB students, transgender, genderqueer, and other non-cisgender students faced the most hostile school climates.
• Gender nonconforming transgender students (students whose gender expression did not align to traditional gender norms) experienced worse school climates compared to gender conforming cisgender students.
• Less than a fifth of students reported that school personnel frequently intervene when hearing homophobic remarks or negative comments about gender minorities.
• 4 in 5 students heard sexist remarks often or frequently at school.

LGBT older adults: An invisible problem within an invisible community (Sage, 2015)

• LGBT older adults are twice more likely to live alone, 3-4 times less likely to have children.
• LGBT older adults are more likely to report being isolated.
• They deal with significant health disparities. 39% have seriously thought of suicide, 53% feel isolated.
• They are more likely to live in poverty (9.1%) than heterosexual couples (4.6%).

Critical Consciousness

Consciousness-raising

• Consciousness-raising group was the site for the conversation about the issues of sexism and patriarchal system of oppression that has socialized women to believe sexist thinking and values and confront their own sexism toward other women (hooks, 2000).
• The core element of consciousness-raising, refusing to uncritically accept ideologies practiced in society, by the majority, the dominant groups.
• For example, as Carol Gilligan (1982) pointed out, “psychological theories... implicitly adopting the male life as the norm, have tried to fashion women out of a masculine cloth” (as cited in Aspy & Sandhu, 1999; Herck, 1996).

Gender Studies and Beyond

• Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (1989), the Black feminist lawyer, coined the term “Intersectionality” to exemplify “a matrix of oppression,” which encompasses the racism and sexism that Black women, as the most marginalized and oppressed group, experience.

• Intersectionality is an oppressive system of power that place men on top of society as the most powerful and capable, set the “norm” based on socially constructed notion of “masculinity” characteristics and attributes, leaving women marginalized and inferior. Sexism is a product of patriarchial system that do harm to all people.
• Patricia Hill Collins (2005) described intersectionality perspectives of how race, class, and gender are embedded in the institutional structures of society, reproduced in people’s everyday life and shape the experiences of all groups. For example, White heterosexual feminist activists who advocate for lesbian women of color must be aware of the power dynamics that exist due to the intersectionality that place these women in unique social status.

• The interlocking structure of oppression; race, gender, and class interlock in structuring institutional oppression.
• Collins (2007) asserts:
• There is no pure victims or oppressors;
• How our actions and thought uphold someone else’s subordination.
• We must examine our different experiences within the more fundamental relationship of domination.

• New ways of thinking (intersectionality) must translate to new ways of action; therefore,

Change our daily behavior.

• Intersectionality and Gender Minority (SGM) poses critical challenges to Transgender women of color, especially violence against Black and Latina transgender women is the highest ever reported.

• 72% of anti-LGBTQ+ homicide are transgender women, out of which 67% are transgender women of color.

Applications in Counselor Education and Training

Did you know...

• Gender is a socially constructed concept (see Anderson & Collins, 2007; Aspy & Sandhu, 1999; Herck, 1996).
• Understand the contributing of gender-role socialization in limiting and defining behavior (Butler, 1988; see also Aspy & Sandhu, 1999)
• Understand the power differential and its contribution to the status of the marginalized groups of people, leaving the economic, political and professional gaps (Amott & Mandell, 2007; Aspy & Sandhu, 1999).
• Fostering Critical Consciousness: The ability to critically examine the existing ideologies that are practiced widely as a way for social justice advocacy and fostering optimal growth development and well-being for individuals the profession serve.

• Critical examination of masculinity and men power.
• Challenge gender stereotypes, roles, and expectations, which in turn, give voices to women of varied races, classes, national origin, and sexuality, whose experiences are affected by their locations in various social hierarchies (e.g., race, class, age, heterosexuality).
• Be aware of the complex nature of the intersectionality of various sociopolitical, cultural and historical variables affect the lives of women, and all.
• Do not tolerate sexism such as “Boys will be boys” to excuse sexist comments and behavior, nor do we support the assumption that men are brought up in the same environment.
• Research on gender equity is occurring at a rapid pace, it is important to continue to monitor and professional development in this area (Sadker & Zittleman, 2007).

Parenting in Schools

According to Ladson-Billings (1995), and Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995), criticality is to interrogate and disrupt the status quo, attempts to change the social structure that perpetuate the disproportionate distribution of resources and opportunities, and ideologies practiced as norm. The interaction of critical consciousness and Praxis (see Scherf and Spector, 2011)

• Critical pdfegy保定s and maintains the cycle of critical consciousness and praxis for positive social change.

Gender Role Socialization and its Limits

Gender-Role Socialization as a result of gender binary perpetuate gender bias, stereotype, therefore sexism in society.

Gender Bias in the Counseling Profession

• Gender bias held by counselors influences their intervention approach to clients (e.g., more affirming attitudes toward men’s aspiration for career than women; Steens & Johnson, 1985).

Gender Stereotypes and Bias in Higher Education

• Women outnumber men in degree attainment of the associate’s, bachelor’s, and master’s level, and yet men dominate behavioral and emotional problems (Sadker & Zittleman, 2005).
• Teachers’ gender stereotypical biases favoring boys continue to impact students’ enrollment in advanced level math and science courses (Lay & Sand, 2015).
• Four out of five girls, and almost as many boys experience some form of sexual harassment during their school years (Sadker & Zittleman, 2007).
• Among LGBT students, three in five (59.3%) experienced sexual harassment (GLSEN, 2013).

Gender equity has reached a new stage, no more blatant bias and discrimination, but become more subtle and pervasive bias continue on the school ground.

The United States has one of the world’s largest gender gaps in math and science performance, leading other Western & Northern European countries.

Gender Binary in Families

“Gender specialization in families” determines the structural restrictions and opportunities; values & beliefs; actual arrangements and distribution of activities; experiences & meanings; interactional patterns (Thompson & Walker, 1989).

• Gender role socialization perpetuates unequal treatment and limits girls’ and women’s access to academic and vocational opportunities, therefore leads to sexist within society (Sinacore, Ginsberg, & Kassan, 2013).

Gender Inequality in Politics as of 2014

In the US Senate, 20 women are serving, compared 80 men.
• In the US House of Representative, 81 women are serving, compared 354 men.
• For every woman speaking or voting in the US Senate, eight men have the power to quell her influence.

Gender Inequality in Economics (The U.S. Census Bureau, 2013)

Women on average earned about 77 cents on the dollar compared to men, 3 cents increased since 1998. In 2011, 58 million of all year around, full time employed men earned average $48,202, compared 43.7 million all year around, full time employed women earned average $37,118.

• Only about 22 Fortune 500 companies are led by women.
• More than 31% of families with a woman as a single parent are classified as poor, whereas 16.1% of families with a man as a single parent are poor.

Power Differential and its Contribution to the Marginalized Groups of People

Intersectionality in Poverty (The U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2007)

• 85% European American
• 16% African American
• 20% Latina/o
• 24% African American (e.g., women of color are more likely to live in poverty).

Intersectionality in School

• More African American students are in the standard science class (e.g., drill and memorization learning), while Asian American and European American students are placed in the honors and advanced science class and receive high quality education (e.g., problem-solving, scientific critical thinking processes, and technology applications) (Schorr & Spector, 2011).
• Crenshaw, Oken, & Nanda (2012) reported the intersectionality of race, gender, and class contributes to stricter discipline for black girls (e.g., Black girls were suspended six times more often white counterparts. Black males were suspended three times more than white counterparts."

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Toward Increasing Gender Awareness

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