Social Justice Plan

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Explore Life Meaning and Commitment

Time and experiences thrashed against my existence, like the ocean, sculpting an antediluvian rock (me) over time. The beating of the unrelenting waves was previously held as a negative consequence, resulting from my disposition of being birth into poverty. Little did I know, this was my privilege. This presented me with the knowhow to negotiate life by using what I have, to ride the motion of the ocean, while not having to build a bigger boat. My mental flexibility allows me to not see myself as a victim. The acknowledgment of the repugnant history of slavery and racism that informs my present resilient functionality is also a highlight of my privilege; a mantle and not sackcloth. These experiences promote personal equity, and the desire to fairly allocate societal resources after having an intimate understanding of what it is like to be denied basic human rights. According to the Word of God, after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you (1 Peter 5:10 ESV). I believe this is my testimony.

**Explore Personal Privilege**

Several benefits pervade my everyday experience. I’m a child of God. Even in saying this showcases my advantage and perceived authority over others. Additionally, I am Black, cultured, able-bodied, middle class, heterosexual, educated- woman, and alive, are a few aggregate compilations of my further advantage. In every way, I am discriminated against by some, I would be considered privileged by others. Certain societal norms protect my sense of innocence and motivate blindness in my response to evidence of most-all experiences of privileges because there are unearned. My intuitive daily functioning demonstrates the banality of this unearned privilege, which helps to maintain and even contribute to societal inequities. In reflection, I can see how my perception can create a ripple beyond me for generations to come. Noting that these prospectuses existed even before me. This concept can be hypothesized by following the herd-immunity model of vaccination: When enough individuals are vaccinated, the incidence of the disease is reduced for the entire population, protecting those who are not vaccinated (John & Samuel, 2000).

As I struggle to fully accept the magnitude and consequences of these structural features of inequity, I can see how this works on the reverse as well. My everyday experience of privilege is often overwhelmed by visible prejudice, oppression, and discrimination. These distributive injustices are only silenced by my desire to feel good about myself, which leads me to believe that outcomes are a function of my efforts, develop competencies, and the favor of God. Is this cloaking? Or another form of strategy to combat oppression? Given that privilege is propagated in part by segregated access to advantaged networks (Phillips & Lowery, 2018). Either way, I believe, I get to decide the beauty of the journey of life.

**Explore the Nature of Oppression**

I experience covert and overt oppression frequently from individuals who do not believe black autonomy, equality, and even privilege exist. These experiences have placed me on the defense, so much so, that included in these experiences are perceived oppression, which only serve to expand the feelings of widespread tyranny and frustration. Many times, aspects of oppression surfaces from within my very own subculture and group. I have experienced well-intentioned people, insisting upon-me aspects of their disparities, dispositions, and victim mentality, with total disregard of whether I interpret my life in such a way or not. This is another form of prejudgment and I find it to be very-much-so oppressive. It is like I am met to live up to one expectation or another, or one stereotype or another. Either way, resulting in limited space for me to assert who I am organically. Also turning the lens on me, I am not immune from the disease of being oppressive to others. Whether this occurs inadvertently or not it does not take away from the experiences of others caused by me. Even in the most rarefied financial, intellectual, and cultural spaces, to experience a person as something other than themselves or their interpretation is an injustice of their personhood. Growing into the realization of this, I prayed for God’s mercies and forgiveness for how my words, thoughts, and deeds, may have impacted others negatively. I take comfort in knowing that my prayers are answered and that God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, has heard my prayers (2 Timothy 1:9 NIV).

**Work to Become Multiculturally Literate**

Because of this privilege, grace from God, today I am a mental health and substance abuse/ misuse clinician. I am presently practicing my craft within a private practice and a non-for- profit capacity; utilizing online resources in mediums to answer the call of the times. Including internship, I have functioned in this capacity for almost ten years. I provide this service to people who have been marginalized, under-served, and inappropriately affected by poverty and discrimination. I believe my clientele should be treated with dignity and respect, not as a privilege but as a ‘right’ under the requirement of their citizenship in God’s kingdom. When placed in the same room as my clients, functioning as the professional in the space, I am the servant leader. I believe I am powerful; not in might but influence. I am cloaked with the responsibility of non-malfeasance and beneficence. As reported from previous clients, my collaboration and contribution of clinical expertise produced “significant” generational changes, when approaching and educating others regarding substance use and mental health supports. Although experiencing noteworthy impact over the years I understood that my action served as an intervention to meet a short-term goal of slowing the cost of mental health and substance abuse affects upon my community. Knowing this was not enough and desiring to preserve the point of enlightenment, just, and humane society I found, I answered the call to grow and serve as a counselor educator. This is my way to sustain changes that would outlive my efforts. My sustainability plan is attached to my endeavors of earning my place as a future post-secondary education instructor/ staff, at a Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) accredited university. I hope to advance, best practices by standardizing the educational criteria and outcomes for CACREP doctoral Counselor Education and Supervision (CES) program nationally. The formulation of a fidelity model would allow for systematic analysis, the acquisition of capacity, and recognizable competencies, despite the facilitating program and university or college.

**Establish a Personal Social Justice Compass**

As society advances, we encounter new cultural, health, and societal disparities that need the attention of the profession and practitioners like me to address them. My social justice compass is a mechanism to help me clarify the impact these problems have on students, clients, and community members. The compass used to guide my professional and personal growth is influence by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) strategic framework. From this model most-all, social justice issues can be studied and ideas for clinical, organizational, and political policy changes can derive. This model comprises of 6 stages that integrate cultural competence and sustainability principles every step of the way:

1. Assessment: Identify a social justice issue, comprehensive assessment, analyzing data for patterns, and building a tool kit of an effective action plan based on the findings. Assessment would be on-going to ensure effectiveness and appropriate resource allocation.
2. Capacity: Researching and resourcing to build knowledge of tools and culturally sensitive interventions.
3. Planning: Collaborating with mutually invested organizations and stakeholders to critically think about proposed solutions using an anti-oppression framework.
4. Implementation: Offering an enthusiastic agreement to deliver evidence-based programs and practices as outlined in the social justice action plans.
5. Evaluation- Focuses on data as it examines the process and outcomes of programs and practices.

This model is dynamic, iterative and encourages a team approach. It has served to guide my advocacy approach and provides me with a roadmap for accountability.

**Work to Become Multiculturally Literate**

In conclusion, I feel broken and uplifted at the same time, within my new sense of privilege and the reinterpretation of its meaning I now attached to it. I learned that by denying the privilege, earned and unearned, from myself and others, I am contributing to the normative merits of systemic inequity. In the face of privilege, it may be wise to accept the diverse interconnected global society’s realities of multiculturalism. I vow to embrace and promote equity within a multicultural literate fashion for others and I also vow to humbly embrace my privilege. The strategic framework in place for the sustainability of the aforementioned concept is fueled by the intervention: curiosity. By seeing and understanding things, concepts, and individuals as they are personally defined by its holder, and by asking existential questions, it will enhance the personal and professional growth of this life-long longer.

Reference

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Feedback