

July 2021

Equipping School Counselors for Antiracist Healing Centered Groups: A Critical Examination of Preparation, Connected Curricula, Professional Practice and Oversight

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Recommended Citation

Ieva, Kara P.; Beasley, Jordon; and Steen, Sam (2021) "Equipping School Counselors for Antiracist Healing Centered Groups: A Critical Examination of Preparation, Connected Curricula, Professional Practice and Oversight," *Teaching and Supervision in Counseling*: Vol. 3 : Iss. 2 , Article 7.

<https://doi.org/10.7290/tsc030207>

Available at: <https://trace.tennessee.edu/tsc/vol3/iss2/7>

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Cover Page Footnote

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Equipping School Counselors for Anti-Racist Healing-Centered Groups: A Critical Examination of Preparation, Connected Curricula, Professional Practice, and Oversight

Kara P Ieva, Jordon Beasley, Sam Steen

This paper highlights the potential for school counselors to promote anti-racist practices and racial healing engagement utilizing small group counseling to ultimately eliminate inequities in schools. However, counselor educator programs, founded on middle- to upper-class White ideals, worldviews, and narrowly focused theoretical frameworks, currently function in ways that fail to equip future school counselors with the group facilitation knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for equitable practice in schools across the nation. Using case illustrations and a broad current literature review, the authors conceptualize the rationale for more competencies beyond group course assignment, clinical requirements (e.g., CACREP standards, 2016), practice, and supervision. Critical questions for counselor educators to reflect on for group and connected curricula transformation are provided.

Keywords: group counseling, school counseling, counselor education, anti-racist counseling

Case Illustrations

FICTIONAL FACEBOOK POST: *Counselors Caught in the Middle*, Private Group for Middle School Counselors

I have been running a group for the past 3 weeks with eight students. Four students identify as females and four males. There are two Black students, two Latinx students, and four White students. Given the demographics of our school, we have experienced racial incidents in the previous years. As we returned to school this year in a hybrid format, I completed a needs assessment with the students, parents, and faculty to plan for programming. One of the topics mentioned the most was social connection and healing from the aftermath of 2020. I am extremely uncomfortable with the way this group is progressing, and I am unsure on

how to handle it moving forward. In this last group session, things got tense as we were focusing on students' intersecting identities at school and evaluating self-awareness. In summary, there were students who disagreed on how the school supports/does not support certain identities. During that discussion, it became apparent that three of the White students were operating from a racist lens. While I was able to reframe and bring students to the here-and-now to share their current thoughts and emotions, I am not sure we truly resolved anything. I also feel like I lost trust from all students. How do I address the racial conflict and attempt to bring cohesion among the students in my group moving forward? Thanks in advance.

FICTIONAL FACEBOOK POST: *School Counselor Educators*, Private Group

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How are you all supporting your interns regarding #antiracistSC? As many schools have moved toward universal screenings, there are a lot of tier 2 interventions, specifically group counseling, required by school counselors. On the upside, I am seeing a lot more groups being run at all levels. On the other hand, I can't help but feel discouraged based on what I am seeing thus far. Some of our site-supervisors co-leading sessions with our interns are unable to facilitate dialogues about race and affirm students of Color during small groups. Instead, the supervisors redirect and avoid them all together. I am worried that not only might they be harming the K-12 students but also setting a bad precedent for our interns under their tutelage. I am trying to model and mitigate this in group supervision, but I worry it is not enough. Is anyone else seeing or experiencing this? How do we ensure our future school counselors are comfortable pushing back against racism and not becoming complacent to school practices that perpetuate racism? I appreciate any insight or suggestions.

In this conceptual piece, authors argue for counselor education programs to use an anti-racist lens when preparing school counselors to facilitate group counseling in schools. The above posts, while fictional, are a composite of situational context and group dynamics that some school counselors and school counselor educators encounter in delivering comprehensive counseling programs and supervision across the P-12 continuum. These cases also illustrate the need to use small group counseling for important anti-racist work. As schools move toward healing centered engagement due to a wide range of effects and disparities highlighted by COVID-19, school counselors will be tasked to build healing communities from trauma in general, while continuing to engage in anti-racist practices that affirm their students and communities of Color more specifically.

Unfortunately, not all school counselors may be equipped with the requisite knowledge and skills to address racial trauma and promote racial healing. The group training course work, connected curricula, and supervision currently taught in counselor education programs across the country is insufficient. It is important to note that school counseling is a marginalized profession in counselor education (e.g., limited school counselor educators in a program responsible for school counseling identity in a limited number of classes), in the school setting (e.g., limited number in the school with expertise, role ambiguity from administration, and limited power), and in the broader counseling profession [e.g., the American Counselor Association (ACA) and American School Counseling Association (ASCA) view the profession from two different lenses and are in disagreement]. Historically, counselor education was founded on upper middle-class norms, and even with influential accreditation standards (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs, 2016), fail to fully prepare school counselors to promote healing and combat racism directly in schools. To address this gap, the present article confronts the following two questions:

1. In what ways do counselor educators programs prepare school counselors with an anti-racist educator identity (in relation to schools and systems) and an anti-racist counselor identity (orientation and skills)? Furthermore, how do counselor educators connect the two identities to deliver anti-racist group counseling interventions with the goal of healing (counseling) and equitable success (education) for all students?
2. And, more importantly, how can counselor education programs and professional affiliates strengthen their curricula and ongoing supervision to support the needs of school counselors and ultimately P-12 school communities?

The answers to these questions have intercon-

nected systemic implications for counselor education programs, accreditation and licensure bodies, and professional organizations. To situate the complicated nature presented by these questions, it is essential to understand the complexity of what schools themselves are facing and, ultimately, the immediacy of what is required for school counselors beyond 2020. Therefore, this manuscript provides an overview of current school climate within a historical context, the central components of healing-centered engagement work, and the connection to the evolving anti-racist school counselor role to provide context for the broader counselor education community and affiliates who govern curricula, standards, licensure, and ongoing professional development.

Historical Racialized Context in Schools

For decades, public education has been criticized for its contribution to the glaring and obvious *school to prison pipeline*, a term used to describe the policies and practices that directly and indirectly push students out of school and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems (American Psychological Association [APA], 2012). Many researchers have shed light on the use of racist and oppressive practices in schools (Delpit, 2012; Kozol, 1991, 2005; Love, 2016; Noguera, 2008) evidenced by overrepresentation of students of Color, specifically Black males, in special education (U.S. Department of Education, 2016), tracking of Black and Brown students in low ability classes (McCardle, 2020), and the disproportionalities in discipline consequences for students of Color compared with their White counterparts (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Okonofua et al., 2016; Skiba et al., 2011, 2014a, 2014b).

There are a number of complex systemic factors contributing to racial disparities in educational achievement and disciplinary practices, which include (a) unconscious racial bias of educators, (b) inequities in resource allocation across schools; (c) unmet mental and physical health needs; (d) power differentials in classroom policies and expectations; and (e) exclusionary discipline policies (Skiba et al., 2014b).

Additionally, scholars have argued that students affected by these practices would benefit from additional educational and counseling services from schools as opposed to exclusionary and segregation tactics (Baffour, 2016). The perpetuation of these oppressive practices and racial inequity in schools results in psychological violence, feelings of isolation, self-doubt, exclusion, and trauma (Clewiston et al., 2020).

Contemporary School Context

The primary mission of public schools is to support students in their educational pursuits toward achieving academic excellence and future economic success. To reach this goal, children must feel safe, supported, and ready to learn. However, COVID-19, a worldwide pandemic, has forced school leaders, faculty, staff, students, and families to grapple with a myriad of educational and social emotional issues unlike ever before (Yip, 2020).

For instance, prior to 2020, suicide was the second-leading cause of death for children 10–24 years old, and one in five school-age children who had access to medical care were diagnosed with a mental health condition (Center for Disease Control, 2021). In addition to an already established mental health crisis, 2020 presented a ripple of events that increased mental health (S. Singh et al., 2020) needs for all individuals ranging from young kids to adults stemming from continuous educational disruption, economic and financial distress, grief and loss due to COVID-19, murders of innocent Black people, onset of extreme weather and natural disasters, inequitable educational and medical systems, numerous uncertainties, a national debate on the educational workforce, and a contentious political season (Ieva, 2020).

In March 2020, the shutdown of schools posed new and unique challenges to schools and families. Public education lacked systemic structures to sustain effective teaching, learning, and emotional safety (García & Weiss, 2020), particularly within virtual environments. This brought about educational uncertainty and highlighted the preexisting intricacies of multiple systemic inequities (e.g., education, healthcare, justice, human services, employment)

for communities of Color (Yip, 2020). Existing social economic disparities, intersecting with race, and special education labels previously affected learning and educational outcomes (García and Weiss, 2017; Putnam, 2015; Reardon, 2011) and now, due to COVID-19, persist at alarming rates. In general, school staffs', student's, and families' necessary transition from face-to-face to virtual modalities fuels unprecedented amounts of chronic absenteeism, learning disengagement, increased mental health issues, and existing opportunity gaps that disproportionately affect students of Color (Yip, 2020).

Collectively, these events may result in trauma, as evidenced by the increased diagnosis of substance abuse (Pollard et al., 2020) and child and domestic abuse reports (Xue et al., 2020). To make matters worse, structural racism in schools continues to perpetuate racial trauma for many Black and Brown students (Kohli et al., 2017). Therefore, schools are the best place to intervene as they may see the educational and mental health impact from 2020 for the foreseeable future. However, despite the aforementioned atrocities experienced by students and school personnel, school leaders continue to prioritize academic outcomes for the 2020-2021 school year.

Healing-Centered Engagement

Given the historical and current state of public education, schools need to prioritize mental health and combating persistent racism (e.g., academic inequities) before expecting successful academic outcomes. In other words, a major shift in how schools intentionally dismantle the interconnected systemic racial and growing mental health concerns for low-income and minoritized students is warranted. One promising framework for this shift includes social emotional learning (SEL).

SEL is an integral part of education and human development (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2020) and paramount as schools navigate students' and educators' well-being from any prior trauma, current racial crises, and pandemic. SEL refers to the life skills that support people in experiencing, managing, and expressing emotions, making sound decisions, and fostering interpersonal relation-

ships. From a counseling perspective, SEL promotes protective factors for mental health by building healthy coping skills. Moving toward a school climate centered in healing engagement requires a multitiered approach focused on trauma-informed language and practices, anti-racist education, promotion of SEL, and opportunities for processing thoughts, feelings, and behavior in brave spaces.

Building on the Center for Disease Control's trauma informed practices, *healing-centered engagement* (HCE), a term coined by Dr. Shawn Ginwright (2018), is a holistic, systemic approach that involves identifying cultural, spiritual, civic, and collective healing and "requires questions that move beyond 'what happened to you' to 'what's right with you' and views those exposed to trauma as agents in the creation of their own well-being rather than victims of traumatic events" (p. 3). Using an asset-based approach, HCE focuses on well-being rather than symptoms and acknowledges that young people are much more than the bad things that have happened to them, building on their experiences, knowledge, skills, and curiosity to promote a healing learning environment. Further, HCE addresses root causes of trauma to promote positive experiences and relationships. Lastly, HCE also supports educators (providers) with their own healing. Hence, HCE allows schools to implement a multitiered approach for creating communities of healing, resilience, and growth.

Anti-Racist Education

To support Black and Brown students, teachers, and communities who have been silenced far too long (Torres, 2020) and move toward healing-centered engagement, we must shift our focus to anti-racist education. In alignment with HCE, anti-racist education requires looking at root causes; acknowledging structural racism in education is a critical step in the healing process. Centered at the heart of anti-racist education is an educator workforce committed to lifelong learning and developing critical consciousness (Freire, 1970) and in turn promoting the same for students. Critical consciousness refers to the abil-

ity to recognize and analyze systems of inequality and the commitment to take action against these systems (Freire, 1970).

Developing critical consciousness comes from reading, studying, engaging in deep scholarship, practicing humility, listening to and interacting with others, and consistently examining and re-examining one's own ideas, beliefs, and truths (Pitts, 2020).

Critically conscious school counselors are tasked with acknowledging both inequities and systemic barriers that exist in schools and impact students' social, emotional, academic, and career development (ASCA, 2016). This awareness, desire, and intentionality lead to social justice-focused school counselors. These school counselors "are charged to ensure the success of all students by playing a role as leaders, systemic change agents, and advocates who dismantle and remove barriers while providing anti-racist, systemic prevention and intervention practices that bring about equity in schools" (Mayes, 2020, personal communication). One approach to bringing about equity in schools is implementing a multitiered systems of support (MTSS) framework. MTSS is a culturally sustaining, evidence-based, framework implemented in P-12 schools using data-based problem solving to integrate academic, behavioral, social emotional interventions at three-tiered intensities to improve learning for all students to embed the comprehensive school counseling program with whole school goals. MTSS categorizes three tiers in which the primary level is where all students receive prevention (Goodman-Scott et al., 2019).

Through a data-informed process, students may progress to multiple interventions (e.g., small group counseling, individual counseling, referrals) as needed in each of the other two tiers. Tier 1 provides school counselors with an opportunity to add the delivery of anti-racist and SEL educational programming through classroom lessons to students. However, with the mental health and educational needs coupled with limited access to mental health support, school counselors are finding themselves

spending more time on responsive and intervention services.

To make the promotion of equity in schools commonplace, it is imperative that social justice, anti-racism, and advocacy are at the core of the training, supervision, and practices (Mayes, 2020; ASCA, 2016; ACA, 2014). School counselors are in a unique position to utilize their expertise and begin the healing-centered engagement process for all students brought on by 2020 and beyond. School counselors can use group counseling skills and practices to promote the intersection of trauma-informed practices, anti-racist education and practices, and social emotional learning to support students on their journey and create equitable learning environments.

Group Processing, Difficult Dialogues, and Brave Spaces

Inherent in HCE is the collective space to learn and process free from judgment. Processing, known in this case as reflective thoughts about past, present, and future behavior (Steen, Vanatta, Ieva, unpublished manuscript), is a vital component to anti-racist education, SEL, acquiring and applying new knowledge and ways of thinking, and ultimately developing critical consciousness. While every student processes information differently, trained group leaders can foster group processing, which allows rich discussions to ensue thereby countering prejudice and promoting equity and inclusiveness. Social justice-oriented group dialogues work on the premise that students engage with one another over controversial issues and are expected to operate with honesty, sensitivity, and respect (Arao & Clemens, 2013). To accomplish this, school counselors will require facilitation skills to maneuver difficult dialogues, particularly when speaking about racism and intersectionality to create spaces conducive to fostering deeper reflection and growth.

Braver spaces are an alternative to *safe spaces*, offered by Arao and Clemens (2013), who argued it an impossible feat to guarantee a safe space when engaging in discussions about

structural racism and oppression. Regardless of modality, brave spaces have suggested ground rules that are contrary to common group rules that could perpetuate oppression by silencing members or inviting them to weigh in on culturally mismatched norms. Some of the suggested rules that have been identified as more inclusive include (a) being courageous when confronting conflict, (b) exhibiting authenticity, (c) challenging others by choosing awareness, (d) offering cultural understanding of respect, and (e) constructively critiquing ideas. To successfully facilitate this process, in alignment with anti-racist education, educators must also understand power, privilege, and oppression and be able to recognize microaggressions and implicit bias, skills absent in some teacher education programs (Sleeter, 2016). Given the number of racial incidents in schools (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2019), school counselors can take a lead role in facilitating braver spaces within their small group counseling programs.

Group Counseling

Groups are a microcosm of society, and group work is an important medium where youth can practice and develop coping skills (Levy & Travis, 2020; Shechtman, 2017). Research evidence consistently supports the utility and effectiveness of group counseling in school settings (Akos et al., 2007; Rose & Steen, 2014; Shi & Steen, 2012; Steen, 2011; Steen et al., 2018; Steen et al., 2021; Steen & Kaffenberger, 2007; Steen et al., 2008; Zyromski et al., 2018). To that end, groups have the potential to help students develop a positive identity and self-esteem, increase academic achievement/motivation, increase postsecondary readiness, address trauma and emotional well-being, and build trusting relationships with peers and family (Dispenza et al., 2016; Goldstein et al., 2015; Marino et al., 2015; Villares & Brigman, 2019; Webb et al., 2019), all central components toward a healing-centered engaged climate.

Group counseling environments provide the space for discussions centered on oppression, power, privilege, multiple identities, and inter-

sectionality to occur (Stevenson, 2018). Research suggests that culturally competent-led small groups have been linked to multiple positive outcomes for adolescents and college students (Bruce et al., 2009; Stebleton et al., 2014). To reach these outcomes, multiple approaches have been facilitated for students of Color, including hip-hop spoken word therapy (Levy, 2019; Washington, 2018), digital storytelling (Sawyer & Willis, 2011), and creative arts (Martin et al., 2018). Regardless of methods, evidence demonstrates that group work builds community and cohesion among members, which leads to overall well-being (Guth et al., 2019; Levy & Travis, 2020). Therefore, given today's context of schools, group counseling is an optimal modality for all levels. The skills used to lead groups will necessitate flexibility to ensure delivery is developmentally appropriate.

Empowering Youth Development Through Group Counseling

Some counselors view group counseling through the lens of the majority culture, whereby those with more power and privilege are perceived as the norm and those divergent from this perspective as having deficits (Steen et al., unpublished manuscript). This misconception results in some students of Color being less likely to seek mental health support (Creedon & Cook, 2016), often as a result of culturally incompetent counselors, (Chu et al., 2016) who may perpetuate implicit biases within the counseling relationship. Yet, the school context provides a significant opportunity to address some of these concerns. Therefore, groups are considered a preferred method when working with students of Color and those who have been excluded in school. Traditional approaches have been critiqued for not positioning youth as equal partners in the group experience (Fisher-Borne et al., 2015), which deters from a trusting relationship. However, there are many more ways to engage in group work that is action oriented, strength-based, and centered on student agency and promotes social emotional learning.

One promising example is the use of youth participatory action research (YPAR). YPAR is a methodology in which youth and researchers collaborate to engage in scholarship within a shared community. Further, YPAR trains adolescents to conduct research relevant to issues that have been affecting their lives and that they would like to see addressed (Gibbs et al., 2020). This training provides agency for students to be a part of changes they would like to see while helping them learn skills to collaborate with multiple stakeholders to improve their own individual and collective community. For school counselors, YPAR utilizes students' strengths and expertise for a variety of academic, social emotional, and career projects (Edirmanasinghe & Blagin, 2019), while integrating all of the components of healing-center engagement.

A benefit of YPAR is that there are multiple modalities to meet students' interests and needs. Evidence in school counseling literature demonstrates positive outcomes with the use of different presentation styles co-created by the school counselor–student partnership such as hip-hop cyphers (Levy et al., 2018); mixtape creation (Levy & Travis, 2018); studio creation (Levy & Adjapong, 2020), photovoice (Edirmanasinghe, 2020; Smith et al., 2012; Williams et al., 2020), and traditional PowerPoints (Edirmanasinghe & Blagin, 2019).

Anti-Racist Group School Counseling Facilitation Skills

Anti-racist group counseling skills can be learned within a profession that provides supervision and tailored professional development to support school counselors in combating the structural racism present in schools. Navigating the nuances of human dynamics in a group setting, within an educational context centered in whiteness, demands a cohesive and interconnected curricula and supervisory experience that support the development of critical consciousness. However, gaps in critical consciousness and mindsets of adults promote inequities in schools (Andrews et al., 2019). Therefore, school counselors must be taught to confront these inequities and refrain from “colonizing”

and/ or “conditioning” students by traditional group work frameworks.

Table 1 provides required competencies for anti-racist group facilitation. These group practice and supervision skills could respond to the original Facebook posts and carry out the work with favorable results. This table outlines knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed for group delivery, both in practice and supervision for school counselors. While they are listed in separate columns, school counselors require the explicit interconnectedness of all presented. It is important to note that both Facebook posts require group facilitation and clinical supervision skills, a crucial skill set absent from school counseling training and practice (Bledsoe et al., 2019). Further, given today's school climate, these skills are also applicable in virtual modalities.

Anti-Racist Group Counseling Training

While school counselors are required to take course work to address social and cultural diversity (e.g., multicultural counseling), it does not necessarily correlate with successful anti-racist group knowledge and facilitation skills. Anti-racist school counselors need coursework in advanced culturally responsive group counseling skills (Paone et al., 2015) across multiple contexts. As such, their work requires a modeled connection to all course work in a systematic approach, as opposed to class-by-class knowledge. This requires centering race in every course across the curricula.

Counseling standards, counseling theory, and multicultural counseling textbooks omit critical race theory, intersectionality, and relational cultural theory (RCT), which are needed to support counselors from an anti-racist framework (Steen et al., unpublished manuscript). More specifically, counseling standards lack an adherence to culturally relevant group theory frameworks and skills relegated to delivering groups through an anti-racist framework. Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (2016, f.6.e) lists ethical and culturally relevant strategies for designing and facilitating groups as a standard, however,

it is often interpreted by the diversity within the experiential group. A. A. Singh and colleagues (2020) suggest using RCT as a group framework because it helps counselors “focus on building clients’ relational complexity and competence to seek out mutually empathic connections to navigate disconnecting experiences and societal structures” (p. 263). This framework includes skills needed to facilitate conversations

Table 1: Required Competencies for Anti-racist Healing-Centered Engagement Delivery in Group Practice and Supervision for School Counselors

Knowledge	Skills/Dispositions	Strategies for Competency Development
History of the United States and connection to racism	Validate and affirm racial injustice Compelled to decolonize and disrupt racism (practices and policies) in schools	Literature review/podcasts Book clubs Diversify electives
Anti-Blackness	Recognize how anti-Blackness presents in systems, policies, and individuals	Infuse in each course Decolonize syllabi and curricula Ongoing professional development Include student voice Department action plan addressing anti-Blackness with accountability
Culturally sustaining counseling theories and techniques (e.g., critical race theory and relational cultural theory)	Refrain from dismissal of others based on unconscious awareness of privilege	Audit and decolonize syllabus Remove antiquated theories and techniques Infuse Western forms of counseling
Ecological systems framework	Connect systems inequities across multiple systems and educate adults and students Identify and remove barriers across systems levels	Work to identify and remove barriers across systematic levels, model for students at higher ed level Ongoing professional development and supervision Train all counseling specializations in EST from a school and connected systems lens Involve community systems in coursework
Critical consciousness (e.g., power, privilege, oppression, intersectionality of self and others)	Self-awareness including own conditioning through the years Facilitate awareness and connection in others Challenge policies of ideologies	Continuous reflection and supervision in relation to current and historical events Utilize an anti-racist supervision model (e.g., Anti-racist Inclusive Model of Systems Supervision (AIMSS; Ieva et al., n.d.) Peer consultation/ Intentionality
Conflict resolution (centered in race)	Conflict mediation while maintaining group cohesion Comfortable with conflict Emotional stability	Infuse in techniques, theories, and group coursework Concrete and practical Case studies role play

Table 1: *continued*

		Field Experience Requirement: Observe/Mediation/ Practice/ Reflect
Racial Identity Models and Strengths-Based (Asset-Based Approaches)	Decolonize identities Discuss varying worldviews while building cohesion Explore others' racial identity Promote healthy racial identities	Continuous reflection, professional development, and on-going supervision Infuse across curricula Practical Case Studies/ Self-Analyses
Difficult Dialogue, Courageous Conversations, and Braver Space Models	Utilize and implement in the right context Connect Tier 2 data to delivery method	Continuous reflection, professional development, practice, and on-going supervision Central to programming and teaching, specifically in group context
Group counseling through an anti-racist lens	Ability to broach race in group settings Recognize and challenge implicit bias and microaggressions while maintaining emotional safety Understand the appropriate use of self-disclosure and here-now when confronted with racist remarks or discussions on racism and oppressions	Continually reflect on one's implicit bias, acknowledge racial battle fatigue, directly address microaggressions Willingness to foster discussions on racism and oppression, open to confronting racist and violent remarks
Advocacy (in public schools, community, and political realms)	Engage in discovering inequities with students and communities, Plan activities that align with salient and current issues, Act with intention and join other stakeholders in action-oriented activities (e.g., protest, communicating with legislators, school board and parent- teacher meeting attendance)	Collective reflection, challenging long standing policies and practices, assignments that support advocacy work in schools and across systems, seeking counseling as needed, engaging in self-care, and utilizing peer and group supervision
Culturally Inclusive Program Evaluation and Outcome Frameworks	Flexible qualitative strategies, mixed methods (e.g., focus groups, journal prompts/entries), critical incidents reflection and discourses. Artifacts as evidence include, artwork, music (e.g., mixtapes), pictures, <u>videos</u> and PowerPoints)	Acknowledgment that students and families are agents of change, using an anti-racist framework in examining data, introduce critical methodologies and frameworks, regularly reflecting on one's own positions of power, privilege, and oppression and exploring one's personal impact on the outcomes sought and desired, and a willingness to adjust to the needs of students/clients

about race and address racial conflict amid intersecting identities. All preservice counselors could benefit from experiential and supervisory experiences delivered through this framework, as it provides an opportunity to promote the growth needed to deliver anti-racist healing-centered group work. To assist in furthering the connection from all curricula to practice requires anti-racist competent university and site supervisors.

Anti-Racist Supervisory Experiences

Another aspect of the experiential opportunities to prepare school counselors for group counseling is practicum and internship. These experiences have the potential to be extremely impactful on the development of school counselor professional identities and their ability to facilitate anti-racist groups, but providing the experience is only one aspect. Given that field placements vary depending on the site supervisor and the comprehensive school counseling program in place (Steen et al., 2008; Watkinson et al., 2018), supervisors who lack awareness of critical consciousness and foster racist environments can increase complacency and contribute to a generation of school counselors reinforcing structural racism rather than fighting oppression.

Site supervisors may be ill-equipped to support preservice school counselors with this experience both to use evidence-based group interventions in schools for a variety of topics and to provide ongoing development for using anti-racist group counseling facilitation skills.

Additionally, counselor preparation programs do not mandate placements in schools that are multi-ethnic, multicultural, or multilingual (Holcomb-McCoy, 2004), therefore it is possible that even if preservice counselors are able to have a group experience under appropriate supervision, it might not be culturally diverse. Moreover, since school counselors do not receive ongoing clinical supervision, there lacks accountability to continually reassess their multicultural competence and to further develop critical consciousness (Holcomb-McCoy,

2004).

In summary, to change the field and begin to respond to the aftermath of 2020, school counselors need ongoing clinical supervision that unveils critical consciousness, promotes their counselor and educator identities, and teaches specialized skills to implement group counseling from an anti-racist lens for widespread healing engagement.

Advancing School Counselor Development

The following section will provide a series of reflective questions for counselor education programs and professional affiliates to critically examine and discuss at program meetings. Doing so may lead to discussions about better preparing social justice-engaged school counselors with advanced group knowledge and skills to fuel the success of all P-12 students while providing anti-racist, systemic prevention, and intervention practices that bring about equity and healing in schools.

Reflective Counselor Education Program Curricula Questions

School counselors require nuanced education, counseling skill sets and practices that impact the students and communities to work intentionally on dismantling racism in schools. Counselor education programs across the country must commit to reflect on how they might best serve preservice school counselors in their developing professional identities. A comprehensive critical reflection and examination of the entire counseling training curriculum can help strengthen the program's intersection of anti-racist school counseling, group counseling, and connected curricula to support the development of anti-racist counselors. Below is a series of reflective questions, in no certain order, that counseling programs can use as a starting point during departmental and program meetings.

1. How do we hold ourselves individually accountable for intentionally living out the necessary skills to model, practice, and reinforce anti-racist frameworks that produce favorable counseling, educational, and supervisory outcomes?

2. Where across the curriculum do school counselor (SC) trainees currently receive the knowledge, skills, clinical, and supervisory experiences? What are the areas that currently function within an anti-racist framework?
3. Where do we teach interdisciplinary approaches, and within these approaches, where do we engage in confronting the racist backgrounds of most disciplines?
4. In examining our core courses (e.g., group counseling), how many are taught by SC educators? How might that impact SC trainees' identity development?
5. Where do we teach all specializations from an ecological systems approach and the interconnected systems (specializations) that perpetuate racism collectively? How do we utilize a collaborative model of training for all counselors to operate in schools (e.g., school, mental health, addictions, marriage, and family) and dismantle racist practices and policies together?
6. How are we teaching multicultural and social justice competencies across the curriculum, and how is it displayed in different spaces for individual counseling and group facilitation?
7. Where do we connect and interface with counselor education adjuncts and full-time faculty to provide consistent messages for SC trainees?
8. How do we determine what theories and techniques are antiquated and perpetuate racist practices and remove them from the curriculum to make room for more culturally sustaining practices? In our theories class, are we teaching social justice theory? How are we including other theories (e.g., RCT)?
9. Where do we teach SC trainees to assess for strengths (assets) and use those to determine how to tailor developmental interventions and strategies, as opposed to working on deficiencies?
10. Where at this point does our counselor education (CE) program teach SC trainees to critically think about the racist undertones inherent in ASCA's mindsets and behaviors (e.g., K-12 college and readiness standards)? Regarding group work in particular, how might the use of ASCA mindset and behaviors perpetuate oppression and marginalization of minoritized students? Where do we engage in this conversation with all specializations?
11. Where at this point does our CE program teach SC trainees to question school policies and racist teacher practices and advocate on behalf of the students who do not qualify for programs based on White Eurocentric norms?
12. Where do we teach about collecting and analyzing data (including evaluating group counseling) from an anti-racist framework?
13. To what extent do we teach self-disclosure and confrontation as a skill? Do we teach that it is ok to engage in constructive confrontation within a group? What do we teach about confronting racist policies with administration? Where do we teach that confrontation is a tool to decolonize and self-disclosure is the vehicle in expressing this skill? Where is this modeled?
14. Where do we see opportunities to hold professional organizations (e.g., American Counseling Association and divisions) accountable for anti-racist frameworks that produce favorable counseling, educational, and supervisory outcomes?
15. How do we advocate with and on behalf of SC trainees and CEs to ensure equity and ethical considerations for accreditation and licensure bodies?

Conclusion

In this paper, we shed light on the use of group counseling as a method for school counselors to promote anti-racist practices and racial healing engagement in schools. While we believe that this work could ultimately eliminate inequities within schools, we are also aware that the preparation school counselors currently receive is failing at providing them the tools and dispositions necessary for success in this innovative work. Using case illustrations and reflective questions, we increase the reader's awareness of what is needed for anti-racist group counseling and also challenge counselor educators, professional organizations, and accreditation bodies to ensure that these skills are accessible and implemented within schools and communities.

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