Preparation for the Maryland Counseling Association’s (MCA) 50th Anniversary Conference is winding down, and we are looking forward to your participation in our big event. If you are on the fence about attending, please take a moment to consider the benefits of joining us. If you register for and attend each of the three events, you will be able to walk away with more than 20 NBCC contact hours. MCA is making strong efforts to garner excitement around this milestone event and has added an extra day and a half, plus a pre-conference Professional Development Institute (PDI). We are excited to have Dr. Lee Richmond, Past MCA President as our pre-Conference PDI presenter. Dr. Richmond is speaking on the joy of Being Fully Alive: Active Mindfulness Techniques for Counselors.

Conversations: Diversity AND Inclusion, is winding down, and we are looking forward to your participation in our big event. If you are on the fence about attending, please take a moment to consider the benefits of joining us. If you register for and attend each of the three events, you will be able to walk away with more than 20 NBCC contact hours. MCA is making strong efforts to garner excitement around this milestone event and has added an extra day and a half, plus a pre-conference session.

Of course, no one can put on a conference the size of this one without significant help. MCA members are blessed to have a diligent Board who volunteer many hours of their time so that you can participate in events such as this. Many thanks to those Board members who take initiative and add value to all aspects of conference planning and implementation.

Speaking of the Board, have you considered joining? Collectively the MCA Board offers a broad networking experience and the opportunity to learn about nearby career opportunities. There are three types of MCA Board membership opportunities: 1) run for an elected office, 2) ask for appointment to Chair a committee, or 3) ask the Chair to be a committee member.

See you at the conference,

Karol Taylor
President, Maryland Counseling Association
News & Events

Celebrating our 50th Year!

Thursday, November 2-Saturday, November 4, 2017

Annual Conference @ Embassy Suites by Hilton Baltimore at BWI Airport

Courageous Conversations: Diversity and Inclusion

Thursday Keynote Speaker: Dr. Rich Feller
Rich Feller Ph.D., served as the National Career Development Association’s President 2012-2013, and has served as a consultant to NASA, UN, NFL, AARP, and international and small companies on six continents. NCDA Eminent Career Awardee, he is currently the Lead Trainer for the Career Development Network’s JCTC/JCDC Coach Certificate held by 8K coaches across the world.

Friday Keynote Speaker: Dr. Catherine Roland
Catherine B. Roland, Ed.D., serves as the 65th President of the American Counseling Association. Dr. Roland has been a leader in the Counseling field for over 25 years, and has held many leadership positions, including President of the Association for Adult Development and Aging and the Inaugural Conference Chair for the Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues in Counseling.

Saturday Keynote Speaker: Dr. Simone Lambert
Simone Lambert, Ph.D., will serve as President of the American Counseling Association for the 2018-2019 term. She is a past-president of the International Association of Addictions and Offenders Counselors and her research interests include addiction prevention, counselor wellness, chronic illness, sensory processing disorder, and issues related to children, adolescents, and families.

Conference registration includes Breakfast & Lunch each day & Friday night MCA Mixer; hotel registration includes complimentary appetizers and beverages each night at the hotel Evening Reception

*MCA is an NBCC-Approved Continuing Education Provider (ACEP™) and may offer NBCC-approved clock hours for events that meet NBCC requirements. The ACEP solely is responsible for all aspects of the program.
Professional Development in Career Counseling

Written by Catherine J. Eaton, LCPC, NCC, GCDF (pending)

This summer, I completed the Global Career Development Facilitator (GCFD) training course offered through the National Employment Counseling Association, (NECA). It was the best experience for an online training course I ever had and I wanted to share my story and encourage you to consider this training for your own professional development.

In graduate school, I did not anticipate needing career counseling skills with my future clients. However, in my internships, post-graduate work and in private practice, career counseling is present and pervasive across all populations and demographics.

Feeling underprepared in career counseling issues that arose with my clients, I sought out more training for my professional development. I first met Michael Lazarchick at the ACA Conference in Cincinnati, OH in 2012. At that time, he encouraged his attendees to take the GCDF training course. I declined at the time because I was juggling two jobs after graduation and not in a state of mind to return to academic studies.

I continued to run into Mr. Lazarchick at each ACA conference since then, and at MCA conferences as well. Due to MCA’s close affiliation with NECA, I made connections with those in the career field, and my invitation to take the GCDF remained open. Finally, at the 2017 ACA Conference, Kay Brawley and Michael Lazarchick convinced me to take the plunge.

My concerns about whether I could make the time to honor my commitments, how I would fare as a returning student, and if I could succeed in an online format, which is not my best learning style, were quickly put to rest.

My classmates hailed from all over the U.S. and abroad and included professionals in clinical mental health, rehabilitative counselors, life coaches, college advisors and case managers. I was fortunate enough to have a few classmates local to Maryland!

The intensive twelve-week course was well structured with rich reading materials and inspiring blog discussions. When I struggled with technical difficulties, there was kind and patient support available to help me. When I thought I needed additional guidance, I sought out our very own MCA President Karol Taylor (who is also a GCDF instructor) for tutoring and support.

I was excited to learn interventions that could immediately be implemented with my clients. As a solo practitioner, I did not realize how much I missed the camaraderie of interacting with colleagues or classmates. This class surpassed all of my expectations.

I had the pleasure of meeting additional GCDF instructors at the ACA ILT in July. I was honored and surprised when I was encouraged to continue my training to become a GCDF instructor. That is now my next goal in my professional development.

I invite you to take advantage of NECA’s next Global Career Development Facilitator course, which is scheduled to begin on November 15, 2017. New courses begin every 3 or 4 months. Want to become GCDF certified by the Center for Credentialing and Education? Contact Michael Lazarchick for further information at michael@mlazarchick.com or register online at Working Ahead Moving Forward.
The Relevance of Social Justice Advocacy Today
Written by Chioma Anah, Ed.D., LCPC, ACS PerceptA Therapeutic & Training Center, LLC

“In these days of difficulty, we Americans everywhere must and shall choose the path of social justice… the path of faith, the path of hope, and the path of love toward our fellow man.” - Franklin D. Roosevelt

Social Justice Advocacy is extremely relevant today, due to: the extraordinarily difficult political and social circumstances we live in today; the continued disenfranchisement of large segments of society based on class, race, sexual orientation, gender, nationality, immigration status, religion, mental health status, and socio-economic status; and the mental health issues caused by social marginalization. This article works to highlight the relevance of social justice advocacy today in counseling, and brings to attention additional ways counselors could become better advocates in their work with diverse, marginalized and oppressed clients, through a call to action.

Sadly, we are being subjected to a current administration, whose agenda, it seems, has been focused on unleashing a series of unjust legislations and policies that threaten the rights of women, older adults, LGBTQ members of society, immigrants, and many less powerful members of society. We cannot also forget that we continue to live in a society in which not all of its members have equal rights, equal access and opportunities to freely achieve everything that they are capable of doing. Not all members are able to fulfill their dreams no matter their background. Furthermore, we have large segments of the population who are challenged with mental health issues and traumas, due to being subjected to many social conditions such as discrimination, poverty, powerlessness, oppression and disenfranchisement. The reality that we live in today’s society, makes social justice advocacy even more relevant for us as members of a human family, as well as part of the counseling profession.

Social justice advocacy issues have always been part of the counseling profession from the beginning of its inception. Building Multicultural Counseling Competency (MCC) and a social justice advocacy orientation among counseling trainees are fundamental goals across counseling programs (Pieterse, Evans, Risner-Butner, Collins, & Mason, 2009). For professional counselors today, the American Counseling Association’s (2014) ACA Code of Ethics and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs’ (CACREP) 2016 Standards clearly highlight the critical need for counselors to enhance cultural sensitivity and responsiveness when working with clients from diverse backgrounds. Specific ethical guidelines for counselors include to, “advocate at individual, group, institutional, and societal levels to address potential barriers and obstacles that inhibit access and/or the growth and development of clients” (ACA, 2014, p. 5). Similarly, CACREP (2016) informs counseling practitioners to provide services to diverse, marginalized and oppressed populations in a multicultural and social justice competent way. CACREP (2016) also complements the ACA Code of Ethics, by featuring curriculum standards for counseling trainees within the areas of knowledge, skills, and clinical practice when working with culturally diverse populations. Furthermore, the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MSJCC) provides a more detailed theoretical cultural contextual framework and recommends interventions from both individual and systemic levels (Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillian, Butler, & McCullough, 2016). In reviewing these guidelines, it is clear that competent counselors are expected to approach their clients as cultural beings who exist within varying context and systems, as well as incorporate social justice advocacy into their counseling practice. All counselors want the best for their clients, and should understand the important forces of oppression, inequality, and marginalization at play in their lives.

continued...
The relevance of social justice advocacy cannot be denied in today’s society. It is clear that, the current ethos of the world has significantly spiked the anxiety levels of many clients, and counselors. It is also important to be aware that the most vulnerable members of society, and those that are disenfranchised and subjected to social traumas, are often afflicted with mental health issues; there is a clear relationship between people subjected to social trauma and psychological distress and human dysfunction. Counselors are needed to respond to this important work of social justice advocacy. Albert Einstein said it best when he stated, “Striving for social justice is the most valuable thing to do in life.” With this in mind, here is A Call to Action to all counselors:

1. To better meet the needs of our clients and create a healthier society, it is important for counselors to actively contemplate social issues, become better informed with domestic or local issues, and be better global citizens. Counselors should expand their knowledge base in order to challenge injustice and empower and provide resources for their clients to challenge the inequality and injustices in their lives.

2. Issues of social justice are important in counseling because our clients inherently exist within social and cultural systems and contexts. As counselors, the idea of being “neutral” or “value-free” about one’s political views, is inherently an endorsement for the status quo; a stance for being apolitical within your counseling process, is not necessary a view that is helpful to clients, particularly when that client is a member of a historically marginalized group. Counselors are in positions of power and privilege to be the voice for those historically marginalized, and have to strive to work from a social justice advocacy and empowerment perspective in order to work with their clients in these times of uncertainty and high anxiety. As counselors, we must address the client’s experiences of oppression, powerlessness, and marginalization, as well as ways they can cope and strive towards healing.

3. Within the counseling relationship, working towards a successful therapeutic outcome for your marginalized and oppressed client through empowerment and active social justice advocacy is not “divisive” nor partisan, and counselors have to establish and maintain successful counseling relationships with clients from diverse backgrounds and cultural context, by being aware of the social justice needs of their clients, which are critical to their dignity and their therapeutic change.

4. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is a very important document for everyone, especially counselors, to read.

5. Lastly, counselors should be more active, vocal, and join organizations that focus on human rights and social justice advocacy causes. The Maryland Counseling Association is working on adding a Social Justice Division, and all those interested in joining can contact: Dr. Anah at dr.c.anah@gmail.com

“To be just, it is not enough to refrain from injustice. One must go further and refuse to play its game, substituting love for self-interest as the driving force of society.” - Pedro Arrupe, S. J.

References


Why Should You Join MCA?

Membership is important to your professional growth and career development. It provides:

- Continuing education units at discount prices
- Early notification of MCA and all division events
- Current public policy issues and new laws of interest to professional counselors
- Grant opportunities
- Four newsletters and opportunities to publish and advertise
- Early notification of job openings in the field
- Leadership training and greatly reduced registration costs to annual, regional or national conferences for board members
- Support and advocacy for professional counseling in the state of Maryland
- Electronic reminders to renew your membership
- A list of events that you have participated in

Click here to join MCA today!

Not ready to join? Choose the non-Member Contact option for a no-cost way to add your name to our email list.
Contact the MCA President for more information about committees and open board positions.

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