

these varied forms of diversity and their scientific, clinical, and ethical significance. More recently, scholars and practitioners have written about the core ethical principle of “justice” in psychology (see Leong et al., 2017; Walsh, 2015). To illustrate, Hailes et al. (2020) provide seven guidelines for integrating social justice in ethics which align well with the four principles of Black Psychology and the *Socialization and Oppression in Psychotherapy (SOP) Framework* presented earlier in this chapter. The Guidelines include:

- (a) reflecting critically on relational power dynamics; (b) mitigating relational power dynamics; (c) focusing on empowerment and strengths-based approaches; (d) focusing energy and resources on the priorities of marginalized communities; (e) contributing time, funding, and effort to preventive work; (f) engaging with social systems; and (g) raising awareness about system impacts on individual and community well-being (Hailes et al., 2020, p. 1).

In the words of civil rights leader John R. Lewis, “if you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have a moral obligation to do something about it” (Lewis, 2020, para. 5). We believe that as therapists the ethical duty to address injustice and protect human rights extends to our professional lives and our clinical work.

### SCENARIOS FOR DISCUSSION

You work as a counselor in an elementary school where you provide services to racially and ethnically diverse children and adolescents. Your client Sarah, a 7 year-old girl who was born in Syria and was adopted at 6 by Mr. and Mrs. Harris, was referred to you for concerns related to her “inability to connect with others.” During the clinical interview, the adopted parents report how Sarah does not like to be touched by them. They described Sarah not showing any affection toward them or wanting hugs. They add that Sarah has little to no interest in social interactions, has made no friends since she began school, and even in their neighborhood she is not well liked by the other children in the neighborhood. Mrs. Harris notes that she has heard the neighbors say that Sarah is “a weirdo.” She also reported how Sarah rarely smiles or shows any positive emotions. She recounts how Sarah often runs into her room, and hides under her bed when people come visit their home. The Harris’s don’t know what to do with Sarah. Ms. Harris states, “We have given this girl everything, a place to live, food, toys, an education, but nothing makes her happy. She is so ungrateful for all that

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we are doing for her. We saved her life by bringing her to the United States. My husband keeps reminding me how we should have adopted an American child. I am beginning to agree with him. Maybe Sarah needs to be with her own kind, right?"

- What reactions do you have to Mr. and Mrs. Harris' statements about Sarah?
- Would your reactions change if Sarah is a member of your own ethnic group?
- To what extent do you believe that your education and training have prepared you to deal with this situation?
- How would you respond to Mrs. Harris' question and statements?
- What objectives or priorities would shape your response?
- How if at all would your feelings be affected by the adopted parents' race or sexual orientation?



Your client, who works in the medical field, shows up to a session visibly upset. You listen attentively as he describes living a nightmare. Your client proceeds to share that over the weekend a friend made a post on social media about same gender-loving marriage. Without thinking much about it, your client describes responding to the post with remarks that align with his upbringing and religious faith which defines marriage as the union between a man and a woman. Reportedly, the friend became upset about your client's remarks and proceeded to share your client's post with all of his followers. Overnight, the post went viral. People started calling your client's place of employment asking for him to be fired. Your client who is now wailing states, "This is just too much, I'm so stressed. I just want to go to sleep for good and never wake up from this never-ending nightmare. I don't know what to do—I can't lose my job."

- What are your immediate emotional reactions as you listen to your client's story?
- What are some thoughts you are having about what your client is describing?
- How may you respond to your client?
- What are some things you need to consider in this case?

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- What course of action do you consider?
- Which of the two sides of the story (the friend's or the client's) do you feel more connected to? Why? How may this impact how you decide to proceed?



During the second session of therapy following the initial intake, a White European American therapist opens the session by inviting the client to share what brought her to therapy. The client shares being overwhelmed with her work environment and the demands with being a junior adjunct instructor at a local college. She says, "my good friend believes a lot in therapy and recommended I speak with someone about my stress level." Her tone of voice fluctuated as she narrated her struggles with work. She discussed feeling that students do not respect her and often complain about her being intimidating, distant, and cold. She says, "I feel so frustrated. I give my all to my job and these students. I know they treat me this way because I am a Black woman." The therapist responds, "I am sure there might be other reasons why students are making those statements. Let's think of other reasons why they may not like you?" The client then proceeds to share that a couple of weeks ago she found a derogatory term written across the wall outside her apartment. She called the police, but they told her not to worry as it had probably been "some young people who have nothing better to do." The client recounts how upsetting and scary this had been for her given all the recent racial turmoil in the country. The therapist replies, "Gosh, I hear you ... nowadays college students are terrible, let me tell you about a similar experience I had."

- What are your initial reactions to this case scenario?
- How are you making sense of what may be happening in this therapeutic encounter?
- What are your thoughts about the way the therapist responded to the client?
- What may have motivated the therapist to respond the way they did?
- How if at all would your feelings be affected by the therapist's gender?
- What do you think the client needs from the therapist in this case?
- How do you think the client may be feeling after this session?

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- What message is being conveyed to the client by the way the therapist responded?
- In what ways could the therapist respond to help the client not internalize the way she is being treated by her students?



You have been working with a new cisgender male client who has been court mandated to seek services due to anger management and intimate partner violence (IPV). Treatment involves helping the client understand: (a) the role of power and control in IPV as including physical abuse, intimidation, emotional abuse, property damage, threats, and sexual abuse; (b) the impact of rigid stereotypic gender role ideologies on self and other; (c) taking responsibility for one's own behaviors; and (d) processing the difference between anger and violence. In session, the client often challenges you. For instance, he makes statements such as "my wife asked for it, she doesn't listen to me; don't come to me talking about this feminist crap; you know women cannot live without men and they like it when we show them who's the boss; you're just as evil and manipulative as my wife."

1. What emotional reactions does this scenario evoke in you?
2. Would you share any of your feelings or concerns with the client during this session? If so, what do you say?
3. How do you think the therapist's gender may impact the therapeutic process in this case?
4. Would you respond any differently if the client was in a heterosexual versus a same gender loving relationship?