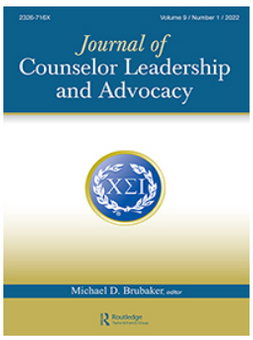

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Creating social change through culturally responsive counseling practices: a look at the multiracial population

Peeper McDonald [a] and Catherine Y. Chang [b]

[a]College of Professional Advancement, Mercer University, Atlanta, Georgia, USA; [b]College of Education & Human Development, Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia, USA

ABSTRACT

Given the steady growth of the Multiracial population and the complexity of what it means to *be* Multiracial, unique mental health considerations for this minoritized and under-researched population must be considered. As a result, this manuscript will illuminate advocacy action approaches for modifying counseling practice to equip professional counselors with culturally responsive tools that underscore best-practices to create social change.

KEYWORDS

Multicultural issues; culturally responsive practices; multiracial advocacy

The Multiracial population is projected to be the fastest-growing group within the United States (Song, 2021) and faces particular psychological challenges related to their unique and complex experience (Campion, 2019; Franco & O'Brien, 2018). Evans and Ramsay (2015) conducted a content analysis examining the counseling literature on Multiracial individuals and only found ten articles published between 1993 and 2013. Though research on Multiracial people since this time has begun to include the exploration of the unique Multiracial experience (e.g., racial microaggressions, mislabeling, racial color-blindness; McDonald, 2020; McDonald et al., 2019; Franco & O'Brien, 2018; Harris et al., 2021) there remains a dearth of literature that addresses the needs of Multiracial individuals especially as it relates to culturally responsive counseling practices. Given that the general counseling literature emphasizes monoracial identities, the limited scope of practice to an underserved, minoritized group such as the Multiracial population is concerning. Maintaining a solely monocultural perspective poses a threat to overall client wellness (Campion, 2019; Villegas-Gold & Tran, 2018), underscoring the need for this manuscript to serve as a call to action for professional counselors, aligning particularly well with the current special issue.

Given the lack of knowledge around the Multiracial population, the authors provide the relevant literature related to the Multiracial population, including Multiracial identity developmental models and the challenges and strengths of this population. After this short review, the authors provide practical steps for working with Multiracial clients that is rooted in the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (Ratts et al., 2015). Professional counselors are encouraged to take everyday steps toward culturally responsive practices with their Multiracial clients to ultimately act as change agents for social justice.

Terminology

The numerous terms used for Multiracial individuals is challenging for professional counselors (McDonald, 2020; Song, 2021). In general, *Multiracial* describes a person who identifies as two or more races. *Monoracial* refers to a person who identifies with one race (Franco & O'Brien, 2018). *Biracial* is often used synonymously with Multiracial to describe a person who does not identify as

CONTACT Peeper McDonald mcdonald_cp@mercer.edu Mercer University, 3001 Mercer University Drive, Atlanta, Georgia 30341

Monoracial, but oftentimes the person who identifies as Biracial is doing so to indicate their identification with two races, whereas someone who identifies as Multiracial could identify with two or more races. *Mixed-race, Multiple Heritage* and *Interracial* are other terms used to describe a non-monoracial person (Song, 2021). Multiracial is the preferred term of the current authors to include anyone who does not identify as Monoracial. Next, a summary of the extant Multiracial identity developmental models will be reviewed to provide a framework for counselors to conceptualize the Multiracial experience.

Multiracial Identity development models

Multiracial identity development is a complex issue partly due to the variance in how Multiracial individuals define their racial identity and the various factors, such as physical appearance, surname, geographic location, generational status, age-related development, cultural knowledge, and family and peer interactions (McDonald, 2020; Poston, 1990), that impact Multiracial identity development and racial identification. Some may take a broad approach (e.g., Multiracial) while others take a specific approach (e.g., Korean and White). Additionally, perception of self is important to consider. The Pew Research Center reported over 60% of individuals with backgrounds that include more than one race did not consider themselves Multiracial (Parker et al., 2015). In contrast, McDonald (2020) found that participants in their study reported simultaneously adopting multiple labels to describe their Multiracial identities and that these self-labels contributed to their racial pride and resilience as a Multiracial person. Despite these complexities, scholars have attempted to develop Multiracial identity development models, which are recounted in the following section to provide a conceptual framework for Multiracial identity development.

Poston (1990) and Root (1990) were the first scholars to develop Multiracial identity development models for healthy Biracial identity development, contrasting previous deficit models of Biracial identity development (e.g., Stonequist, 1937 in his conceptualization of *identity purgatory*). Poston (1990) proposed five levels of Biracial identity development: (1) *Personal identity* where individuals at this level are typically young, and their racial group orientation is just beginning to develop. Identity for individuals at this level is primarily based on their self-esteem, self-worth, and relationships with their family. (2) *Choice of Group Orientation*, which is based on social status factors (group status of parent's ethnicity), social support factors (parental influence, group membership), and personal factors (cultural knowledge, age) where individuals are pushed to select one ethnic group identity. (3) *Enmeshment/Denial* where individuals may experience anger, guilt, shame, and self-hatred at only identifying with one racial group. Parental and community support are important at this level to assist the child in resolving their confusion. (4) *Appreciation*, where individuals may continue to identify with one primary group, but engage to broaden their racial reference group and seek to learn more about all aspects of their cultural backgrounds. (5). *Integration*, where individuals value all their ethnic identities and experience wholeness and integration. Root (1990) highlighted the influence of biological and environmental factors by proposing an ecological model that is non-linear and contextually shifting, resulting in four possible resolutions: Acceptance of the identity that society assigns, identification with both racial groups, identification with a singular racial group, and identification as a new racial group. In this model, Multiracial individuals can self-identify with more than one resolution simultaneously.

Kerwin and Ponterotto's Model of Biracial identity development (Kerwin & Ponterotto, 1995) bases its six stages on age-based developmental milestones. Unlike the previous models, this model recognizes that individuals may have an established public racial identity that differs from their private racial identity. The six stages are: (1) *preschool stage* – Biracial children begin to recognize physical differences and similarities, (2) *entry to school stage* – with growing social interaction, Biracial children may be pushed to select a monoracial label, (3) *preadolescence stage* – growing awareness and

sensitivity toward race, (4) *adolescence* – growing pressures to identify with the parent of color, (5) *college/young adulthood* – continued immersion with one racial group with growing awareness of race, and (6) *adulthood stage* – continued exploration, awareness, and flexibility related to racial identity.

Other racial identity models have followed in Root's (1990) steps by taking an ecological approach. Rockquemore and Brunsma (2002) developed the typology of racial identity options based on the conceptualization that Biracial individuals construct various understanding of their racial identity. The typology for individuals with one Black and one White parent includes *singular identity* (exclusively Black or White), *border identity* (Biracial), *protean identity* (sometimes Black, sometimes White, and sometimes Biracial), and the *transcendent identity* (identify as human, no definable racial identity). Rockquemore and Brunsma (2002) found that the racial composition of and socialization experiences with their social networks and appearance influenced the racial identity options selected by Biracial individuals.

Renn (2008) developed the Patterns of Identity Among Multiracial College students based on a grounded theory study. The five patterns are (1) maintaining a monoracial identity, (2) maintaining multiple monoracial identities depending on the context, (3) maintaining a Multiracial identity, (4) maintaining an extra-racial identity by deconstructing race and resisting preconceived notions of racial categories, and (5) maintaining a situational identity where identity is stable and flexible depending on the context. Related to Multiracial identity development is the construct of Multiracial identity integration (MII). MII, coined by Cheng and Lee (2009), refers to an individuals' perceived compatibility among multiple racial identities and involves racial distance (the degree to which racial identities are perceived as different) and racial conflict (perceptions that racial identities contradict one another). Individuals who experience high MII are characterized with low levels of racial distance and racial conflict. Multiracial identity development and MII appear to be important constructs as they relate to mental health outcomes.

These identity models underscore the complex nature of what it *means* to identify as Multiracial and the monumental task that professional counselors have in front of them when conceptualizing their Multiracial clients (Song, 2021). These models help professional counselors begin to understand what a Multiracial person undergoes in their lifetime, giving concrete examples to professionals who might not otherwise know what cognitive and emotional tensions and strengths lie within a Multiracial person. Though imperfect, the intentionality for sharing these models with readers is to first, provide a historical reference for the contributions of Multiracial identity models and secondly, to provide a starting point for counselors to begin to conceptualize and interact with their Multiracial clients. Afterall, *knowledge*, as discussed later on in this manuscript works in tandem with *awareness* and *skills* to underscore cultural responsiveness.

Challenges and strengths faced by the multiracial population

Now that a conceptual framework has been established using Multiracial terminology and identity development models, it is important to highlight the common challenges and strengths experienced by this population. There are a range of challenges that may occur for this population including discrimination, microaggressive experiences, and trouble with psychological adjustment. For example, the complex terminology often creates internal ambiguity concerning what it means to be Multiracial (Franco & O'Brien, 2018; McDonald, 2020; Parker et al., 2015; Song, 2021). Additionally, stress can be placed on Multiracial people when rejected from the multiple racial groups that they may identify with, known as *horizontal hostility*, typically underscoring monoracist ideals (Campion, 2019). Furthermore, the tumultuous history of the construct of race within the United States adds to the complexity of Multiracial identity (Song, 2021). Multiracial identity includes more than phenotype and speaks to the holidays that are celebrated, the languages that one uses, and the names Multiracial people are given or prefer (McDonald, 2020; Poston, 1990).

Further adding to the complexity of the Multiracial experience are the mixed findings in the available literature. Multiracial adults also reported experiencing racial discrimination, including racial slurs and jokes, poor services in businesses, unfair treatment by their employers, being physically threatened or attacked, and unfairly stopped by police (McDonald et al., 2019; Parker et al., 2015). Despite these stressors, according to the Pew Research Center, the majority of Multiracial adults reported being proud of their Multiracial heritage and viewed their Multiheritage as an advantage (Parker et al., 2015). Researchers also have reported positive outcomes of being Multiracial and having high MII. Multiracial identity appears to serve as a protective factor that can facilitate psychological well-being (Harris et al., 2021; Villegas-Gold & Tran, 2018). Higher levels of identity integration have been positively connected to professional commitment, optimism about future professional success, acceptance by peers, professional satisfaction, mental health, greater degree of interconnected social networks, and a decrease in affective stress (Cheng & Lee, 2009). Given the mixed messages in the literature and the complexity of Multiracial identity, professional counselors need to explore with their Multiracial clients the values and meanings associated with their Multiracial identity while inquiring with the client how they want to be identified racially (e.g., not assuming the client's racial identity based on phenotype alone).

Implications for mental health counseling: Practical steps for cultural responsiveness

Addressing the mental health counseling needs of Multiracial individuals requires that professional counselors adopt an affirmative and culturally responsive stance. Cultural responsiveness is defined as "to acknowledge the existence of, show interest in, demonstrate knowledge of, and express appreciation for the client's ethnicity and culture and place the client's problem in a cultural context" (Atkinson & Lowe, 1995, p. 402). Culturally responsive professional counselors acknowledge and are knowledgeable about the complexity of Multiracial identity and intentionally create a psychologically brave space where Multiracial individuals are supported, and growth is facilitated. We provide the following practical steps for culturally responsive counseling with Multiracial individuals, categorized as *Awareness, Knowledge*, and *Skills*, that are rooted in the professional standards and competencies.

Professional standards and competencies

To provide culturally responsive and affirmative counseling for Multiracial clients, it is essential that professional counselors are aware and knowledgeable about professional standards and competencies which are foundational to the counseling profession. The Competencies for Counseling the Multiracial Population (Kenney et al., 2015) and the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MSJCC; Ratts et al., 2015) are two such documents that are directly relevant to promoting culturally responsive counseling to the Multiracial population.

The Multiracial/ethnic Counseling Concerns Interest Network of the American Counseling Association Taskforce developed the Competencies for Counseling the Multiracial Population, and these competencies were endorsed and adopted by the ACA Governing Council in 2015 (Kenney et al., 2015). These competencies are organized to address three distinct groups within the Multiracial population (interracial couples and Multiracial families, Multiracial individuals, and transracial adoptees and transracial adoption kinship network) across the eight common CACREP core areas (human growth and development, social and cultural diversity, helping relationships, group work, career development, assessment, research and program evaluation, and professional orientation and ethical practice).

The MSJCC (Ratts et al., 2015) provide a framework for integrating multicultural and social justice competencies in all clinical practice, training, research, and advocacy. The standards were endorsed by the ACA Governing Council in 2015, signifying the importance of integrating multicultural and social justice competencies into all areas of the counseling profession (McDonald, 2020). The MSJCC adds

the relationship between client and professional counselor as a developmental domain and highlights the importance of action as an area of competencies. The MSJCC framework includes four quadrants (i.e., privileged counselor-privileged client; privileged counselor-marginalized client; marginalized counselor-privileged client; marginalized counselor-marginalized client), four developmental domains (i.e., counselor self-awareness, client worldview, the counseling relationship (new)), and counseling and advocacy interventions (revised to add advocacy), and four areas of competencies (i.e., attitudes and beliefs, knowledge, skills, and action (new)). The privileged and marginalized counselor/client quadrants are especially salient to the Multiracial population given that at any given time, the Multiracial person could hold both privileged and marginalized identities within the racial construct. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to address the question, navigation, and interactions of privileged and marginalized identities among both the client and counselor; the MSJCC framework is devised for this purpose.

Awareness

The first step in providing culturally responsive counseling to Multiracial individuals is for the professional counselor to actively and intentionally engage in self-reflection as not to impose one's personal values onto the Multiracial client (ACA Code of Ethics Standard A.4.b; ACA 2014). Questions that facilitate building this type of awareness include: How do you define yourself culturally? What are your cultural values and biases? What values/assumptions do you have regarding Multiracial individuals? What stereotypes do you have regarding Multiracial individuals? How might your cultural identities enhance and impede your relationship with your Multiracial client? What cultural identities do you hold that are privileged? Which ones are oppressed? What cultural identities does your client hold that are privileged and oppressed? During this process, it is of utmost importance for the professional counselor to engage in authentic self-reflection, resisting the temptation to say, "I have no biases towards others" and "I don't hold stereotypes." Doing so only underscores racial color-blindness, a form of discrimination that perpetuates inequality (McDonald et al., 2019) and creates a space for the professional counselor to counsel with naivete, disallowing any personal responsibility to "see" the client in all their intersectional identities, ultimately leading to harmful outcomes. In addition to this reflection process being continual (throughout one's training as well as before, during, and after engaging in the practice of counseling), counselors should also engage these questions in a variety of ways where they reflect alone and with others (when possible) to allow for supplemental feedback. Additionally, counselors need to build awareness around the power of language and the importance of decolonizing language.

Decolonizing language

Colonization speaks to a system of power built on the belief that one group is superior to another and therefore has the "right" to dominate that group (typically colonization reflects the ways in which White people have historically dominated people of color and indigenous groups) (Singh, 2019). "In the end, the historical realities of colonization have been erased over time, and this erasure is validated by our culture" (Singh, 2019, p. 56). One way that the reality of colonization still shows up is in everyday language, though it is often outside of one's awareness. When it comes to Multiracial clients, colonizing language and actions could manifest in many ways. One common practice is for counselors not to spend time on racial identity at the outset of counseling but to assume the client's identity based on phenotype and one's own subjective experiences. This could mean that the counselor marks the demographics of the client down on paperwork without discussing it with the client (or there is not even an option on the paperwork for the client to identify their racial identity, if they choose); the counselor avoids discussing race within the counseling space; or the counselor uses their own words to describe the client's identity instead of the label the client prefers (e.g., in an attempt to broach with the client the counselor asks, "Tell me what it's like to be a mixed person" when the client used the term

Biracial to describe themself.) Given that language holds power, professional counselors need to not only acknowledge the biased and colonizing language that is used often unconsciously, but actively work to recognize it and change it. In this way, practicing decolonizing language will support Multiracial clients' complex identity and experience while undercutting systemic forms of oppressive, racist language (McDonald, 2020; Villegas-Gold & Tran, 2018).

Knowledge

Building on the importance of consistently evaluating one's attitudes and awareness, the culturally responsive counselor needs to establish a solid knowledge base for working effectively with Multiracial individuals. This knowledge base includes (but is not limited to) the Multiracial identity development models and the key constructs previously discussed (i.e., knowledge of the MSJCC and the Competencies for Counseling the Multiracial Population) as well as knowledge of the socio-political history of discrimination that this population has endured (e.g., Loving v. Virginia Supreme Court decision in 1967; hypodescent or "one-drop rule"). The ACA Code of Ethics specifically outlines the professional counselor's responsibility in gaining knowledge by stating, "Whereas multicultural counseling competency is required across all counseling specialties, counselors gain knowledge, personal awareness, sensitivity, dispositions, and skills pertinent to being a culturally competent counselor in working with a diverse client population" (ACA Code of Ethics Standard C.2.A; ACA 2014, p. 8). Two additional constructs that impact Multiracial individuals and are essential for counselors to be knowledgeable about include microaggressions (and how to combat them) and antiracism.

Microaggressions and microinterventions

Microaggressions are subtle, often unintentional behaviors and interactions that denigrate, insult, and undermine the recipients, resulting in physical and mental distress for minoritized individuals (McDonald, 2020; Sue et al., 2019). Microaggressions can also be presented environmentally through social media, educational curriculum, entertainment, monuments, and other offensive mascots and symbols (Sue et al., 2019). Sue et al. (2007) delineated three subsets of microaggressions: (1) micro-assaults – overt offenses directed at an individual (e.g., racial slurs); (2) microinsults – subtle putdowns (e.g., "you speak English so well"); and (3) microinvalidations – offenses that invalidate or negate an individual's experiences with discrimination (e.g., "we are all part of the human race"). Microaggressions are a form of racism, now recognized by the American Medical Association (AMA) as a threat to public health. In November 2020, the AMA released a statement declaring racism as an urgent public health threat that impacts health inequities in minoritized communities and calls for systemic and structural-level change. Furthermore, the declaration called for the development of training, research, and policy to combat racism and the health effects thereof (O'Reilly, 2020).

Though research on microaggressions in counseling is limited, the few scholars who have investigated microaggressions in counseling report that microaggressions are related to poorer working alliance (Owen et al., 2014), lower emotional well-being with increased depression and negative feelings (Franco & O'Brien, 2018; McDonald, 2020), and lower psychological well-being (Campion, 2019; Harris et al., 2021). Implications from these limited studies point to the importance of counselors' awareness of the subtle cultural messages that they may be sending their Multiracial clients. To combat the effects of microaggressions, Sue et al. (2019) developed *microinterventions*. Microinterventions are grouped into four major strategies: (a) make the invisible visible, (b) disarm the microaggression, (c) educate the perpetrator, and (d) seek external support (see Sue et al., 2019 for examples of each category). The bottom-line for professional counselors is that we all have the potential to microaggress and as a result, it is important to remain vigilant, self-aware, and seek out feedback from others to employ microinterventions as needed.

Antiracism

An antiracist idea is any idea that suggest the racial groups are equals in all their apparent differences – that there is nothing right or wrong with any racial group. Antiracist ideas argue that racist policies are the cause of racial inequities (Kendi, 2019, p. 20).

Kendi (2019) asserts that there are only two stances in the world, antiracist and racist. To be antiracist is to not only acknowledge that racism exists and perpetuates a system in which people of color are oppressed, but to decide every day with every action, that one will actively fight against racism. What does this look like then as a professional counselor with a Multiracial client? This means that along with the aforementioned suggestions, professional counselors continuously take a look at how they take up space with their Multiracial clients (and all clients for that matter). Kendi (2019) writes that everyone has the ability to be racist no matter their own racial identity. Just as the professional counseling ethics, competency standards, and licensing laws mandate that counselors continue to grow through acquiring continued education to ensure that the professional counselor is in a continual state of learning and growing, so must they continually focus on how they are showing up as a racist or antiracist counselor. Are counselors validating, empowering, and listening to the complex experiences of Multiracial clients? Or, for example, are counselors assuming that race is inconsequential to the client because of how the client phenotypically appears? This process is ever in flux and continues to require the attention and vigilance of professional counselors, as they can at any moment perpetuate racism or antiracism (Kendi, 2019).

Skills

When counseling Multiracial individuals, it is essential that professional counselors consider the identity developmental level of the client to inform the working alliance. A start to building that relationship is practicing decolonizing language and antiracism as previously mentioned. A major stressor for Multiracial individuals is when they are not given the option to self-identify as Multiracial, when their Multiracial identity is invalidated, or when they are racially mislabeled (e.g., "you don't look Biracial; your skin is so white") (McDonald, 2020; Greig, 2015). Professional counselors can ensure that paperwork allows clients to choose more than one race on demographic forms and provide an open space for clients to self-identify their multiple racial identities to promote the exploration of Multiracial identity.

Furthermore, Multiracial research has revealed that Multiracial people (children, adolescents, and adults) often feel social pressure to pick one racial group over the other. Professional counselors need to provide opportunities for their Multiracial clients to discuss this tension and explore the internalized societal biases that may shape early experiences of the Multiracial individual (Evans & Ramsay, 2015). Since higher levels of Multiracial integration is a protective factor that promotes psychological well-being, professional counselors need to foster racial pride in their Multiracial clients (Greig, 2015). This can be accomplished by helping the client focus on the advantages of their Multiracial heritage as well as helping the Multiracial client connect with Multiracial communities and role models, which can help clients develop positive views of Multiracial identities.

Counselors need to understand how their counseling practices can embody advocacy to ultimately end oppression, marginalization/minoritization, and discrimination. By looking for ways to make everyday changes (e.g., language and documentation forms), professional counselors modify their own views of race and actively support antiracism, understanding race to be salient to clients' identities. Including an open dialogue with clients about their racial background can become an integral part of the counseling process, whereby creating an open, safe, and supportive space for clients to explore and challenge, professional counselors support lasting social change. One strategy to facilitate open dialogue is broaching.

Broaching

Broaching is a concept introduced by Day-Vines et al. (2007) that encourages the exploration of salient identities within the counseling relationship and how these identities could impact this relationship and possibly counseling outcomes. Broaching is a way to practice effective multicultural counseling because the counselor is creating time and space for the client's identities to be explored and re-visited as needed. This underscores the idea that counseling is a place where these identities are validated and empowered and have an integral role in the counseling relationship (Villegas-Gold & Tran, 2018). Furthermore, since some identities are considered "observable" and others less so, broaching is an intentional conversation about the important identities to a client. Given the complexity of Multiracial identity and that Multiraciality is not always "observable," broaching serves the counseling relationship well by being an avenue by which the counselor can start exploring what is important to the client, build rapport, and gain an understanding of the client's worldview (McDonald et al., 2019; Day-Vines et al., 2021, 2007). During the broaching process, it is important to first ask permission to explore the client's salient identities and share the intentionality of doing so, use the label/language that the client uses, and be prepared to share one's own salient identities to: a) model for the client what is meant by *salient identities* and b) explore how the potential similarities and differences in identities between the counselor and client might impact the counseling relationship. Examples of broaching prompts with Multiracial clients (adapted from McDonald, 2020) include: You mentioned that you identify as Multiracial. Tell me more about that. How might your experiences as a Multiracial person connect with other parts of your identity/culture? You shared earlier that you identify as Multiracial. How might that impact our counseling relationship? What strengths have you developed as a result of your cultural background? There's been a lot going on within the news lately about race and race relations. I wondered how that might be affecting you and our work together in counseling?

The power of broaching should never be under-estimated by the culturally responsive counselor.

Social justice action

With the growing recognition that social justice is integral to professional counseling, counselors must be willing to take action that promotes optimal health and well-being for Multiracial clients in and out of the counseling space. Given the importance of connecting Multiracial clients with their community, professional counselors need to foster relationships with local community agencies that serve the Multiracial community and actively engage in training opportunities to remain current on best practices for working with the Multiracial community. Multiracial knowledge, skills, and understanding as well as decolonizing antiracist practices should be emphasized in counselor-training programs through accreditation standards (i.e., Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs) (McDonald et al., 2019). By incorporating accreditation standards in the counseling training all professional counselors receive, this sets a foundational framework for upcoming counselors to move into their professional journeys as stakeholders in the wellness of the fastest growing population in the U.S. Additionally, Multiracial awareness, knowledge, and skills, along with training in culturally responsive practices create a strong foundation for the continual growth that professional counselors need to competently work with Multiracial clients, especially given the complexity and multiple *ways* one can be Multiracial. To this end, counseling practices, K-12 schools, and counselor education programs need to consider editing policies to be more social justice oriented and antiracist. Barnes and McCallops (2019) report that practices deemed as culturally responsive are a necessity given the diverse nature of the U.S. population. Ladson-Billings (1995a), Ladson Billings (1995b), the author that coined the term *culturally responsive pedagogy*, provides suggestions for social justice and antiracist interactions in education systems: Create an environment where students can grow through intellectual challenge; Keep in mind that academic and general success need to occur while simultaneously maintaining cultural sensitivity; and Culture can and

should be used as a tool to acquire and impart knowledge. For detailed examples of how these suggestions are further defined within the context of the Multiracial population, please see McDonald, (2020).

Finally, given the dearth of research related to counseling outcomes with Multiracial individuals, scholars within the counseling profession are encouraged to focus research on the mental health needs of the Multiracial population as a way to promote and inform social justice and advocacy in action. The following research questions are recommended: What are the counseling experiences of the Multiracial population? What impact does discrimination have on this population? Are there within-group differences related to mental health for this diverse population? What are the advantages and disadvantages of having a Multiracial identity? What factors impact the psychological well-being of Multiracial individuals, especially in the wake of the novel Coronavirus pandemic and social unrest of 2020? Scholars should also focus on providing empirical support or revisions for the various Multiracial identity development models given the ever-evolving experiences and understanding of what it means to be Multiracial.

Conclusion

Given that the Multiracial population is one of the fastest-growing groups in the U.S. (Song, 2021) but remains a traditionally minoritized and under-researched group, professional counselors need to continually explore the complexity of what it means to *be* Multiracial along with the unique mental health considerations for this population. A summary of the current Multiracial literature and developmental models in addition to the strengths-based approaches to counseling Multiracial clients was described with a specific goal to equip professional counselors with culturally responsive tools that underscore best-practices for culturally sustaining social change. Additionally, the following resources are recommended to underscore learning around one's own presence when it comes to thinking about racial identity and how to support Multiracial clients: *The Racial Healing Handbook* (Singh, 2019); *How to be an Antiracist* and related Workbook (Kendi, 2019); *White Fragility* (DiAngelo, 2018); *Multiracial Identity and Racial Politics in the United States* (Masuoka, 2017); *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice* (Adams et al., 2018); The *Bill of Rights for People of Mixed Heritage* (Root, 1993) and *The Multiracial Oath of Social Responsibility* (Root, 2004); and The Davidson Microaggressions Project resource website (davidsonmicroaggressionsproject.org, 2020). Though this list is certainly not exhaustive, it is the hope of the authors that is serves as a helpful starting point for professional counselors in the goal to understand how their counseling practices can embody advocacy to ultimately end oppression, marginalization/minoritization, and discrimination, and create sustaining social change.

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ORCID

Peeper McDonald http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1979-8959

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