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Why be critical?

From Career Counseling to Career Concerns ...

- Work–related concerns manifested within counseling practice regardless of the counseling type or modality.
- Have considered relevant since inception of counseling and psychology:
  - Freud – described the goal of therapy to help patient find meaning in love and work.
  - Parsons – considered father of both counseling and career counseling.
- Work is a phenomenon most often present in session if you are open to looking for it.
- Opens the discourse to be inclusive of other career professionals (e.g., coaches, GCDF’s, HR).

Critique 1: Career Work is WEIRD

- Western
- Educated
- Industrialized
- Rich
- Democratic

Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010
Critique 2: Career Work is Dehumanizing

- A thought experiment …
  - Think of a small to mid sized community. Think about the overall public health of this community. Which job is more important to public health, the town trash collector or physician/healer?
  - Which job could go unfilled in the community the longest without adversely impacting public health?
  - Why is the physician/healer more dignified in most every community compared to that of trash collector?

Paolo Freire’s Work

- By posing the problem of a client’s own dehumanization in the world of work, critical consciousness is awakened.
- “The awakening of critical consciousness leads the way to the expression of social discontents precisely because these discontents are real components of an oppressive situation” (1970, p.36).
- Thus, the following is the essential question in this critique: Does career counseling embrace the humanization of clients within current approaches to theory and practice?

Critique 3: Career Work is Colonizing

- Counselors working with career concerns must ask, how does my approach perpetuate a system of work that asks nothing of the colonizer (dominant majority) and everything of the colonized?
- Examples?

Alterity

- The postcolonial theory concept of alterity, or otherness, describes the mechanisms by which some individuals are pushed to the social margins and kept there on the outside looking in (Bauman & Gingrich, 2006).

Advocating Workers—within—Environment

- Migration and Immigration is one area of common experience where we see this phenomena: “If our goal is social justice, do we wish only to understand the cultural beliefs of an undocumented Mexican immigrant mother, or should we also wonder, with equal curiosity, about who benefits from the policies that prompted her decision to migrate, her vulnerability to wage discrimination, and other structural matters that inform her experience?” (Goodman & Corsi, 2016, p. 3)
Counselor as Proxy Agent

Principles of Reflective Practice

- The altered/changed self has to be explored and constructed as part of a reflexive (self-referential) process of connecting personal and social change.
- Counseling for career concerns therefore “becomes a shared process of enlisting as many individuals as is relevant, ethical, and necessary toward the end that each individual agent and the collective agency (work environments) is better able to function.”

AWE – Reflective Intervention Designs

1. Counselor and client collaborate to determine goals (using client language is good practice).
2. Environmental factors that influence goals are discussed.
3. Specific environmental factors that are likely to facilitate and impede goal attainment are clearly identified.
4. The magnitude with which client can exercise their own agency is determined.
5. Plan for multiple scenarios that incorporate the first four points.

Reflective Problem Posing as a Technique

AWE – Principles at a Deeper Level

1. Encourage individual acts by the client as creating a new collective reality.
2. Help client develop personal agency awareness and skills.
3. Collaborate with client to identify myths propagated by the dominant social discourse.
A Final Thought

Freire believed that the ongoing production of the social world through dialogue occurs in dialectical interplay with the structural features of society such as its social relations of production, cultural formations, and institutional agreements. In the process of becoming literate—a process Freire referred to as praxis—meaning circulates, is acted upon, and revised, resulting in political interpretation, sense-making, and will formation. The outcome of this intersubjectivity produced through praxis is never fully predetermined.

(McLaren, 1999, p. 49)

Discussion

- My hope is to have prompted reflection on current practice:
  - Please take a moment and use Twitter (@PCDACA CareerConcerns) that describe a new thought or idea you have about your practice after attending today’s session.
  - What helpful critiques or unanswered questions might I apply to this work moving forward?

References