



Position Statement on Social Justice, Prejudice, and Discrimination

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) has a strategic goal to advance social justice. This goal is also reflected in the NASP principles of ethical practice. Consistent with this, the Arizona Association of School Psychologists (AASP) reaffirms its commitment to protect and promote social justice awareness, values, and practices that facilitate safe educational environments and equitable educational practices, free from prejudice and discrimination.

AASP firmly believes that all children deserve an education that affirms and validates their cultural and individual background, particularly those who come from oppressed communities and marginalized groups. AASP strives to build and promote resilience, well-being, and positive educational and mental health outcomes for all children.

AASP believes that to advocate for socially just practices, school psychologists must have an understanding of the following terms and engage in self-reflection regarding their own beliefs, emotions, behaviors, and implicit biases.

What is social justice?

Social justice is both the promotion of non-discriminatory practices and the empowerment of families and communities. AASP recognizes that social justice is both a process and a goal that requires action. Action begins (but does not end) with self-reflection and self-awareness of privilege (NASP, 2016), biases, beliefs, and other social psychological processes. School psychologists work to ensure the protection of human rights, equity, and the well-being of all children. Because historical oppression is at the heart of social justice work, we intentionally recognize that social justice means listening and paying particular attention to individuals whose life experiences have traditionally been ignored, minimized, or rationalized, such as Black and Indigenous Americans. School psychologists engage in social justice practice through culturally-responsive professional practice and advocacy to create schools, communities, and systems that lead to equity and fairness for all children and youth.

What is prejudice?

In the context of social justice, a prejudice is an intense negative emotion toward a group of people or an individual because of their belonging to or identifying with a group of people. Prejudices are learned via socialization experiences that begin in the home and at school, as well as through observation and vicarious learning with exposure to mass media (TV, internet, movies) and messages contained in society at large. Prejudice is highly associated with stereotyping processes and discrimination practices at individual, interpersonal, institutional, and structural levels (Calderón, 2019).

What is a stereotype?

A stereotype is a preconceived belief about an individual or group of people. Stereotypes operate at both the conscious and subconscious level (i.e., implicit associations) and influence

the day to day social interactions of people. Stereotypes are more likely to be applied under conditions of stress and cognitive overload; neutralizing stereotyping requires awareness, a desire to eliminate bias, reflection, and the ability to evaluate information in a deliberate manner (Calderón, 2019).

What is discrimination?

Discrimination is the unfair treatment of individuals by virtue of their membership in a group. At the individual and interpersonal levels, discrimination is usually related to stereotyping and prejudice. At the institutional and structural levels, some of the most pressing issues in school psychology are differential rates of punitive practices with students of color; differential rates of referral for special education and gifted programs for diverse students; segregation and substandard education of ELL students; and other issues related to the intersectionality of marginalized identities (Proctor, Williams, Scherr, & Li, 2017).

What is our responsibility to address issues of discrimination and social justice as school psychologists?

AASP urges school psychologists and other educators and leaders to:

- Develop policies to establish and maintain racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity among school personnel.
- Develop pedagogical approaches to incorporate social justice at the classroom, school, and district levels.
- Implement research-based programs that reduce racial achievement gaps.
- Implement research-based strategies that mitigate the effects of racism, prejudice, and discrimination and result in resilience and educational excellence.
- Promote active parent and community education and involvement in positive student outcomes.
- Promote ongoing evaluation of institutional policies that may passively support negative outcomes for certain groups of students. (NASP, 2012).

RESOURCES

NASP Position Paper on Racism, Prejudice, and Discrimination

<https://www.nasponline.org/x26830.xml>

NASP Social Justice Resources <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/diversity/social-justice>

Implicit Bias: A Foundation for School Psychologists <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/diversity/social-justice/implicit-bias-a-foundation-for-school-psychologists>

Intersectionality and School Psychology: Implications for Practice

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/diversity/social-justice/intersectionality-and-school-psychology-implications-for-practice>

REFERENCES

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