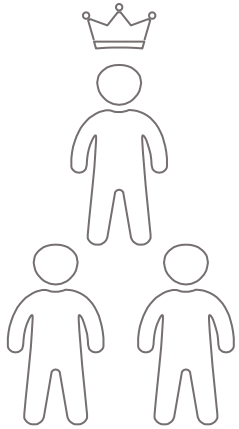


Baobab Collectives Volunteer Guidebook: Anti-Oppressive Practice



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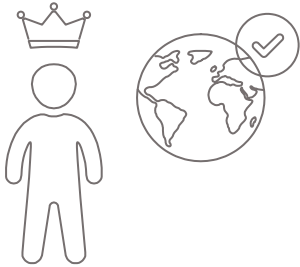
Principals Of Anti-Opressive Practice



- A socially constructed hierarchy determines who is privileged and who should be excluded based on their differences. People with disabilities, for example, are undervalued by society and their contributions to society are undervalued only because of their impairment.
- People do not fit into a single social category or area. As a result, we might be oppressed both as victims and as perpetrators. We frequently re-create oppressive social power and control relationships. For example, a woman may face oppression as a result of her gender, yet she may also benefit from white skin privilege.

(Springtide Resources, 2008).

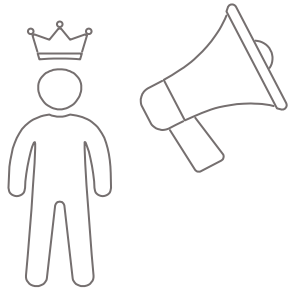
Principals Of Anti-Oppressive Practice



- "Dominant culture" is created by the ideas, thoughts, and beliefs of people who "belong" to groups at the top of the social hierarchy. The dominant culture becomes the norm by which everyone is compared. Wearing the hijab, for example, is regarded as unique in Canada because the mainstream culture standard of women's dress does not include it.
- Because people have a wide range of life experiences, not everyone in the same social group has the same experiences. People who have several marginalized identities suffer more than just additional challenges; their lived experience is completely different

(Springtide Resources, 2008).

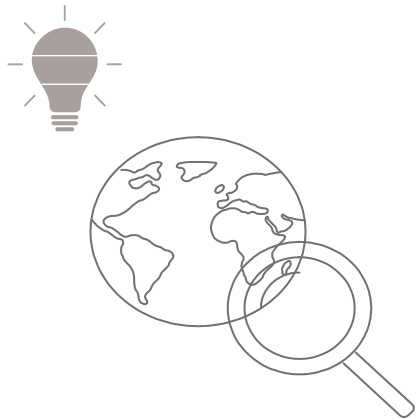
Principals Of Anti-Oppressive Practice



- Members of privileged groups have the ability to control who has access to resources and information. For those who are not part of these groups, this reinforces the cycle of power and oppression. People who have been marginalized and exploited have limited authority over their own past, present, and future. Canadian history, for example, has been written from the perspective of white-skinned colonialists of European heritage. This historical perspective is perpetuated through dominant education institutions as the only true view of history.
- Individuals must accept responsibility for their role in maintaining oppression both interpersonally and systemically as part of integrated anti-oppression efforts. Individuals and systems must change in order to bring about change.

(Springtide Resources, 2008).

Why is Anti-Oppressive Practice Important In Social Work?

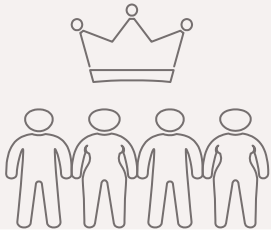


The field of social work is complex, multidimensional, and is constantly developing. Social workers promote change in social policies as well as clients' lives and conflicts. However, social workers are situated within the context of a social paradox where they must ensure in their daily practice and interactions they are not the oppressor to the oppressed. Social workers must consider the power dynamics between their occupation and client relationships, and recognize that even *unintentionally*, this power can lead to oppression. AOP is not the only key to social change, but an important tool that social workers should bring to their everyday practice.

(Amed, 2019).

What Is Anti-Oppressive Practice?

The term anti-oppressive practice is self-explanatory, “anti” referring to opposition and “oppressive” is what it opposes. Essentially, you are practicing opposition to oppression.



How Can I Practice With An Anti-Oppressive Mindset?

A social worker must always be taking action towards an AOP (Anti-Oppressive Practice), if you want to see change in everyday practice relationships then you must acknowledge that change begins with the social worker. You must address the nature of SELF, referring to your ego, thought patterns, mindset, behavior, and attitude.

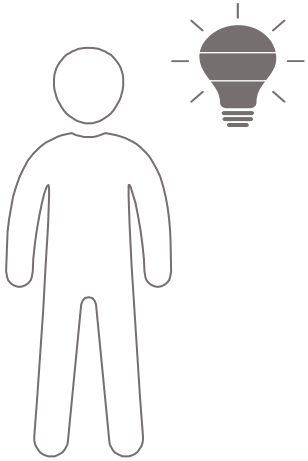
- “In our daily practice relationship, an understanding of the “SELF” within the context of AOP as a transformational tool helps us to engage in experiences that sometimes challenge our sense of SELF and our way of knowing and doing.” (Amed, 2019).



For example, you may feel discomfort working with clients who are from different cultural backgrounds. How can you address this discomfort? Acknowledge that not acknowledging this discomfort can lead to practicing with a power absorbed SELF. However, you must also recognize that SELF is ever changing and there is always room for growth.



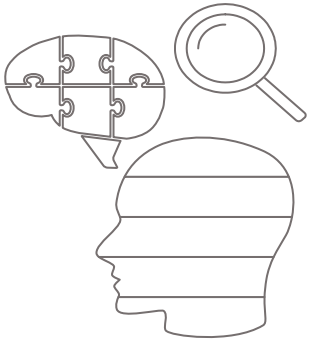
Takeaways



- “The underdeveloped SELF entertains “predigested thinking” which encourages a person to stick to the status quo about others (For example, those stereotypes we may hold about some of our clients, colleagues, or manager/supervisor).” (Amed, 2019).
- “To combat “predigested thinking,” AOP challenges us to critically examine the SELF, those thoughts, behaviors, actions, or attitudes that either maintain oppression or inspire change.” (Amed, 2019).
- “A transformed SELF is an evolved SELF; I say “transformed” because a transformed SELF seeks to empower, motivate and inspire to transform people’s lives.” (Amed, 2019).

Reframing The Mind

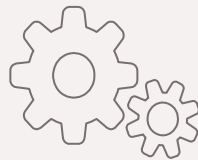
Reframing of the mind is our ability to reflect, identify, and rethink our perceptions of our daily practice experiences that lead to certain behaviors. anti-oppressive practice (AOP) helps us to deconstruct our interpretation of our everyday relationships to bring about personal change. Reframing provides social workers with the opportunity to evaluate or take a second look at how they perceive certain practice relationship experiences, and the impact such experience might have on their professional self. Reframing of the mind from an AOP lens takes into account that our mindset is not fixed and is an evolving transformation that has both practical advantages and disadvantages that must be continuously reweighed.



(Amed, 2019).



Tools





Tools That Can Assist in Practicing an Anti-Oppressive Mindset:

- Barrier Exercise

This tool was created to be used in individual or group supervision to talk about the obstacles people experience, how they affect them, and how it affects your relationship. This will aid you in determining how to interact with them in an anti-oppressive manner. It may assist you to apply this tool to case studies as practice.

- Diversity Workshop Guide

Although this source was created as a tool kit to run a diversity workshop, there is plenty of valuable information within it for education about diversity, power, and privilege.

- Privilege Exercises

Group exercises related to privilege, however these can also be completed individually in reflection time.

- Intersectionality Activities

Several different activities that can assist in practicing critical thinking about intersectionality, power, and privilege.

Basic Terms



Race and Culture

Culture - Culture is a group of people's deliberately and unconsciously learned everyday living routine. Language, governing procedures, arts, customs, holiday festivities, food, religion, courting rituals, and dress all exhibit these patterns.

Colorism - Colorism is a type of prejudice or discrimination in which persons are treated differently based on the social implications that skin colour carries.

Race and Culture Cont.

Micro-aggressions - Micro-aggressions refer to common daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental actions that, whether intentional or unintentional, communicate racial invalidations. These messages may be sent verbally, ("You speak good English"), non-verbally (clutching one's purse more tightly around people from a certain race/ethnicity) or environmentally (symbols like the confederate flag or using Native American mascots). Such communications are usually outside the level of conscious awareness of perpetrators.

BIPOC - BIPOC stands for Black, Indigenous, and people of color.

Two Spirit

An umbrella term for a range of non-binary and culturally recognized gender identities
and expressions among Indigenous people.

Disability

Ableism - The belief that disabled people are less valuable than non-disabled people, resulting in discrimination and persecution of people with disabilities and physical differences.

Accessibility - The extent to which a facility is readily approachable and usable by individuals with disabilities, particularly such areas as the residence halls, classrooms, and public areas.

Economic Class

Classism

Classism refers to beliefs that result in, and help justify, unfair treatment of individuals or groups because of their socioeconomic class. “Classism” can also be expressed through public policies and practices that prevent people from breaking out of poverty instead of providing equal economic, social, and educational opportunity.

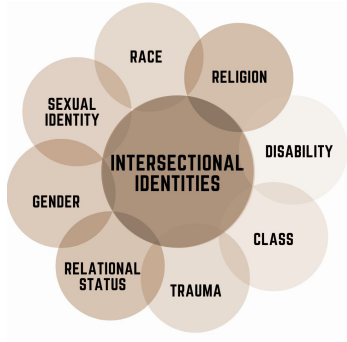
Gender and Sexuality

Gender Identity - Gender identity refers to a person's internal sense of their gender.

Gender Non-Conforming - Gender non-conforming refers to people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their gender.

Homophobia - Homophobia refers to the fear or hatred of homosexuality (and other non-heterosexual identities), and those perceived to be gay or lesbian.

Intersectionality



Intersectionality describes the way that multiple identities might impact each other. Essentially, identities overlap one another to create an experience unique to the person and their social locations. It is important to consider the intersectionality of social location in social work practice. For example, a woman of color may not experience gender inequalities the same way in which a white woman would. In this example, let's say you're a white woman working with a client who is a woman of color, you should not assume you understand the gender inequities they face because your whiteness provides privilege that is oftentimes more influential than your gender identity.

Resource

Here is the source of these terms for

further exploration:

[Glossary of inclusion and diversity terms.](#)

A list including inclusion and diversity terms.

References

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<https://www.ocswssw.org/wp-content/uploads/Anti-Oppressive-Practice-as-a-Transformational-Tool.pdf>

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