

Traumatic Stress and Educational Hegemony: A Multi-Level Model to Promote Wellness and
Achievement among Socially Marginalized Students

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Abstract

Despite efforts by counselors, psychologists, and educators to improve the educational attainment and experiences of socially marginalized students, there continues to be significant disparity for culturally diverse and lower income students. Integrating the frameworks of traumatic stress and educational hegemony, the authors explore barriers to optimal academic and psychological functioning for culturally diverse students. The authors present a model and provide a case example that illustrates sources of traumatic stress in a school setting and symptoms of traumatic stress among school-aged children. The authors provide recommendations for counseling and advocacy practices that can reduce educational hegemony and promote wellness and high achievement among socially marginalized students.

Introduction

Achievement disparities between White and culturally diverse students persist (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009), and have generated the attention of counselors, psychologists, and educators interested in equity in education. Frequently, deficit-orientated perspectives are used to explain and address the differences in achievement between socially marginalized students and their more privileged counterparts (Whaley & Noel, 2012; Braun, Chapman, & Vezzu, 2010; Garcia & Guerra, 2004). Such perspectives posit that academic underachievement is the fault of the student and/or parents, instead of examining systemic factors that create barriers to student achievement. Some education scholars have suggested that the “achievement gap” might more aptly reflect school environmental factors than disadvantaged culturally diverse learners (Ladson-Billings, 2005; Murrell, 2002). Furthermore, it has been asserted that school cultures can marginalize diverse students, creating academic challenges and psychological stress for students (Cholewa & West-Olatunji, 2008; Goodman & West-Olatunji, 2010).

Multicultural scholars within counseling, psychology, and education have examined these issues through the lens of *educational hegemony*, the dominance of one perspective, value system, or group over others within the school setting (Dawson, 1984; Goodman & West-Olatunji, 2010; Tatum, 2007). Additionally, recent scholarship in the area of traumatic stress has shown that contextual factors, such as systemic oppression and discrimination, can cause traumatic stress reactions that have long-term, multifaceted, and negative impacts on an

individual's health (Carter, 2007; Paradies, 2006; Goodman & West-Olatunji, 2009). The purpose of this paper is to present a model that integrates traumatic stress theory and educational hegemony to identify sources of traumatic stress in education for diverse students. The authors utilize a case example to demonstrate how this multi-

level model can be used within a school setting to identify: factors that contribute to stress, symptoms of traumatic stress, and interventions that fostered improvement in the mental health and academic functioning of an African American student. Recommendations for counseling and advocacy interventions are provided (Green, McCollum, & Hays, 2008; Ratts, Lewis, & Toporek, 2010).

Review of the Literature

Traumatic Stress and Systemic Oppression

There is growing scholarship supporting that traumatic stress can be caused by systemic factors, including various forms of social injustice, oppression, and discrimination (Carter, 2007; Harrell, Hall, & Taliaferro, 2003; Goodman & West-Olatunji, 2009). Contemporary research on traumatic stress and systemic oppression contends that both physical health problems and mental health problems may result from experiences of discrimination and racism (Carter; Paradies, 2006). Furthermore, historical experiences of discrimination experienced across generations may exacerbate current encounters with oppression and injustice in one's life (Danieli, 2001; Goodman & West-Olatunji, 2008). Among African Americans, the history of enslavement of Africans in the United States and the ensuing legacy and on-going forms of discrimination and racism converge to form a complex source of trauma that is both historical and current in nature (Cross, 1998).

Traumatic Stress Manifested in Child Populations

Studies on trauma among children and adolescents have found a number of common symptoms of traumatic stress for this population, including *reexperiencing*, which is characterized by psychological reactivity, flashbacks, and nightmares (Boney-McCoy & Finkelhor, 1996). Another symptom of traumatic stress involves *avoidance*, which is manifested in evading reminders of traumatic events as well as generalized emotional detachment and diminished interests (Graham-Bermann & Levendosky, 1998). Children who have experienced trauma often display *arousal* behaviors that result in difficulty concentrating, restlessness, hyperactivity, and irritability (Streeck-Fischer & van der Kolk, 2000). Finally, children exposed to traumatic events commonly internalize or externalize their reactions to traumatic experiences. The *internalization* of such reactions is often marked by anxious and/or depressed moods as well as an increased tendency for social withdrawal. *Externalizing* behaviors among children are characterized by acting out, behavior problems, and increased aggression (Kernic et al., 2003).

It is often difficult to differentiate symptoms of trauma from other behaviors or psychological problems that children exhibit in their lives (Perlman & Doyle, 2012). Indeed, children's symptoms of trauma are frequently overlooked or misinterpreted as behavior problems or other disorders, including symptoms that are linked to autism and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (Levine & Kline, 2007). Scholars and clinicians have also noted that traumatic stress symptoms can resemble common behavior problems that are manifested among children who are

having academic difficulties (Halpern & Tramontin, 2007; Levine & Kline, 2007). Thus, the overlapping symptomology of psychological and behavioral reactions that are associated with childhood trauma and other mental health problems further complicates accurate assessment of this serious psychosocial phenomenon (Arnold et al., 1999; Goodman & West-Olatunji, 2010). Recently, the notion of childhood trauma has been linked to a variety of experiences that children in marginalized cultural-racial groups routinely encounter as students in U.S. schools and in the broader society (Carter, 2007), which has been called *educational hegemony* (Dawson, 1984; Goodman & West-Olatunji, 2010).

Educational Hegemony

Increasingly, scholars in counseling, psychology, and education are exploring the ways in which oppression across generations is perpetuated within educational settings (Dawson, 1984; Goodman & West-Olatunji, 2010; Tatum, 2007). In the U.S., ethnocentric monoculturalism has generally dictated educational practices, relegating culturally diverse perspectives, values, experiences, and behavioral norms to second-class status (Hale, 2001). This deficit-oriented view of culturally diverse students means that their culture is not substantially included or affirmed in the pedagogical processes that characterize many of the schools in the United States (Garcia & Guerra, 2004). The cultural-racial biases that continue to fuel the ethnocentric monoculturalism that dominates education in the U.S. results in hegemonic educational processes that may contribute to many children of color's psychological distress and mental health problems (Cholewa & West-Olatunji, 2008).

Historically, for African American students, educational hegemony in the U.S. has been legislated explicitly, most notably by school segregation and disparity in funding of African American schools (Tatum, 2007). Despite the legal mandate to end of segregation in the U.S. as a result of the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, there has been a significant increase in the racial segregation of U.S. schools accompanied by significant disparities in public funding along racial and ethnic lines (Darling-Hammond, 2005). Consequently, schools comprised of a majority of students who come from socially marginalized groups in general and African American students in particular often have less qualified teachers, fewer educational resources, and limited access to accelerated enrichment programs.

The continuing Eurocentric focus of teacher education programs and the predominance of White teachers graduating from such programs have been identified as additional factors that contribute to the lack of cultural competence among many educators who are responsible for promoting the development of students of color (Sleeter, 2001). These forms of educational hegemony are amplified when teachers unconsciously maintain stereotypically low expectations of students of color. The perpetuation of such low expectations result in many teachers failing to select students in marginalized and culturally diverse groups for school leadership positions or encourage these students to participate in extracurricular programs and activities (Hale, 2001; West-Olatunji, Frazier, Baker, & Garrett, 2014).

Disparities in Academic Achievement

Educational researchers have identified numerous related factors that contribute to the continuing racial disparities that exist in U.S. K-12 school systems (Barton, 2003; Irvine, 2003). These factors include a lack of adequate student advisement and support, students' poor relations

with peers, and educational environments that mirror culturally-biased values and worldview of the dominant cultural/racial group in the U.S. (Allen, Epps, Guillory, Suh, & Bonous-Hammarth, 2000). For instance, when compared to their privileged counterparts, marginalized students are more likely to be punished severely (Skiba et al., 2011), less likely to graduate from high school (Orfield, Losen, Wald, & Swanson, 2004), less likely to take advanced coursework (Solorzano & Ornelas, 2004), and more likely to be placed in special education (Townsend, 2002).

Efforts to integrate many U.S. public schools and provide additional funding for low performing schools have done little to address academic achievement disparities (Irvine, 2003). Attempts to address these issues have included the development and implementation of compensatory education programs for at-risk students (Beck, 1999), referrals to alternative education programs (Foley & Pang, 2006), the creation of professional development schools (Trachtman, 2007), and home-school collaboration initiatives (Dryfoos, 1994). Even when culturally diverse students are able to withstand the various forms of educational hegemony described above during their primary and secondary school years, enter institutions of higher education ill equipped to handle the challenges of equally unsupportive academic environments in those settings (Barton, 2003).

Multi-level Model for Addressing Educational Hegemony and Traumatic Stress

The attempts to address the evident problems within U.S. school systems that lead to academic underachievement among students of color have been ineffective (Garcia & Guerra, 2004). The scholarship noted above suggests that models are needed to address the ongoing disparities for students of color that account for the existence of educational hegemony and possibility that this can result in traumatic stress symptoms. Using the understanding of educational hegemony and traumatic stress, the authors outline a “multi-level” model for working with marginalized students in schools. Given that educational hegemony and traumatic stress may be manifestations of inequity from the broader society, students are often impacted at various levels of interaction in multiple systems of the society they come in contact. As such, counselors and psychologists need to intervene at multiple levels to promote student wellbeing and success.

Based on the conceptualization of educational hegemony that students face in school, a multi-level model for counselors and psychologists to address educational hegemony is proposed. Counselors and psychologists need to identify the multiple systems that impact a child in the school system and to intervene at multiple levels in order to address educational hegemony and its impact. This model conceptualizes the child at the center of four interconnected systems and proposes that interventions are required at all five levels (see Figure 1). A brief overview of the multi-level model for intervention is provided, followed by a case study explicating the model that is based on the authors’ experiences. The case study links the research findings noted above with incidents of educational hegemony and trauma as it relates to the school setting and provides recommendations and interventions.

Level 1: Individual. At the individual level, counselors and psychologists assess for behaviors and symptoms that may be indicative of traumatic stress and educational hegemony

(as described above). The counselor or psychologist can provide interventions as the individual level in order to assist the child in coping with a system that may be resistant and slow to change (Lewis, Lewis, Daniels, & D'Andrea, 2011). Additionally, a space for healing and an acknowledgement of injustices and problems within the system are provided. This is critical, as individual interventions should not serve to further marginalize students, but instead should empower them to overcome harmful environments.

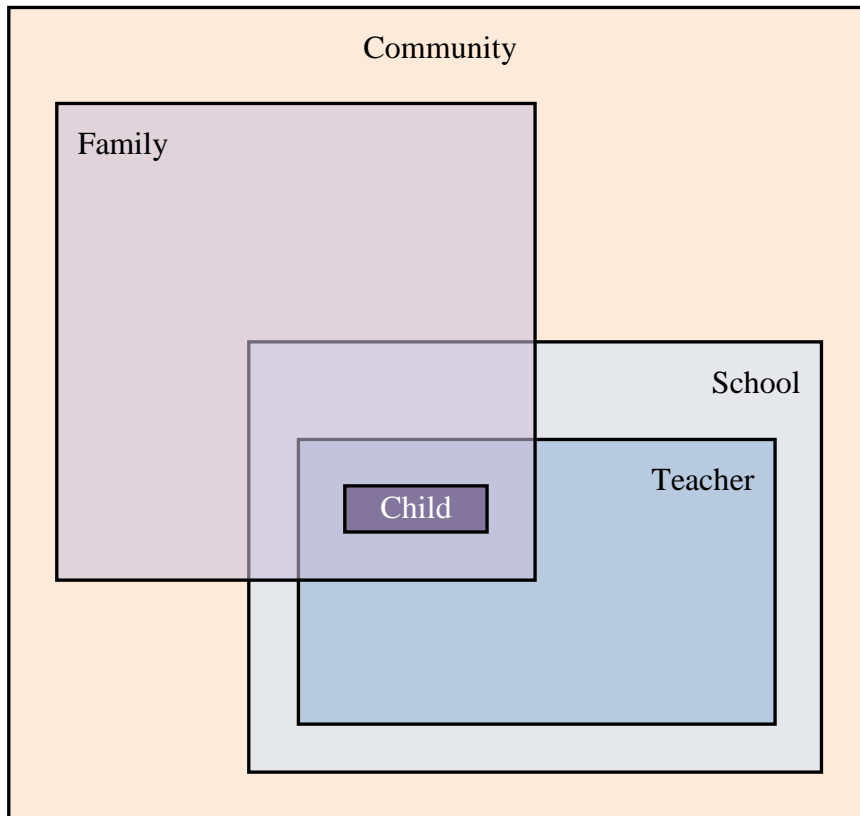


Figure 1. Multi-level model for addressing educational hegemony and traumatic stress: Interconnected systems that impact a child's school experiences.

Level 2: Teacher. At the teacher level, counselors and psychologists can assess for educational hegemony within classroom practices and provide feedback to teachers. Educational hegemony may be evident in the following: students of color being seated in the back of the class or in a special position due to behavior problems; the teacher having limited or negative interactions with students of color; or visual cues in the classroom affirming primarily White identities. Counselors and psychologists can provide feedback about these observations in order to increase teachers' awareness of, often unintentional, hegemonic practices. Teaching strategies to reduce hegemony and increase cultural competence within the classroom might include encouraging diverse students to take on classroom leadership or affirming cultural identities by including scientists of color in a lesson (Tatum, 2007). Such interventions attempt to mitigate the impact of hegemonic teaching practices that may arise from Eurocentric teacher training and professional expectations (Sleeter, 2001).

Level 3: School. At the school level, counselors and psychologists should review assessment and disciplinary procedures to address any disparate policies. School personnel should also review school data to identify disparities that appear in student outcomes (e.g. suspensions, grade point averages). Marginalized students experience more frequent and more severe discipline actions than their privileged counterparts (Skiba et al., 2011), which may result from explicit policies or biases in the execution or seemingly equal policies (e.g. teacher deciding to refer a student for acting out in class based on her/his interpretation of this behavior). Counselors and psychologists can also provide whole-school professional development to reduce educational hegemony and increase cultural competence among the entire staff, helping them become more aware of implicit and explicit bias (Brubaker & Goodman, 2012; Lewis et al., 2011). School counselors, in particular, may develop accountability projects that demonstrate the effectiveness of such interventions on the achievement of students in their school (Topdemir, 2013).

Level 4: Family. At the family level, the counselor or psychologist can offer interventions to provide family members with strategies that aid the student in coping with educational hegemony that is present within the school environment. The counselor or psychologist can provide resources and collaborate with family members to address systemic changes that need to be made in the school. Family support is critical to include, as the family can then serve as an advocate and partner in enacting equity within the school. Counselors and psychologists will also want to glean information from families about the student within other environments to find out if the student's behavior is present in multiple environments or if there is something unique happening in the school setting. Families can also provide information about the student's cultural practices and norms, which may further school personnel's ability to incorporate and affirm diverse cultural perspectives.

Level 5: Community. At the community level, counselors and psychologists should examine broader practices/policies that perpetuate racism and hegemony (e.g., textbooks approved by school board). They should look for advocacy opportunities to enact policy changes that promote justice and reduce systemic oppression. Given that the community is the environment in which schools and families are situated, interventions at the community level are efficient and effective because they target systemic barriers that may impact multiple systems.

Case Illustration: Jackson

The names and places mentioned in this case illustration and case conceptualization are a fictional compilation of the authors' experiences and are used to illuminate the model.

Jackson is 10-year-old African American boy in the 5th grade at Harmony Elementary, where he has been a student since Kindergarten. His teacher, Ms. Beverly, referred him to the school counselor due to his disruptive in-class behavior. The counselor assigned to work with Jackson gathered information from both the teacher and the student in developing a case conceptualization and treatment plan that will help Jackson better navigate the classroom and the school. This case was also contextualized within the broader setting so that all systems impacting Jackson could be considered using school-level data.

The Teacher's Perspective

Mrs. Beverly is a 25-year-old White 5th grade teacher that has been teaching for 2 years. She reported to the school counselor that Jackson is constantly “clowning” around with his classmates and rarely stays on tasks when given work in class. She added that when she asks him do his school work, Jackson simply states, “I already know the answers.” Due to his classroom antics, Ms. Beverly decided to move Jackson’s desk away from his classmates and put it next to her desk. Ms. Beverly articulated many concerns, including her trepidation about the consistency with which Jackson distracted other students and his failure to concentrate on his schoolwork. The teacher hypothesized that this was due to low academic ability. Ms. Beverly also complained that Jackson’s behavior is generally erratic. “There are times when he is staring out the window, totally disconnected,” Ms. Beverly stated. “Other times any little thing will set him off and he’ll talk back to me or another student.”

The counselor proceeded to review Jackson’s school records and found that his decline in grades began in the second half of his 3rd grade year with a steady deterioration in his overall grade that resulted in a “C” average at the end of the 3rd grade. During his 4th grade year, Jackson began the school year well, achieving an “A” average when his first report card was issued. However, by the time his third report card was issued, Jackson’s school achievement had declined once again, as reflected in his “C” average.

The Student’s Perspective

During her first meeting with Jackson, the counselor asked, “Why do you think you have been sent to see me?” Immediately, Jackson stated, “The teachers don’t like me here.” When probed why he felt that way, Jackson stated that, “I have been going here since kindergarten and the teachers have always said I was bad and would always move my desk next to them. One day I even heard them talking about me with other teachers in the hall, telling them they didn’t want me in the class because I had a bad attitude and ‘diarrhea of the mouth.’”

When asked about his tendencies to “space out” or snap at people as was reported by his current teacher, Jackson stated, “She doesn’t care about me. So I try to just sit there and mind my own business. But sometimes people are just too much and I get mad.” The counselor responded by asking Jackson how he knew that the teacher didn’t care about him. Jackson immediately stated that, “Most of the teachers are like that. They don’t like Black kids. They don’t pick us for stuff – good stuff I mean. They only talk to us about what we’re doing wrong.”

Case Conceptualization

In conceptualizing Jackson’s case using the Multi-level Model, we will look at the interventions from the individual, teacher, school, family, and community perspectives. In looking at the issues present, the school counselor wanted to assess the degree to which educational hegemony and traumatic stress theories might relate to this student’s situation and the teacher’s reactions to his in-class behavior; the counselor intentionally look beyond the intrapsychic focus provided by the teacher to possible systemic causes (Ratts et al., 2010). In doing so, the counselor first considered how school-wide patterns that are consistent with the concept of educational hegemony may operate within the school and contribute to both Jackson’s behaviors and the teacher’s expressed concerns about this student. One indicator of educational hegemony that the counselor noted at the school was the disproportionately high rate of African American students who were referred to the counseling department and other administrators for disciplinary

reasons.

The counselor also included data from previous classroom observations within the school. In numerous observational assessments, the counselor found that most of the African American students in these classes (including Jackson's class) were either seated near the back of the classroom or identified as problematic students and seated right next to the teacher's desk. School records also indicated that African American students were disproportionately represented in lower ability and remedial classes at the school. These findings are consistent with the literature noted above on indicators of hegemonic practices or outcomes of such educational injustices (e.g., Skiba et al., 2011; Solorzano & Ornelas, 2004; Townsend, 2002).

Using this data, the counselor proceeded to incorporate various aspects of traumatic stress theory into her conceptualization of Jackson's situation and, more specifically, his school experiences. In doing so, she noted that many of the problem behaviors reported by the teacher were consistent with literature on traumatic stress symptoms among children. For instance, the counselor recognized Jackson's "spacing out" and disengagement behaviors while in class as consistent with avoidance behaviors and internalization dynamics that are described by traumatic stress researchers (Graham-Bermann & Levendosky, 1998; Holmes & Slap, 1998). Jackson's disruptiveness and conflict with others in the classroom setting is also consistent with externalizing behaviors evident among children who have experienced traumatic stress (Kaplan, Pelcovitz, & Labruna, 1999). Finally, Jackson's distractibility and difficulty concentrating may represent the arousal symptoms of traumatic stress (Vernberg, La Greca, Silverman, & Prinstein, 1996).

Recommendations for Counseling and Advocacy

Using educational hegemony and traumatic stress theories as a framework, counselors and psychologists can develop new types of interventions that are aimed at addressing both the teacher's concerns and the student's school experiences from a more comprehensive and systemic perspective than is normally used in similar situations and settings (Green et al., 2008; Ratts et al., 2010). As demonstrated by the counselor in this case study, the development of such interventions are aimed at addressing:

- [a] the interconnections that exist between students' personal/psychosocial needs and their academic achievement,
- [b] teachers' concerns about students in-class behaviors, and
- [c] the linkages between various forms of educational hegemony that may contribute to the traumatic stress children in marginalized groups encounter as a result of their schooling and other experiences.

To address the adverse impact of these intersecting factors, counselors direct time and energy to make changes at multiple levels of students' educational experiences. This involves:

- [a] providing individual and group counseling services to students in need,
- [b] developing and implementing consultation and in-service training services that are aimed at increasing teachers' and administrators' understanding of the interconnections

of educational hegemony and traumatic stress that result in adverse psychological and behavioral outcomes among many students like Jackson who come from marginalized cultural-racial groups, and,

[c] advocacy services that are designed to foster substantial changes in organizational policies and practices as well as modifications in the school curricula that address local, state, and/or national educational outcome standards in ways that are more culturally respectful and relevant for the values and worldviews of diverse student groups and their families.

A multi-level approach can not only provide remediation for existing problems, but also can prevent further problems for students and promote academic success and psychological wellbeing. It is important to note that when implementing interventions at any level, mental health practitioners must approach clients, teachers, administrators, families, and the community as someone who is willing to work as an advocate for what is best for the client and ultimately for the betterment of all levels of the system, this will aid in minimizing the any resistance that can occur for practitioners implementing multilevel changes. The following sections outline some of the specific intervention strategies that were used by the counselor to address issues related to educational hegemony and the ensuing symptoms of traumatic stress manifested by Jackson in the case study presented above.

Multi-Level Model Level 1: Individual

At the individual level, the counselor assessed the behaviors described and provided interventions to assist Jackson in developing coping skills in the classroom and within the school. The counselor met with Jackson in weekly counseling sessions to discuss the feelings he had about his school experiences in general and how these experiences contributed to his in-class behaviors. The counselor followed up on Jackson's statements that his teachers didn't care about him or believe in him, as well as the other Black students in the school. In discussing his feelings related to these school encounters, Jackson pointed out that he had heard teachers refer to him as a "bad student," who is viewed as capable of doing well in school but generally not caring about the quality of work he does in school. He also reported that he noticed that the African American students tended to be in remedial coursework instead of advanced coursework.

First, the counselor sought to acknowledge Jackson's experiences within the school setting and identify how these might be linked to his disruptive and disengagement behaviors. As discussed, marginalization may lead to traumatic stress, which may in turn lead to such behaviors. However, this connection may be outside of the student's awareness. To accomplish this counseling goal, the counselor asked Jackson to describe what occurs during the typical day at school. Responding to the counselor, Jackson described school as being a "scary" place to be because he never knew what to expect from teachers or administration. From his perspective, Jackson indicated that he believed he was thought to be a "trouble maker" and "bad" by most teachers, administrators, and many students at school. When asked how those perceptions made him feel he stated that he felt hurt because the students didn't think of him that way until the teachers started describing him as being a "problem student" in his classes. Jackson had also heard several teachers and administrators make informal negative comments make about him the halls. He also said that he was rarely recognized for the good things he did like "turning in my homework on time and making good grades. So I simply started to give up and stop doing

those things. It just isn't worth it anymore." He reported that his African American friends at the school had similar experiences, and that he felt angry and discouraged.

Jackson's description, as well as discussions in following counseling sessions, was consistent with the counselor's hypothesis that Jackson felt marginalized and was reacting through disruptive or inattentive behaviors. The counselor first focused on acknowledging the validity of his feeling of being disliked and ignored in school before moving onto developing more adaptive behaviors and coping strategies so that he could be successful in school. She acknowledged that many of his school experiences contributed to the negative behaviors that led him to get into trouble with his teachers. It is critical that while coping in the immediate context is important, counselors should not minimize or ignore students' experiences of injustice; counselors must be acknowledge these experiences as real and emphasize that injustices should and will be addressed by the counselor and others.

Next, focusing on Jackson's strengths and resilience (Keller-Dupree, 2013), the counselor asked Jackson to identify anything or anyone positive that he might use as a resource to cope with the stress of the school day. Jackson listed reading books and recess as things he enjoyed about school. The counselor then explored how he might focus on stories from his favorite books or how he felt during recess to help reduce anxiety during negative interactions with his teachers. The counselor then role-played a situation where Jackson was encouraged to use ideas he learned from previous readings to cope with the various stressors he experienced in school. When participating in these role-plays with Jackson, the counselor repeatedly emphasized that, while he will not be able to control the actions of teachers, he can control how he reacts to these actions and how they impact school performance. She emphasized his ability to be resilient despite obstacles and shared some books with him that featured this theme. She also told Jackson that she would work with his teachers and parents to address the treatment that he was receiving. She reiterated that that while she was helping him cope, she wanted to serve as an advocate for him to improve the conditions of the school environment.

Multi-Level Model level 2: Teacher

This level in the Multi-Level Model includes assessing for cultural inclusion within the classroom via classroom lesson plans, assessing for student participation with all students in the classroom, and assessing for the use of multiple learning modalities that would allow all students to learn within the classroom. Using observation and discussion with the teacher regarding goals for each week's lesson and overall goals for students, the counselor can provide feedback to teachers in the classroom to aid in increasing cultural competence within the classroom setting and therefore decreasing hegemonic practice. The counselor scheduled a meeting with Ms. Beverly (Jackson's teacher) to discuss the possibility of the counselor conducting additional classroom observations when Jackson is both in and out of class. During her meeting with the teacher, the counselor also sought to investigate what Ms. Beverly perceived as the main issues regarding Jackson's behavior and what steps she thought were needed in order to improve his behavior. Classroom observations performed while Jackson was in class were used to gain information about the specific behaviors presented during class time and to observe Ms. Beverly's reactions to the behaviors presented. Observations performed when Jackson was not in the classroom provided information about the classroom environment without the reported behavior and to observe whether there were changes in Ms. Beverly's classroom management

style or noticeable differences in her teaching without Jackson being in the environment. Both types of observations allowed the counselor to observe a typical day in the classroom since observations were conducted at different times of the school day and on different school days. This helped the counselor gather an accurate picture and to compare information being reported by the teacher and student with what was observed. In addition the counselor was able to see how Ms. Beverly handled disruptive behaviors with various students and student reactions to perceived disruptive behavior over a period of time and during different times of the school day.

Particular attention was paid during classroom observation to cultural factors within the classroom. This included differential treatment by the teacher or by other students that might indicate stereotyped threat or unconscious biases. For instance, observations would show if reactions and disciplinary actions are similar when a White student speaks out of turn as when an African American student speaks out of turn. Noting such differences, the counselor could then dialogue with Ms. Beverly about her observations so that the teacher could become more aware of her own biases and the impact on her teaching and classroom management. Emphasis would be placed not on shaming, but on developing more cross-cultural and social justice awareness that could allow Ms. Beverly to have more favorable outcomes with marginalized students. To increase Ms. Beverly's cultural competence and efficacy with diverse students, the counselor would introduce multicultural education strategies, such as incorporating positive images and content about diverse cultures into classroom visuals and lessons. Culturally relevant pedagogy might also include having children bring in family artifacts from home and sharing these items with classmates (Tatum, 2007).

To address the specific problem behaviors Ms. Beverly had identified for Jackson, the counselor asked questions that focused on the classroom environment. Was there something within the classroom environment that might trigger Jackson's behavior? What in Jackson's behavior triggers certain reactions from Ms. Beverly? What interventions had the teacher tried and how had they worked or not worked? The counselor and teacher then discussed ways that Ms. Beverly could achieve the desired behavior from Jackson without large amounts of time spent on redirection and major disruption of other students. Some of the recommendations given to Ms. Beverly based on the dialogue included the use of multicultural education strategies as mentioned above. By dialoguing about the reasons behind Jackson's behavior, the counselor was able to identify that a particular student in the class seemed to upset Jackson. The teacher had continually instructed Jackson to ignore this student, but the counselor noticed that the student appeared to intentionally provoke Jackson. The teacher agreed to experiment with seating Jackson away from this student and also addressing the provoking behaviors of the other student when they were observed.

The teacher and counselor also focused on prevention of disruptive or disengagement behaviors using the multicultural/social justice perspective. For instance, the teacher could create leadership opportunities within the classroom and rotate these opportunities among the students. This would create a sense of equity and pride among all students in the class. Furthermore, a variety of modes of learning that include group work and movement could also benefit students from diverse backgrounds. Including movement would allow children to direct additional energy in a positive direction, instead of becoming disruptive.

Multi-Level Model Level 3: School

At this level in the model the counselor reviewed the culture of the school and staff to increase cultural competence and equity throughout the school setting. Though the school is composed of a varying cultural groups in the school staff and administrative leadership, the counselor is specifically looking at whether the school has programming that is responsive to the cultural make-up of the school, such as cultural history programs, character education for students that discussed cultural differences, and programming that allowed parents from various cultural backgrounds additional support (e.g., partnerships with community cultural groups, bilingual interpreters). The counselor found that other parents and students of color had reported similar experiences with school teachers and administrators that led them to feel the school was not culturally responsive to the needs of parents in regards to programming and sensitivity. The counselor had also noted there was consistent underachievement among culturally diverse students in the school. As such, to the counselor intervened on a school-wide level in order to address the need for systemic change (Crethar, 2010; Green et al., 2008). The counselor proposed the development of a school-wide diversity initiative that would allow teachers, administrators, and staff the opportunity to increase their cultural competence and effectiveness with diverse students. Ideally, parents would be incorporated as well. This included conducting in-services for parents, teachers, and staff that focused on ways to be responsive to culturally diverse parents and students, and conducting parent-teacher meetings and school meetings that were specifically geared to answer any questions the parents had regarding their children and any suggestions they had to increase cultural sensitivity and inclusion among the parents, teachers, and staff. Using these interventions the hope of the counselor was to get everyone to feel included and a part of the schooling process of their children, and to eliminate the feelings of negative interaction expressed by the parents, teachers, and staff.

Second, the counselor began to examine the referral and tracking practices of students to the counselor that took place in order to identify embedded hegemonic practices that may underlie the racial disparities in achievement. The counselor explored the process by which students are referred for special education or low-ability tracking. She focused on accurate conceptualizations, including the differentiation between traumatic stress and other problems. She proposed the inclusion of interventions that focused on a strengths based approach and cultural inclusion to see if it change the assessment of the child by the teacher prior to concluding that a student had low-ability or another problem. Some of the interventions included providing the teachers with alternative learning modalities that are response to various cultural backgrounds, looking at alternative ways to test the knowledge base of students, and looking at alternative ways to get students to participate in leadership opportunities in the classroom.

Multi-Level Model Level 4: Family

In addition to her individual work with Jackson, the counselor was committed to addressing the various forms of educational hegemony that characterized the school environment and conceptualized multiple levels of interventions to address these complex traumatic symptoms by including interventions with Jackson's family. As part of the family intervention, the counselor spoke to Jackson's mother and father about their son's as well as their own experiences with the staff at Jackson's school.

Upon learning that Jackson's parents experienced a pattern of negative interactions when

meeting with their son's teachers and various school administrators to discuss their concerns, the counselor reframed the discussion along a social justice perspective. In doing so, the counselor emphasized two points. First, she acknowledged that Jackson's parents repeatedly stated that, while they felt frustrated by the school personnel's reactions, they wanted to help Jackson behave appropriately in the classroom so that he could be successful. They also indicated that, as his parents, they felt responsible to ensure he behaved appropriately and to support the teacher's instruction of her class.

Second, the counselor summarized a number of issues that the parents accurately identified as contributing to Jackson's behaviors. The counselor affirmed Jackson's parents' concerns regarding their negative interactions with school personnel. The counselor expressed her commitment to advocating for parents to have positive interactions at the school and to promoting the school personnel's cultural competence and awareness of personal bias. She acknowledged that there are often misunderstandings or unconscious discrimination between schools and parents and students of color.

The school counselor proceeded to talk about the important role that parents and mental health professionals play in jointly advocating for the rights of their children and clients. With this in mind, the counselor encouraged Jackson's parents to join with her in collectively brainstorming how such advocacy efforts could be implemented to not only assist Jackson in being less disruptive at school, but also to target specific ways to lobby support for changes to be enacted among the teachers and administrators themselves.

A number of issues emerged as the counselor and Jackson's parents continued their discussion in their meeting together. First, the parents indicated that Jackson's problems reflected a pattern since he was in kindergarten. This pattern was characterized by Jackson getting positive feedback during the first part of each year he attended Harmony Elementary School, followed by a significant decline in his academic achievement and an increase in disruptive behaviors as the school year continued. Second, Jackson's parents explained that they noticed that many of Jackson's friends (all of whom were also African American children) experienced similar school-related problems as their son.

After listening to Jackson's parents discuss the two points described above, the school counselor encouraged the three of them to discuss strategies that they could use to: [a] assist Jackson in making changes that were aimed at reducing his disruptive behaviors in his classes and [b] advocate for changes that could be implementing by Jackson's teacher (Ms. Beverly) as well as school-wide changes that would result in an increased understanding, respect, and implementation of different teaching and learning strategies that more effectively complemented the values and worldviews African American students brought to school.

The counselor was interested in empowering Jackson's parents to take a lead role in ensuring that their son, and other students, received a quality and equitable education. The counselor worked with Jackson's parents to develop ways they could become advocates for his education. First, Jackson's parents were encouraged to participate in a meeting with other parents whose children were experiencing similar problems to discuss recommendations for changes with the school administrators. Jackson's parents and the counselor also discussed how they

might plan a meeting with other African American parents, and other parents of color, to discuss the need for a greater level of social justice to be manifested in the way their children were being educated at the school. The counselor introduced the idea of culturally competent teaching practices that have been shown to be more effective with diverse students. After hearing about these practices, Jackson's parents decided to learn more about specific cultural competencies in teaching and discussed ways of sharing this knowledge with other parents as they advocated with individual teachers. The search for knowledge on multicultural education practices also engendered the desire to advocate for a school-wide multicultural and social justice training. This training would be pursued by gaining support from the school principal to have the entire staff at the school participate in a series of workshops on how to address the common problems that are associated with educational hegemony that in turn contribute to traumatic stress for many students in marginalized and devalued groups. Parent involvement in this project could also lead to the entire school community working together to increase the achievement of all students, as well as increase family-school collaboration that is of concern to educators.

Multi-level Model level 5: Community

Finally, the counselor or psychologist can explore additional options for support of students of color through community resources as well as identify hegemonic practices that may be occurring in the community as a large. Counselors and psychologists can connect students and their families to community resources that are intentionally designed to support students of color in developing positive and meaningful relationships with peers and adults both inside and outside of the school setting (Moore, Ford, & Milner, 2005). Also creating community relationships that serve as a bridge between the child, family, school and the community that promote culturally competent practices and highlight the experiences of systemic oppression and aid in helping those impacted to not internalize experiences as personal shortcoming or attacks. Furthermore, peers and community mentors can share strategies that have helped them be resilient to the pain and distress associated with discrimination. Students can benefit by receiving support as well as a "road map" for navigating and externalizing the daily experiences of prejudice. Programs allowing both mental health professionals and educators to collaborate about practical strategies they can employ together to address the complex problem of educational hegemony and the traumatic stress that many children experience when subjected to this social injustice could result in many positive outcomes (Paternite, 2005). By introducing programming that is culturally relevant to the students being targeted for school-based services would help to maintain students' interest in their education and contribute to their personal as well as intellectual development. Also, as numerous researchers have noted, advocating for school administrators to support the implementation of more culturally responsive programs in schools fosters a greater level of trust and positive rapport between culturally diverse students, their families, and school personnel (Fusick & Bordeau, 2004).

Conclusion

Traditional school services suffer from a lack of utilization of multi-level programs that support youths who are at-risk for academic failure. The alternative education programs used are designed to meet the individual needs of students at risk for failure academically, not specifically the needs of the family members of the student (Foley & Pang, 2006). School counselors are well-positioned to develop and implement a broad range of individual, family, and school change

strategies that can help diverse students overcome barriers and realize their educational and personal potential, as well as to transform these barriers (Crethar, 2010). However, to effectively implement such services, counselors and other school-based and mental health practitioners need to acquire the multicultural counseling (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992) and social justice advocacy (Lewis, Arnold, House, & Toporek, 2003) competencies that are outlined and endorsed by the American Counseling Association.

Having acquired these competencies, practitioners are better able to foster individual, family, and school-wide changes that help to ameliorate the complex problem of educational hegemony and the ensuing traumatic stress that many students in marginalized cultural-racial groups encounter in school settings. Culturally competent, social justice-oriented school counselors can help to achieve the above stated goals in various ways. For instance, they can create school-based programs that help students to develop effective coping skills and overcome negative peer pressure that not only contributes to the achievement gap, but affirm many teachers' and administrators' stereotypic thinking about the personal, familial, and cultural deficits of these students.

Continued disparities in achievement for socially marginalized students indicate the need for innovative approaches that address not only individual problems, but the larger, systemic factors that create barriers to achievement and wellness. Finally, the case study that presented in this article illustrates how counselors and psychologists working in school settings may benefit for using a conceptualization framework that incorporates and understanding of traumatic stress and educational hegemony. The case study describes how educational hegemony can result in traumatic stress among school-aged youths which result in disruptive behaviors requiring the attention of school counselors and gives guidelines for addressing this complex form of social injustice to reduce disruptive behaviors that are linked to children's traumatic stress reactions. The use of such a framework incorporates advocacy into the role of the counselor, while also providing culturally appropriate individual and family services.

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