

Aspiring Social Justice Ally Identity Development: A Conceptual Model

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Individuals who are supportive of social justice efforts are not always effective in their anti-oppression efforts. Some who genuinely aspire to act as social justice allies are harmful, ultimately, despite their best intentions, perpetuating the system of oppression they seek to change. Different underlying motivations of those who aspire to be allies can lead to differences in effectiveness, consistency, outcome, and sustainability. The conceptual model presented here, using underlying motivation to frame the different issues and challenges facing those who are aspiring allies, is offered as a tool for student affairs professionals' self-reflection and developing students as allies for social justice.

The conceptual model presented here is intended to help inform aspiring allies and student affairs professionals seeking to develop social justice allies how individuals who already support diversity and social justice view what it means to be an ally. Conceptualizing these various identities can help student affairs professionals understand why some allies are effective, consistent, and sustainable where others are not and build on these good intentions to develop more effective allies. After first discussing the role of social justice allies in higher education and student affairs, the author explores the emerging schol-

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arship on ally development and relevant theoretical support for this conceptual model. A framework for understanding aspiring ally identity development, including three developmental statuses of aspiring ally identities, is presented along with considerations and applications for student affairs practice in higher education.

Role of Social Justice Allies in Student Affairs

Systems of oppression operate on individual, institutional, and societal levels through conscious and unconscious actions and beliefs to exploit some individuals or groups and benefit others based on membership or perceived membership in social groups, including but not limited to race, gender, sexual orientation, class, religion, and ability (Bell, 1997; Hardiman & Jackson, 1997). As a result, members of dominant social groups (e.g., men, Whites, heterosexuals) benefit from unearned privileges given in the form of *unearned entitlements*, things everyone should have, and *conferred dominance*, things no one should have (McIntosh, 1988). Examples of these privileges include a heterosexual couple's ability to show affection in public without fear of harassment or assault or an able-bodied person not having to worry where the curb cuts are located when traveling across town or across campus. These unearned privileges are granted not as a result of merit, hard work, talent, or accomplishment, but rather as a result of the inequitable systems that award these privileges to some and not others based solely on social group membership.

The system of oppression not only influences students and institutions of higher education, but as social institutions colleges and universities have also been instrumental in perpetuating and maintaining the system (Kivel, 2002). Student affairs professionals committed to social justice education seek not only to develop their own critical consciousness and change oppressive systems within their educational institutions as transformative educators (Rhoads & Black, 1995), but also to educate students to engage in societal transformation towards a vision of social justice.

Until recently, explorations with regard to social justice in student affairs have focused on either the experience of members of subordinate groups who are targets of the system of oppression or the oppres-

sive attitudes and behaviors of those from dominant groups who are agents of the system, often unknowingly and unintentionally (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997; Broido, 2000). A social service approach, focused on supporting those who are the targets of oppression, is essential and should continue to be advanced: however, encouraging a social change approach is also necessary to change the structures in institutions and society that perpetuate systems of oppression, making these social services necessary in the first place (Kivel, 2000). A social justice approach to education focused on social change (Adams et al., 1997; hooks, 1994) is in the best interest of all members of society, not just those who are from marginalized social groups and the direct targets of the system of oppression (Freire, 1972/2000; Johnson, 2001). For student affairs professionals, developing social justice allies is a key component of working towards social change. Broido (2000) built on earlier definitions (Washington & Evans, 1991) to define social justice allies as “members of dominant social groups (e.g., men, Whites, heterosexuals) who are working to end the system of oppression that gives them greater privilege and power based on their social-group membership” (p. 3). Allies engage in social justice efforts to reform or dismantle systems of oppression and strive toward a “vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure” (Bell, 1997, p. 3).

Emerging Scholarship on Ally Development

The emerging empirical and theoretical literature on ally development has primarily explored the factors encouraging or hindering individuals from dominant social groups to aspire to be social justice allies (Broido & Reason, 2005). This literature informs the conceptualization of the model presented here, which focuses on how those who already aspire to be allies can be more effective, consistent, and sustainable and how student affairs professionals can encourage this development.

Using a phenomenological approach to conduct and analyze interviews of college students who were identified by others as social justice allies, Broido (2000) discovered having precollege egalitarian values, gathering information, engaging in meaning making processes, developing confidence, and being presented with opportunities to act

as allies were critical factors in the development of social justice allies. Although all of the students in the study were willing to be allies and did so when asked or invited, none of them acted as allies until they were presented with an opportunity to do so. This study highlights the important role of the college experience in encouraging ally behavior, even among those who are already willing to be allies.

Fabiano, Perkins, Berkowitz, Linkenbach, and Stark (2003) explored the role social expectations play in an individual's willingness or reluctance to engage in ally behavior, particularly college men as allies for women with regard to sexual violence. In their survey of college students, the authors found that "the only significant predictor of males' willingness to intervene in a situation that might lead to sexual assault was their perception of other males' willingness to intervene" (p. 109). Fabiano et al. speculated that a social norms approach can be effective in encouraging college men to confront the comments and behavior of their male peers. The authors concluded that by accurately revealing other men's lack of support for sexist, objectifying, and violent behavior, individual men are more likely to intervene and confront these sexist messages. There is also conceptual support to explore this approach for other types of social justice allies (Berkowitz, 2003). By fostering a motivation to be an ally that is less dependent on the perceptions of peers, student affairs professionals could develop more consistent social justice allies.

Goodman (2000) identified empathy, moral and spiritual values, and self-interest as three main sources of motivation contributing to individuals' support of social justice and equity. In Goodman's "continuum of self-interest" (p. 1073), individualistic self-interest is about "me" and "my" interest, relational or mutual self-interest reflects a motivation to benefit "you and me," and an interdependent self-interest is focused on a broader "us." This continuum of self-interest illustrates the importance of underlying motivations in fostering different conceptualizations of what it means to be an ally.

Theoretical Background

Despite the emerging research on promoting students' desire to be an ally, there is little scholarship on the differing ways individuals aspire

to be allies. In this section the author discusses some of the conceptual and theoretical literature helping to inform student affairs professionals' growth as aspiring allies and foster development in college students supportive of social justice efforts.

Developmental Dimensions

Identity development is a process of becoming more complex in understanding personal, social, or professional identities (McEwen, 2003). The model presented here is developmental because the consciousness and understanding of aspiring allies increases in complexity and sophistication (Reason & Davis, 2005). The increasing complexities of underlying motivations are central to the developmental aspects of this model. Development from self-interest to altruistic to blended underlying motivation is not only central to an individual's desire to work towards social justice, but also key to influencing individual effectiveness in those efforts. The progression from dependence to independence to interdependence has been observed in Goodman's (2000) continuum of self-interest as well as other identity development theories (Helms, 1995; Kegan, 1994; Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen, 2005; McEwen, 2003; Wijeyesinghe & Jackson, 2001).

Cultivating Self-Interest

Although privileges as a result of hierarchical and oppressive systems are very real and may appear to only benefit members of the dominant group, ultimately the system of oppression also harms those from the privileged group as well (Brod, 1987; Freire, 1972/2000). For example, as a result of individual and societal homophobia a heterosexual man may find it difficult to form meaningful interpersonal relationships with gays and lesbians. On a deeper level, members of dominant groups may suffer a loss of authenticity and humanity as a result of their unearned privilege and dominant position in society (Freire, 1972/2000). Brod (1987) argues that members of the dominant groups are so deeply harmed by their often unwitting participation in a system of oppression, that they would ultimately be better off without the unearned privileges resulting from the system of oppression. Although there are many reasons members of dominant groups seek to dismantle the systems that grant them this unearned privilege,

breaking free from this pain and becoming “a worker in your own liberation” (Bishop, 2002, p 100), is a key step in becoming an effective, consistent, and sustainable ally.

Identity Development and Effectiveness, Consistency, and Sustainability

Due to the action-oriented nature of both leadership and social justice allies (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Reason, Broido, Davis, & Evans, 2005a), leadership identity also informs aspiring ally identity. Research on leadership identity development indicated that differences in leadership identity can result in differences in behavior, which in turn influence the effectiveness of leadership (Komives et al., 2005). In earlier stages of leadership development the individual may self-identify as a leader, although one may not be very effective at practicing leadership as it is defined by those at later stages of the model. Similarly, an individual may self-identify as an ally and be striving to do ally work but may be falling short by the definition of allies at later stages in the model or according to members of oppressed groups.

Since allies are part of dominant social groups by definition (Broido, 2000), it is helpful to examine the identity development of those with privileged social group identities. Using Helms's (1995) model of White racial identity development, student affairs professionals can begin to see how members of various privileged groups might begin to foster a sense of their social group identity influencing the individual's desire and effectiveness working to end oppression.

In Helms's (1995) first status, *contact*, one is naïve about the social and historical meanings of race and racism, may advocate color-blindness as a positive stance, and likely believes that People of Color can and desire to be assimilated into the dominant culture. At this status, the individual may aspire to be an ally and will likely define this as helping members from subordinate groups to conform and blend in without seeing the potential harm of such assimilation (Tatum, 2003). Someone acting from Helms's next status, *disintegration*, is just beginning to develop an awareness of different treatment as a result of racism, struggling with the dilemma of White privilege, which may

lead to anger at other members of the dominant group and the individual identifying as an ally. However, because an aspiring ally at this status does not fully recognize the systemic nature of oppression or one's own role in that system, guilt, anger, and anxiety associated with this increased awareness may result in paternalism and victim blaming. Helms describes the next status as *reintegration*. In this status, the person responds to the struggle and guilt of consciousness of White privilege with pride in White group membership, acceptance of the dominant cultures messages about race, and fear and anger towards other racial groups. As a result, an individual functioning from this status is unlikely to aspire to be an ally. Working through this anger, one may arrive at a highly intellectual understanding of race and racism, which Helms's (1995) identifies as, *pseudo-independence*. As the person begins to recognize the role Whites play, Tatum's (2003) "guilty White liberal" (p. 106) begins to emerge. This can be seen in many aspiring allies who attempt to separate themselves from others in a privileged group by their ally efforts. For example, a White student may vilify other White people's racism as a way of establishing his/her own credibility as a racial ally. The artificial aspects of this status are evident when those supportive of social justice causes acknowledge their own oppressive socialization (Harro, 2000) intellectually, but are unable to confront that socialization in a meaningful way and often respond defensively when others identify their own oppressive behaviors. When Whites are functioning from Helms's *immersion-emersion* status they have shifted from trying to change People of Color to trying to change Whites. When functioning from this status, people may be able to be effective allies in some instances, however, the lack of stability stemming from anger at other Whites and searching aspects of this status prevents them from consistently acting as effective allies. Individuals functioning from Helms's final status, *autonomy*, are centered and balanced in their White identity, which is internalized and no longer simply intellectualized. Because race is no longer a threat, alliances with People of Color are easier. An aspiring ally at this status is able to be a truly effective ally because one is able to work with members of the oppressed groups, eagerly seeks to understand one's own oppressive socialization as a means of liberation, and understands the complexity of the intersecting nature of all forms of oppression.

Identity Development of Aspiring Social Justice Allies

The following descriptions of Aspiring Ally for Self-Interest, Aspiring Ally for Altruism, and Ally for Social Justice and their developmental components (see Table 1) are offered as tools for student affairs professionals seeking to develop more effective, consistent, and sustainable allies in themselves and students. The following descriptions illustrate how different identities may influence a wide range of perspectives and behaviors significantly influencing an aspiring ally's effectiveness working against the system of oppression.

Ally for Self-Interest

Aspiring Allies for Self-Interest are primarily motivated to protect those they care about from being hurt. They often seek to be an ally to an individual with whom they have a personal connection rather than to a group or an issue, and see themselves as protectors who intervene on behalf of a specific individual from an oppressed social group, and frequently do so without consulting him/her. These individuals may or may not identify with the term "ally" but instead will see their behavior in relational terms, such as being a good friend or sister.

Because the focus is on protecting those whom individuals care for, these aspiring allies may be unlikely to confront overt acts of oppression when the people they care about are not present and may even join in the oppressive behavior because those they care about are not directly harmed. For example, a man may offer to walk a female friend to her car to ensure her safety. This man's good intentions are admirable and certainly helpful on an individual level, but unless he also recognizes the institutional and societal levels of support for violence against women he will be limited in his effectiveness as an ally and may even unknowingly be engaging in sexist behavior himself without realizing it. By working with this man to develop an understanding of the systemic nature of oppression, student affairs professionals can build on this man's good intentions, helping him to be a more effective ally.

Aspiring Allies for Self-Interest generally see the world as a fair and just place and are shocked and outraged that these exceptions still

Table 1
Aspiring Ally Identity Development

	Aspiring Ally for Self-Interest	Aspiring Ally for Altruism	Ally for Social Justice
Motivation	Selfish—for the people I know and care about	Other—I do this for them	Combined Selfishness—I do this for us
Ally to . . . Relationship with Members of Oppressed Groups	Ally to a person Working <i>over</i> members of the target group	Ally to target group Working <i>for</i> members of the target group	Ally to an issue Working <i>with</i> members of the target group
Victims of Oppression	Individuals with personal connection are or could be victims—my daughter, my sister, my friend	They are victims	All of us are victims—although victimized in different ways an unequally
Focus of Problem	Individuals—overt perpetrators	Others from the agent group	System
View of Justice	These incidents of hate are exceptions to the system of justice	We need justice for them	We need justice for all
Spiritual or Moral Foundation	I may be simply following doctrine or seeking spiritual self-preservation	I believe helping others is the right thing to do	I seek to connect and liberate us all on spiritual and moral grounds
Power	I'm powerful—protective	I empower them—they need my help	Empower us all
Source of Ongoing Motivation	Motivator (my daughter, my sister, my friend) must be present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependent on acceptance/praise from the other • Easily derailed by critique by other • Often leads to burn out 	Sustainable passion—for them, for me, for us, for the future
Mistakes	I don't make mistakes—I'm a good person, and perpetrators are just bad people	Has difficulty admitting mistakes to self or other—struggles with critique or exploring own issues—highly defensive when confronted with own behavior	Seeks critique as gifts and admits mistakes as part of doing the work and a step towards ones own liberation—has accepted own <i>isms</i> and seeks help in uncovering them
Relationship to the System	Not interested in the system—just stopping the bad people	Aims to be an exception from the system, yet ultimately perpetuates the system	Seeks to escape, impede, amend, redefine, and destroy the system
Focus of the Work	Perpetrators	Other members of the dominant group	My people—doesn't separate self from other agents
Privilege	Doesn't see privilege—wants to maintain status quo	Feels guilty about privilege and tries to distance self from privilege	Sees illumination of privilege as liberating and consciously uses unearned privilege against itself

take place in this day and age. They are able to see specific overt acts of discrimination, but cannot see the underlying pervasive systems of oppression. Aspiring allies may see acts of oppression as horrible and terrible acts perpetrated by bad or immoral people such as members of the Ku Klux Klan. This limited view of oppression makes it difficult for them to acknowledge, let alone take responsibility for, their own unintentional oppressive behaviors and role in perpetuating the system of oppression. These unwitting oppressive behaviors can be seen in students who use language like “that’s so gay” or “that’s retarded” without intending to marginalize gays and lesbians or people with developmental disabilities. The focus of Aspiring Allies for Self-Interest’s action is on stopping the “bad people,” perhaps overt and intentional racists or anti-Semites, but otherwise maintaining the status quo including their own, likely unacknowledged, privilege.

Aspiring Allies for Self-Interest are encouraged because they feel powerful and self-actualized when intervening on behalf of individuals they care about who are members of oppressed social groups and can become addicted to being a hero or rescuer and the praise that comes with that role. Because these aspiring allies do not consult with those who are oppressed, connect individual acts of oppression to a system, or acknowledge their own internalized oppressive attitudes and behaviors, they are likely to engage in behaviors they believe to be beneficial but that ultimately perpetuate the system of oppression harming those who the aspiring ally cares about either directly or indirectly. For example, a man may genuinely try to help a woman get a job, despite a history of sexist hiring by the employer, by telling her to dress nicely for the interview because that is her best asset, not realizing how he is demeaning and objectifying her.

By intervening in specific isolated instances of overt discrimination, one may be acting in accord with religious doctrine or seeking one’s own spiritual salvation by doing the “right thing.” Because of a lack of understanding of the systemic nature of oppression, efforts to address more institutional aspects of oppression are likely to be met with resistance by Aspiring Allies for Self-Interest and may even be labeled as discrimination such as “reverse racism” or “the homosexual agenda.”

Aspiring Allies for Self-Interest are often openly accepted for their good intentions without considering the ways they may perpetuate the

system of oppression or quickly dismissed or demeaned as potential allies. A developmental approach would view these good intentions as an opportunity to work with these individuals to develop more effective, sustainable, and consistent allies. By understanding where these individuals are coming from and the developmental dimensions along which their growth as aspiring allies can develop, student affairs professionals offer developmentally appropriate interventions and support to encourage growth and learning.

Aspiring Ally for Altruism

As an awareness of privilege begins to develop, seeking to engage in ally behavior as a means of dealing with the guilt becomes a primary underlying, often unconscious, motivator for Aspiring Allies for Altruism. For members of dominant groups, recognition of the systemic nature of their privilege and oppression “often generates powerful emotional responses in students that range from guilt and shame to anger and despair” (Tatum, 1992, pp. 1–2). This guilt is useful for a time as it can help move those with privilege from an intellectualization of oppression to an emotional connection. However, guilt cannot be the sole motivator, as guilt alone does nothing to change the systems granting privilege to some and oppressing others (Kimmel, 2003). With regard to racism, Tatum (2003) refers to this as the “guilty White liberal” (p. 106). At this status, aspiring allies see the system intellectually, but focus on other members of the dominant group as the real perpetrators. By vilifying other members of their dominant group, aspiring allies distance themselves from others in the agent group in an attempt to minimize the guilt stemming from their increasing awareness of unearned privilege.

When confronted with their own oppressive behaviors, they may become highly defensive or have difficulty admitting mistakes in an attempt to maintain their status as exceptional members of the dominant group and manage the guilt associated with this newly acknowledged privilege. For instance, a White woman working to end racism may be willing to acknowledge the possibility of her own racism intellectually, perhaps doing so as way of differentiating herself from other White people. She may also respond defensively if a Person of Color points out the racist implications of a term she used during a training

session, even defending herself by listing her “résumé” of anti-racist efforts as justification, rationalization, or explanation.

One means of managing guilt is to seek the role of “rescuer” or “hero” for members of the subordinate group. Aspiring Allies for Altruism see members of the subordinate group as the sole victims of oppression and do this work for them. The paternalistic nature of this altruism may lead to positive gains in the short term, but ultimately perpetuates the system of oppression by placing aspiring allies in the role of exceptional helper to the victims of oppression. This paternalistic approach may also unconsciously feed one’s own sense of power and privilege. Aspiring Allies for Altruism seek to empower members of the oppressed group, which maintains credit and some control in the person doing the empowering, rather than encouraging and supporting members of the oppressed group to empower themselves. This may be part of a spiritual or moral view that helping others is the right thing to do. Freire (1972/2000) explains that rationalizing “guilt through paternalistic treatment of the oppressed, all the while holding them first in a position of dependence, will not do” (p. 49). In this way, Aspiring Allies for Altruism fail to recognize that one “must speak *with* the oppressed without speaking *for* the oppressed” (Reason et al., 2005a, p. 1).

Burnout in Aspiring Allies for Altruism is common because of the energy needed to maintain their status as an exceptional member of the dominant group, denying to both self and others their own oppressive socialization, and a need for continued acceptance from the other. Because these aspiring allies do not see how members of the dominant group are also hurt by the system of oppression, aspiring allies view their efforts as selfless and altruistic efforts that should be welcomed with praise and approval from the subordinate group. In this way, aspiring allies’ guilt can become a liability, as members of the oppressed group are often sought out to reaffirm and support the aspiring allies, once again placing the burden of oppression on members of the subordinate group.

Many student affairs professionals may recognize themselves in the description of an Aspiring Ally for Altruism or recognize some of their most active and engaged students on issues of diversity. This desire to help members of oppressed groups is admirable in many ways and

should not be discouraged. This motivation has led to many excellent anti-oppressive efforts. However, this perspective does leave aspiring allies vulnerable to many obstacles and often limits them to simply responding to, rather than actively addressing, the systemic roots of oppression. Cultivating a selfish motivation to end oppression by encouraging an understanding of the way forms of oppression also hurt members of the dominant group, in addition to this altruism, can help aspiring allies transcend their guilt and begin to see their role working towards social justice in new and liberating ways.

Ally for Social Justice

Individuals acting as Allies for Social Justice work *with* those from the oppressed group in collaboration and partnership to end the system of oppression. The collaborative and systemic aspects of how aspiring allies view their role is congruent with definitions of social justice allies (Bell, 1997; Broido, 2000).

Allies for Social Justice recognize that members of dominant groups are also harmed by the system of oppression, although the harm done to members of dominant groups is not the same nor comparable to the harm done to subordinate groups. By working towards social justice, allies are seeking not only to free the oppressed but also to liberate themselves and reconnect to their own full humanity (Freire, 1972/2000). Accepting the reality and influence of privilege, Allies for Social Justice see escaping, impeding, amending, redefining, and dismantling systems of oppression as a means of liberating us all.

Rather than being allies to an individual (e.g., my friend, my sister, my roommate), these individuals are allies to issues such as classism, racism, or religious oppression (Kendall, 2006). Allies for social justice also see the interconnectedness of forms of oppression and recognize how limiting it can be to seek strategies addressing one form of oppression in isolation (Bell & Griffin, 1997).

As a means of monitoring their own unacknowledged oppressive socialization (Harro, 2000), these allies seek to develop systems and structures to hold themselves accountable and be held accountable by members of oppressed groups, without placing the burden for accountability on the oppressed (Kivel, 2002). Allies for Social Justice

connect and take responsibility for working with others from dominant groups, rather than seeking to separate from them, in an effort to bring about justice in the interest of all. From this perspective, ending oppression may be grounded in spiritual or moral principles and an effort to better connect all individuals, both oppressors and the oppressed, to restore individual and collective humanity and spiritual liberation.

This blended motivation to dismantle the system of oppression creates a sustainable passion for social justice that is not dependent on the praise and favor of the oppressed. Rather than being defensive, allies actively seek out critique, not only to be effective allies, but also as a means to realizing their own full humanity. Allies are open to feedback not only as a way of helping the other but also as a means to illuminate their own oppressive socialization and privilege, a necessary part of the ongoing process of liberating members of the privileged group from their own internalized dominant socialization. For example, instead of fearing that her own racism will be pointed out by her students and responding with defensiveness, a faculty member instead genuinely appreciates a greater consciousness of her racist socialization and as a result actively and systemically seeks out such feedback. If she is able to view this feedback as a gift, contributing to her own increased consciousness and liberation, she is likely to be more accountable to members of subordinate groups. This not only creates more sustainable and consistent allies but also allies less likely to unintentionally replicate the hierarchical power structures of the system of oppression.

Application

This conceptual model is intended as a tool for self-reflection and developing more effective allies. Several issues must be considered in the application of this conceptual model in student affairs practice, including the nonlinear and aspirational nature of aspiring ally identity development, distinctions between intent and outcome, consistent anti-oppressive action, and the problematic nature of self-identifying as an ally.

Considerations

Although this model is presented rather distinctly for clarity, individual experiences and real life applications are likely to be more fluid. As is common with identity development conceptualizations, this model is not intended to be a strictly linear or chronological model (Kegan, 1994). Helms (1992) describes White racial identity as a cylinder that fills or empties depending on the individual and environmental context. Like Helms (1995), this model uses *status* rather than stage or level to reflect this fluidity. Individuals who support social justice efforts likely hold each of these identity perspectives within themselves and may act from one perspective in one interaction and another perspective in the very next interaction, depending on complex internal and external factors. The goal of development is to foster a more complex and sophisticated consciousness that is more stable and less likely to regress or recycle through earlier statuses (Kegan, 1994). As a result of these constant changes in the individual and the environments, the Ally for Social Justice status is an aspirational identity one must continuously work towards.

For those who are the direct targets of oppression, underlying motivations may appear to be irrelevant; only the outcome of the behavior matters (Washington & Alimo, 2005). If someone acts in a way that works against the system of oppression, confronting a homophobic joke for instance, it may not matter what the underlying motivation is to the person who is a direct or even indirect target of that joke. As educators seeking to be effective allies and to develop effective ally behaviors in others, understanding underlying motivations alone may not be relevant, but understanding underlying motivations can be a strong tool to develop more consistently effective ally behaviors. The outward behavior and statements of supportive members of the dominant group may not differ significantly in specific isolated instances; however, there remain substantial differences in the long-term consistency. For example, if a heterosexual woman's underlying motivation is self-interest, and she acts to protect her gay male friend, she may not confront and may even join in the same homophobic behavior when her friend is not around because he is not directly threatened. However, if she is acting from a blended motivation she will confront the behavior consistently because she understands how the homophobic joke harms her friend, all those who identify or are perceived

to be nonheterosexual, and heterosexuals including herself. This underlying motivation may not be articulated, consciously acknowledged by the aspiring ally, or even apparent to an observer. However, this consistency, or lack thereof, does significantly influence the effectiveness of individual efforts to work towards social justice.

The harm aspiring allies may unintentionally cause reveals the problematic nature of self-identifying as a social justice ally. The most credible and authentic naming of social justice allies is done by members of the oppressed group (Brod, Terhaar, Thao, Laker, & Voth, 2005). This model is not intended as a means for individuals to justify their self-declaration as allies. Instead, it is intended as a tool to help aspiring allies more consistently engage in the type of anti-oppressive actions that would result in members of the oppressed group identifying them as allies.

Intersecting identities should also be considered. Individuals who experience many privileged identities may experience their Aspiring Ally Identity Development differently than those who predominantly come from subordinate social group identities. If a Muslim man has never had an ally with regard to religious oppression, this may influence the type of ally he aspires to be with regard to sexism. On the other hand, if one has benefited from having many allies, this too may influence the way an aspiring ally frames his/her identity. This model may also help aspiring allies foster connections across oppressions. A man who has made great gains in being an ally with regard to sexism may be able to use this conceptual model to better understand his defensiveness and paternalism and help him to become a more effective ally on issues of ability, religious oppression, or class. By being conscious of the intersections of dominant and subordinate social group identities and the influence on ally development and behavior, student affairs professionals will be able to better foster student development as well as their own learning.

Student affairs professionals are cautioned that this conceptual model could contribute to an over-intellectualization in which an individual may be paralyzed to inaction by fear of making mistakes and not being the "ideal ally." It may also be tempting to use this framework to dismiss and demean students or colleagues aspiring to be allies, particu-

larly in a false attempt to establish one's own ally credibility. However, this framework is intended as a tool to foster an understanding of aspiring allies and the developmental components of their identity as a guide to offering more appropriate and effective interventions fostering learning and growth.

A Tool for Self-Reflection

This framing can be a helpful tool for student affairs professionals' self-reflection as aspiring allies. To better understand their own emotional reactions, encourage them to establish systems to hold themselves accountable, and strive to be the most effective, consistent, and sustainable allies they can be. Better understanding the motivations that may be underlying their aspiring ally identity may help student affairs professional recognize their own counterproductive ally behaviors, such as paternalism or defensiveness, and be a tool to foster a more effective social justice ally.

For example, a student affairs professional in campus recreation aspiring to be an ally for transgender students on campus may discover that her own underlying motivation is really about helping transgender students on campus. This framework may encourage this professional to explore how addressing the issues of transgender students on campus might benefit all members of the campus community, including herself. In doing so she may be able to foster a more sustainable motivation in the face of campus resistance. Perhaps a White staff member in campus activities is frustrated by criticism from Latino students on campus, particularly after he has advocated for more resources to support this increasing student population. Rather than being defensive and frustrated, a reflective practitioner may use this model to reframe this feedback as a gift, helping him to uncover his unconscious racism. Doing so not only helps him become a better advocate for Latino students on campus but also helps him liberate himself from his own racist socialization.

Developing College Students as Social Justice Allies

This framework can also assist student affairs professionals seeking to develop students as effective social justice allies. This model may help social justice educators understand how the individual sees oneself as

an ally. With this understanding, student affairs professionals may be able to implement more developmentally appropriate educational interventions.

For example, a resident assistant may ask for information about putting up a bulletin board about homophobia after one of her residents reveals that he is gay. However, the same staff member may not confront homophobic comments in other environments and has participated in telling some homophobic jokes during a staff retreat. This resident assistant may not be developmentally ready to explore how homophobia hurts heterosexuals, without first exploring the systemic nature of heterosexism. The resident assistant's supervisor may encourage her to think about how her comments may impact other gay, lesbian, or bisexual individuals; and how homophobia, including the resident assistant's own comments, affects an entire group of people, not just this one individual. If successful with this approach, the resident assistant may then be ready to be challenged to explore how heterosexual relationships are also limited by heterosexism and homophobia, fostering a more sustainable ally for social justice.

In another example, a fraternity committed to addressing rape on campus may offer to serve as escorts for women on campus after dark. Although this may be a helpful and welcome step, some may recognize the paternalist nature of these good intentions and the failure to address more systemic roots of violence against women on campus. The fraternity men may be encouraged to engage in discussions about the more systemic aspects of rape culture and patriarchy and how those systems also serve to harm the men and their organization. This could foster a deeper commitment and result in the men exploring the issues facing women more carefully including the fraternity's own sexist behaviors as individuals and an organization.

Conclusion

Student affairs professionals are often at the forefront of efforts to support students on campus from subordinate social groups as well as confront the negative oppressive behaviors of students from privileged social identity groups (Rhoads & Black, 1995). As student affairs

begins to also include a more proactive education for social justice approach (Kivel, 2000), the role of student affairs professionals in developing social justice allies has garnered increasing attention from conceptual (Reason, Broido, Davis, & Evans, 2005b) and empirical perspectives (Broido, 2000; Fabiano et al., 2003). The conceptual model presented here may serve as a framework for the identity development of aspiring allies for social justice, developing more effective and sustainable social justice allies among both student affairs professionals and students on college campuses.

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