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## Internationalization of Canadian Counselling Psychology: A Collaborative Endeavour Grounded in Social Justice Internationalisation de la psychologie du counseling pratiquée au Canada : une démarche collaborative fondée sur la justice sociale

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### ABSTRACT

During the Canadian Counselling Psychology Conference held at the University of Calgary in 2018, participants in a working group met to discuss the internationalization of counselling psychology and to articulate the ways in which the values of Canadian counselling psychology can inform international interactions. As an outcome of the working group process, the authors report on the themes that emerged: mapping the territory, movements and tensions, and challenges and opportunities. Taking these themes into consideration, the authors discuss the implications for researchers, educators, and clinicians in Canadian counselling psychology.

### RÉSUMÉ

Au cours du Congrès canadien de psychologie du counseling tenu à l'Université de Calgary en 2018, les participantes et participants d'un groupe de travail se sont réunis pour discuter de l'internationalisation de la psychologie du counseling et pour formuler des façons dont les valeurs de la psychologie du counseling pratiquée au Canada pourraient servir à informer les interactions internationales. Pour rendre compte de la démarche du groupe de travail, les auteur(e)s citent les thématiques qui en sont ressorties : cartographie du territoire, mouvements et tensions, et défis et opportunités. Considérant ces thématiques, les auteur(e)s discutent des implications pour les chercheurs, les formateurs, et les cliniciens œuvrant en psychologie du counseling au Canada.

Internationalization in the field of psychology is not a new idea, as is evidenced by a growing body of international research and by the numerous psychological associations that organize international conferences such as the International

Congress of Psychology (Douce, 2004; Marsella and Pedersen, 2004; van de Vijver, 2013). Internationalization has been described as a moral imperative to make psychology more inclusive and representative of the world's population (van de Vijver, 2013). As well, it has been observed that if we want our models and findings to be applicable outside the Euro-American context in which most published psychological studies have been conducted thus far, psychologists need to learn from populations and human experiences outside of Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD) societies (Heinrich et al., 2010).

While there is a broad and growing literature on the internationalization of psychology (e.g., Bullock, 2014; van de Vijver, 2013), most of this scholarship has emerged from the United States, whereas this working group was focused on the Canadian experience. Though the field of Canadian counselling psychology has a number of international counterparts, it is only in recent years that there has been a more comprehensive discussion of the internationalization of counselling psychology in Canada. Nonetheless, the focus has been on similarities and differences in counselling psychology training and practice across international contexts (e.g., Goodyear et al., 2018), with little attention given to how international collaborations might be constructed in ways to highlight the common values embedded in the discipline.

During the Canadian Counselling Psychology Conference held at the University of Calgary in 2018, participants were invited to join working groups on various topics related to the conference's overarching theme of advocacy. The goal of the working group entitled "The Internationalization of Counselling Psychology" was to discuss counselling psychology as an international discipline and to articulate the ways in which the values of counselling psychology can inform international collaborations. As an outcome of the working group process, the authors of this paper report on the themes that emerged from the working group discussions and present the implications for researchers, educators, supervisors, and clinicians in Canadian counselling psychology.

### **Working Group Analysis**

The working group consisted of nine members: five professors, one clinician in a university counselling centre, and three students. The members, though all affiliated with Canadian institutions, represented a range of races, nationalities, ethnicities, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, ages, and other social locations. The group met twice over the course of the conference for an hour and 30 minutes at each session. At the end of the conference, the discussions were reported back to the conference delegates. In writing this article, the authors drew from simple qualitative methods to analyze the notes that two note-takers had written during each of the working group meetings. Although we applied techniques from qualitative analysis, this article does not reflect a qualitative

study as the notes were a secondary source and not a verbatim transcript of the discussion. Nonetheless, together we identified the following themes: (a) mapping the territory, (b) movement and tensions, and (c) challenges and opportunities.

### **Mapping the Territory**

In the initial meeting, the group members tried to arrive at a common understanding and to articulate a definition of *internationalization*, so the first theme that is evident from this discussion was “mapping the territory.” Though a range of ideas came forth, there was some consensus about the notion that internationalization implies travel and crossing borders; the group understood these constructs as movement that is both geographical and conceptual. *Internationalization* was contextualized from the perspective of Canadian counselling psychology as active processes in which movement across borders is multidirectional. The purpose of these processes is knowledge creation, exchange, acquisition, and intervention, all of which may be happening simultaneously. We arrived at a loose consensus that those who engage in initiatives related to the process of internationalizing counselling psychology require reflexivity and reciprocity. As one participant stated, “How can we contribute to international movements but also let ourselves be influenced by what is happening?” This idea of multidirectional movement will be addressed in the next theme.

### **Movement and Tension**

Throughout the discussion, a recurring idea was the direction in which internationalization occurs and the tensions that are present in each direction of travel. The group discussed various types of movements, including Canadian academics and practitioners going to other countries, academics and practitioners who migrate to Canada, Canadian students travelling abroad, international students studying in Canada, and clinical interactions within and outside national borders. Regardless of the direction of travel, each comes with its own set of benefits and challenges.

Questions emerged that allowed us to examine underlying assumptions related to international work, making it necessary to consider the *who*, the *what*, and the *how* of crossing borders as counselling psychologists. The questions that emerged were: For what purposes is international travel deemed highly desirable or justifiable, and who has the freedom to pursue these objectives? In other words, *who* has the ability to move and *whose* knowledge is considered expert? Consistent with feminist social-constructionist theories (Sinacore & Enns, 2005), we were asking questions about power and privilege in relationship to the sharing of knowledge and the imparting of information. Next we asked: *What* places are perceived as lacking and in need of knowledge and *what* places are perceived as “rich” in knowledge? These questions attempt to address the assumption that the knowledge of one group is more valuable than that of another and therefore

can be imposed or imparted across contexts. Our final question was as follows: *How* are standards evaluated in different locations and across different cultural, scientific, and theoretical frameworks?

Throughout the discussion, the group considered how the presumed answers to the questions asked led to assumptions about obligations to offer and to receive knowledge, rather than bidirectional invitations to collaborate and to co-create knowledge. Group members expressed concerns that unless the underlying motivations for mobility and knowledge sharing are examined, those doing international work are likely to reproduce colonizing ways of thinking and behaving. These tensions are not unique to the idea of the internationalization of psychology, but rather they reflect ongoing tensions within psychology that have been articulated scholarship addressing feminist, queer, multicultural, and Indigenous concerns: as these scholars work to expand the boundaries around psychological knowledge (e.g., Arthur & Collins, 2015; Ginsberg & Sinacore, 2015; Stewart & Marshall, 2015).

### ***Canadian Academics and Practitioners***

The first movement we identified was that of experts travelling for short visits in order to disseminate knowledge. As a group, we considered the opportunities and privilege associated with this kind of experience. Canadian academics may attend international conferences or travel to other countries to collaborate with researchers who are doing similar work. Alternatively, practitioners may travel to provide training or to offer clinical, humanitarian, logistical, or consultative support.

When Canadian experts work in other national contexts, a number of tensions and challenges emerge. Central questions are: *What is considered expert knowledge and who gets to be an expert? Is expert knowledge always hierarchal? Are there numerous social locations in which expertise can be honed and valued?* For example, when we discuss the notion of being “rich in knowledge,” someone may have rich theoretical and research knowledge but not be rich in knowledge about the diversity or about the historical and political dimensions across social and cultural contexts in different geographical locations. The assumption of unilateral expertise does not promote the production of high-quality knowledge. Throughout this discussion, there was a general consensus that the construction of knowledge sharing needs to be bidirectional and culturally informed in order to avoid reproducing Western narratives of colonization as is discussed in the extant literature (e.g., Douce, 2004). In this way, international exchanges inform and benefit all parties.

Another tension discussed was related to the accessibility and applicability of the information counselling psychologists share when they cross borders—that is, the steps that need to be taken in order to make information accessible and applicable to the people within the country they are working in such a way that they

mitigate the risk of engaging in extractive and colonizing practices. For example, while scholars from North American universities are under pressure to publish in English-language journals with high impact factors, academic publications of this type may not benefit the collaborators and stakeholders who are literate in a language other than English. Collaborative partnerships are essential in order to ensure shared expertise is available in the languages collaborators speak so that they can avail themselves of the knowledge. As such, it is essential to develop genuinely egalitarian and collaborative partnerships to co-create programs and to articulate knowledge in ways that make sense and are useful to all.

Next, the motivations for engaging in international work were identified as an additional tension. It is essential for us as scholars and practitioners to reflect on whether we are motivated by a career-driven orientation to enhance our curriculum vitae or by a spirit of collaboration in which all parties benefit. Currently, internationalization is valued and doing international work affords status within institutions and within the field. The assumption that international work is more prestigious than local work can result in a self-centred approach whereby the pursuit of status blinds us to the necessity of creating truly inclusive and collaborative partnerships.

Researchers and practitioners who are oriented by counselling psychology values founded in strength-based, multicultural, and qualitative approaches may be better prepared to address the many tensions described above. This idea was reflected in some of the presentations at the CCPC conference (e.g., Minami, 2019; Wada & Suzuki, 2019) that discussed non-colonizing and reflective approaches to cross-cultural and international work. In addition, members of the working group posited that all academics and practitioners who travel outside of their familiar geographical and conceptual terrain can adopt an attitude of cultural humility (Hook et al., 2013). This concept implies that partners are considered full equals and that those who enter into a new context have the obligation to learn from their local partners about their conditions and needs and to take care not to impose a Canadian understanding or interpretation on these collaborations.

### ***International Academics and Practitioners***

A second theme that emerged from the discussions was related to foreign nationals migrating to Canada to conduct research or to practise. Similar to Canadians travelling abroad as discussed in the previous section, newcomers to Canada will need to be aware of the cultural context in which they are entering. However, given the discrepancy between Canada's immigration policies, which value highly skilled and educated immigrants, and the realities of the employment market, scholars and practitioners who move to Canada and who hope to stay face a number of often insurmountable challenges. For example, as is well documented in the literature, practitioners trained outside of Canada may not

have their credentials recognized by Canadian licensing bodies (e.g., Sinacore, 2017; Sinacore et al., 2017). As a result, they may be required to take university courses, complete supervised clinical hours, and pass qualifying and language fluency exams. These burdens may result in practitioners being unable to find employment, either in the short term or in the long term.

Scholars who come to work in academic programs in counselling psychology may find themselves in a similar situation. Academics often need to be registered as psychologists to be eligible to work in graduate-level counselling psychology training programs in order to provide clinical supervision to their students. In addition to trying to secure registration as psychologists, new academics are under pressure to write grants, to conduct research, to write journal articles, and to supervise students (often in a second language) in order to get tenure. Moreover, academics who chose or are forced to leave their country may find that their academic achievements are not recognized by hiring committees in Canadian institutions. As a result, immigrant professors who are employed or seeking employment and tenure in Canada face numerous disadvantages.

### ***Students: Canadian and International***

Students leave home to study for a range of reasons. Some students study abroad to work and learn in new contexts and to bring new knowledge back home. Others leave their countries of origin with the hopes of building a life in a new country and of pursuing a career as a counselling psychologist. Some of these students come from countries where counselling psychology is respected as a unique discipline (e.g., Taiwan and the United Kingdom), while others come from countries where it is not recognized. Each of these conditions results in different trajectories for students and warrants different responses from academic and clinical supervisors.

In Canada, accredited academic and internship training programs are bound by the accreditation standards of the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA). While accreditation, credentialing, and publishing criteria are created to assert and uphold standards that are meant to protect the discipline and the public, we acknowledged that they create a centralization of knowledge that operates in opposition to the kind of multilateral exchanges that we envision when thinking about internationalization. We observed that these kinds of centralized standards can serve as barriers to a free, open, and vibrant exchange of ideas.

Canadian accreditation standards identify five core content areas that are steeped in Western values: (a) biological basis of behaviour, (b) cognitive-affective basis of behaviour, (c) social basis of behaviour, (d) individual behaviours, and (e) historical and scientific foundations of general psychology (CPA, 2011). Working group members questioned whether these particular content areas are universally desired of all counselling psychologists, regardless of the identity of scholars or practitioners or of the context in which they work. Participants noted

that psychological research and training in Canada historically has excluded the perspectives of a diversity of scholars such as feminist, LGBTQIA2S+, racial and ethnic minorities, Indigenous, and those with disabilities, and as a result, research and training programs have not attended to the needs of the diverse communities they are part of and of the populations they represent. This issue was also raised during the National Summit on the Future of Professional Psychology Training in Canada, which was held in Montreal from May 7 to 9, 2019 (Ansloos et al., 2019; Mikail & Nicholson, 2019).

The discussion about accreditation and standards of training led the workgroup members to identify the tension between universal and local knowledge. There were reservations about assuming that what is taught in accredited programs is generalizable to all people and useful in all contexts. When working with international students or preparing domestic students to travel abroad, instructors and supervisors must consider different educational goals and career objectives. As well, they need to consider how knowledge may or may not be transferable across cultural contexts and how best to support students when adjusting to different learning environments. Students who travel to study have the potential to encounter different ways of thinking about the human experience through the discipline of psychology but risk being the bearers of a neo-colonial, unidimensional approach to psychology. As one student workgroup participant asked, “How do I bring the things I learned in Canada back to [my home country]? It’s important not to try to transport a ‘Westernized’ model, but to modify it to work with and for my culture.” The working group discussion highlighted the need to reconsider the meaning of “diversity” from an international perspective. While there are analogous diversity debates about competencies in North America, participants in the working group also acknowledged the fact that what diversity looks like in other countries may be very different from what it resembles in Canada. As one participant explained, for example, the legal and social context for gay and lesbian rights in Canada is very different than in countries where those identities are illegal. Thus, when training international students, academic and internship programs need to be cognizant of the fact that the North American diversity framework will not necessarily be directly transferable to their home contexts.

We mused that perhaps the discussion on standards in psychology education needs to expand from competencies based on Western theories to include knowledge produced outside of North America and the transferability of knowledge and skills that students can apply in a global context. Canadian programs might accomplish this transferability by considering international experiences in the admissions process, encouraging their students to attend international conferences, supporting students to engage in international research, developing a focus on international issues within the curriculum, and advocating for the internationalization of CPA’s accreditation standards.



### ***Clinical Interactions Within and Beyond Borders***

An emergent area of discussion within the working group was about practising counselling and psychotherapy across borders. Working group members identified the movement of clinicians travelling or relocating internationally to work as counselling psychology practitioners and of international students who intend to return to their home countries to work as practitioners. In addition, we discussed practitioners attending to the needs of clients with salient migration histories here in Canada. Working group members acknowledged that each type of movement requires attention to professional issues as well as multiple social, cultural, and political contexts.

Working group members noted that when clinicians prepare to work outside of Canada, they need to be aware of different regulatory requirements, the status of counselling psychology in the country they intend to practise in, and the potential limitations of their training and experience to address the needs of local populations. Cultural values are embedded in psychotherapy theories and therapeutic goals, and these values may or may not be shared in different contexts. While certain therapy modalities have become popular internationally, working group members had questions about whether it is always appropriate to export models of therapy that were developed in North America and in Europe outside of those cultural contexts. They questioned whether these models should be adapted and, if so, how.

Working group members identified particular examples in which the training received in accredited programs may not adequately prepare clinicians for international work, such as humanitarian interventions, which increasingly include psychosocial or counselling services. Some members wondered whether the time has come for counselling psychology programs to offer internationally based course content and internships to prepare students for internationally oriented careers and to provide a counselling psychology perspective that would counter the dominant global paradigm of mental health. Other working group members observed that many of these considerations are also relevant when providing counselling services to clients who have a salient migration history and to those who represent a wide range of social locations. They noted that the rich counselling psychology literature on multicultural counselling could inform clinicians practising in Canada or abroad and that clinicians can also learn from cultural psychology, community psychology, liberation psychology, anthropology, and human rights perspectives.

### **Challenges and Opportunities**

Over the course of the working group meetings, as we considered the multi-directional flow of people and ideas and the attendant challenges and opportunities, social justice was a unifying theme. We considered the potential harms of the globalization of psychology, if it is taken to mean exporting knowledge from



a perceived centre (for example, academic knowledge produced in English) in order to colonize the periphery. We also considered the harms associated with extracting and appropriating knowledge from other contexts and traditions. As previously indicated, many of the tensions and challenges discussed in this article parallel those identified by feminist, LGBTQIA2S+, multicultural, Indigenous, community-based, and disability scholars with regard to their work in their own North American contexts. As such, these questions and concerns are not new. Thus, as we turn our focus globally and expand the boundaries of psychological knowledge to articulate the broader complexities of human experience, the insights and strategies offered by feminist, multicultural, and social justice theories can be used to address the challenges and opportunities related to international work.

Working group members discussed the potential for Canadian counselling psychology to offer a unique perspective on internationalization. Canadian counselling psychology, by definition, espouses values that include taking strength-based, holistic, and person-centred approaches while upholding the value of human equality and attending to a range of socio-cultural factors (CPA, 2009). Counselling psychology has defined a self-reflexive and non-judgmental stance such that relating with others promotes open and honest dialogue across differences. Counselling psychologists uphold the ideas of cultural humility and of being open, respectful, and self-reflective non-experts in relation to another's identity, life experiences, and moral values (Foronda et al., 2016). To this end, the group discussed the importance of plurality and respect. The group identified the need to recognize a plurality of rich and living cultural traditions that seek to understand the human experience and to have concepts related to well-being and what constitutes a good life. Counselling psychology offers values around relationship, belonging, and identity, and it constructs knowledge and interventions that seek to promote healing.

There is a rich history and tradition of social justice and human rights scholarship and practice within counselling psychology (Enns & Sinacore, 2005; Ginsberg & Sinacore, 2015). Members of our group referred to this history as an important foundational framework for any movement toward internationalization. For scholars and practitioners seeking to undertake international work, it is essential to understand the current moral and political debates within and across national contexts in order to be cognizant of potential sources of oppression and marginalization as well as the binaries and vulnerabilities they create. Thus, the process of internationalization invites us to move toward a praxis of psychology that is more intersectional and informed by social justice.

Members of our group expressed how much they appreciated having the time and the space for this long, wide-ranging, and exploratory conversation. Many of us acknowledged that these kinds of conversations are rare but necessary. We shared a sense that we want more time to think together, to build collaborative

relationships, to receive support, and to offer mentorship so that we can influence the movement toward internationalization. Participants wanted to identify opportunities and locations within Canada in which collaborative approaches to internationalization could be developed. They noted, for example, that while international psychology conferences do exist, the typical format is such that individuals or groups present their papers to other delegates in a manner that promotes “dissemination” but does not necessarily foster collaborative engagement. Moreover, international psychology conferences do not necessarily have representatives from counselling psychology, nor do they lead necessarily to dialogues related to social justice.

As a result of these conversations, members of the working group proposed developing a forum in which global conversations about the internationalization of counselling psychology could occur. Though a number of models on how to develop this forum were discussed, the goal would be to facilitate the development of community and of international partnerships and to facilitate dialogue about collaborative, egalitarian, inclusive, non-colonizing, and contextually relevant clinical, research, and training practices. The forum would be a physical or virtual space in which practitioners and academics could consult about “best practices” in different international contexts so that work within Canada and abroad can attend to the complexity of the diversity with and between national and global contexts.

### **Implications for Counselling Psychologists**

The ideas that emerged from the working group discussions have clear implications for researchers, educators, practitioners, and clinical supervisors. Though there are intersections between these implications, especially given that many counselling psychologists are in multiple roles, we have articulated them as separate ideas for ease of understanding.

#### **Research**

In their review of the extant literature addressing counselling psychology research, Domene et al. (2015) acknowledged that research requires epistemological and methodological diversity to address adequately the rich questions and multiplicity of populations with which we do research. Methodological diversity includes the use of quantitative, qualitative, and action research methods, which are essential to accessing information and to understanding human behaviour that otherwise is not available through traditional deterministic approaches to research. In addition, incorporating counselling psychology values into the ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological aspects of the research we are conducting is vital to the development of inclusive, holistic, and culturally competent knowledge creation. Integrating counselling psychology into each of these components of research can guide the development of knowledge construction

and exchange initiatives that are egalitarian and accessible to all stakeholders. Thus, research development, design, and dissemination need to be reflexive, collaborative, and non-hierarchical while attending to cultural humility, diversity, and contextual factors. Research goals and outcomes need to be understood from the perspective of all parties involved such that different ways of knowing are valued and inform research processes.

As well, egalitarian practices of knowledge exchange need to be developed in collaboration with all stakeholders such that they promote multidirectional learning, which can challenge the conventional assumptions of cultural encapsulation. These practices need to go beyond dissemination in English through traditional peer-reviewed journals that are available only to English-speaking individuals who have access to a university library. For international academic partners, the language barrier is one consideration and the financial barrier is another, as the cost of annual subscriptions to journals is often prohibitive for institutions in developing countries. In order for travelling scholars to avoid imposing the institutional pressures they face on local partners, they can consider open-access publishing options. Domene et al. (2015) and others recommended disseminating research through other means, such as websites and YouTube videos. In addition, researchers could create podcasts or develop other creative outlets for their research such that the stakeholders and those whom the research impacts directly have access to what can be learned from the work. Nonetheless, regardless of the outlet for distribution, it is important that research products are co-constructed and verified by all constituencies prior to becoming public.

### **Academic Programs**

Much of the curriculum in graduate programs in counselling psychology is driven by the CPA's accreditation standards. However, the current standards give little attention to diversity, and the diversity standard is quite broad and difficult to interpret. The CPA's accreditation manual states that the "CPA is committed to reflecting the cultural and geographical diversity of Canada as well as committed to the scientific application of psychological knowledge to human development and functioning—the latter commitment which can know no regional boundaries" (CPA, 2011, ix). While this commitment is laudable, the abstract nature of this statement makes it difficult to interpret what is meant by the local commitment within Canada and by the universal commitment outside regional boundaries. Further, site visitors are asked to evaluate how diversity is taught and how it is represented among faculty and students, even though there are no clear guidelines concerning expectations with regard to didactic instruction, what is meant by diverse representation, or what is necessary for practical training (CPA, 2011).

Given their importance, it is essential that we evaluate standards in graduate training in the context of the internationalization of counselling psychology.

How can local and global forms of knowledge be integrated into the curriculum in such a way that Canadian values are not imposed on global knowledge? Simultaneously, how can we recognize the importance of local knowledge while valuing global knowledge? Can curriculum be constructed in such a way that cultural explanations about human development can be incorporated without imposing diagnoses of cultures that operate with values and of moral frameworks that challenge Canadian world views? In order to do so, programs can increase the attention they give to global mental health challenges identified by the World Health Organization such as poverty, violence, forced migration, discrimination, a lack of access to health care, a lack of access to education, unemployment, inadequate housing, crime, and poor nutrition. In our discussions of diversity both locally and globally, we asked how these factors are attended to in a respectful, humanizing, and culturally informed manner.

Accreditation standards aside, the curriculum needs to be inclusive of international perspectives. While developing an inclusive curriculum may be challenging due to the language of instruction, there are pedagogical practices that can be employed so that there are opportunities to analyze what is being taught and how it is being taught so that the curriculum does not reproduce colonization and marginalization. Historically, critical pedagogy (Freire, 1972) set the groundwork for developing non-oppressive pedagogical frameworks. Emerging from this work were multicultural, feminist, and social justice pedagogies. In counselling psychology, social justice pedagogy has become a framework that is commonly discussed. In their analysis of multicultural and feminist pedagogies, Sinacore and Enns (2005) proposed that social justice pedagogy has four dimensions. These dimensions include attending to (a) knowledge and the knower, (b) power and privilege, (c) empowerment and social change, and (d) that the personal is political. Applying these dimensions for curriculum evaluation may facilitate an analysis of what knowledge is privileged in the curriculum and what knowledge is missing. Developing curriculum through the lens of social justice pedagogy requires an assessment of who is identified as the knower (expert), who is missing, and whether there are a diversity of voices represented through readings, other learning materials, and guest lecturers. It also involves asking how power and privilege are addressed in classroom discussions as they relate to course content and curriculum development.

In addition to asking critically the above questions, attention needs to be given to poverty, violence, forced migration, discrimination, precarious housing, and other global challenges related to mental wellness and distress. As well, are global perspectives being presented and is there attention given to a diversity of orientations about mental health care? Does the curriculum address empowerment and social change such that attention is given to the social determinants of mental wellness and mental distress? Where is there a need for an understanding of resiliency versus a sole focus on dysfunction? In addition, is there a discussion

in the curriculum about how personal decisions have political implications, such that what is included and excluded in the curriculum has local and global political implications? Educators must ensure that the next generation of researchers and practitioners are trained to meet the challenges of a world that continues a rapid process of globalization.

### **Practitioners**

Practitioners “on the ground”—wherever that ground may be—are increasingly aware that health disparities can be caused or exacerbated by a lack of access to mental health services both globally and among racialized populations locally (McKenzie et al., 2016; Patel et al., 2014). Clinicians recognize that to respond appropriately to the needs of a wide range of groups of people, the services offered must be suitable and acceptable to the community in question. Practitioners must be cognizant of the fact that Western practices can be exported or imposed uncritically and that culturally preferred practices can thus be devalued, lost, or appropriated without sufficient understanding. Consequently, practitioners must be diligent in their evaluation of their work to avoid imposing Western ideologies on their clients or on their clients’ communities.

Across the discipline of applied psychology, practitioners are grappling with an awareness that internationalism matters and that finding answers about how it matters and about what to do in practice requires conversations that cross the boundaries that have been erected within the discipline. The feminist, multicultural, and social justice theories and therapies that have emerged from within counselling psychology are highly valued but not well articulated or integrated into the field. The values that have deeply informed Canadian counselling psychology—which include attention to therapeutic relationship, intersectionality, power and empowerment, collaborative practice, respect for clients’ lived experiences, cultural humility, and self-reflexivity—are the types of values members of the working group wished to see at the foundation of international mental health practices.

Although Canadian counselling psychology has important perspectives and skill sets to contribute, practitioners may build upon their cross-cultural and multicultural foundations by learning from Canadians in other areas of mental health practice such as cultural psychology (Ryder et al., 2011) or transcultural psychiatry (Kirmayer, 2012). For example, in day-to-day practice with individuals, the DSM-5 Cultural Formulation Interview is a tool that grew out of an international transcultural psychiatry collaboration aimed to understand illness experiences that are culturally relevant to patients and their families. Using this tool, counselling psychology practitioners working locally or internationally can deepen their qualitative understanding of their clients’ presenting concerns to inform their treatment plans (Lewis-Fernández et al., 2015).

As well, practitioners can benefit from considering human rights–based approaches to psychology (Huminuik, 2018; O’Connor et al., in press). Examples of how a human rights–based approach may be incorporated into clinical practice includes developing skills to assess the impact of human rights violations or participating in collaborations among psychological associations to advocate for human rights (Huminuik, 2017; Huminuik & Wyndham, 2020). Counselling psychologists can utilize advocacy skills to reach beyond their individual scope of practice and to address the systems-level changes that are needed to reduce disparities and to bring human rights and social justice values to the core of internationalization efforts in psychology.

### Conclusion

In sum, the discussions held by the working group members clearly identified important themes when considering the internationalization of counselling psychology. We have tried here to summarize those themes and to offer some next steps via a discussion of implications for researchers, educators, practitioners, and clinical supervisors. Interestingly, these discussions and the conceptualization of this article occurred before the COVID-19 crisis and the recently emerging protests against racism in North America. The social, economic, health, and other disparities that have been highlighted by the current situation (Sinacore & Kassan, in press) illustrate how essential it is for psychologists to move toward centralizing human rights and social justice theories and practices throughout their work, training, research, and professional development. Psychologists are uniquely positioned to take a leadership role to address the global mental health and societal challenges that we are currently experiencing due to the pandemic. Based on their stated values, counselling psychologists have a moral and ethical obligation to so do.

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