
special issue

Hearing Our Elders

Introduction to the Special Issue

The start of a new year ushers in new dreams and fresh beginnings all rooted in recollections of past successes, promised changes, and hoped-for outcomes. The uncertainty of the coming year's new challenges can also trigger mixed emotions. On the one hand, there is excitement in the possibilities of what can be accomplished. On the other hand, sailing in and navigating uncharted waters of alleged opportunities is reason enough to proceed with cautious anticipation. This special issue of the *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development (JMCD)* activates within the editorial board both fervency and zeal fueled by the launch of a new legacy series—Hearing Our Elders—and fly-on-the-wall curiosity regarding readership receptivity to this new portal to learning.

From this point forward, *JMCD* will publish ongoing articles in the Hearing Our Elders series. The purpose of this ongoing series is fourfold. First, the series illuminates the lived experiences of elders on whose shoulders the Association of Multicultural Counseling and Development, *JMCD*, and the current generations of counseling professionals—spanning from early career to seasoned—stand. The second and related intent is to invite celebration around lives well lived, both in service to others and in their commitment and dedication to advocating for significant and, in some cases, historic causes that no one person alone could take on. The best place to hide is in plain sight captures the spirit of the third purpose of this new series. Hidden within the complex coexistence of the self-focused and at the same time selfless lives that characterize our living legends are lessons learned, fresh insights, and new ways of seeing the world. If vision is the art of seeing what is invisible to others, then visionaries included in this series are deemed master artists. Finally, for those generations who are to come, the Hearing Our Elders series provides a way to document the stories—and histories—of luminaries who have shaped our lives, the field, and the way we approach ourselves and our profession. The hope of this series is to provide a continued archive of such voices so that new voices have an understanding of the context that has preceded them.

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For reasons that we hope will become clear, our first celebrated hero in the Hearing Our Elders series is the Honorable Congressman John Lewis. His leadership in the civil rights movement and front row position in the march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, in support of voting rights is both legendary and inspiring. In the up-close-and-personal portrait by William D. Parham and Caroline S. Clauss-Ehlers, Congressman Lewis shares his observations and thoughts regarding mental health and asserts a call to action for the profession.

Excitement about this special issue also spawns from the release of the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MSJCC; Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, & McCullough, 2015), which update and revise the Multicultural Counseling Competencies developed by Sue, Arredondo, and McDavis (1992). Manivong J. Ratts, Anneliese A. Singh, Sylvia Nassar-McMillan, S. Kent Butler, and Julian Rafferty McCullough's discussion of the MSJCC is additive to the existing literature and will likely serve as a catalyst for continued professional discourse. Rounding out this special issue, and complementing the inaugural Hearing Our Elders selection, are articles that invite consideration of traditional Mexican/Mexican American and perceived U.S. mainstream cultural values as predictors of thriving (Melissa L. Morgan Consoli, Jasmín Llamas, and Andrés J. Consoli) and consideration of acculturation, ethnic identity, English proficiency, and attitudes toward seeking counseling among Chinese international students studying in the United States (Jiaqi Li, Aretha Faye Marbley, Loretta J. Bradley, and William Lan), the latter of which is featured in *JMCD's* Global Perspectives series.

Compelling and dramatic 21st-century domestic as well as global, social, political, economic, and moral challenges represent stimuli for personal and organizational decision making. Key questions up for consideration and in need of reconciliation include "On which side will individuals and organizations align relative to the question of collusion?" and "Will individuals and organizations choose to collude with maintaining systemically structured status quo activities, or will they work together to dismantle sanctioned systems of inequity and injustice?" Because success may be viewed as a by-product of either choice, the only question really on the proverbial table is, "In what ways do individuals and organizations want to succeed?" Only time will tell! We hope that this special issue influences the response.

—William D. Parham, *Guest Editor* and Caroline S. Clauss-Ehlers, *Editor*

references

- Ratts, M. J., Singh, A. A., Nassar-McMillan, S., Butler, S. K., & McCullough, J. R. (2015). *Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies*. Retrieved from <http://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/competencies/multicultural-and-social-justice-counseling-competencies.pdf?sfvrsn=20>
- Sue, D. W., Arredondo, P., & McDavis, R. J. (1992). Multicultural counseling competencies and standards: A call to the profession. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 20, 64–88. doi:10.1002/j.2161-1912.1992.tb00563.x