

Individuals residing in urban communities are commonly plagued by income inequalities, unemployment, crowding, crime, physical decay, unstable housing, and social disorder. The combination of these social and economic influences typically gives rise to the sources of adversity that policy analysts are familiar with when analyzing the problems of urban blight and decay. We propose that the most effective solution to mitigate these widespread problems are anchored within the communities themselves.

Despite this potential to cultivate empowering relationships and long-term change, counseling scientist-practitioners rarely incorporate the design, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination of community-based interventions in practice and research. It is vital for interventions and mental health initiatives to acknowledge the importance of engagement and mobilization of resources, leaders, and stakeholders where people live, work, go to school, play, and develop in order to be successful. Thus, it is necessary to examine the processes, challenges, and opportunities involved with undertaking non-traditional, community-based lines of research to promote strength-based, collaborative, inter-professional services accessible to general population.

Previous research demonstrates both the ability for community-based interventions to facilitate mental health and prevention initiatives as well as multiple challenges. While the authors provide general advice concerning the cultural relevance of interventions and attention to target populations, the findings neglect to identify concrete methods to improve intervention effectiveness or understand why some programs are more effective or implemented better than others. Furthermore, a review of the literature revealed that several factors, including fidelity measures, dosage, and sustainability, were either not measured or not addressed.

The interventions examined in the current theoretical proposal include a wide range of psychosocial or psycho-educational services employed in a single- or multi-component program. These services may be delivered in multiple formats or modalities (e.g., workshops, coaching, mobile devices, consultation groups) across a host of settings (e.g., schools, homes, community centers, parks, non-profit agencies). We aim to identify ways multicultural counseling researchers can become more involved with the community-based interventions we review, discuss, and advocate in the current proposal. Through the adaptation of constructs and approaches to cultural competence to meet the purposes and goals of interventions that are still inherently psychosocial and relational in nature, the possibilities are boundless.