

Advocacy in Counseling Leadership

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Introductions



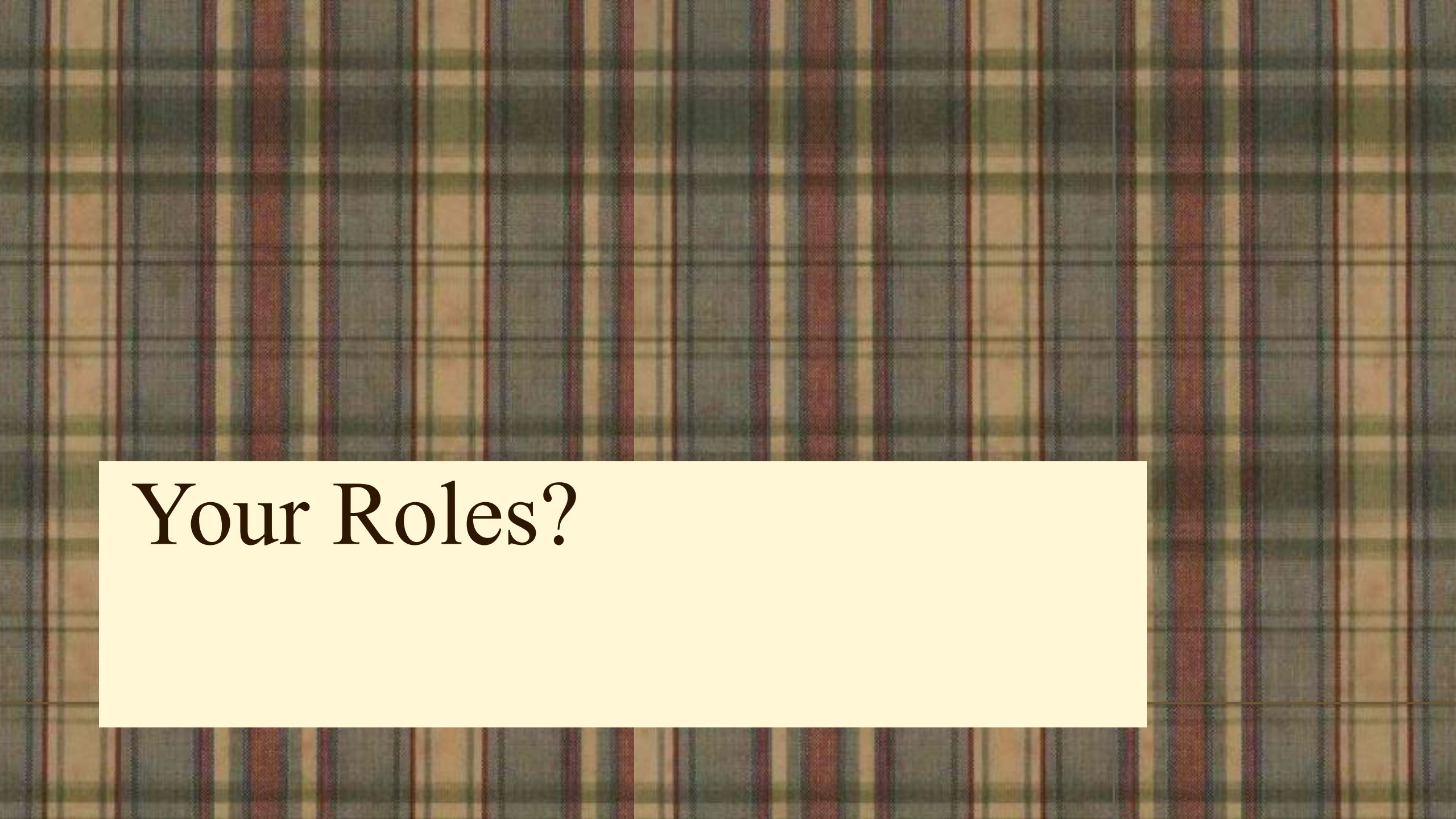
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University of Denver
2024-2025 SAIGE President



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Your Roles?

Learning Objectives

Participants will

1. understand the role of advocacy within the context of counseling leadership;
2. identify five key principles of effective advocacy efforts within professional counseling leadership;
3. apply principles of advocacy in leadership across contexts of counselor education, organizational counseling leadership, and clinical supervision.

A dark brown, multi-pointed starburst graphic with a white outline, containing the text "L.O. #1".

L.O.
#1

A dark brown, multi-pointed starburst graphic with a white outline, containing the text "L.O. #2".

L.O.
#2

A dark brown, multi-pointed starburst graphic with a white outline, containing the text "L.O. #3".

L.O.
#3

Agenda

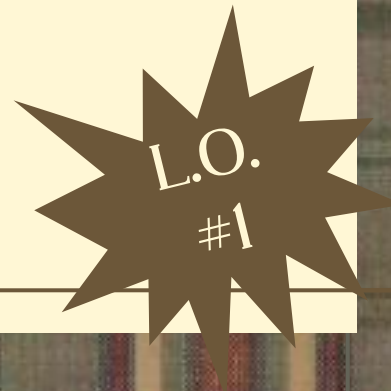
- ❖ Foundations
- ❖ Key Principles
- ❖ Cross-Context Application
- ❖ Skill-Building & Self-Awareness
- ❖ Comments & Curiosities
- ❖ References



Foundations

What is Advocacy in Counseling Leadership?

Use of influence, expertise, and ethical responsibility to promote systemic change



Guided by Competencies

❖ ACA Advocacy Competencies¹⁰

- ❖ Advocacy as a leadership ethic
- ❖ Empowerment as organizational culture
- ❖ Systems change as a leadership imperative

❖ AMCD MSJCC⁴ Counseling & Advocacy Interventions: Institutional

- ❖ Explore supportiveness of organizations
- ❖ Connect others with supportive individuals
- ❖ Collaborate with organizations
- ❖ Remove systemic barriers
- ❖ Highlight inequities

What is the role of
advocacy in leadership?

Obstacles to Advocacy in Counseling Leadership

Obstacles to Advocacy in Counseling Leadership

What obstacles have you faced
in your professional advocacy
efforts?



*a super-
exciting
brainstorming
activity!*

Obstacles to Advocacy

- ❖ Feels abstract (what do we actually do?)
- ❖ Fear
- ❖ Fatigue, isolation, lack of support
- ❖ Failures with advocacy/leadership training
- ❖ Lack of consistent, transparent, formal feedback mechanisms
- ❖ Resource deficiencies
- ❖ Lack of continuity within leadership vision/mission
- ❖ Absence of entire context

Key Principles of Effective Advocacy

Key Principles of Effective Advocacy

L.O.
#2

Self-Awareness & Identity⁵

How does your
identity inform
advocacy?

Example:
Reflective
practice

Systemic Understanding³

In which
system is
advocacy
needed?

Example:
Systems
mapping

Collaborative Relationships¹

How can you
engage in
coalition
building?

Example:
Activating peer
networks

Intentional Communication⁹

What
communication
method is most
impactful?

Example:
Storytelling or
use of data

Ethical Courage & Risk-Taking²

What is the
balance
between your
courage and
risk-tolerance?

Example:
Awareness of
risks

Case Example

❖ Context

- ❖ You're a new president of a state counseling organization.
- ❖ There is tension on the Executive Board over competing priorities.
 - ❖ Some members want to focus on licensure portability.
 - ❖ Some members want to focus on advocacy related to current social issues being addressed in state legislation.
- ❖ The competing advocacy priorities are causing division and disengagement. Stalling any action from the Board.

Self-Awareness
& Identity

Systemic
Understanding

Collaborative
Relationships

Intentional
Communication

Ethical Courage
& Risk-Taking

Self-Awareness & Identity

- ❖ Why do I see one issue as more urgent or important?
- ❖ What biases or identities might be influencing my approach?
- ❖ What lens do I bring to these issues?
- ❖ What communication would promote transparency and room for multiple truths?

Systemic Understanding

- ❖ What overlapping systems are at play? (political, professional, social?)
- ❖ How can I best understand how the systems interact with each other?
- ❖ How can I support reframing from either/or to both/and?

Collaborative Relationships

- ❖ How has trust been broken?
- ❖ How can engagement be promoted?
- ❖ How can we leverage our common ground?
- ❖ What aspects of our work promote collaboration? What aspects promote competition?

Intentional Communication

- ❖ How can I communicate with clarity and emotional intelligence?
- ❖ How can I humanize *both* advocacy areas through storytelling?
- ❖ What method of communication would best convey the message?

Ethical Courage & Risk-Taking

- ❖ How can I foster my own courage and decision-making?
- ❖ If isolated, who can I include to support the organization's needs?
- ❖ Am I connecting my actions to our professional commitment to social justice, equity, and liberation?

Cross-Context Application

Cross-Context Application



Case:

Advocating for culturally responsive curriculum in a resistant department

Considerations:

power dynamics,
institutional policy

**Counselor
Education**

Case:

Challenging inequitable hiring practices within a counseling agency

Considerations:

HR systems,
advocacy fatigue

**Organizational
Counseling Leadership**

Case:

Supporting a supervisee advocating for a marginalized client population

Considerations:

gatekeeping, supervisee empowerment

**Clinical
Supervision**

Self-Awareness
& Identity

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**Clinical
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Self-Awareness & Skill-Building

An Awareness Inventory Appetizer

Consider your comfort/experience with:

- ❖ Storytelling
- ❖ Policy navigation
- ❖ Strategic communication
- ❖ Coalition building
- ❖ Systems analysis/mapping

Advocacy Skills Inventory

1. Client/Student Level:

Empowerment & Advocacy with Individuals

- ___ Ability to help clients recognize their strengths and rights
- ___ Skills in teaching clients self-advocacy strategies
- ___ Ability to identify barriers in clients' environments (e.g., school, workplace, family systems)
- ___ Skills in connecting clients with community resources and supports
- ___ Confidence in coaching clients to voice needs effectively (e.g., role-plays, scripting)
- ___ Awareness of counselor role boundaries while encouraging client empowerment

2. Community/School Level:

Advocacy with Systems & Collaborations

- ___ Skill in assessing systemic barriers affecting client groups (e.g., policies, bias, exclusion)
- ___ Ability to partner with community organizations and allies
- ___ Experience in designing or implementing outreach programs
- ___ Skill in educating stakeholders (teachers, administrators, employers) on client/student needs
- ___ Ability to mobilize community resources to address gaps in services
- ___ Competence in using data (surveys, needs assessments) to highlight inequities

3. Public Arena / Societal Level:

Advocacy in Public Policy & Social Change

- ___ Knowledge of relevant laws, policies, and regulations
- ___ Skill in writing policy briefs, position statements, or advocacy letters
- ___ Ability to engage in legislative advocacy (e.g., contacting representatives, lobbying ethically)
- ___ Experience with coalition building for social justice initiatives
- ___ Skill in public speaking/media engagement to promote counseling concerns
- ___ Ability to use research and evidence to advocate for systemic change

4. Counselor Self-Awareness & Professional Responsibility:

Ongoing Advocacy Development

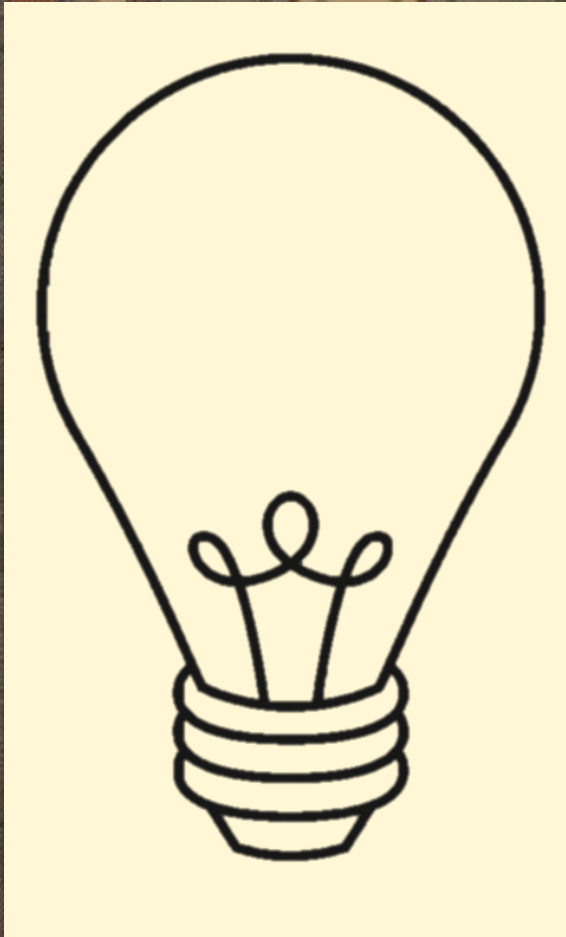
- ___ Awareness of personal privilege, biases, and intersecting identities in advocacy
- ___ Commitment to lifelong learning on advocacy and social justice issues
- ___ Ability to integrate advocacy into counseling practice ethically
- ___ Engagement in professional organizations (ACA divisions, state associations)
- ___ Skill in mentoring or training others in advocacy practices
- ___ Willingness to evaluate own advocacy effectiveness and adjust strategies

Skill-Building

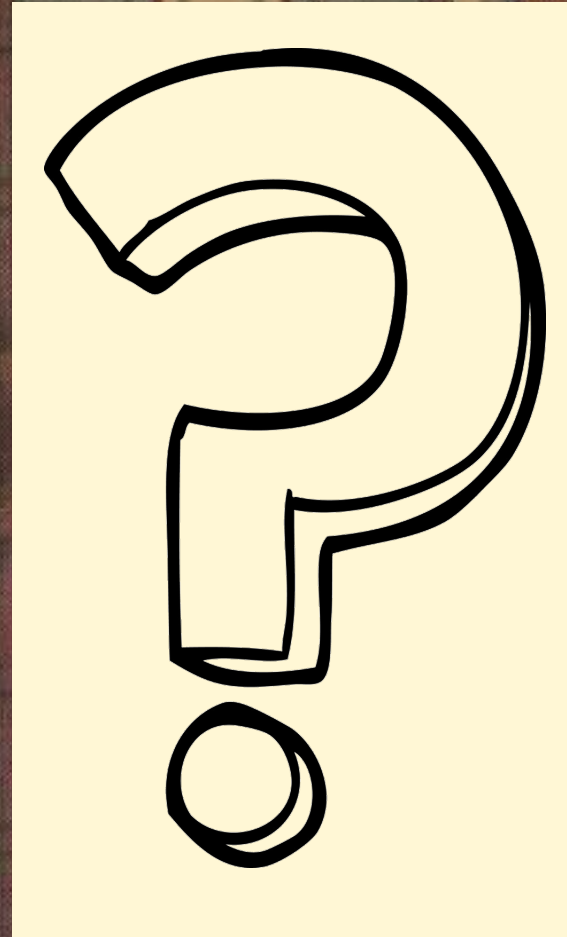
- ❖ What is one step you can take in the next month to build your skills?
- ❖ How can you learn from one person, with whom you are already connected, who is skilled in one of your areas of growth?

Comments & Curiosities

Comments



Curiosities



References & Contact

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