

EMERALD POINTS

# SOCIAL JUSTICE CASE STUDIES

Interdisciplinary and Non-Traditional  
Interdisciplinary Approaches

**CHERYL GREEN**



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## Interdisciplinary and Non-Traditional Interdisciplinary Approaches

BY

**CHERYL GREEN**

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United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India  
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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK

The purpose of this book is to provide individuals who desire to learn more about social justice, the ability to discuss and engage in the traditional interdisciplinary and non-traditional interdisciplinary processes as they work on case studies addressing multiple social justice issues. Examples of social justice case studies that will be presented include: the recognition of “fright” in a man of Caribbean descent who is also experiencing depression, a widowed mother and physician who now identifies as a transgender male, a veteran returning from combat, Espiritismo and its impact on a college student, and a Christian requested not to openly pray.

Individuals interested in exploring the varied roles of interdisciplinary and non-traditional interdisciplinary teams, will learn how these roles positively and negatively impact the lives of others. Approaches to the management of complex case studies will be discussed, as well as ethical dilemmas, facilitation of family meetings, community-based interventions, discharge planning, and cultural consideration in health care, education, and the community will be addressed. Case studies, concept maps, review questions, and concise chapter learning objectives, will enhance individuals’ openness to developing relationships to others that are different from themselves.

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# PUBLICATION STATEMENT FOR CASE STUDY

This book provides individuals whom simply have a desire to explore how social injustices can impact the lives of their fellow human beings, an opportunity to read and discuss case scenarios. The ability to discuss and engage within interdisciplinary and non-traditional interdisciplinary exploration processes as one reads these case studies, provides the opportunity to proactively address multiple social justice issues. Examples of social justice case studies that will be presented include: a gentleman who experienced a health care misdiagnosis leading to a late stage diagnosis of cancer and the recognition of “fright” in a gentleman of Caribbean descent. The varied roles of interdisciplinary and non-traditional interdisciplinary team members, and how these roles positively and negatively impact health, social interactions, and quality of life outcomes will be considered. Approaches to the management of complex social justice cases will be discussed, as well as ethical dilemmas, facilitation of family meetings, discharge planning, cultural consideration in health care, prejudgment, discrimination, and bias. Case studies, concept maps, review questions, and concise chapter learning objectives, will enhance application to real-life occurrences of social injustices.

Dr Cheryl Green

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*This book is dedicated to all individuals who are committed to ensuring that all human beings are provided respect and dignity. Social justice case studies are presented that stir discussion on societal situations and personal conflicts that implore persons to explore the psychological, psychosocial, physiological, and spiritual needs of persons that are different from themselves. Openness to that which is uncomfortable is the goal of each chapter, for the facilitation of respectful and dignified perspectives of diversity that inform the value of equity and inclusion.*

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Cheryl Green, PhD, DNP, RN, LCSW, CNL, CNE, ACUE, MAC, FAPA** is Associate Professor, School of Nursing, Southern Connecticut State University, USA and an off-shift Nurse Leader at Yale New Haven Hospital in New Haven, Connecticut, USA. Dr Green has been a registered nurse for over 32 years and a licensed clinical social worker for over 28 years. Her areas of research include mental illness, medication error prevention, medical-surgical health issues, incivility and discrimination, prayer and spirituality, self-care, distraction, stress and anxiety, nursing education, death and dying, health disparities, addictions, simulation, and mindfulness.

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## FOREWORD

The National Association of Social Workers, *Social Work Dictionary, 2014* defines Social Justice as “An ideal condition in which all members of a society have the same basic rights, protection, opportunities, obligations, and social benefits. Implicit in this concept is the notion that historical inequities should be acknowledged and remedied through specific measures. A key social work value, social justice entails advocacy to confront discrimination, oppression, and institutional inequities.” The ideals of social justice must be an underpinning of our work in social services and health that includes mental, physical, and social determinants.

My personal view of social justice is aspirational. Our careers are spent as social advocates working toward eliminating inequities both in society and service delivery. It is imperative that our goal is to become intersectional in our advocacy for vulnerable populations. It requires collaboration with our clients as individuals, in groups, organizations, and communities. Our job as advocates includes assuring consumer voices are heard at the table where decisions about their lives are being discussed and perhaps decided.

The past few years have seen growing divides in our nation (and internationally) politically, racially, and economically. The COVID-19 pandemic and racism have created racial and economic tensions bringing to the forefront the inequities existing in our nation. In this environment the call for interdisciplinary social justice is critical.

In my 40 plus years as a professional social worker, I continue to strive to take actions that advance issues of social justice, primarily in the legislative and electoral arenas. Changes here are often incremental, flowing, and waning, depending on who is in governmental power. Keeping my eye on the prize, being persistent, ready to take advantage when the window of opportunity opens, and not becoming discouraged when the window closes, that is the arduous process that social justice demands of us.

My social work career has included fighting for healthcare coverage for all, mental health parity, voting rights, income supports that address poverty, and social work licensure. Furthermore, I worked for 25 years to achieve preference in employment of public service professional social workers as social

justice demands the highest quality workforce for all. My work has undertaken coalition approaches and involvement of related disciplines to avoid professional turf wars. In Dr Cheryl Green's *Social Justice Case Studies: Interdisciplinary and Non-Traditional Interdisciplinary Approaches*, the author recognizes the vital importance of interdisciplinary social action.

Over the years I have also taught as an adjunct faculty member and frequent guest lecturer in both baccalaureate social work (BSW) and master social work (MSW) programs. In these lectures I have found that actual practice examples and case studies have the greatest learning benefits. *Social Justice Case Studies: Interdisciplinary and Non-Traditional Interdisciplinary Approaches* utilizes case studies to realistically introduce to the reader recipient experiences of service delivery. It takes on issues such as individuals' rights to self-determination, pregnancy, language barriers, limited options because of poverty, and lack of human respect. The case studies presented in this book will bring to life the gravity of the issues impacting people's daily lives.

*Martin Luther King, Jr. said "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice". The important work we undertake in our profession and our personal lives is to bend toward social justice. Social Justice Case Studies: Interdisciplinary and Non-Traditional Interdisciplinary Approaches by Dr. Cheryl Green is significant to individuals and students' training as her emphasis is an interdisciplinary practice perspective with a social justice lens.*

Stephen Wanczyk-Karp, LMSW

Executive Director

National Association of Social Workers, Connecticut Chapter

## PREFACE

*Social justice* can be a vague set of words that seem trivial to those impacted by what these words imply. *Social* relates to society and *justice* to the impartiality that some people in society receive and others do not. The impartiality of social justice in itself is conditional to how interactions are purposefully intended to not be respectful of the targeted persons or populations affected. For those who choose to not acknowledge social justice, it is easy to state that there is equality for all human beings. However, in taking time to listen to the stories of others' lives, humbleness and respect can evolve in the unbeliever. As one's story is their own truth, mutual respect for one another's truths is social justice.

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to personally thank my husband, William C. Green and sons, Joshua W. Green, and Elijah M. Green for their love, support, and prayers.

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# INTRODUCTION

## SOCIAL JUSTICE

*Social justice* represents a desire for human beings to change their relational status with one another, their environment, and their spiritual and moral condition. The change is founded upon an awakening to the understanding of what is deemed valuable in society and worthy of respect, dignity, and societal attention. Social justice seeks to bring to awareness the lived experiences of others to the masses, so that an actual change in how persons are treated, able to attain goals, and negotiate their daily lives is examined as to its fairness. Additionally, social justice seeks to examine to explore the impact of discrimination, inequity, and exclusion on all people. Regardless of their skin color, language spoken, hair texture, ability to give birth (pregnancy), gender, sex, age, religion, or financial status, all people have or will experience social injustices.

Social justice is a societal ideal. The debate remains in each of our minds as to what is right and what is wrong. We seek the metaphoric ideal of fairness, but this can often be a matter of personal perceptions. Resolution of these perceptions come when human beings are provided the opportunity to discuss, explain, and evaluate the circumstances of others and consciously determine whether the outcomes were humane and representative of social justice. In doing so, they themselves develop insight into the lived experiences of others, while comparing and contrasting their own life experiences.

## PRESENTATION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE CASE STUDIES

Case studies are presented within this book that have multiple themes of injustices as experienced through the eyes of fictional characters. Readers will explore the origin of the injustices and consider the longevity by which the persons impacted have experienced these injustices and how these injustices can be eradicated. With increased awareness of the life situation and

experiences of others, readers will learn that all human beings hold the same ideals for themselves and family, to be treated with dignity and respected.

### INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAMS

*Interdisciplinary teams* consist of people from different professions that unite and share their individual skills and specializations, to work on behalf of others. Traditionally, the purpose of an interdisciplinary team is to assist persons entering healthcare systems, in receiving a holistic approach to their treatment planning. Persons from multiple disciplines address individual's specific health needs in the realms of diet (e.g., dietitians), spiritual care (e.g., chaplains), disease management (e.g., nurses, respiratory therapists, pharmacists, case managers, and healthcare providers), exercise (e.g., physical and occupational therapists), and a host of other identified needs.

Interdisciplinary teams can also be used in education to facilitate the organization of shared teams of students. Educators functioning within interdisciplinary teams may develop the curriculum together, share teaching of students, and the same teaching schedule(s). Readers of this book will be provided case studies that include interdisciplinary teams, as well as case studies that do not but warrant group discussion and identifications of roles of persons that are necessary in addressing characters within specific case study's needs.

### EXPANSION OF THE VIEW OF INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAMS

Within this book, the terminology of interdisciplinary teams has been expanded to *nontraditional interdisciplinary teams* to examine the roles of teams in society (e.g., police officers, homeless shelter workers, workplace teams, etc.) that can impact the ability of persons to live and function in a healthy manner because they have been misunderstood, assumptions have been made about them, or they have been intentionally marginalized. The latter can occur when hidden biases, as well as racism or discrimination, emerge. Hence, if the affected person, persons, or group of people are unable to assimilate, negative behaviors may surface and be enacted by others who deem the person or group unworthy and valueless.

## THE SOCIETAL CULPRIT

The conundrum as a society that we find ourselves within is that we expect social justice to be the norm. In spite of our world history being one of injustices such as corruption in politics, sexual perversions, fraud, false imprisonments, sexual abuses, slavery, murders, greed, deception, pornography, indenture servanthood, suicide, physical and emotional abuses, and neglect, we desire peace and equality. While human behaviors will never be perfect and social justices a goal to be achieved, by taking the time to understand one another, perhaps the hurt we cause one another as human beings can be rectified or perhaps end.

## AN UNFOUNDED FEAR

Applying case study methodology, case studies will introduce readers to persons who are different from themselves. These persons will be of different psychological, physiological, socioeconomic, and spiritual backgrounds. The unifying themes as readers discuss each case study will be the humanness of characters in experiencing life's complexities. The latter will help readers resolve their unfounded fears regarding those persons who are different from themselves.

## CONCEPT MAPS

Readers of the *Social Justice Case Studies: Interdisciplinary and Non-Traditional Interdisciplinary Approaches* book will be presented with cases that foster critical thinking and reasoning. As the cases are read and discussed, tools such as *concept maps*, a conceptual diagram that explains relationships persons have in their lives (and environment), can be instrumental in understanding best practice approaches. When strengths and weaknesses are deciphered by the affected person(s) and individuals working with the affected person(s), collaboratively, plans of beginning the work to address the problems or issues can be initiated.

## CLIENT-CENTERED GENOGRAMS

*Client-centered genograms* explore the relationship persons have with their environments and the people within these environments. And they can be used in the identification of familial and community-based supports for persons, as well as stressors, both internal and external. In conjunction with concepts maps, visual pictorials such as client-centered genograms are created to help bring clarity individuals life events and situations that can impact them physiologically, psychosocially, and spiritually. Concept maps and client-centered genograms will be used in some of the case studies as a means for readers to contemplate and discuss with others, the interventions necessary to stabilize persons in crisis or persons requiring assistance in understanding their personal dilemmas or those of others (e.g., family members, colleagues, or peers).

The purpose of the social justice case studies is to bring enlightenment to the life situations of others and understanding the complexity of social constructs in the fostering of undue stress upon others. As readers read the case studies, answer case study questions, and develop visual pictorials addressing the identified fictional characters' issues, empathy and controversy may simultaneously occur as emotional reactions about the cases arise. These are normal responses. Ultimately, with understanding and openness, the similarities of all people within the race that is humanity will bring unity toward resolution.

## KEY TERMS

Interdisciplinary teams

Nontraditional interdisciplinary teams

Concept maps

Client-centered genograms

# WHY IS SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPORTANT?

## ABSTRACT

*Social justice is a phrase that seems to be overused. A catch-all phrase for all things humanly deviant, social justice is referenced when a group of people, person, or persons behave negatively toward other groups of people or persons because they have deemed them different. Thus, social justice, when applied to the resolution of the deviant acts of discrimination against others based upon their age, gender, religion, sexual preference, race, ethnicity, cognitive ability, culture, or a disability can be reframed as a proactive engagement for change at a societal level. Hence, social justice, although a seemingly vague phrase, requires a clear response of the conscious to end injustices.*

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- (1) Explain what social justice is and to whom it applies to in modern society.
- (2) Determine if there can be bias in social justice initiatives.
- (3) Discuss the emotional pain experienced by persons who feel misunderstood and discriminated against.

## KEY TERMS

Social justice

Relativity

Case studies

Transgender

Nonbinary

Antitrans stigma

## SOCIAL JUSTICE DEFINED

*Social justice* examines the experiences of different people from varied backgrounds, how they interact within society, and how society accepts or rejects them. Societal terms of acceptance and rejection are tenuous, with labeling of disenfranchised groups with perceptions of worthy and unworthiness of their existence. For example, having the social class of low-income and being uninsured or underinsured may be a factor in the ability for an individual to receive adequate health care. However, an educated, and financially stable, insured individual of Asian, Native American and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, or Black/African American descent could still experience healthcare disparities because of their ethnic-minority status in society ([United States Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c, 2021d, 2021e](#)). A dichotomy of health disparities in the latter example exists, but not solely because of income or education, but because of ethnic-minority status. While current data identify poverty and lack of education as factors involved in the receiving of adequate health care, disparities remain an issue for ethnic-minorities within the United States.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

Issues of social justice have likely existed as long as man and womankind have walked the earth. Discrimination, be it perceived or actual, has historically existed for hundreds of years. Be it the enslavement of people groups such as Jews, Africans, indentured servants in colonial Jamestown in 1607 by the Virginia Company, African Americans, American Indians, and Asians, or the blatant attacks against the lives upon those that society deemed as free from slavery, through church burnings and hangings that occurred in the name of hatred ([History.com, 2021](#); [Public Broadcasting Service, 2014](#)). Social justice remains a current topic that will likely exist as long as human beings roam the earth.

As long as there are people who speak different languages, have different variations in the color of their skin, follow different faiths, and choose to love others that do not look like themselves, social justice will remain a pertinent issue. The selective closure of one's eyes, heart, and mind to the pain of others renders social justice unresolved and persistent in society as a whole. Resolution can only begin when small steps are taken to educate future generations

on the necessity of differences among human beings in order to create a diverse world and restore hope in the survival of the human race. All people have value.

### DID YOU NOTICE I HAVE A SOUL?

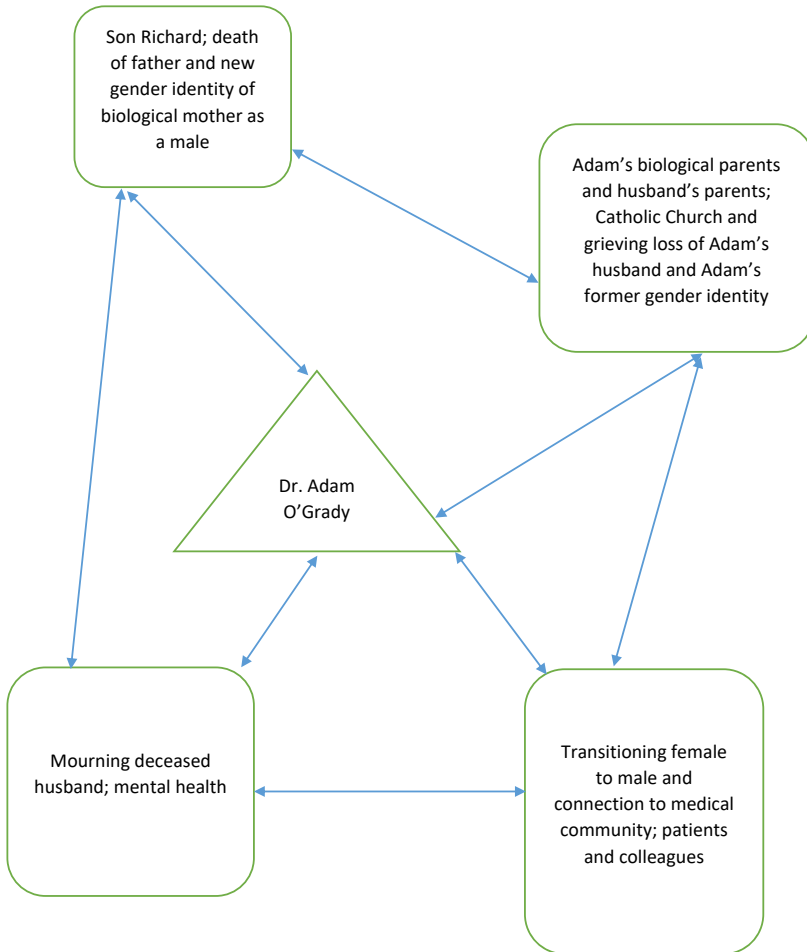
*Relativity* explores the nonexistence of a standard to compare and the absence of universal application. A mainstay, however, is the potential presence of one's soul. Unassociated with religion, it is recognized that when there is a failure to breathe, the heart ceases to beat, the mind is no longer able to bring stages of wakefulness to the human body, and death draws near. The draw of death is the absence of the soul, the essence of who we are in our own existence.

Sometimes we forget that outside of ourselves, others exist and breathe. Air and gas exchange, as lungs require expansion and contraction with oxygen that permeates tissues with oxygenated blood, and cells are nourished. However, when too much or too little oxygen gathers in the body and blood dyscrasias abound, blood cells become mutant, disease erupts and the body begins the long battle to survive.

For many of us who have been witness to, heard about, and experienced societal inequalities, the stress felt is like a hollow burning in the gut as we worry, ask why, and feel the shame of our own humanity. Unfortunately, there is no map nor clear directions as to how one can resolve social justice issues. Perhaps, when we treat one another with respect and dignity, change, positive change, can happen.

### SOCIAL JUSTICE CASE STUDIES

*Case studies* referencing life situations that affect people representing all facets of society will be presented for review and discussion. With each case study, consider what went wrong, why the issue presented matters, and how best to respond. Examine your own values, ethical standards, and moral compass as you read each of the case studies based on fictional characters, and contemplate decisions and actions you will make.



### RULES OF CASE STUDY REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

It is important that as each case study is reviewed, participants in the discussion exhibit calm and composure with respect to other's beliefs and opinions. The purpose of this book and the case studies is to promote conversations within a social justice context that are absent of injury to the character and differences of others. These guidelines for appropriate and productive social justice conversations were developed to enhance comfort and trust in starting these difficult conversations. Please review the five guidelines below.