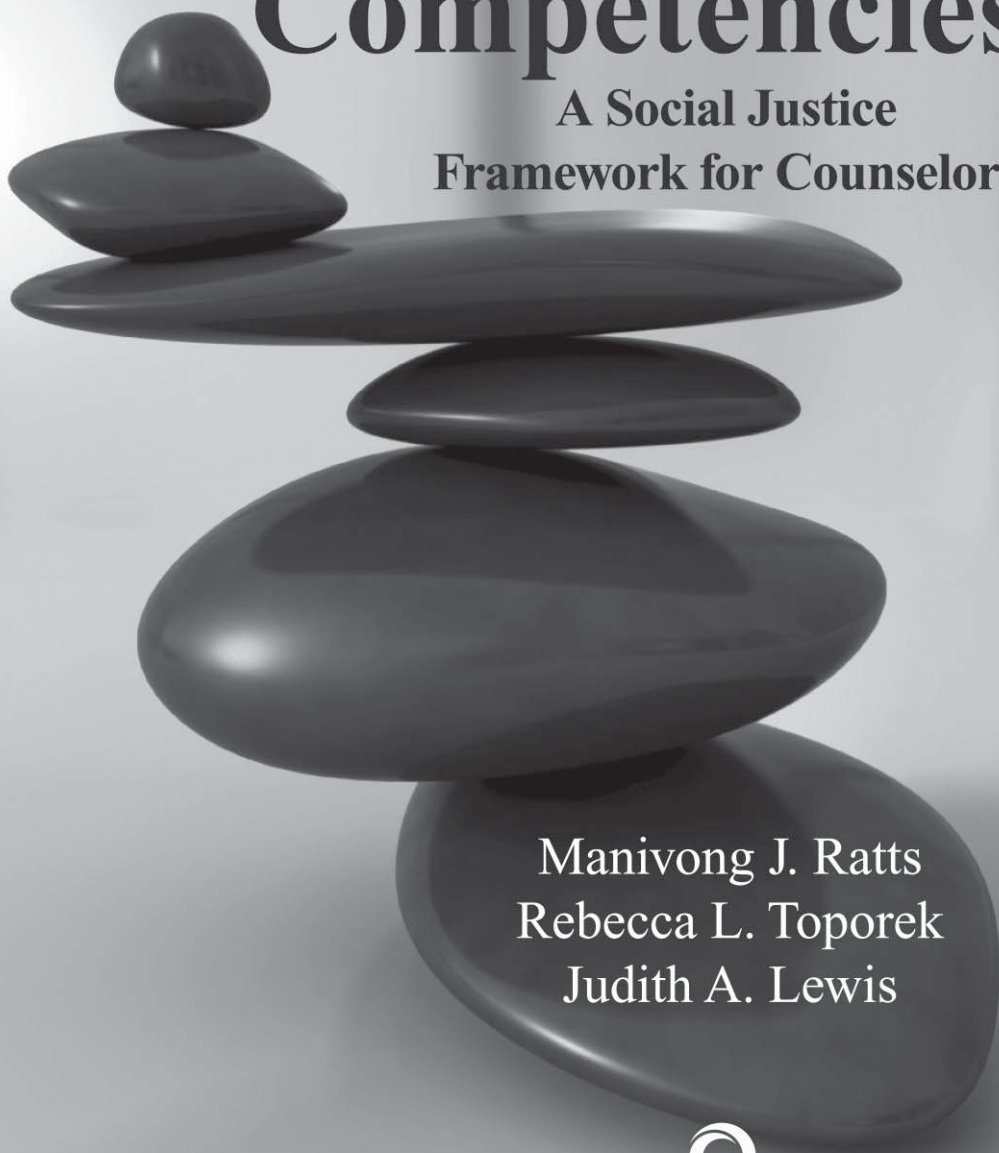


# ACA Advocacy Competencies

A Social Justice  
Framework for Counselors



Manivong J. Ratts  
Rebecca L. Toporek  
Judith A. Lewis



AMERICAN COUNSELING ASSOCIATION

5999 Stevenson Avenue  
Alexandria, VA 22304  
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# ACA Advocacy Competencies

## A Social Justice Framework for Counselors

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## Dedication

This book is written in honor of the late *Dr. Mary Smith Arnold* (1946–2003) and *Dr. Reese M. House* (1938–2007), whose leadership, inspiration, and commitment to social justice have made everlasting contributions to the field of counseling and the American Counseling Association (ACA) Advocacy Competencies. Their unwavering commitment to social justice and advocacy is summarized below.

**Dr. Mary Smith Arnold** devoted her life to the struggle against oppression in all its forms. From the times she spent marching with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to her latest efforts against the war in Iraq, Dr. Arnold was staunch in her convictions. In her personal life, she exemplified all that is meant by *advocacy competency*. In her professional life, she put this talent and wisdom to work in the counseling models she developed and in the inspiring mentorship she gave to the budding advocates who were her students. She also played a major role in awakening ACA and its divisions to the role of the counseling profession in antioppression work. Dr. Arnold originated her “Unlearning Oppression” workshop when she was still a doctoral student at the University of Iowa. Over the years she spent at Kent State University and then at Governors State University, she offered this training hundreds of times and taught scores of colleagues how to begin unlearning oppression themselves and teach others in a way that never engendered defensiveness. She understood how important it was to know all forms of oppression, to recognize that all of us are “sometimes in the shoes of the oppressor and sometimes in the shoes of the oppressed,” and to be good allies across difference. As a scholar, she published widely on advocacy and diversity. As a leader, she joined in the effort to create Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ), a division of ACA; acted as CSJ’s representative to the ACA Governing Council; and served as a valuable member of the Advocacy Competencies Task Force. The Mary Smith Arnold Anti-Oppression Award is given annually in her honor.

**Reese M. House** was one of the coauthors of the ACA Advocacy Competencies as a founding member of Counselors for Social Justice. A professor emeritus of school counselor education at Oregon State University (OSU), he left OSU to join the Education Trust in 1997 and was hired by Dr. Pat Martin to become program director of the National Center for Transforming School Counseling (NCTSC) from 2002 to 2006. In that time, over 100 school districts around the United States learned the new vision principles for transforming school counseling and over 40 counselor education/school counseling programs redid their curricula and practices based on Dr. Martin and Dr. House’s work with the NCTSC. The focus on leadership and advocacy, including the importance of helping to close achievement and opportunity gaps for school counselors, became a part of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) 2004 Ethical Standards for School Counselors, the ASCA National School Counseling Program Framework Model, and the 2009 Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs’ standards for all counselor education specialties.

In 2007, he received ACA's Arthur A. Hitchcock Distinguished Professional Service Award. In addition to transforming school counseling, Dr. House was a leader in focusing counselor education on issues of advocacy along with his OSU colleagues. During his time at OSU, he was founder and initial executive director of the Cascade AIDS Project in Portland, Oregon, and a board member with Oregon gay rights advocacy group Right to Privacy. His legacy of mentoring countless graduate students and school counselor educators and advocating for the academic, career, and college success of every K–12 student lives on with the annual Reese M. House Social Justice Advocacy award presented annually by Counselors for Social Justice.



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## Preface

*Getting a new idea adopted, even when it has obvious advantages, is difficult. Many innovations require a lengthy period of many years from the time when they become available to the time when they are widely adopted. Therefore, a common problem for many individuals and organizations is how to speed up the rate of diffusion of an innovation.*

—Everett M. Rogers,  
*Diffusion of Innovations*, 2003, p. 1

This book is for the helping professional who seeks to eradicate society of the oppressive social, political, and economic conditions that impede human growth and development. Moreover, this book demonstrates how the American Counseling Association (ACA) Advocacy Competencies can be used as a framework for implementing microlevel and macrolevel advocacy strategies. The underlying premise behind the creation of the Advocacy Competencies is the belief that clients bring with them a complex set of problems that cannot be resolved simply through interventions that take place in the traditional office environment. Counselors need to also attend to the social milieu. In other words, counselors need to be adept at both individual counseling and community-based work if they wish to help clients achieve optimal psychological health and well-being. The Advocacy Competencies can help counselors achieve this goal.

The publication of this book is timely given the ACA Governing Council's endorsement of the Advocacy Competencies in 2003. This endorsement, coupled with the rise in the social justice counseling perspective, brings advocacy to the forefront of the profession. It has taken some time for the field as a whole to become familiar with the Advocacy Competencies. We attribute much of this to the fact that new ideas, no matter how beneficial they may be, take time for an organization to fully embrace. To help speed up the rate of adoption, and to diffuse any anxieties people may have about the Advocacy Competencies, we felt a book of this nature was needed.

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## Overview of the Book

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This book is categorized into three sections. Section I is titled "Transgressing Traditional Counseling Paradigms: Connecting Social Justice and the ACA Advocacy Competencies." This section provides a foundation for understanding the place advocacy and social justice have in the field. The chapters in this section help to connect advocacy, social justice, and the Advocacy Competencies. An instrument is introduced in this section as a tool to help counselors determine their level of advocacy competence.

Section II is titled "From Theory to Practice: Application of the ACA Advocacy Competencies." The purpose of this section is to demonstrate the generalizability and applicability of the Advocacy Competencies. Chapters in this section offer examples of how the Advocacy Competencies can be used with diverse client populations (e.g., clients of color; clients with disabilities; lesbian, gay, bisexual,

and transgender clients; etc.), across various counseling settings (e.g., K–12 schools, private practice, community colleges, etc.), and in specific specialty areas (e.g., group, career, drug and alcohol, etc.). Authors for this section were selected on the basis of their commitment to advancing social justice issues in their respective areas of expertise.

We titled Section III “20/20: The Future of the Counseling Profession” because we wanted to leave readers with an idea of what we hope the profession aspires to become. In this section we review and summarize the common factors and fresh ideas offered in Section II of the book. Strategies and suggestions for bringing these ideas into the mainstream of the counseling profession are also discussed.

To provide a consistent approach across all of the chapters, we asked each author to address the following questions in his or her chapter:

- What is the primary rationale for applying the Advocacy Competencies in your specific setting, specialty area, or population?
- Given the needs of the population you serve, how would you use the Advocacy Competencies to benefit your clients or students?
- How might issues of multiculturalism and diversity affect the advocacy program you describe in this chapter?
- What challenges might counselors face in implementing the Advocacy Competencies in your particular setting or specialty area?
- What are the expected benefits of carrying out the advocacy strategies that have been described in your chapter?

Whether you are a student, counselor, or counselor educator, we hope you will find this book useful. We believe the combination of theory and practical application offered in this book will provide readers with concrete strategies for how to operationalize the Advocacy Competencies. In addition, we hope the comprehensive nature of this book will help readers to see that the Advocacy Competencies are applicable across a variety of settings and specialty areas, and with various client populations. More important, we hope this book will help the clients and communities you serve to address the lethal impact oppression has on human growth and development.

—*Manivong J. Ratts*  
Seattle University

—*Rebecca L. Toporek*  
San Francisco State University

—*Judith A. Lewis*  
Governors State University



## Acknowledgments

The editors would like to thank Kari Aleshire and Bridgette Bethea, students at Seattle University, for their assistance with this book.

•

*Manivong J. Ratts*

I would like to thank my parents for their support and my father for instilling in me a sense of social justice.

•

*Rebecca L. Toporek*

I would like to thank Phil, Kaiya, and Dylan for their patience and support.

•

*Judith A. Lewis*

I would like to thank the faculty, staff, and students at Governors State University.





## About the Editors

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**Rebecca L. Toporek, PhD**, is a counselor educator, associate professor, and coordinator of the career counseling specialization at San Francisco State University. She was a member of the American Counseling Association Task Force that developed the Advocacy Competencies and has written numerous articles and chapters in the areas of advocacy, social justice, community engagement, multicultural competence and training, and career counseling. In addition, she coedited the *Handbook for Social Justice in Counseling and Psychology* and the *Handbook of Multicultural Competencies* and is coeditor of the *Journal for Social Action in Counseling and Psychology*. She worked for over 10 years as a career counselor and community college counselor and in 2001 received her PhD in counseling psychology from the University of Maryland, College Park.

•

**Judith A. Lewis** received her PhD in counseling from the University of Michigan. She is a retired professor in the College of Health Professions at Governors State University. She has served as president of the American Counseling Association (ACA) and the International Association of Marriage and Family Counselors. She has published a number of books, chapters, and articles related to counseling and advocacy and chaired the ACA Task Force that was charged with developing the Advocacy Competencies.





## About the Authors

**Loretta J. Bradley, PhD**, is a Paul Whitfield Horn professor and coordinator of counselor education at Texas Tech University. Prior to her affiliation at Texas Tech, Dr. Bradley held positions at Temple University and Peabody College of Vanderbilt University. Dr. Bradley was president of the American Counseling Association (ACA) from 1998 to 1999 and president of the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) from 1995 to 1996. Her theme as president of ACA was “Advocacy: A Voice for Our Clients and Communities.” Dr. Bradley has been the corecipient of research awards from the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, ACA, and ACES. She is one of 25 counselors featured in the book *Legends and Legacies*. Dr. Bradley has been a frequent speaker and writer at counseling conferences and in journals.

**Robert C. Chope, PhD**, is professor in the Department of Counseling at San Francisco State University, where he founded the career counseling program. He is also the founder of the Career and Personal Development Institute in San Francisco, a practice that he has had for over 29 years. His is one of the oldest professional career development practices in the United States and is the source of much of the data featured in his consultation and scholarship. Dr. Chope has been licensed in California as a marriage and family therapist since 1971 and a psychologist since 1977 and has been listed in the National Registry of Health Care Providers in Psychology since 1980. He is the president (2008–2009) of the National Employment Counseling Association. In March 2008, Dr. Chope was honored as a fellow of the American Counseling Association. In June 2008, Dr. Chope was initiated into the H. B. McDaniel Hall of Fame at Stanford University for his “exemplary contributions to the field of counseling and guidance.”

**Hugh C. Crethar, PhD**, is associate professor of counseling and counseling psychology in the School of Applied Health and Educational Psychology at Oklahoma State University. He has served in numerous positions within the American Counseling Association and was the 2007–2008 president of Counselors for Social Justice. His scholarly interests include the promotion of multicultural and advocacy competence in the field of counseling, school counseling, professional development of counselors, and counselors as academic leaders, change agents, and advocates.

**Jerome V. D’Agostino, PhD**, associate professor of education and human ecology at The Ohio State University, earned his doctorate in 1997 from the University of Chicago in measurement, evaluation, and statistical analysis. He specializes in applied measurement and assessment. Over the past 9 years, he has conducted several studies on the validity of standards-based assessments. He has served on numerous assessment advisory committees and presently is chair of the Arizona Technical Advisory Committee for AIMS (the state standards-based assessments). He has extensive experience in working with educators to develop formative assessments to monitor learning. He led a team that collaborated with science teachers in Tucson, Arizona, to develop online, formative assessments aligned with the districts’ science curriculum, and he has conducted numerous workshop throughout the country on classroom grading and test score interpretation for

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**Amy Ford, PhD**, is the program advisor for the MA in community counseling program. She began her tenure at Northwest Christian University (NCU) in 2004, teaching courses in theories of counseling, counseling strategies and treatment, research methods, career development, and individual appraisal. She is one of the clinical supervisors in the Community Counseling program and provides counseling services to clients at the NCU counseling center.

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