

# MONTEREY DECLARATION OF CRITICAL COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY<sub>1</sub>

## Preface

From August 5th through August 9th, 2001, a small group of community psychologists and friends attended the Inaugural Critical Psychology Conference in Monterey, California. Following two presentations on the need for critical perspectives in the field, by Holly Angelique and Ken Kyle, a group of attendees decided to create a Declaration of Critical Community Psychology. Under the editorial direction of Kyle and Angelique, members met in working groups at the conference to discuss the Declaration and later provided feedback via electronic communication. Following is the resulting document. We hope this will serve as a foundation from which to move the field forward.

## Preamble

Whereas the Swampscott Conferees of 1965 were motivated in part by a desire to prevent or reduce individual suffering, and by a vision of a more just world,

whereas the Conferees acknowledged that psychological intervention at the individual level was inadequate to address individual suffering,

whereas the Conferees declared that "community psychology . . . is devoted to the study of general psychological processes that link social systems with individual behavior in complex relations (Bennett et. 1966, p. 6-7)

and whereas community psychologists have not adequately developed that linkage thus far

Now, therefore

**We, the undersigned participants of the Monterey Bay Conference on Critical Psychology do declare:**

that preventable human suffering is the result not only of individual psychopathology, but also of individual, group, community and governmental acts, as well as social, cultural and institutional arrangements;

that much preventable human suffering is, therefore, intrinsically tied to social injustice;

that community psychologists must, therefore, work for social justice by engaging in both ameliorative and transformative acts at multiple levels; and

that the field of community psychology must adopt a critical theoretical stance and enact policies and practices in keeping with that stance if the Swampscott vision is to be realized.

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## Critical Theoretical Principles and Policy Guidelines for Community Psychologists

Article 1 - Ethical Obligation to Redress Social Injustice

Community psychologists have an ethical obligation to redress social injustice and to work actively to transform social, cultural and institutional arrangements that foster social injustice.

#### Article 2 - Vision of the Good Society

Community psychologists should employ a critical vision of the good society; i.e., we should evaluate policies and institutions on the basis of what could be, not on the basis of what is "normally" acceptable.

#### Article 3 - Understanding Human Behavior in Context

Community psychologists should understand human behavior in context; i.e., we should actively work to develop an understanding of the social institutions and forces in which individual humans are enmeshed, and we should adopt a social-ecological perspective in our work.

#### Article 4 - Consciousness Raising and Critical Thinking

Community psychologists should actively foster critical thinking among community members, students and colleagues, and facilitate conscientization whenever possible.

#### Policy 1 - Full Collaboration and Partnership Between Community and University

Community psychologists should collaborate with communities to design and evaluate projects in light of their potential to effect social change, and community psychology programs should place greater emphasis on community involvement in graduate practica.

#### Policy 2 - Methodological Diversity

Graduate programs in community psychology should reduce their emphasis on quantitative methods to the exclusion of other methodologies, and should expand the role of participatory research methods.

#### Policy 3 - Development of Theory

Community psychologists should develop theories that include in-depth analyses of human subjectivity, power asymmetries and social change.

#### Policy 4 - Broad Interdisciplinary Training

Graduate programs in community psychology should include interdisciplinary training in both theoretical and substantive areas of inquiry.

#### Policy 5 - Address Inequalities

Community psychologists should acknowledge the ill effects of ableism, ageism, bigotry, economic structures that exploit and impoverish, homophobia, misogyny, racism, sexism, speciesism and white supremacy, and work to undo them in our community interactions and in our scholarly activities.

## **Signatures, appearing in chronological order**

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## **References:**

Bennett, C. C., Anderson, L. S., Cooper, S., Hassol, L. Klein, D. C., & Rosenblum, G. (Eds.). (1966). *Community Psychology: A report of the Boston conference on the education of psychologist for community mental health*. Boston: Boston University Press.

1Drafted by Holly Angelique and Ken Kyle. Names appear in alphabetical order. Each person contributed equally.

Angelique, H. & Kyle, K. (2002). Monterey declaration of critical community psychology. *The Community Psychologist, A Publication of the Society for Community Research and Action, Division 27 of the American Psychological Association*. 35(1), 35-36.

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