Fostering Critical Feminist Multicultural Qualitative Research Mentoring

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Abstract
Qualitative research mentorship is essential to the development of counseling psychology as a field that supports socially just and multicultural inquiry. This type of research aligns with the core values proposed by the American Psychological Association. However, the governing beliefs and practices of neoliberal structures in higher education challenge critical qualitative research mentorship in counseling psychology. Namely, the values of economic gain promote practices that may constrain the potential for effective mentoring and socially just qualitative research practices. In opposition to these forces, we propose a critical multicultural feminist praxis for qualitative research mentoring. Critical feminist multicultural mentoring attends to systemic and relational power dynamics through transparency, collaboration, reflexivity, and attention to context. We describe the assumptions of critical feminist multicultural mentoring and apply them to case vignettes to illustrate ways to mentor students engaging in socially just qualitative research. In our discussion, we articulate implementation, policy, and research implications.

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Qualitative research mentoring is pivotal to the development of an intellectual tradition, particularly in counseling psychology. Critical qualitative research mentorship fosters inquiry with the potential to enhance human development, enact socially just change, and promote multiculturalism in counseling psychology (Hollingsworth & Fassinger, 2002; Morrow, 2007). This focus is in alignment with the American Psychological Association (APA; 2010) “2010 Amendments to the 2002 ‘Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct’” and the “Multicultural Guidelines: An Ecological Approach to Context, Identity, and Intersectionality” (APA, 2017).

However, the practices of neoliberalism in higher education may threaten qualitative research agendas focused on social justice and multiculturalism. Neoliberalism is an economic ideology that promotes competitive, individually focused productivity in service to global financial markets (Harvey, 2005). When applied to higher education, neoliberalism fosters research that generates economic gains for the university (Chubb & Watermeyer, 2017; Olsson & Peters, 2005). By contrast, research that promotes social justice and multiculturalism seeks to benefit marginalized and underrepresented communities (Deering, 2016; Liboro, 2015), sharing the university’s assets with marginalized communities. The intention of socially just research is to catalyze positive change in a given community (Deering, 2016; Liboro, 2015; for a critique of neoliberalism in higher education, see Rustin, 2014).

Faculty need to consider the role of neoliberalism in their efforts to advance qualitative research agendas as investigators and mentors. Critical feminist multicultural (CFM) qualitative research mentoring is an approach that can help faculty and students navigate and overcome the constraints of neoliberalism. CFM mentorship supports qualitative research agendas that may facilitate greater alignment between counseling psychology and social justice.

A CFM approach to qualitative research mentoring incorporates social justice and critical psychology values and practices that attend to dynamics of power, oppression, and identity (Fassinger & Morrow, 2013; Hoover, Strapp, Ito, Foster, & Roth, 2018; Lyons et al., 2013; Ponterotto, 2013). CFM mentors commit to these values through developing mentor–mentee relationships that involve transparency, collaboration, reflexivity, and a contextually attuned process (Arczynski & Morrow, 2017; Chan, Yeh, & Krumboltz, 2015). CFM mentoring may appear no different than “just good research mentoring practices”
(Arczynski & Morrow, 2017). However, it is rooted in the rich legacy of critical psychology and exposes the mantle of power intrinsic in all relationships (Arczynski & Morrow, 2017).

CFM mentors attend to the dynamics of power between researchers and participants, within mentoring relationships, and in society as a whole, particularly attending to how systems and institutions encroach on participants, mentees, mentors, and other aspects related to research and mentoring (Morrow & Hawxhurst, 2012). Although “just good research mentoring practices” may groom mentees to fulfill the obligations of research productivity, CFM mentors raise mentees’ consciousness as to the political and systemic structures underpinning notions of productivity (e.g., neoliberalism). When CFM mentors contextualize the influencing function of governing ideologies, like neoliberalism, on systems and individuals (e.g., focusing on popular science trends or developing a catchy consumer-focused brand), CFM mentors alert mentees to these realities. Further, this contextual consciousness prepares mentees to navigate the tensions between building a qualitative research agenda and meeting productivity requirements. For student mentees navigating career pressures and wishing to pursue an academic career centered on qualitative, socially just research, the CFM approach to mentorship could help these students handle the constraints of a neoliberal system (Gormley, 2013). As another example, although scholars have emphasized the importance of clarifying expectations, CFM mentors promote the practice of transparency (an open dialogue about one’s thoughts and feelings) with the aim of balancing personal and political power in relationships with mentees as well as to provide guidance not available to mentees with underrepresented identities (Benishek et al., 2004; Fassinger, 1997). CFM practices may be instrumental in naming, exploring how to work within, and acting to dismantle neoliberal influences on qualitative research (Arczynski & Morrow, 2017; Morrow & Hawxhurst, 2012). These practices may lead to powerful psychological outcomes for mentees. Enhancing mentees’ well-being, efficacy, and empowerment are valuable outcomes of effective mentoring (e.g., Arczynski & Morrow, 2017; Chan et al., 2015; Hoover et al., 2018).

Scholars have articulated the importance of CFM principles for research mentoring practices, broadly (Benishek et al., 2004; Fassinger, 1997; Gormley, 2013), and we extend these works to qualitative research mentoring specifically. Qualitative research mentoring attuned to issues of power, privilege, identity, and marginalization may be particularly salient to researchers that embody marginalized identities. For example, racial discrimination, tokenization, and gender oppression have adversely affected the success of Women of Color in academia (Evans & Cokley, 2009; O’Shaughnessy & Burnes, 2016). Mentoring attuned to the particular psychosocial difficulties
experienced and resiliencies demonstrated by Women of Color may positively affect their career trajectories.

In this paper, we propose a conceptual framework for how to engage in CFM qualitative research mentoring and manage dilemmas common to qualitative research mentoring in neoliberal academic contexts. We integrate the current literature and extend two empirical theories: one theory for mentoring Students of Color (Chan et al., 2015) and one framework for feminist multicultural psychotherapy supervision (Arczynski & Morrow, 2017). We identify the critical factors of CFM mentorship for faculty members who strive to provide CFM mentorship, and for students wishing to obtain qualitative research mentorship. As part of this effort, we define central concepts, articulate CFM mentorship practices, and illustrate practice recommendations with three case vignettes. In proposing a CFM model for qualitative research mentoring, we provide guidance for implementation, future research, and policy.

**Mentoring**

Mentoring relationships are essential for students’ professional development in counseling psychology (e.g., Mehlman & Glickauf-Hughes, 1994). As described in the counseling psychology literature, mentoring may inscribe multiple meanings to the roles of mentors. For example, mentoring relationships assist mentees in learning the unwritten social mores of a discipline and instilling a path toward career success (Bogat & Redner, 1985).

For this paper, we define mentoring as:

> a personal relationship in which a more experienced faculty member acts as a guide, role model, teacher, and sponsor of a less experienced graduate student or junior professional and provides the individual with knowledge, advice, challenge, counsel, and support in [their] pursuit of becoming a full member of a particular profession. (Evans & Cokley, 2008, pp. 52–53)

We focus on qualitative research mentoring between faculty (mentors) and students (mentees) in doctoral-level counseling psychology programs.

Although scholars have provided guidance for mentoring in counseling psychology, much of the extant literature has presented mentoring in an etic fashion. Scholars broadly and proactively have promoted the professional and personal development of mentees (e.g., Johnson, 2002; Johnson & Huwe, 2002), described the nuances of mentoring relationships (Schlosser, Knox, Pruitt, & Hill, 2003), articulated mentoring discrepancies across psychology fields (e.g., Johnson, Koch, Fallow, & Huwe, 2000), identified mentoring dimensions related to marginalized groups (Alvarez, Blume,
Cervantes, & Thomas, 2009; Evans & Cokley, 2008; Russell & Horne, 2009; Schlosser, Talleyrand, Lyons, Kim, & Johnson, 2011), and examined the influence of mentoring on mentee research productivity and engagement in independent research (e.g., Hollingsworth & Fassinger, 2002). However, the extant scholarship has offered few guidelines for addressing issues of identity and power (e.g., Johnson, 2002), usually focusing on a single status such as race, gender, or sexual orientation (Alvarez et al., 2009; Chan et al., 2016; Russell & Horne, 2009; Schlosser et al., 2011). Additionally, guidance on how to provide mentorship to students wishing to conduct qualitative research is scarce (Levitt, Kannan, & Ippolito, 2013; Turner & Crane, 2016). Previous scholars have developed practice guidelines in research mentoring (Schlosser et al., 2011), yet few authors have stipulated theory-driven mentoring practices (Benishek et al., 2004; Fassinger, 1997), or addressed intersectional identities in mentoring relationships (Schlosser et al., 2011) specific to qualitative research. Moreover, we found no scholarship focused on CFM qualitative research mentorship.

Qualitative Research in Counseling Psychology

Qualitative research has expanded the field of counseling psychology by answering calls for inquiry to promote social justice and multiculturalism (Morrow, 2007). Social justice and multicultural approaches to qualitative research in counseling psychology embrace the following principles: (a) attending to power dynamics between researchers and participants; (b) managing power with participants through relationality, transparency, and collaboration; and (c) engaging in reflexivity as to how the research context influences participants (Haverkamp, 2005; Hoover & Morrow, 2015; Morrow, 2007).

Despite the recognized value of qualitative inquiry, the discipline of counseling psychology has failed to recognize qualitative research as a scientific equal to quantitative research (Ponterotto, 2013; Walsh-Bowers, 2002). The inequitable weight, attention, and representation is likely in response to the implementation of neoliberal values and practices at the university level (Saunders, 2010). Furthermore, in efforts to raise psychology’s scientific legitimacy, counseling psychologists tried to mirror a post-positivist medical model for producing evidence through psychometrics and statistical data and analysis (Haverkamp, Morrow, & Ponterotto, 2005; Ponterotto, 2013).

The marginalization of qualitative research is also made visible through the dearth of counseling psychology doctoral programs that offer specialized training in qualitative research training (Levitt, Motulsky, Wertz, Morrow, & Ponterotto, 2017; Walsh-Bowers, 2002). A potential doctoral student exploring counseling psychology programs will encounter few programs that offer
training in qualitative research methods, typically with one course offered (Levitt et al., 2017). However, that same student is likely to receive at least a modicum of training in quantitative methods, if not multicourse sequencing and advanced study courses, in any given program (APA Commission on Accreditation, 2016). Compared to the preponderance of quantitative research in psychology programs, few doctoral programs train students in qualitative research methods; as a result, comparatively fewer students could eventually specialize in qualitative research as faculty (Ponterotto, 2013). Therefore, a serious gap exists in graduate mentorship in qualitative methods. CFM qualitative research mentoring becomes particularly salient when considering the broader neoliberal academic ecology in which faculty and students are situated.

Neoliberal Academic Structure

Neoliberal priorities focus on private property rights, low taxes, free trade, and limited government intervention in the market (Harvey, 2005). Neoliberalism took hold during the economic policy reforms implemented by the Reagan (United States) and Thatcher (United Kingdom) administrations (Harvey, 2005). The main criticism of neoliberalism is that it generates the unequal distribution of resources and, therefore, maintains systemic injustice. Specifically, neoliberal policies have compromised the allocation of resources associated with fundamental human rights such as education, healthcare, housing, and employment (Scholte, 2005).

Neoliberal economic policies have resulted in federal and state governments reducing financial support for public universities and colleges. This lack of governmental support has forced universities to rely on private sources of revenue (Chubb & Watermeyer, 2017; Saunders, 2010). Reliance on private funding sources changes the academic landscape for students and faculty at universities (e.g., through rising tuition costs). To save on costs, universities may reduce full-time faculty positions in favor of hiring part-time or adjunct faculty, and require faculty to secure external funding through private and public grants and contracts (Saunders, 2010). The reliance on external funding privileges certain research types and paradigms that yield economic gains (Denzin & Giardina, 2016; Saunders, 2010).

Neoliberalism has infiltrated the politics of academic freedom and critical inquiry. Universities have long been considered a protected space where the primary goal of students and faculty was the pursuit and construction of knowledge. Members of an academic community cultivated this knowledge to create a dynamic, critical understanding of the human condition and of the world(s) in which we live. Under neoliberalism, however, research that has
critical inquiry as a primary goal is not desirable (Harvey, 2005). Instead, research that produces marketable products is more likely to be funded by external sources and given more value in tenure and promotion reviews. Because qualitative research values the process as much as the outcomes of research, methods involved with collecting and analyzing qualitative data can be resource intensive and time-consuming (Denzin & Giardina, 2016; Walsh-Bowers, 2002). Attending to the process involved with qualitative research methods contradicts the neoliberal austerity approach and emphasis on outcomes (Harvey, 2005). This tension may reduce the support universities provide for qualitative research agendas and mentorship.

Specific to qualitative research, neoliberal values and practices do not align with the paradigms that inform critical qualitative research (Liboro, 2015). Given that the aim of critical qualitative study is to illuminate how systems of power work upon psychological, social, and political processes (Morrow, 2005), qualitative research aims to bring marginalized perspectives to the forefront, uncover strategies to diminish social power differences, dismantle systems of oppression, and rebuild using radical practices. When a university embraces a neoliberal ideology, it may create a hostile environment for research that does not align with neoliberalism. Neoliberal systems promote the number of publications versus the quality or the social impact of a project (Chubb & Watermeyer, 2017; Walsh-Bowers, 2002). Building a critical qualitative research agenda takes more energy and creativity within neoliberal systems, in part because the agenda goes against the ideological tide.

Understanding how neoliberalism influences critical qualitative research is essential to understanding the landscape in which a mentor seeks to provide effective CFM mentorship. CFM mentors need to understand the socio-political and economic forces that shape qualitative research agendas and mentorship. This understanding will help mentors and mentees confront neoliberal pressures when developing and expanding a critical qualitative research agenda. It may be that critical qualitative researchers make informed choices to do what is necessary to meet the obligations of a neoliberal system, consciously create spaces to develop critical qualitative research, and simultaneously seek to dismantle neoliberal practices with radical new practices.

**CFM Qualitative Mentoring**

To provide an antidote to the problems resulting from neoliberalism in higher education and to optimize the possibilities for enhancing mentees’ qualitative research success, we propose a CFM conceptual model for qualitative research mentoring. Our conceptual framework weaves together critical, feminist, and multicultural models that are empirical (Arczynski & Morrow,
Three dimensions of a CFM mentoring approach include the following:

1. The assumption that mentorship is wrought with power dynamics.
2. The management of power via relationality, transparency, and collaboration.
3. Attending to power via reflexivity and attention to context.

The power dynamics present in mentoring relationships involve consideration of both position status differences (mentor–mentee) and intersecting identity differences (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender; Arczynski & Morrow, 2017; Benishek et al., 2004; Fassinger, 1997; Gormley, 2013). If not adequately anticipated and managed, power disparities can lead to mentee exploitation, oppressive dynamics, ineffective mentoring, and perpetuation of unhealthy systemic practices.

Managing power in mentoring relationships requires attending to the relationship, practicing transparency, and engaging in a collaborative process. Relationality involves validating mentees’ struggles, following through on commitments, and responding to relationship ruptures and distress (Arczynski & Morrow, 2017; Benishek et al., 2004; Chan et al., 2015). By making explicit their mentoring styles, expectations, and limitations, mentors engage in transparency (Arczynski & Morrow, 2017; Chan et al., 2015; Schlosser et al., 2011). Lastly, collaborative mentoring involves working with mentees to construct their personal and project goals (Arczynski & Morrow, 2017; Benishek et al., 2004; Christensen, 2013).

By engaging in reflexive practices and identifying contextual forces, mentors can attend to power in mentoring relationships. For example, mentors develop conscious awareness by exploring how their biased thinking affects relationships and research tasks. This work involves processing the influence of identities on mentoring relationships in terms of sociopolitical power and marginalization, and examining how a lack of awareness may emerge from privileged statuses and socialization (Arczynski & Morrow, 2017; Hoover, 2016). Further, mentors are encouraged to reflect on their development as qualitative researchers, feminists, multiculturalists, and activists (Christensen & Arczynski, 2014; Hoover & Morrow, 2016). For example, mentors can reflect and process by journaling individually, by engaging in interpersonal discussions, or by organizing communal events focused on how bias and privilege influence mentoring relationships.

Attention to context requires radical action. Specifically, CFM mentors aim to create space to acknowledge the implications of context (i.e., personal,
historical, familial, community, university, and professional) on their research and on mentees’ development. In tandem, attention to context ramps up the importance of mentors advocating for changes when the status quo impinges upon the well-being of mentors and mentees (Arczynski & Morrow, 2017; Benishek et al., 2004; Chan et al., 2016; Fassinger, 1997; Gormley, 2013; Hoover, Luchner, & Pickett, 2016). Acknowledging context can be accomplished through dialogue with mentees and other mentors. With mentees, discussion can revolve around how the university and departmental contexts influence the mentorship relationship. With other mentors, faculty may broach this issue with the aim of developing or changing mentor–mentee policies. Mentors could also develop brown bag series or town hall events in which students and faculty are invited to discuss the various contexts that shape mentoring relationships.

In the next section, we employ the CFM conceptual framework for qualitative research mentoring to examine typical dilemmas that emerge within a neoliberal academic context. Typical concerns for mentors include their limits of competency, a focus on needs based on identity, and mentees’ career advancement. The case vignettes will include an orientation to the dilemma, a description of a given mentoring relationship, and CFM recommendations.

**Case Vignettes**

We analyze three vignettes to illuminate common dilemmas and tensions resulting from the influence of the corporatization of higher education on qualitative research mentoring. We employ the vignettes as devices to illustrate typical behaviors expressed in mentoring relationships. We then use the CFM model to deconstruct mentoring practices and to illustrate different steps mentors can take through a CFM framework. Our goal is to engage with the following question: How can mentors apply CFM mentoring within a neoliberal academic context to avoid mentee exploitation, foster the empowerment of mentees, and affirm mentees’ own radical research agendas? We answer this question via the following CFM mentorship guiding principles: (a) attention to power asymmetries, (b) sensitivity to power via reflexivity and attention to context, and (c) management of power via relationality, transparency, and collaboration.

To promote reflexivity, we included prompts based on these guiding principles in Table 1. The questions may serve as procedural process guidelines to consider in advance and while engaging in CFM qualitative mentoring. The guidelines are not exhaustive, but they may prime the reader to be reflexive within a mentoring relationship.
Table 1. Guiding Principles and Prompts Promoting Reflexivity

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guiding Principles</th>
<th>Prompts to Promote Reflexivity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attention to power asymmetries</td>
<td>- What elements of the research might influence the mentee’s workload and other academic commitments?</td>
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<td>- How do I anticipate evaluating the mentee’s project involvement, including constructive and strengths-based feedback, throughout the life of the project?</td>
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<td>- What benefits might the mentee glean from the mentoring relationship?</td>
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<td>- How can I use the mentoring relationship to meet the mentee’s career goals?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- How can I advocate for changes in the university system and greater neoliberal context to challenge structures that impinge upon the well-being of myself and my mentees?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sensitivity to power via reflexivity and attention to context</td>
<td>- How do I attend to the intersection between the mentee’s identities and my own identities, the identities of participants, and other research relationships?</td>
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<td>- What is my level of competence in providing qualitative research mentoring and navigating a CFM approach to mentorship?</td>
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<td>- Might another faculty member on campus provide adequate research mentoring?</td>
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<td>- What work might I need to do to understand my identities, cultural beliefs, socialization, and experiences of privilege and oppression to work across difference with my mentee?</td>
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<td>- How can I attend to working across difference with my mentee to promote mentee growth?</td>
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<td>- What tactics can I employ to scrutinize my interaction with this mentee to manage power, enhance the mentee’s learning, and to benefit the project?</td>
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<td>- How does the university climate influence how I interact with my mentee?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Management of power via relationality, transparency, and collaboration</td>
<td>- What roles (e.g., mentor, employer, instructor, evaluator) will I embody throughout the life of this mentoring relationship?</td>
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<td>- What processes (e.g., employment terms, letter of recommendation writing, penalties for not completing tasks) do I anticipate facing in the present mentoring relationship?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- How do I address these roles and processes with a focus on maintaining a just relationship via managing power, transparency, and collaboration throughout the life of a project?</td>
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The vignettes presented next are an amalgamation of our personal experiences as mentors and mentees. The vignettes provide a platform to apply the CFM model of mentorship to realistic experiences. The scenarios are fabricated representations of possible mentoring relationships using fictitious names.

**Vignette #1**

An advanced graduate student, Marcus, who identified as a Black cisgender man, was exposed to a faculty member’s (Dr. Haines) qualitative research at a department networking event. Dr. Haines identified as a White, cisgender woman, second year, tenure-track assistant professor. Marcus sought to join the faculty member’s research team with a keen interest in the research topic and limited exposure to qualitative research. Dr. Haines interviewed Marcus to discuss his interest in her current research project. Dr. Haines learned that Marcus planned to pursue a research career, had successfully contributed to other faculty projects, and was open to learning qualitative research.

Subsequently, Dr. Haines oriented Marcus to the project; the research design and data collection were set, and she was assembling a team to conduct qualitative analysis. She outlined the research team obligations: (a) meet twice weekly for 2 hr each meeting, (b) complete individual tasks between meetings, and (c) commit to the project for 1 year of analysis without financial compensation. Marcus had no qualitative training, which was typical because the university offered few qualitative courses. However, Dr. Haines was eager to recruit the mentee because of his positive reputation in the department and his genuine interest in the topic. For the specific project, Marcus’s identities would add to the perceived rigor of the study, as Marcus was the only team member to hold these identities that were represented in the study population. Dr. Haines did not offer to bring any students in as authors on the manuscript, as Dr. Haines needed to publish a single-authored paper as part of her tenure review in 4 years.

This case is filled with CFM tensions and poses questions for self-examination. Did Dr. Haines have an obligation to discuss Marcus’s involvement in the project beyond analyzing the data? Did Dr. Haines have a responsibility to address Marcus’s commitment to the project in tandem with his obligations to maintaining good standing and progress in his program? How did Dr. Haines benefit from this arrangement? How did Marcus benefit from this arrangement? What negative consequences were likely to emerge from this situation?

**Attention to power asymmetries.** In this case, the mentorship power dynamic included structural and interpersonal dynamics. Structurally, the issues consisted of having a department without qualitative research courses or
funding to compensate the mentee. Interpersonally, Dr. Haines was the expert on qualitative research, and she knew that Marcus’s social identities enhanced the perceived trustworthiness of the study’s findings. Dr. Haines also was the owner of the design, dataset, and future manuscripts. The mentor–mentee relationship was shaped by the year-long commitment of biweekly meetings and tasks, as well as power dynamics related to identity, oppression, and power. Although Dr. Haines did acknowledge the time commitment, it seems that she failed to acknowledge or own her power as the owner of the project and future manuscripts, as well as her power related to privileged identities and statuses. We recommend that mentors reflect on these dynamics in order to discuss them with mentees at the outset of, and throughout, mentoring relationships.

**Sensitivity to power via reflexivity and attention to context.** We recommend dialogue to determine how to recruit, orient, and maintain a mentee’s involvement in a research project. Ultimately, decisions about these research training processes and responsibilities fall to the mentor due to the mentor’s greater power status. Reflexivity requires ongoing awareness and acting on such awareness appropriately. In this case, Dr. Haines needed to engage in transparent dialogue about her inability to offer or guarantee authorship. In addition to specific decisions, mentors need to orient mentees to the neoliberal university context. Specifically, Dr. Haines ought to have oriented Marcus to her need to pursue publishable materials as a single author. If Marcus hoped to be added to the publication as an author, Dr. Haines could offer an alternative. Possibly, Dr. Haines could offer to mentor Marcus through co-authorship of a separate publication developed from the dataset.

**Management of power via relationality, transparency, and collaboration.** Although Dr. Haines did provide transparency about the time commitment, she failed to extend this transparency into additional aspects of the project: (a) the impact of the mentee’s involvement on his career, (b) the mentee’s identities, and (c) the future manuscript. To exemplify relationality, she would have developed rapport and trust to discuss more sensitive issues, such as any negative consequences that might emerge from committing to the project. For example, Marcus might not have had the time to seek out other research opportunities that were funded, more likely to yield a co-authored publication, entailed quantitative data and analysis, or more directly tied to his career goals. Similarly, Marcus’s social identities were seemingly salient to the project, but this went without discussion. Marcus might feel tokenized because of the group composition (e.g., Marcus is the only Black member) and Dr. Haines’s belief that his identity raised the rigor of the analyses. Further, Dr.
Haines should have engaged in critical reflexivity as to the influence of her sociocultural identities on the dynamic between Marcus and herself, and then facilitate a dialogue with Marcus on ways to manage power dynamics.

Lastly, Dr. Haines did not discuss a future manuscript. Dr. Haines indirectly bypassed issues related to ownership of the project by relegating Marcus to research team analyst. Instead, we recommend that CFM mentors follow a more direct approach by discussing the power structures and dynamics related to authorship. To be transparent, Dr. Haines should have mentioned her need for solo authorship and her recommendations about how to handle these issues. The mentor should practice transparency via dialogue so the student and professor can develop a collaborative solution. Perhaps Marcus was not interested in manuscript writing because of other existing obligations, or perhaps Marcus already wrote a related literature review that they could have easily molded into the manuscript. Without broaching the subjects, both mentor and mentee overlooked ways they could benefit one another.

**Vignette #2**

Zola, a student who identified as an international, cisgender woman, asked to join a qualitative research team to enhance a mentor–mentee relationship that she had with the faculty team leader, Dr. Ansel, and to yield a letter of recommendation for future job applications. Dr. Ansel, a faculty member who identified as a biracial, U.S.-born, cisgender man, was familiar with Zola’s work. Specifically, Dr. Ansel served as a member of Zola’s thesis committee and would also be a member of her dissertation committee. In an initial meeting, Zola was upfront about her hope to cultivate a working relationship with Dr. Ansel to strengthen a future letter of recommendation. Dr. Ansel had a conversation with Zola about the tasks necessary for the next phase of his current research project and what additional training Zola would need in preparation for the study. The meeting ended with a plan for Zola to attend an analysis-training seminar offered by Dr. Ansel, to complete readings, and to follow-up prior to the next team meeting.

As Zola’s participation in the project began, some surprises arose for her. The CFM research paradigm that guided the project required all team members to engage in reflexivity through journaling and peer debriefing. Dr. Ansel expected mentees to share their journals and to be honest and vulnerable during peer debriefing. Across the life of the project, mentees reflected and debriefed on many issues: negative societal stereotypes about racial minorities who have committed crimes; mentees’ own privileged experiences with and ignorance of the criminal justice system; and mentees’ personal experience with and exposure to issues of nationality, citizenship, and
immigration status. Although Zola participated in the journaling and peer debriefing, she feared that Dr. Ansel’s opinion of her might change due to her candid disclosures. Over time, Zola began to delete sections of her journal before submitting them to Dr. Ansel for review. Her desire to engage in impression management, prevent backlash from her mentor, and ward off microaggressions from research team members diminished Zola’s authentic engagement in the reflection exercise.

This case brought up many questions regarding the mentor. Had Dr. Ansel considered and discussed the consequences of the reflexivity tasks (journaling and peer debriefing) required of the mentee? Was Zola using her emotional labor to purchase a supportive reference from Dr. Ansel? Was Dr. Ansel committed to providing ongoing feedback and support to give a positive recommendation? At what point would Dr. Ansel determine that Zola’s performance merited a positive reference? How would Zola’s status as an international student and her cultural background shape her experience on the team and with the project?

Attention to power asymmetries. CFM mentors should recognize the distinct statuses inherent to being a potential reference. The mentee is not only in a place of deference to the mentor for the project, but the mentee is also confined by the promise of a future reference, and this sense of confinement may be augmented by the mentee’s cultural values. This dynamic may bring out the need to please, avoid embarrassment, and avoid microaggressions or backlash. Contingent on the social identities of the mentee and mentor, the mentee could feel additional vulnerabilities. For example, with an international graduate mentee working with a U.S. citizen mentor, Zola may worry about Dr. Ansel misunderstanding her disclosures. When working across differences, mentees and mentors may have many layers of privilege and oppression that manifest as they complete their qualitative research tasks.

Attends to power via reflexivity and attention to context. The case described may seem to exist in the vacuum of the mentor–mentee relationship. However, seeking a recommendation has meaning within this neoliberal academic context. Zola was looking for a favorable recommendation for future work, possibly in the neoliberal U.S. society or another nation–state with another economic structure. Dr. Ansel participated in and had been socialized by this context, but perhaps the U.S. job market was new for Zola, given her international student status. With this dynamic, Dr. Ansel had the knowledge Zola needed to be savvy on the job market. This context shaped the need for a positive reference, the expectations for what the letter ought to contain, and who ought to write it. Mentors should reflect on and recognize not just their
status as a reference provider but also their familiarity regarding the neoliberal context in which mentees must operate. Directly educating mentees about the procurement of references and the role of letters of recommendation may be necessary. With this information, mentees can self-advocate more effectively.

**Manages power via relationality, transparency, and collaboration.** By virtue of future academic and professional references, Dr. Ansel has gatekeeping and evaluatory power. As such, he should have engaged in informed consent with the mentee about his expectations for the mentee’s performance on the project and his decision-making around providing recommendations. Dr. Ansel had an obligation to be explicit about his recommendation provision process, such as sharing whether he always writes letters for team members or not, what situations might complicate his decision to write a letter, and what he tends to comment on in letters of reference (e.g., only strengths, a mixture of strengths and growth edges).

Dr. Ansel and Zola could have then established how they would like formative feedback processes to occur. Dr. Ansel and Zola could have examined the following: When would Dr. Ansel provide feedback about Zola’s strengths and areas for growth? How would Dr. Ansel communicate about any issues that jeopardize a strong letter of recommendation? How would Zola provide feedback about any project concerns, given the additional pressures of seeking a positive reference? A collaborative discussion may offer opportunities to Zola to make agentic, empowered choices, versus Dr. Ansel engaging in protectionist or paternalistic processes.

With an open dialogue that addresses the previously discussed questions, a plan could be established for Zola to provide feedback about any issues with the project. Such an arrangement could facilitate Zola in telling Dr. Ansel about her struggles with the reflexivity tasks of the project. With CFM mentoring, informed consent is not the only avenue for being transparent. By collaborating on an ongoing structure for formative feedback, issues that Zola did not raise at the initial meeting could be openly discussed later.

**Vignette #3**

Victoria, a Latinx mentee who identified as middle class and queer, in gender and in sexual orientation, entered a PhD program with the vague idea that they wanted to pursue a dissertation project that involved qualitative research methods and to seek a faculty career. Victoria approached a faculty member, Dr. Stavros, with whom they had rapport, to seek advisement on their dissertation and professional goals. For the dissertation, Victoria desired to
complete a qualitative study focused on evaluating a prevention intervention addressing a specific social problem.

Dr. Stavros identified as a non-Latino White, middle class, heterosexual cisgender man, and was a full professor. Dr. Stavros had conducted qualitative research projects in the past but was not an expert in qualitative research. However, Dr. Stavros had extensive experience evaluating prevention interventions. Dr. Stavros had multiple advisees, yet he had not historically provided substantive support to the advisees regarding securing academic careers.

Dr. Stavros discussed his potential limitations as an advisor for Victoria—his limited experience with qualitative methods and his more hands-off approach to supporting academic career development. He expressed enthusiasm for Victoria’s dissertation project ideas and articulated his expertise in conducting prevention intervention evaluations. He stated that he would be willing to adjust his approach to provide more academic career support but would not be able to specialize in qualitative methods. Therefore, he strongly suggested that Victoria identify a committee member with qualitative expertise willing to provide Victoria with greater support than was typical of committee members. Also, Dr. Stavros advised Victoria to identify and enroll in qualitative research courses available in and beyond their department to develop needed skills. Victoria committed to the mentorship as they felt that the Dr. Stavros’s enthusiasm outweighed the limitations that might come with his limited experience with qualitative research.

As the new relationship emerged, the mentor had many opportunities and tensions. What was Dr. Stavros’s obligation to engage in critical self-reflection about the sociopolitical power asymmetries that existed between the identities he embodied and the identities Victoria embodied? What reflexive and relational work should Dr. Savros have done to manage or diminish these power differences? Given Dr. Stavros had limited qualitative research experience, should he seek extra training or consultation to bolster his skillset? Further, what knowledge did Dr. Stavros have to offer about the constraints when pursuing a qualitative research agenda in the academy? Was Dr. Stavros obligated to provide mentorship to prepare the mentee for navigating a career in neoliberal institutions?

**Attention to power asymmetries.** From a CFM standpoint, Dr. Stavros should consider the power dynamics associated with Victoria’s identities. Recognition of power dynamics would include being transparent with Victoria about how their embodied experiences as scholars may differ and how the neoliberal university system may create extra challenges for Victoria, given that they identify as a nonbinary queer Person of Color. Dr. Stavros could ask Victoria how they preferred for him to mitigate the power asymmetries that
emerged both about their identities and within the mentor–mentee relationship. This process could include a conversation initiated by Dr. Stavros describing how the identities he embodied afforded him privileges within academic systems that were unearned. This transparency could encourage Victoria to discuss any concerns they had about the challenges they have experienced or could experience with discrimination and bias in educational systems because of their underrepresented identities. Dr. Stavros could use this conversation as an example of how the two of them could continuously attend to the power asymmetries that emerge across the life of the mentor–mentee relationship.

**Sensitivity to power via reflexivity and attention to context.** By using a CFM framework, Dr. Stavros should encourage Victoria to engage in critical reflection on the status of qualitative research within the neoliberal university system. This reflection would include the following: (a) the mentee’s success as a qualitative researcher within a system that does not value this approach to research, (b) the political and fiscal barriers the mentee is likely to face within the neoliberal academy, (c) the type of research most universities value and most external funders support, (d) the tensions between producing time- and resource-intensive qualitative research versus engaging in more efficient research projects, and (e) the link between the number of publications, status of publication outlets, and obtaining tenure. Further, Dr. Stavros should ideally be prepared to provide Victoria with resources to reduce identified barriers, such as names of journals that publish articles aligned with their research, conferences that value the type of research they seek to carry out, names of faculty who perform similar research, and possible funding options.

**Management of power via relationality, transparency, and collaboration.** To further address power dynamics, Dr. Stavros should employ relationality, transparency, and collaboration. First, Dr. Stavros should establish a relational connection with Victoria through dialogue to ascertain Victoria’s academic objectives within a personal and cultural context. Within this discussion, Dr. Stavros could use transparency to share his limitations for providing CFM qualitative research mentorship and to collaborate on a plan of action. As part of this effort, Dr. Stavros could provide Victoria with his plan to gain experience and knowledge on the specific methods Victoria was using for their dissertation project. Also, Dr. Stavros could provide Victoria with those same resources so that they may also gain training on methods. Dr. Stavros could give the mentee resources to build a research agenda that meets neoliberal requirements and incorporates CFM qualitative research values and practices.
Discussion

Research mentoring is particularly salient to qualitative research, given the limited training available and the dearth of faculty who specialize in qualitative research within APA-accredited counseling psychology doctoral programs (Levitt et al., 2017). CFM practices may assist in negotiating issues related to mentor–mentee relationships in student- or faculty-led qualitative research such as informed consent, multiple roles, and evaluative power. Further, CFM mentors may enhance mentees’ preparedness for academic positions by informing mentees about the neoliberal context. For instance, CFM mentors may discuss implications for the additional burdens mentees may experience when publishing, as well as possible avenues for subverting the norms of depoliticizing research (e.g., naming the political foundations for completing a research study in a publication).

Therefore, we propose a CFM qualitative mentoring approach to challenge the neoliberal status quo. We argue that the status quo is incongruent with effective CFM qualitative research and mentoring. This CFM approach aims to optimize mentees’ research development and to provide one approach for transformative research mentoring, as illustrated by case vignettes. Next, we focus on implications for implementation, policy, and research.

Challenges to Implementation

Differing institutional, departmental, and program cultures may support or detract from the implementation of a CFM qualitative research mentoring model (Arczynski, 2017). For example, universities with hierarchical models of governance may imbue these dynamics on underlying departments and units. Colleagues and administrators may challenge faculty who employ transparent and collaborative research mentoring styles (Arczynski, 2014). Faculty may also need to justify using CFM mentoring strategies with applied psychology training competencies (e.g., APA, 2012; Goodman et al., 2004; Ratts, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, & McCullough, 2016), inclusive education frameworks (Burnes & Singh, 2010), and professional ethics and guidelines (APA, 2010). Justification of CFM strategies may be necessary for neoliberal contexts that discourage such practices. Even with such justifications laid out, liberal, as opposed to radical changes, may only be deemed feasible.

To incorporate a CFM framework for qualitative research mentoring, mentors may need to advocate in academic institutions to ensure equitable standards for reviewing cases for tenure and promotion. Junior faculty employing CFM research and mentorship methods may need the support of their senior faculty to demonstrate the time and human resource differentials
between qualitative and quantitative research as well as traditional and socially just research (Fassinger & Morrow, 2013). Further, mentors may need to raise their critical consciousness to work across difference with mentees regarding identity, professional development, and ideological frameworks (Arczynski & Morrow, 2017).

**Implications for Policy**

We recognize that mentors are likely operating within a neoliberal system saturated with power asymmetries. Policies need to support mentors in providing mentorship that is attuned to power and to protect the mentor from policies that promote power asymmetries. At the university level, resources for conducting qualitative research need to be provided, including resources that afford time. For example, institutions may offer pilot funds for qualitative research as well as other resources such as transcription services and access to high-quality audio/video recording equipment. Rather than counting publications as a metric for tenure and promotion, committees should prioritize the quality of research conducted by faculty members from the lens of qualitative research, particularly the markers specific to the social impact of qualitative research (Morrow, 2007). Once these policies are in place, it may be easier to assist mentees in pursuing qualitative agendas. Departments can develop clear strategies and policies that specify mentorship expectations and supports.

**Implications for Research**

We presented a CFM framework that drew from empirical and conceptual models of mentorship and supervision. Our application of a CFM framework for qualitative research mentoring relationships has yet to be empirically examined. Scholars need to generate empirical evidence to more accurately understand how a CFM framework influences mentoring processes and outcomes. Researchers may use qualitative methods to explore mentoring relationship processes, conduct longitudinal studies to examine outcomes of research mentoring on student career success, and carry out critical incident studies to identify radical mentoring practices. The focus of future studies may be on mentees, mentors, relationships, or CFM qualitative research mentoring programs. Further, data sources may include dyadic or individual interviews or recorded mentoring sessions.

Many of these recommendations may not be unique to CFM. It is likely other mentoring paradigms would recommend similar strategies, such as informed consent procedures. As such, further scrutiny is merited to accentuate the unique and universal aspects of our recommendations. Further, the
previously described practices may be applied differently depending on the mentees’ and mentors’ development and experiences.

**Conclusion**

Mentoring is an essential process for the career development of counseling psychology mentees; yet, few frameworks exist to support the execution of CFM qualitative research mentoring. Engaging in research mentoring does not exist in a vacuum. Instead, research mentoring influences and is influenced by the ecology of neoliberal higher education. We provided a conceptual framework of the major dimensions of CFM qualitative research mentorship, explored the tensions of executing CFM qualitative research mentoring within neoliberal university cultures, and recommended next steps. To support mentors in learning how to effectively employ a CFM lens to qualitative research, mentors can employ the procedural process guidelines identified in this paper to enhance reflexivity, develop local or distance peer consultation teams to discuss implementation of the CFM model, and engage in critically reflexive dialogues with peers to understand their identities, power, and radical change more deeply.

**Authors’ Note**

The authors were honored and privileged to work under the mentorship of the counseling psychologist–activist–mentor Susan L. Morrow, PhD, Professor Emerita at University of Utah. Dr. Morrow died December 23, 2018. She has made lasting impressions on the field of counseling psychology and has changed the lives of many with whom she has worked. We hope this publication does justice to Dr. Morrow’s mentorship and shares with readers a glimpse of her power.

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