



A  
MOVEMENT  
FOR  
JUSTICE

SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE PRACTICE

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**WE ARE A  
MOVEMENT FOR  
SOCIAL JUSTICE.**

**WE ARE ADLER  
UNIVERSITY.**

The previous iteration of Adler University’s manifesto on socially responsible practice, *The SRP Project (2012)*, began with the observation that while social media vastly increased connections among people, the actual sense of society was diminished. Similarly, global interdependency was viewed as being more evident at the same time nations were struggling to respond to the “critical demands of a global economy, financial downturns, unjust regimes, genocide, and increasing demands for dwindling resources.”

In some ways the context in which we live and work has changed almost beyond recognition since the last paper, fueled in part by the pace and speed of both information and disinformation. In other ways, the social ills and challenges named then remain unchanged. But the work at Adler University, through our curricula, centers and institutes, and multiple programs and practices that advance justice, continues to advance the understanding and application of the still radical organizing principles of Alfred Adler. In this advance, there is movement. This movement can be seen in Adler University students, faculty, staff, graduates, and community partners.

Socially responsible practice remains the central Adlerian approach to achieving social justice. At Adler University, our mission remains to graduate socially responsible practitioners, and this is accomplished through instruction, collective reflection, collaboration, skill development, and activism for social justice.



Socially responsible practitioners are educated at our three campuses to be effective personal and social change agents in the pursuit of justice.

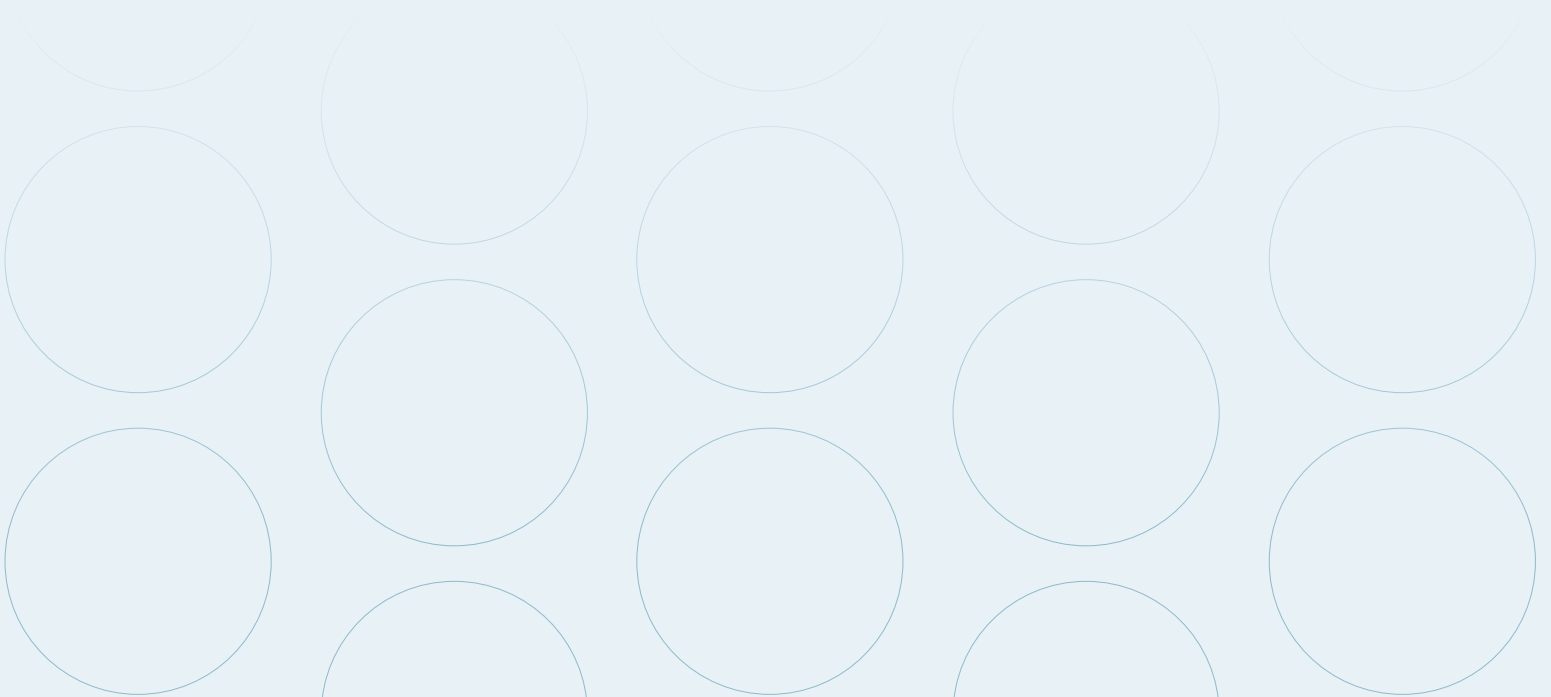
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## **SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE PRACTICE HAS NOW BECOME A COLLECTIVE MOVEMENT FOR JUSTICE.**

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Because Adler University students, faculty, and staff embrace social justice and work hard to make socially responsible practice a reality, the practice is less a concept and promise than when it was described in the University's first paper on the topic in 2006. Now it is also less a "project" than it was in 2012. It has now become a collective movement for justice.

This paper will define socially responsible practice as it is understood at this time at Adler University, its origins, and how it has become the University's critical value proposition. The paper provides an overview of how socially responsible practice is enacted, and how it affects curriculum and the whole university environment. Finally, this paper explores benefits of socially responsible practice and comments on future opportunities. ○





The practice of social responsibility is a values-based execution of behaviors and actions that build upon global movements for social justice and equity. Adlerians are change agents who take an inward look that explores their own connection to social problems. Adlerians also inquire intentionally into the origins of those problems, analyze the systems which perpetuate them, and take outward steps to resolve social problems collectively. Socially responsible practitioners understand and work to ensure community health, rather than simply providing services to individuals without a recognition that ongoing socially bound environmental factors must also be addressed. They consider their own history of understanding oppression, their initial resistance, and the lessons learned from anti-oppression work.

The practice of being socially responsible requires that one build intentional connections with the global community to collectively work toward and ensure equitable health and wellness. The Adlerian concept of social interest informs us that individual health is inherently tethered to the health of others and the environment. Thus, communal and environmental ties are essential to creating healthier environments, enacting inclusive approaches to solving problems, and promoting a thriving humanity.

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## **THE MOST PRESSING ISSUES FACING INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES CANNOT BE RESOLVED BY “FIXING” PEOPLE.**

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Based on Alfred Adler’s explicitly social-contextual stance, socially responsible practitioners believe that the most pressing issues facing individuals and communities cannot be resolved by “fixing” people. Building on the legacy of Rudolf Dreikurs, socially responsible practitioners confront the widespread tendency to treat social ills as individual failings, ignoring the impact of profit motives in issues like arms production, incarceration, psychopharmacology, and public policy development. Oppression afflicts millions each day and simultaneously affects us all. Thus, the injuries of oppression are ubiquitous, and experienced in forms such as racism, sexism, age oppression, heterosexism, xenophobia, and classism.



**Left** Alfred Adler

**Right** Rudolf Dreikurs

Alfred Adler and his student Rudolf Dreikurs held that human progress would only be achieved by actions aimed at the social betterment of all and the establishment of a society based on cooperation and social equality. Socially responsible practitioners must be prepared to engage at the intersections of power, questioning systems and widely held beliefs to discover and resolve that which is incongruent with community health. They must make assessments of inequity and exercise courage through action to resolve these.

Alfred Adler, his colleagues, and his students in the last 100 years challenged practitioners to work against nationalism when it harms humans, wars of conquest, unemployment, and other obstacles which interfere with wellbeing in families, schools, and society at large. These social justice movements are evoked at the foundation of health, as health is a vector for human beings to achieve their highest potential, share their gifts and talents, and positively affect the world. Thus, health ought to be regarded as a human right, and access to healthy environments and health care are essential to achieve it. Health, often confused with healthcare, more accurately includes the emotional, environmental, financial, intellectual, occupational, physical, social, and spiritual and religious domains of wellbeing. At Adler University, practice in the context of health is explored by examining social determinants of health, policy, systems, and collective approaches to achieving health equity in each of these domains. ○





**ORIGINS OF  
SOCIALY  
RESPONSIBLE  
PRACTICE**



Alfred Adler was the first to see that physical health, mental health, and social conditions are interconnected. In his first book, *The Secrets of the Tailors Trade* written in 1898, he explored how the occupational conditions of tailors in Vienna had an impact on their physical health; Alfred Adler held society responsible for these outcomes. In that book, as well as his other early publications prepared for the Symposium on Suicide in 1910, he suggested that underlying social conditions should be a part of any meaningful discussion concerning individual mental and physical health. He saw poor social conditions as partly to and responsible for negative health outcomes ranging from physical illnesses in poor tailors to suicidal epidemics in youth.

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## THROUGH HIS LIFE'S WORK, ALFRED ADLER BECAME AND REMAINS RELEVANT IN THE 21ST CENTURY.

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In his lectures, interviews, and articles, Alfred Adler continued to highlight the harm of social inequalities, such as racism, sexism, totalitarianism, and social passivity. His ideas became more refined during times of social crises – after World War I, during the Great Depression, and following the Nazi rise to power. He continuously pointed to the social responsibilities of health professionals to both address and confront social ills. In speaking out, envisioning and encouraging a more equitable social order, he was breaking social taboos. Through his life's work, Alfred Adler became and remains relevant in the 21st century.

Contemporary societies continue to uphold values that perpetuate inequities and caste systems of oppression. Thus, individuals and groups cannot be held solely responsible for their health outcomes because social conditions are still unequal, inequitable, and unjust. Members of society, on all its levels, in any economic stratum, in any political camp or position, hold responsibility for understanding the links between social conditions, oppression, and inequities.

Social conditions at work, especially those experienced by members of marginalized populations, significantly impact health and overall life outcomes. These inequities persist in schools, health systems, and the job market. Since these conditions are still the norm, practitioners ought to be reminded of the connections Alfred Adler highlighted among overall health, work and living conditions, and society at large. His approach requires socially responsible practitioners to intervene in ways that include community-based approaches to remove social conditions that create and contribute to poor health. Practitioners are responsible for being advocates, allies, and activists that stand in solidarity with marginalized communities in joint efforts to create social change, reparations, reconciliation, and restorations that last for generations.

The symptoms of social problems and injustices are visible in health outcomes; wellness varies according to quality and access to health and human support systems. “Our health and well-being reside in our community life,” said Adler University President Raymond E. Crossman as he reflected on the institution’s Adlerian heritage and pursuit of social justice. The quality of community life should not be determined by a person’s geographic location, language spoken, religion, skin color, ability level, citizenship, or any other social variable.

Socially responsible practitioners must use knowledge, analysis, and skills that address the historical impact of inequity as they work for social justice. Equity via social justice is achieved when we unite to end all forms of oppression. We have a responsibility to collectively repair and restore blighted communities through civic engagement and community building, with a commitment to this outcome.

This unified approach is also tied to Alfred Adler’s central idea about the connection between community and health, *gemeinschaftsgefühl*. Adlerians understand the necessary interdependence with others, that the welfare of any individual depends on the welfare of

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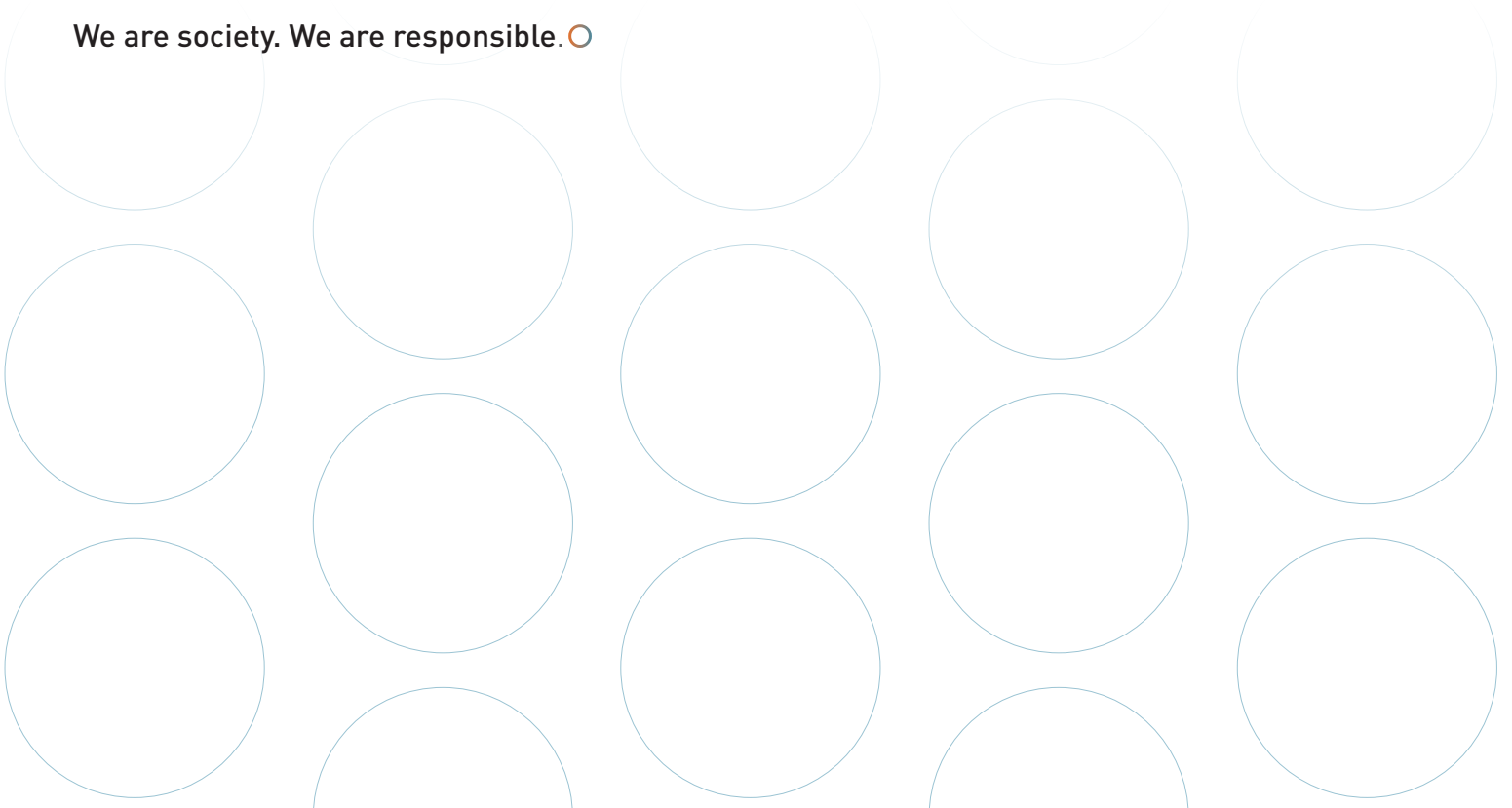
## WE OUGHT TO CREATE OUR BEST AND GREATEST SOLUTIONS TOGETHER.

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everyone. Further, this understanding is then translated into actions aimed at both self-development and cooperative and helpful movements directed toward others. The “ein” in the term *gemeinschaftsgefühl* means oneness, conveying that we ought to create our best and greatest solutions together.

Our well-being is measured in how we connect and support one another to develop healthy communities that are repaired and liberated from oppression. It is this philosophy of Alfred Adler that informs socially responsible practice, as we are most powerful when we exercise collective courage and risk imperfection to eradicate injustice and move toward a more just society. For the socially responsible practitioner, well-being as a concept of individual health is not enough. Rather, social well-being – the well-being of all – ought to inform the actions of our personal and professional lives.

**We are society. We are responsible.** ○



**ESSENTIALS  
OF SOCIALLY  
RESPONSIBLE  
PRACTICE**

Social justice refers to equitable distribution of economic, political, civil, cultural, social, and other resources and opportunities in society in order to promote the optimal development of persons and communities. Social justice is achieved when we demonstrate with courage and discipline



a commitment to knowledge about and engagement with diverse peoples; learn about historical and contemporary inequities; build relationships to promote solidarity for social justice; gain knowledge and skills to advance social justice; confront and resist oppression; restore justice; and make reparations and reconciliation to those aggrieved. Socially responsible practitioners must:

### **Learn about and engage with a diversity of people.**

They develop collegial and social relationships with people whose social identities are different than their own across race, age, ability, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, military experience, income, language, and other aspects of diversity. These relationships create exposure to and empathy for the life experiences of others, challenging our own perspectives and behaviors that will not support justice. Ultimately, these relationships embody the active and lasting sense of oneness that Alfred Adler wrote about.

### **Learn about historical and contemporary inequities**

They access print, digital, and community resources that expose unfair treatment, recognizing personal positions of power and privilege and the historical foundation of these. This investigation is often an iterative process in which the practitioner comes to understand one level of unfair treatment, only to find as new information becomes available that this understanding is incomplete. Thus, the practitioner will need to employ analysis of systems and institutions to identify the etiology and emergence of injustice; and to engage in a life-long process of that analysis as their self-awareness and awareness of others will change over time.

### **Build relationships to promote solidarity for social justice.**

Practitioners work with others like themselves for support and to address those areas of confusion about their own biases. They also build alliances with others different from themselves to build coalitions, reflect on their own assumptions, and gain perspective on structures and systems that keep inequity in place.



### **Gain knowledge and skills to advance social justice.**

Socially responsible practitioners strive to acknowledge social injustice and to avoid blame as an endpoint of their efforts. Similarly, they recognize with integrity their own personal and collective power and control to effect change, neither over nor under-estimating their capacity to act decisively. When their interpersonal, social, emotional, or technical skills are insufficient for the work ahead, they refine these skills and partner with others holding shared commitments to change.

### **Confront and resist interpersonal, institutional, structural, and social oppression**

Socially responsible practitioners recognize their own positions of power and privilege, acknowledging the impact of these on their own biases and discriminatory practices, which are often supported by organizational policies and practices that maintain social inequity. They acknowledge and address the ways they themselves manage oppressive systems. Their acts of resistance include organizing, action planning, lobbying, fund raising, educating, and transforming their reactive anger into pro-active determination.

### **Work to restore justice.**

The work of socially responsible practitioners includes influencing and developing policies, structures, practice rules, power sharing, and change leadership that is aligned with social equity. This work advances justice by meeting others where they are in the process of change, providing personally meaningful information as social motivators, promoting an equity-focused approach to social change, modeling behavior that moves us to justice, and reinforcing the movement toward justice. They also support interpersonal and institutional actions to overcome the legacy of injustice which include dialogues to promote understanding, community investments, and development of public policy that addresses barriers to equity and inclusion. This work requires civic involvement beyond voting, showing approval in social media sites, or tweeting.

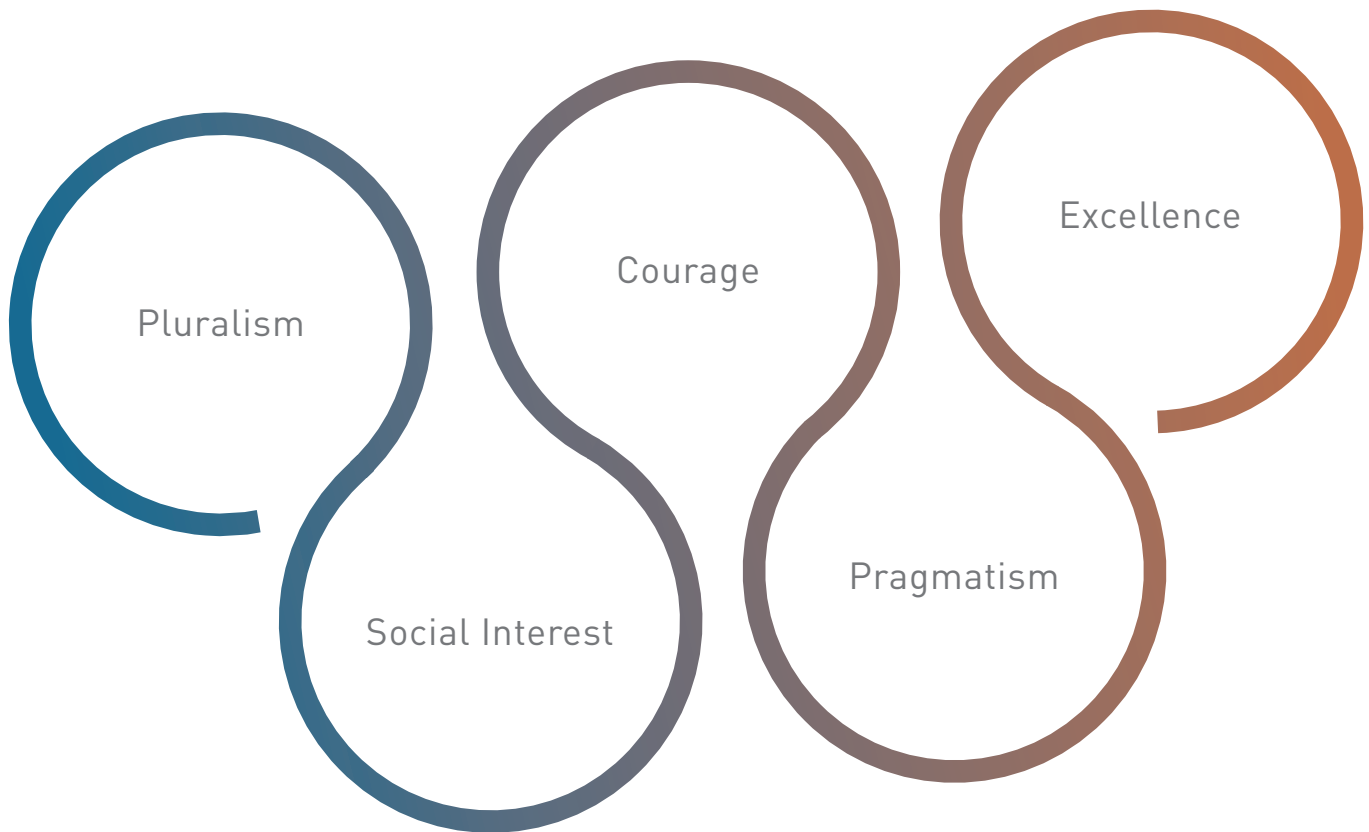
### **Make reparations and reconciliation to those aggrieved.**

The practice of reparation seeks, at its core, to provide acknowledgement, responsiveness, and restoration to individuals and populations wronged through individual or collective action or inaction. Examples include the seizing of lands of Indigenous peoples of the Americas, enslavement of Africans, internment of Japanese Canadians and Japanese Americans,



disregard for the survivors and families of the residential school system, continued pay inequities for women in the workplace, deprivation of professional employment opportunities for Jewish Americans in many states through the 1960s, intentional delay of a public health response to HIV, and others. These have all sparked debate about right action through reparation. Socially responsible practitioners support a formal apology on the part of nations to the living descendants of these people. They support restorative practices which include civil settlements such as direct payments, increased educational opportunities, and government-funded community investments to overcome the legacy effects of these injustices.

The values of Adler University also serve to broaden our understanding of socially responsible practice as a mission toward and approach to social justice. Pluralism, Social Interest, Courage, Pragmatism, and Excellence are all essential elements of socially responsible practice. Adler University infuses these core values in the academic curriculum, campus-based programming, and external projects. Socially responsible practice is an organizing principle that Adler University uses to actualize Adlerian philosophy, bringing these values into movement and action.



### Social Interest

Adler University is a part of and invested in the surrounding community. Social responsibility guides its decisions and establishes its goals for learning, teaching, and administration. Life at the University is marked by rich opportunities for collective problem-solving, an active pursuit of sustainability, a vigorous commitment to the cities and peoples of Chicago and Vancouver, and a realization of those cities' connections with the larger world.

## Pluralism

The University respects and celebrates human diversity and difference. Its academic, social, and organizational strength is enhanced by inclusiveness and respect for the unique identity of individuals reflected in their cultural traditions, beliefs, and viewpoints. The University embraces diversity in its broadest sense, including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, age, nationality, language, disability, socioeconomic status, education, spiritual and religious orientation, political perspective, and intellectual viewpoint. Its programs, partnerships, and relationships demonstrate deep local roots, wide national influences, and broad global reach.

## Courage

Adler University encourages leadership, innovation, and creativity, action on principle, and challenges to the status quo. It continues to work toward a culture of innovation. The University expects its ongoing work to challenge assumptions and to support revolutionary approaches to social action and change. Staff and faculty are encouraged to find solutions beyond the boundaries of traditional higher education practices. Students are prepared to be leaders who are agents of change.

## Pragmatism

Adler University programs and institutions are outcome-oriented, evidence-based, and pursue real-world solutions to social ills and measurable results in social justice. The University applies scholarship and theory to socially responsible practice. Its work can be observed in the surrounding communities in which students, staff, and faculty live, learn, and practice. The University seeks to use organizational practices that are effective, efficient, and focused on outcomes.


## Excellence

The University embraces the highest level of quality, rigor, and integrity for education, scholarship, performance, and outcomes. This value enacts socially responsible practice through policies and practices affecting students, staff, and faculty. It assures that the development of socially responsible practitioners remains at the center of the University's work by establishing standards for its execution.

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# SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE PRACTICE IS THE ADLERIAN APPROACH TO ACHIEVING SOCIAL JUSTICE.

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Socially responsible practice is the Adlerian approach to achieving social justice. Our students, faculty, staff, trustees, partners, and alumni have a responsibility to pursue social justice through the aforementioned steps and values. At Adler University, our practice is comprised of collective reflecting, collaborating, and activism for social justice. 



**MOVEMENT  
FOR SOCIALLY  
RESPONSIBLE  
PRACTICE**

Among Alfred Adler's advocates and followers was Adler University founder Rudolf Dreikurs (1897-1972), a psychiatrist who immigrated to Chicago in 1937 after Adler's death. Dreikurs lived and worked in Chicago's Hull House and he was instrumental in the child guidance movement in the U.S. In 1952, Dreikurs founded the Institute of Adlerian Psychology that is now Adler University.

Early instructors and founders of the Institute were also Bernard Shulman, Harold Mosak, Bina Rosenberg, and Robert Powers, who collectively touched thousands of practitioners, primary educators, and parents with coursework and programs about common sense, effective, and optimistic ways to support health and community life.

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## A NEED IDENTIFIED IN BOTH THESE ENDEAVORS WAS TO EXPAND THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF STUDENTS TO USE ADLERIAN THEORY TO ADDRESS BROADER SOCIAL ISSUES THAT AFFECT HUMAN WELLBEING.

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The commitment of Adler University to educating and training socially responsible practitioners was renewed in 2004 as a result of the School's organizational strategic planning process and again in 2012 with the publication of *The SRP Project*. A need identified in both these endeavors was to expand the education and training of students to use Adlerian theory to address broader social issues that affect human well-being.

Since the publication of *The SRP Project*, evidence for the need for socially responsible practice has only grown. In North America, white supremacy and white terrorism have been on the rise. Violence against Indigenous women and silence over missing and murdered Indigenous women continue. An international resurgence of nationalism has also resulted in heightened visibility of extreme socio-political perspectives such as so-called incels. Attacks on groups expressing religious beliefs and practices have increased.



Police-involved shootings, school shootings, and systems of protecting perpetrators of sexual assault and abuse have been challenged by highly visible movements and demonstrations like Black Lives Matter, #MeToo, and March for Our Lives.

Across continents, people are experiencing the impacts of climate change and are seeing the failures of policies that sought to protect humans from the impact of extracting and burning fossil fuels. Increased wealth and health disparities, climate change, poverty, and violence are contributing to wide-spread displacement and immigration.

The social issues that reflect an even greater need for socially responsible practitioners have also prompted greater global support for many pro-human perspectives. For example, practitioners in many disciplines have adopted broader definitions of wellness. They are also looking to social safety nets, health care, and education, understanding these to be human rights. The importance of inequity in limiting positive health outcomes is more widely understood. Progress has been made, for example Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Further, health systems are finding more opportunities to address social determinants of health that were once viewed as the role of advocacy groups or social service practitioners.



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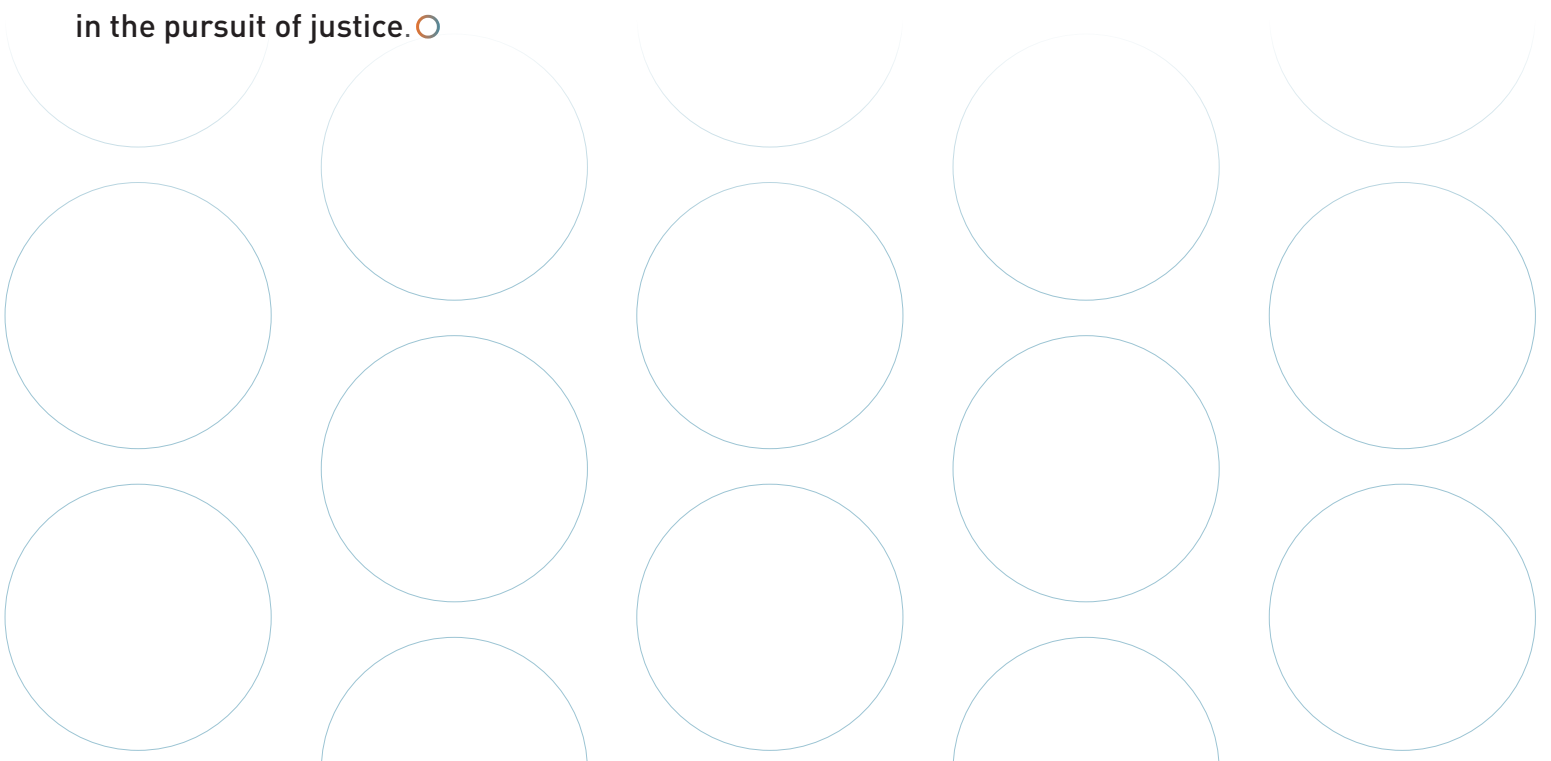
## ADLER UNIVERSITY HAS PRIORITIZED THE EXPANSION AND ALIGNMENT OF EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WITH SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY.

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Adler University has prioritized the expansion and alignment of education and community engagement with social responsibility. It has deepened its understanding of socially responsible practice as its students, faculty, staff, and community partners have brought new concepts and perspectives to the discourse and application of socially responsible practice. The University community, as well as the University's community partners, identifies social responsibility as the most important feature of the University's identity, distinctiveness, and strength. Social responsibility as a uniquely Adlerian concept is the most salient feature of the University's legacy.

In 2005, faculty at Adler University described socially responsible practitioners as fostering the development of social equality and respect through compassionate action throughout the global community. In 2009, the Board of Trustees approved this definition:

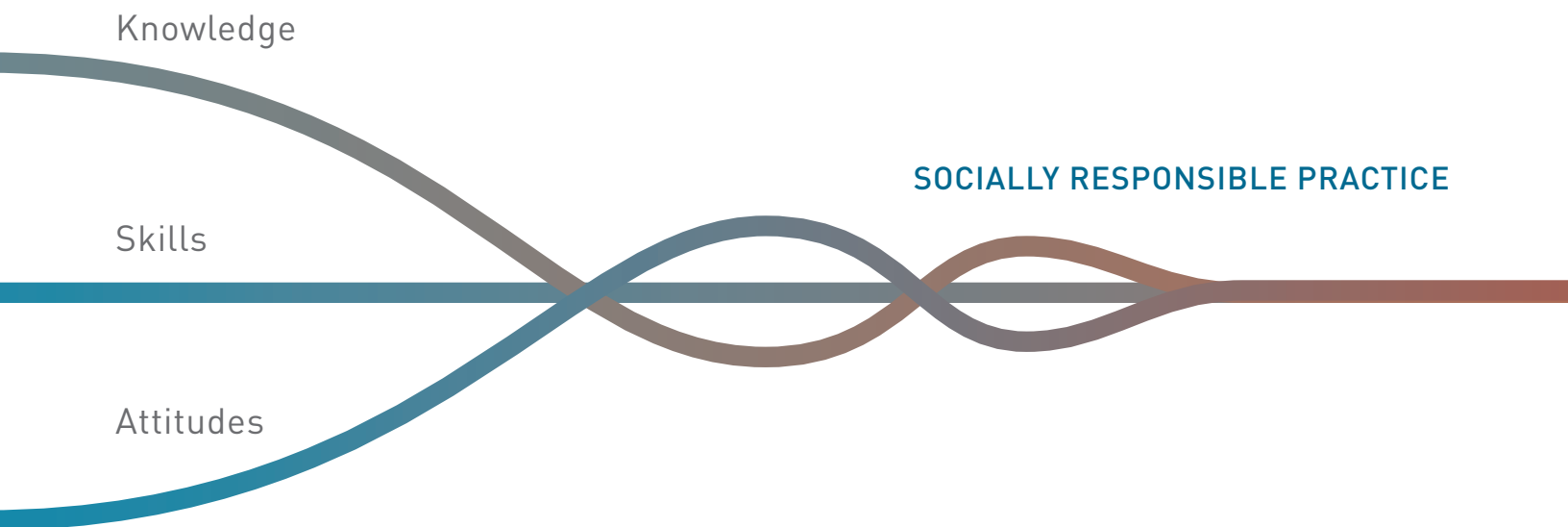
**Socially responsible practitioners are educated to be effective personal and social change agents in the pursuit of justice. ○**



**CURRICULUM  
COMPETENCIES  
FOR SOCIALLY  
RESPONSIBLE  
PRACTICE**

Faculty have operationalized socially responsible practice within a curricular framework of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required of practitioners across many disciplines. This framework allows practitioners to understand the role of social context in conditioning physical and behavioral health in order to integrate this understanding into professional practice and civic engagement, and to actively collaborate with others to reform systems that adversely affect human well-being. The framework also reminds faculty and staff to address their own understandings and actions that can advance social justice.

## CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK



### Knowledge

Adler graduates are expected to know the theory and research on the social, cultural, historical, economic, and political systems in which individuals are embedded and that affect well-being. Included in this knowledge is an understanding of how the distribution of power affects human welfare and functioning. Further, this distribution of power is made evident in the nature and structure of various service delivery systems that impact individuals and communities. These delivery systems can include teams or people with differing perspectives to identify and address socio-cultural phenomena that impact health.

With this knowledge, graduates possess insight into how communities function, organize, self-define, self-regulate, and identify and pursue objectives. This requires them to know methods of public policy analysis, formulation, and implementation. They are also familiar with multilevel initiatives to enhance individual and community health and well-being, while remaining cognizant that these are often embedded in Western perspectives and that non-Western views and approaches to well-being also exist.

## Skills

Socially responsible graduates are expected to possess the ability to integrate theory and research from multiple perspectives and to critically examine the claims of a broad range of theories, models, and disciplines. They are able to engage in constructive, informed social action that uses multiple techniques. Their success in these endeavors requires an ability to network, cooperate, and collaborate across communities and disciplines. It also requires their ability to work and communicate with people who hold different world views, life experiences, beliefs, and values.

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# GRADUATES ARE ABLE TO USE MULTI-MODAL APPROACHES IN ADDRESSING INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY NEEDS.

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Adler graduates are also able to development holistic interventions based on an understanding of the context in which persons live. This means that they have developed skills in assessing how the broader social context contributes to inequalities in health and well-being across populations. Graduates are able to use multi-modal approaches in addressing individual and community needs.

## Attitudes

The knowledge and skills named here are supported by a commitment to social justice among graduates. They must be caring, compassionate, empathetic, ethical, and self-reflective. Graduates are respectful of individual, cultural and other differences, open-minded, flexible, and exhibit nimbleness in fluid environments. Their work is marked by optimism, hopefulness, and a willingness to question the status quo. They are also cooperative and collaborative while standing in solidarity with the oppressed.

The development of these competencies in Adler graduates is supported through their preparation to understand socially responsible practice in their field through core curriculum, practical training experiences, additional required coursework, and campus-based learning experiences that explore the context of social injustice. The competencies are also supported through their thoughtful application in the broader educational environment at Adler University. This environment includes the structure and organization of the University, which includes institutes, centers, and other praxes to support fidelity to mission and socially responsible practice. ○



**SOCIALLY  
RESPONSIBLE  
PRACTICE IN  
ACTION**

Building on Alfred Adler's theory, socially responsible practice is measured by the intention, persistence, intensity, and direction of action that is informed by the goal of community wellness and a clear idea of both proximate and global community. In this way, socially responsible practice is a life pursuit and not a job. Socially responsible practitioners understand that an integral part of their role is to remain focused on justice, using their knowledge, skills, and resources to effect social change.

Because Adlerian practitioners recognize that health resides in our community life – that unless everyone is healthy, we are not healthy – the socially responsible practitioner reliably seeks to address the physical, intellectual, environmental, emotional, financial, social, spiritual, and occupational health of community members. They recognize that even wide-spread availability of resources to contribute to wellness cannot be equated with actual accessibility of those resources.

Socially responsible practitioners also hold on to the promise that we will advocate for you today, and we will support you in advocating for yourself tomorrow. They are inspired by the actions of oppressed people and aspire to assist others as they gain the knowledge and skills needed for effective change.

Several other things must be noted about socially responsible practice. It is useful to note what socially responsible practice is not.

**First, it is not unscientific.** Socially responsible practice is rooted in social sciences as presented in our unique curricula. A critical component of demonstrating socially responsible practice is the assessment of the context in which social issues exist. These assessments use science to examine historical antecedents, individual experiences, family structures, institutional resources, and community support. The socially responsible practitioner uses intellectual rigor: those models of inquiry that hold the greatest promise to yield results that will shed light on injustice where it exists. The rigorous application of scientific method to the study of the effects of socially responsible practice is both possible and necessary.

**Second, socially responsible practice is neither merely service nor empathy.** While empathy in clinical and non-clinical applications of socially responsible practice can aid in the identification of social ills and an understanding about their impact on individuals and groups, empathy alone will not translate into the social and political practices that rectify these issues. Indeed, in the absence of action empathy can inadvertently suggest that problems are intractable.

**Third, socially responsible practice is not just compassion.** Compassion can be defined as a desire to help in the face of suffering. Therefore, compassion may be both an affective and cognitive motivator to prompt movement on an issue, but the desire to intervene alone is not itself intervention. The desire to move is not the same as moving. As Robin DiAngelo posits in her best-selling book, *White Fragility*,

“[W]hite progressives cause the most daily damage to people of color... [T]o the degree we think we have arrived, we will put our energy into making sure that others see us as having arrived [rather than pursuing] actual antiracist [and social justice] practice.”

Arriving at a clear idea of proximate and global community can be challenging. Widely available sound bites in social media are often imprecise, advocate for political positions at the expense of understanding, and advance existing narratives that do not challenge the underlying social inequities in which they were developed. Socially responsible practitioners commit to the pursuit of reasoning based on facts, become students of civics, and cultivate the courage that allows for a reevaluation of their own biases.

Groups and individuals moved to the margins of society find limited or no access to work, health care, education, affordable housing, mental health support, financial resources, friends and allies, and reinforcement for a solid sense of their own rich interior lives. The socially responsible practitioner respects people in these circumstances and advocates for an end to these injustices. The courage shown by people moved to the margins ought to be met with the courage of practitioners who work to improve themselves and change society.

Adler University has applied this understanding of socially responsible practice in its program offerings, commitments, ongoing intentional inquiry, and its own development into a university. ○



**ADLER UNIVERSITY'S  
SOCIALY  
RESPONSIBLE  
PRACTICE MOVEMENT**

As a university, we recognize that, collectively, we are in the midst of stretching our own practice of social responsibility. We are in the process too of becoming Adler University – a name and identity change enacted in 2015 to reflect our vision for a university uniquely focused on socially responsible practice to advance a more just society. Our heritage serves as the foundation, and our evolution is evidenced in the efforts of our campuses and concomitant innovations.



### Chicago Campus

Founded in 1952, with courses taught by Dreikurs, Shulman, Mosak, and other Adlerians, social justice has been a consistent hallmark of the institution's work in Chicago. In 1961, the campus designed and taught the first singular class to address the psychology of women, and in 1964, faculty were among the first psychologists to enter and work with incarcerated people in prison settings at Cook County Jail. The founders endured criticism in promoting an Adlerian perspective

and this work. For example, there are many stories from early days in which our founders were introduced on academic and civic panels – and were met with the departure of the other panelists from the stage because they were scornful of an Adlerian perspective.

In recent days, the University has become recognized in Chicagoland by government, nonprofit, philanthropy, and business sectors as a leader in social justice education and work. Socially responsible practice has been refined from Adlerian heritage through ongoing curricular revisions and the development of new academic programs and initiatives.

### Vancouver Campus

Dreikurs, Shulman, and Mosak traveled to Vancouver beginning in the late 1960s, which led to the offering of a master's degree in counselling in 1974. For 30 years, we graduated Adlerian counselors in Vancouver through a partnership with the Adlerian Psychology Association of British Columbia. Then, in 2004, the Board of Trustees in Chicago approved the institution's

new vision for socially responsible practice, and the following year, in 2005, decided to extend and support that vision across national borders by formalizing the Vancouver Campus. Canadians were added to the Board and new resources marshalled to grow the campus.

In 2017, a new campus facility was built, and in 2018, the first Canadian trustee was elected Chair of the University's Board of Trustees.

Socially responsible practice has been extended in a uniquely Canadian way in recent years. The students, staff, and faculty of the Vancouver Campus have adopted a goal to create a culturally safe and welcome environment for Indigenous people. In addition, a signature of the campus is a regular dialogue entitled *Social Justice Beyond Borders* that invites academics and activists to explore global social justice issues and ways to address them through education and activism.



### Online Campus

Online classes were first delivered in 2005 to ensure Adlerian reach in a higher education future which is expected to be increasingly virtual. Resources were dedicated to developing more online classes, the first entirely online academic programs were offered in 2012, and the Online Campus launched in 2015 – all with the realization that access is paramount to the promulgation of socially responsible practice.

In 2018, the University's signature learning experience – the Social Justice Practicum – was developed and piloted within the fully online

setting. Now all students in the Online Campus complete the same mission-critical experience as their peers in Chicago and Vancouver. Plans continue to innovate pedagogy for engaging communities in the online learning environment.

### **Center for Civic Learning and Community Action**

The Chicago Campus' Department of Community Engagement was redesigned in 2017 as a Center to administer and align the Social Justice Practicum (SJP) across the campuses and to coordinate other social justice and civic education initiatives. Since 2006, the SJP has introduced students to concepts in civics, intersectionality, and community organizing. Students are placed in their first year of study with community partners to complete challenging on-site projects that provide experiential learning about socially responsible practice. Students on SJP consider policy implications of the work and their relevant political activism. Beyond SJP, Center staff work to support the civic engagement of all University stakeholders through campus exhibits, voter registration drives, open dialogue sessions, and professional development.

### **Adler Community Health Services**

Upon Rudolf Dreikurs' death in 1972, the Dreikurs Psychological Services Center was established on the Chicago Campus. In 2010, the on-campus clinic was redesigned into Adler Community Health Services (ACHS), a community-embedded model for communities most in need of health care across Chicagoland. Dispersing the on-campus clinic seemed to be more aligned with the vision of the first community psychologist Alfred Adler. In 2018, ACHS was implemented in Vancouver with the same community-embedded service and training model. ACHS augments the over 700 community partner training sites at which students are prepared to be socially responsible practitioners.

### **Institute on Public Safety and Social Justice**

Since 2006, institutes and centers have been established for faculty, staff, and students to extend Alfred Adler's thinking and work in the context of today's pressing social issues. The Institute on Public Safety and Social Justice (IPSSJ) was launched in 2009 to address public safety challenges with socially just solutions. IPSSJ works with trauma-focused community

coalitions to reduce criminalization of communities of color – including evaluating the nation’s first Restorative Justice Community Court in Chicago’s North Lawndale neighborhood and providing support and evaluation for Community Restorative Justice Hubs. In addition to offering trauma-responsive programming within the Illinois Department of Corrections and the Department of Juvenile Justice, IPSSJ collaborates to provide investigative oversight for the Independent Monitoring Team’s work to oversee the Consent Decree driving police reform in Chicago.

## University Structures and Functions

The University works to engineer its processes and organization to support and reflect socially responsible practice. We have established practices that allow us as a community to explore social problems, consider our methods to address them, and nurture our efforts to advance social justice. Importantly, we acknowledge that we are a work in progress and expect to continuously improve how all University activities align with socially responsible practice. Examples of ways the University has aligned its processes include:

### Annual Retreat

Faculty, staff, and students across the three campuses devote a day each year to together reflect on the University’s mission with an emphasis on exploring the sources and tools for socially responsible practice. Since 2011, the retreat has supported the University community to:

1. **Learn more about social problems** for which socially responsible practice is critical in finding solutions;
2. **Reflect upon socially responsible practice** in our advocacy, activism, pedagogy, and professional practice;
3. **Identify, award, and celebrate** students, staff, and faculty who exemplify socially responsible practice.



### Board of Trustees

At each board meeting, trustees monitor goals and activities related to the first and key strategy of the University’s strategic plan: *Advance socially responsible practice in the University’s activity and reach*. The Board sees its primary responsibility as ensuring that Adler University is becoming more Adlerian each year. Trustees work through trainings and discipline to make their governance support and reflect socially responsible practice, and trustees are recruited first and foremost for their values and experience related to social justice, with attention to diverse board composition.

### Cabinet

The Cabinet was established in 2018 as a new leadership group to advise and consult with the President, to develop and implement University-wide operational and strategic plans, to approve University guidelines and policies, to recommend allocation of resources, and to continuously improve the learning environment. The 22-member leadership team is larger than is typical at universities and includes both appointed and elected members to realize the University’s Adlerian values in decision making.

### Center for Adlerian Practice and Scholarship

This Center protects and extends the Adlerian intellectual foundation of the University. As all academic degree programs have a perspective shaped by Adlerian concepts and principles, the Center serves as a curricular resource for faculty and staff to ensure that all students know how Alfred Adler is relevant to their work and today's social challenges. In addition to ongoing consultation, trainings bring alumni and other University stakeholders together with Adlerians from all over the world.

### Center for Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity

Understanding the need for an emphasis on diversity and inclusion within socially responsible practice, the Adler Black Student Association in Chicago, with the support of faculty and staff from all three campuses, met with University leadership to propose that a Chief Diversity Officer be hired to better address equity in all university activities. The new leader is beginning the Center in 2020 to steward a new central university diversity plan.

### Common Book

Each year the University selects a book of fiction for students, staff, and faculty to read together. Books are selected related to themes of social justice, and programming explores those themes. *Americanah*, *Indian Horse*, and *The Great Believers* are examples of books that we have read since 2010 that examine the intersectional lives of people through the lens of culture, social inclusion, and equity.



### Extracurricular learning

Activities such as the Common Hour, Community Action Day, and Adler Action Day are focused on socially responsible practice. For example, weekly Common Hours in Chicago and Vancouver allow students, staff, and faculty to meet with other campus stakeholders and visitors about their work and activism. Common Hours have featured visits with elected officials, presentations on immigration policy and outcomes, and Narcan training to help people experiencing a drug overdose. ○



**THE FUTURE  
OF SOCIALLY  
RESPONSIBLE  
PRACTICE**



The Adler University motto is *Non nobis solus sed omnibus*, or *Not for ourselves alone, but for all*. The motto affirms the Adlerian roots of the institution and its present and future endeavors as it continues the work of Alfred Adler. Educating socially responsible practitioners is the central value proposition of the University's educational programs embodied in this motto. For all those who have chosen the path of liberation, there is the realization that what benefits one must benefit all — and what harms one, harms all. Thus, as Adler University commits to graduating socially responsible practitioners, the institution benefits students, the individuals and communities engaged, faculty and staff, the various professions chosen by Adler University graduates, and society-at-large.

The University continues and strengthens its commitment to graduate effective social change agents in the pursuit of justice. Its students, faculty, and staff must learn more and advance actions for economic justice, criminal justice, environmental justice, racial justice, and the rights of immigrants, women, LGBTQ people, and others. The University is expanding and deepening its engagement with communities in collaborative partnerships that strengthen those communities, provide service, and prepare graduates.

Socially responsible practice demands that practitioners expand, develop, and evaluate the impact of community, group, and individual interventions intended to promote wellness and reduce human suffering. But enduring social inequities associated with differences in economic class, race, gender and gender expression, sexual orientation, and immigration status must similarly be confronted, as these intersect with and limit inclusion in work, physical, social, and service environments for whole populations.

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## **ADLER UNIVERSITY GRADUATES CONTINUE TO CHALLENGE THE STATUS QUO**

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For example, structural racism evidenced in social segregation and immigration policy persists overtime, adapts to many new contexts, and impacts population health more than individual risk factors. Adler University graduates continue to challenge the status quo that contributes both to

individual and population health risks, injury, and limited life expectancy.

As another example, while many practitioners are devoting greater energy to the improvement of reimbursement rates for service provision, Adler University graduates must re-examine policies and practice that favor individual interventions and a fee-for-service approach to addressing human need while ignoring comprehensive approaches to health. Exciting opportunities exist for the socially responsible practitioner to collaborate with urban planners, environmentalists, social scientists, innovators in information technology, and others to create interventions that give space in which people in communities can solve their shared problems through initiative, passion, energy and a strong desire to serve.

At this point, the beneficiaries of Adler University's efforts to train socially responsible practitioners – and indeed the benefits that accrue to them as practitioners – are still emerging. The early research in the application of Adlerian principles in education showed promise in public administration, public policy, counselor education, art therapy, industrial and organizational psychology, military psychology, couple and family therapy, sport and health counseling, forensic counseling, rehabilitation counseling, and clinical psychology. Adlerian principles also hold potential for generalizability across other fields, such as health care, public health, teacher preparation, post-secondary education, nonprofit management, communications and new media, and others. However, the application of socially responsible practice principles and programs in these arenas remain open for development and extensive study.

In 2017, the faculty operationalized socially responsible practice as one of the three broad learning outcomes of the University as part of the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Program (SLOAP) Reengineering Project:

“The ability to apply principles of social justice to analyze issues from a structural and systemic perspective and advocate/intervene at these levels to remove barriers to health and well-being in collaboration with individuals, communities, and organizations. Demonstrate the ability to critically examine current practice and engage as a change agent in activities that challenge and transform the status quo.”

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## 96 PERCENT OF SLOAP RATINGS WERE MET ABOVE THE PROGRAMS' INDICATED SUCCESS THRESHOLDS.

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This reformulation assists faculty in determining the success of curricula and programs in producing socially responsible practitioners. Program outcomes are then measured through ratings from student, faculty, alumni, and community partner reporters. For example, in the 2019 – 2020 SLOAP process, over 11,000 ratings were collected across the University to measure the attainment of this broad learning outcome. Overall, 96 percent of these ratings were met above the programs' indicated success thresholds. Such findings do not declare an endpoint in pursuit of socially responsible practice, rather they indicate progress and motivation to better monitor success and opportunities for improvement.

Many opportunities remain for faculty, student, and alumni research and evaluation to determine if the aspirations of socially responsible practice translate into their intended outcomes. Particularly promising are practices and metrics that involve community-based participatory approaches and the social determinants of health, as originally proposed by Alfred Adler in 1898. Socially responsible practice can and must address issues of minority stress, availability and accessibility of health education, poverty and economic deprivation, discrimination, and social isolation; each of these warrants further inquiry.

Adler University fulfills its mission through its application of principles of social interest in its daily work. Still, discussions among students, faculty, and staff have pointed to the need for continued efforts to understand and address the differential power base that exists among them, both historically and in the present. Self-advocacy, student debt, widely divergent perspectives, culturally bound views of professionalism, and expectations of partner agencies are among the myriad considerations for all groups within Adler University to consider in the light of its commitment to socially responsible practice.



The journey to fulfilling a commitment to the work of Alfred Adler and creating a world of greater compassion and justice is still unfolding. The work ahead of Adler University is intertwined with the magnitude of the world problems that must be addressed and our skills in doing so. However, with the strength that comes from generations of Adlerians committed in solidarity for justice, Adler University moves together as an institution united by a sense of purpose, not for ourselves alone, but for all.

**We are a movement for social justice. We are Adler University. ○**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The production of *A Movement for Justice: Socially Responsible Practice* has been a work in progress over many years, beginning with the first concept paper in 2006. Members of the Adler University community have remained in persistent reflection and dialogue about socially responsible practice to deepen our understanding of social justice and to embolden us in various calls to action.

The inspiration for this new document came from our 2019 retreat when we explored *Our Mission in Action* to assess our understanding of socially responsible practice. And much like *The SRP Project* published in 2012, this new document was created with a collective of contributors that included students, faculty, staff, community partners, alumni, and trustees. Together we engaged in brainstorm sessions, dialogues, and work group meetings to create a document that presents our refined understanding and execution of socially responsible practice. This document would not have been possible without the thoughts, insights, and reflections of previous and current supporters. Listed below are the contributors to *A Movement for Justice: Socially Responsible Practice*.

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