A Social Justice Approach To Black Mental Health

Allyson N. Drayton, NCC, LPC

allydconsults@gmail.com



Being an anti-racist therapist is unlike being a culturally competent therapist or a therapist who practices cultural humility. The former is accountable to act against a system of oppression, instead of capitalizing on it.

BABE KAWAII-BOGUE



OVERVIEW

Cliff Notes: HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/A5QZV9RGX6K

On Anti-Racism & Health Equity: Ethics Talk: Antiracism, Health Equity, and a Post-COVID Future | Journal of Ethics | American Medical Association (ama-assn.org)

Racist Roots:

Scientific Racism

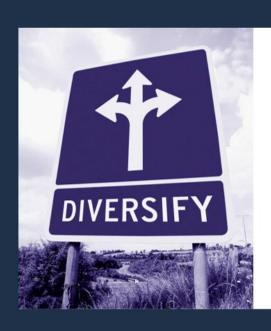
• Scientific racism emerged in the 17th century just after the onset of chattel slavery, in order to legitimize the dehumanization and murder of Black people through racial capitalism.

The Medical Model & "Behavioral Health"

• Flawed (fraudulent) intelligence research conducted by past APA President & recipient of the APA Career Achievement Award strengthened legislation to prevent the immigration of individuals belonging to groups categorized as being "intellectually inferior". Robert Thorndike used behavioral science to justify the dehumanizing treatment of BIPOC persons, women, Eastern and Southern Europeans, and people from lower socioeconomic statuses. His research, rooted in white supremist ideology, became the foundation for behavioral research in psychology to this day.

Protest Psychosis

 Helped justify the need for police brutality in the civil rights movement, Jim Crow laws, and mass incarceration in prisons and psychiatric hospitals. Today, schizophrenia is among the most over diagnosed mental illness among Black Americans.



DECOLONIZATION:

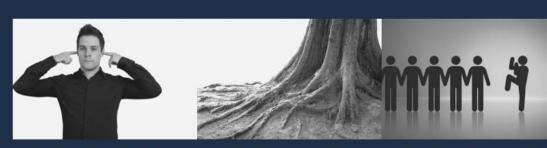
Moving Beyond Cultural Competence

Disparities have been resistant to interventions such as cultural competency training and standardized diagnostic tools. Basic diversity approaches that focus primarily on the race of the provider and the client, while valid, is an approach that does not consider the system itself, the functions of the diagnosis, and its structurally developed links to protest, resistance, racism and other associations that work against the therapeutic connection.

Social Justice practice focuses on the effects of power differentials on individual and family wellbeing and on the relationship between clients and therapists. It calls for discussing issues of empowerment, cultural resistance or social action.

(Falicov, 2004)





MICROAGGRESSIONS

Traumatic discrimination can also result from excessive and intense microaggressions (i.e., repeated exposure to subtle discrimination that persists throughout an individual's life), as well as from blatant and subtle forms of systemic microaggressions (e.g., enforced policies or practices in government or institution that continually marginalize certain groups of people).

VICARIOUS/COLLECTIVE

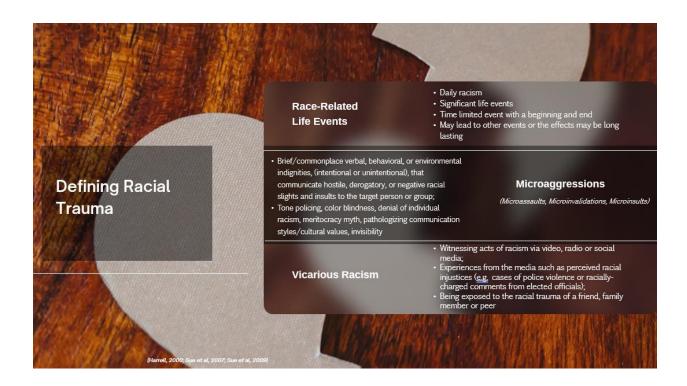
Vicarious racism traditionally refers to experiencing racial discrimination indirectly through close contacts, such as family members and peers.

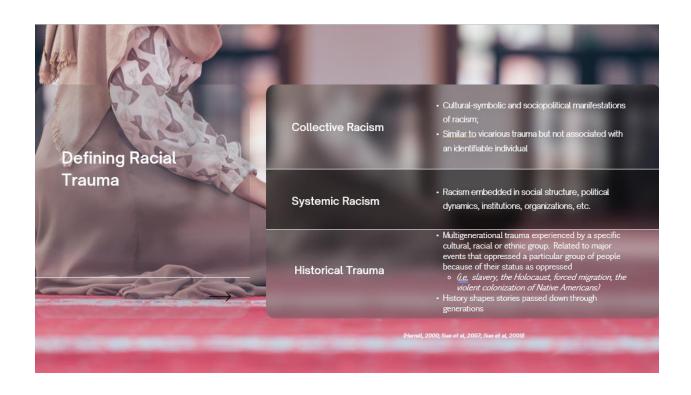
Vicarious racism can be experienced by those who are not directly involved with the event, but who identify with the victims of racism generally on the basis of race.

REACTION FORMATION

A psychological term which speaks to how people respond the opposite way of how they feel due to fear, rejection, or perceived threat to their survival.

Examples- "Acting White", Self Injurious Behavior, avoiding outward expression of culture/ethnicity, turning the other cheek





Examples of Race-Related Traumas That May Not Meet DSM-5 Criteria for PTSD Overt racial slurs and threats made by anyone Distressing medical experiences (i.e., having assault or death using a racial/ethnic epithet); Police harassment, body searches, and assaults (og do) of Incarceration (i.e., having been physically or (i.e., issuing threats, searching the victim's body sexually assaulted while in jail/prison); for evidence of a crime); • Immigration difficulties (i.e., having feared for the · Workplace discrimination (i.e., co-workers express life of oneself/loved ones during the immigration process, or having been exposed to extreme racially motivated threats or carry out physical assaults against a targeted individual); temperatures); • Deportation (i.e., children of undocumented · Community violence (i.e., witnessing gang violence or being afraid for one's life/personal immigrants witness violent confrontation, safety or that of family members); abduction of, and separation from parents by law





REFERENCES

- ❖ A Therapeutic Approach to the Treatment of Racist-Incident-Based Trauma. Bryant-Davis
 & Ocampo, 2006. Journal of emotional Abuse
- Community Building | National Museum of African American History and Culture (si.edu)
- ❖ How False Beliefs in Physical Racial Difference Still Live in Medicine Today The New York Times (nytimes.com)
- How to provide anti-racist mental health care The Lancet Psychiatry
- ❖ Institution for the Study and Promotion of Race and Culture. <u>Racial Trauma is Real Infographic</u>. Boston College.
- Mental Health Disparities: African Americans. 2017. American Psychiatry Association; psychiatry.org Mental Health Disparities: Diverse Populations (psychiatry.org)
- Mental Health in African American Communities: Challenges, Resources, Community Voices NAMI (namila.org)
- Microaggressions and Traumatic Stress: Theory, Research, and Clinical Treatment (apa.org)
- * Racial Trauma and Communities of Color: Assessment and Treatment | Mental Health America (mhanational.org)
- * Racial Trauma: Race Based Traumatic Stress. Carter, 2007. Psychiatric Times.

- * Racial trauma: Theory, research, and healing. Comas-Diaz et al., 2019. American Psychologist.
- * Racial Trauma Reading List
- * Racism: A Challenge for the Therapeutic Dyad | American Journal of Psychotherapy (psychiatryonline.org)
- Schwartz, B., & Flowers, J. V. (2006). How to fail as a therapist: 50 ways to lose or damage your patients. Impact Publishers.
- Stress & Trauma Toolkit for Treating African Americans in a Changing Political and Social Environment. APA, African Americans (psychiatry.org)
- Structural Racism Task Force (psychiatry.org)
- ❖ The African American Adolescent Respect Scale: A Measure of a Prosocial Attitude . Leary, Brennan & Briggs.
- http://rsw.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/15/6/462
- ❖ The Invisible Client: Ramifications of Neglecting the Impact of Race and Culture in Professional Counseling. Isaac Burt, Valerie E. D. Russell, and Michael Brooks. ACA 2016
- The Use of Spirituality and Kinship as Contributors to Successful Therapy Outcomes with African American Families (researchgate.net)
- Transforming Service Delivery Systems, Organizational and Administrative Structures -Behavioral Health News
- What Is Racial Trauma? Understanding How Trauma Affects the Black Community. Jamila Holcomb, Ph.D., LMFT, RELIAS