Understanding Racial Trauma: Implications for Professional Counselors

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Who Are We?

- Doctoral Students at Sam Houston State University.
- Cohort 18
- Similar Interests in research
  - Clinical Mental Health Counseling
  - School Counseling
Land & Labor Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge that we live in Bryan College Station, TX & Houston, TX the original ancestral homelands of the Sana, Tonkawa, Coahuiltecan, Atakapa-Ishak people. We pay respect to the Sana, Tonkawa, Coahuiltecan, Atakapa-Ishak people and their forever presence throughout their historical diaspora.

Further, we would like to acknowledge the labor of enslaved people, particularly of African descent, forced to work countless hours to build a nation, that is America, and received no recognition for it. As a Black man and woman, we are forever indebted to their labor, strength, and resilience.
As professional mental health counselors, we would be remiss if we did not hold space to acknowledge the atrocities Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) experience daily because of their racial identities. BIPOC folx are often the target of racially motivated aggressions, exclusions, and physical attacks. Consequently, these physical, emotional, and psychological injuries create long-term mental health concerns. We hold space to recognize their humanity and center their healing. Additionally, we acknowledge that no statement alone can undo centuries of harm. However, we believe that BIPOC communities could heal when we name the hurt committed, its impact, and honor all BIPOC experiences. We call forth truth, healing, and justice.
Overview

- Review Learning Objectives
- Grounding Exercise
- Discuss Racial Trauma & Implications for Professional Counselors
- Discuss Strategies & Restorative Practices
- Wrap-up
Learning Objectives

- Attendees will understand how to define racial trauma.
- Attendees will learn how to recognize signs and contributing factors of racial trauma in self and/or others.
- Attendees will identify 2-3 strategies that promote healing and reduce the impact of racial trauma.
Grounding Exercise
Racial Trauma Defined

A term used to describe the physical and psychological symptoms that people of color often experience after being exposed to stressful experiences of racism.

Further, it is the accumulation of stress experienced by a person of color that can be direct or perceived discrimination and mistreatment due to racial identity that results in psychological or emotional injury.

(Carter, 2007)
What Does Racial Trauma Look Like?

- Fear & hypervigilance
- Headaches
- Insomnia
- Body aches
- Memory difficulty
- Self-blame
- Confusion
- Shame
- Guilt

- Intrusive thoughts
- Changes in appetite
- Changes in sleep
- Anger
- Anxiety
- Difficulty concentrating
- Extreme Fatigue
- **Hopelessness**

(Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005; Carter, 2007; & Helms, Nicolas, & Green, 2010)
ACA Code of Ethics

The Counseling Relationship
- A.7.a. Advocacy

Relationship With Other Professionals
- D.1.c. Interdisciplinary Teamwork

Evaluation, Assessment, and Interpretation
- E.1.a. Assessment
- E.5.b. Cultural Sensitivity

Supervision, Training, and Teaching
- F.7.c. Infusing Multicultural Issues/Diversity
- F.11.c. Multicultural/Diversity Competence

Research and Publication
- G.1.a. Conducting Research

(ACA, 2014)
2016 CACREP Standards

**Standard 2.1.e.**
Advocacy processes needed to address institutional and social barriers that impede access, equity, and success for clients

**Standard 2.2.b.**
Theories and models of multicultural counseling, cultural identity development, and social justice and advocacy

**Standard 2.2.c.**
Multicultural counseling competencies

**Standard 2.2.h.**
Strategies for identifying and eliminating barriers, prejudices, and processes of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination

**Standard 2.3.i.**
Ethical and culturally relevant strategies for promoting resilience and optimum development and wellness across the lifespan

**Standard 2.5.m.**
Crisis intervention, trauma-informed, and community-based strategies, such as Psychological First Aid

(CACREP, 2015)
Coping and Healing

Coping

- Traditional forms of self-care and strategies for stress management.
- Direct action to regulate stress.
- Avoid intense emotions from becoming too overwhelming.
  - Numbing painful experiences which can deepen the wound or trauma.

Healing

- Surpasses coping and focus on thriving rather than surviving.
- Occurs when BIPOC gain critical consciousness and resist ongoing oppression.
- Centers healing, justice, and wellness.
- Moves from an individualistic to collectivist approach.

(French et al., 2020)
Racism and Discrimination in Schools

- Academic Achievement Gaps
- Discipline
- Advanced & Special Programs
Roles & Responsibilities

ASCA Ethical Standards
B-PF 6. Demonstrate understanding of the impact of cultural, social and environmental influences on student success and opportunities
B-PF 9. Create systemic change through the implementation of a school counseling program

ASCA Mindset & Behaviors
B-LS 9. Decision-making informed by gathering evidence, getting others’ perspectives and recognizing personal bias
B-SS 2. Positive, respectful and supportive relationships with students who are similar to and different from them
B-SS 10. Cultural awareness, sensitivity and responsiveness
Roles & Responsibilities

Awareness & Reflection

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Knowledge & Skills

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Action & Advocacy
What Does Advocacy Look Like?

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy & Practices

• Self initiated learning and discovery
• Ongoing professional development
• Facilitate schoolwide training and discussions for key stakeholders
• Embed cultural experiences into educational practices

Safety & Inclusion

• Trauma Informed
• Restorative Practices
• Supportive school climate/culture
Strategies & Restorative Practices

- **Racial Socialization**
  (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019)

- **Positive sense of self and culture**
  (Skewes & Blume, 2019)

- **Implementing Microintervention strategies**
  (Sue et al., 2019)

- **Community healing through storytelling**
  (Chioneso et al., 2020)

- **The Racial Healing Handbook**
  (Singh, 2019)

- **Increasing critical consciousness**
  (French et al., 2020)

- **Circle Forward: Building a Restorative School Community**
  (Boyes-Watson, 2015)

- **Positive behavioral supports and interventions**
  (PBIS, 2021)
Contact Us!

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