“Uncomfortable Conversations on the Couch: Racial Trauma and Incorporating Culturally Sensitive Practices”

The SUPPORT Act Grant Team and the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) are proud to be hosting Dr. Rae-Anne Dougan and Dr. Jeremy Walden.

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Today’s Presenters

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Uncomfortable Conversations on the Couch

Racial Trauma and Incorporating Culturally Sensitive Practices

Rae-Anne Dougan, PsyD & Jeremy Walden, PsyD
“Nothing in the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity.” (Martin Luther King, Jr.)
Welcome to our presentation!

We do not represent DMAS or CMS. We are Licensed Clinical Psychologists who primarily work in the private sector. We do not represent the APA (or any other state or national behavioral health association). We have no commercial interests related to this presentation. We will at times be adding our perspectives based on the research and or clinical work; and we will ask you to share your perspective during the Q&A.
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   A Culturally Sensitive Practice
Introduction

Goals:

Openly discuss racial biases, inequities, and trauma, as well as, normalize conversations that foster the application of culturally sensitive practices through...

1. Providing historical context or racial bias and white privilege
2. Raising awareness regarding current issues of racism and prejudice
3. Providing clinical application of culturally sensitive treatment
4. Impact of culturally sensitive treatment for individuals with substance use disorders
A form of race-based stress, refers to People of Color and Indigenous individuals’ (POCI) reactions to dangerous events and real or perceived experiences of racial discrimination. Such experiences may include threats of harm and injury, humiliating and shaming events, and witnessing racial discrimination toward other POCI.

Although similar to post-traumatic stress disorder, racial trauma is unique in that it involves ongoing individual and collective injuries due to exposure and re-exposure to race-based stress (Comas-Dias, Hall, & Neville, 2019).
PLAN SHEWING THE STOWAGE OF 130 ADDITIONAL SLAVES ROUND THE WINGS OR SIDES OF THE LOWER DECK BY MEANS OF PLATFORMS OR SHELVES (IN THE MANNER OF GALLERIES IN A CHURCH) THE SLAVES STOWED ON THE SHELVES AND BELOW THEM HAVE ONLY A HEIGHT OF 2 FEET 7 INCHES BETWEEN THE BEAMS: AND FAR LESS UNDER THE BEAMS. See Fig 1.
Europe invaded the Americas bringing with them diseases, including smallpox and measles. These unfamiliar diseases spread quickly among Native Americans and wiped out the populations of many native cities. The Europeans started colonizing the Americas in order to cultivate new farmlands and create new jobs for the growing populations of Europe. They made Africa an extension to America, with the function of providing the continent’s slave labor for 400 years.

The "Discovery" of America

The first African American indentured servants arrive in the American colonies. Less than a decade later, the first slaves are brought into New Amsterdam (later, New York City). By 1690, every colony has slaves. By 1793 hundreds of thousands, the number grew as they bred slaves. They were considered property and not human. There were 400 million slaved blacks by 1870. America’s wealth was built on the labor of kidnapped slaves.

Growth

The first African American indentured servants arrive in the American colonies. Less than a decade later, the first slaves are brought into New Amsterdam (later, New York City). By 1690, every colony has slaves. By 1793 hundreds of thousands, the number grew as they bred slaves. They were considered property and not human. There were 400 million slaved blacks by 1870. America’s wealth was built on the labor of kidnapped slaves.

13th Amendment freed the slaves

The 13th Amendment ensured that blacks would remain inferior and suppressed their power. If blacks didn’t know their place, they would lose their freedom. Whites were taught white supremacy. With the creation that blacks are savages that will kill and rape white people, many lynchings, beatings, torture and burning of black neighborhoods ensued. Jim Crow 1830-1965: Racial segregation and the KKK.
Whites started a wave of terror. In 1921, Tulsa, known as the Black Wall Street, was burned down and most of the community killed, purely because they were black.

Zoning Laws and Red Lining

1934 “Redlining” is endorsed by the Federal Housing Administration creating institutionalized home loaning. Baltimore adopted the first zoning laws to keep whites and blacks separated.

Affirmative Action Ban (MI)

SCOTUS upholds Michigan’s ban of affirmative action
The Civil Rights Movement
1954-1968

The civil rights movement in the United States was a decades-long struggle by African Americans to end legalized racial discrimination, disenfranchisement and racial segregation in the United States.
Memphis Sanitation Strike - 1968
A Social construct. A power construct of collected or merged difference that lives socially. (Kendi, 2019)

A belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race.

A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.

The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex.
Current Factors

Life Expectancy

Life expectancy of Black Americans is 3.6 years less than White Americans. Of note when controlling for education and SES, the discrepancy increases.

School Discrepancies

By kindergarten, Black American children perform worse on reading and arithmetic tasks than White children. Through 8th grade, the gap in standardized testing continues to grow.

A North Carolina county study, 160,000 students cited for violating school policy. Black students counted for 55% of the days suspended but only counted for 31% of the population. Suspensions were given at 3x the rate to Black students as White students (Kinsler, 2005).

High school drop out rates are 6.3% for Black Americans and 4.1% for White Americans.

College enrollment for Black Americans was 44% and 72% for White Americans.

Income Discrepancies

In 2009, Black Males made on average 23,738 a year and White males made on average 36,785 a year.
Anti-Blackness

Resistant or antagonistic to black people or their values or objectives. Opposed to or hostile toward black people.
Biology: A biological racist is one who is expressing the idea that races are meaningfully different in their biology and that these differences create hierarchy of value.

Ethnicity: Ethnic racism is a powerful collection of racist policies that leads to inequity between racialized ethnic groups and are substantiated by racist ideas about racialized ethnic groups.

Body: A bodily racist is one who is perceiving certain racialized bodies as more animal-like and violent than others.

Culture: A cultural racist is one who is creating a cultural standard and imposing a cultural hierarchy among racial groups.

Behavior: A behavioral racist is one who is making individuals responsible for perceived behavior of racial group and making racial groups responsible for the behavior of individuals.

(Kendi, 2019)
Color: Colorism is a powerful collection of racist policies that lead to inequities between Light people and Dark people, supported by racist ideas about Light people and Dark people.

Class: Class Racist racializes classes, supports racial capitalism against those classes, and justifies them with racist ideas.

Space: Space racism a powerful collection of racist policies that lead to resource inequity between racialized space or the elimination of certain racialized spaces.

Gender Racism: The intersection of gender and race and policies i.e. black women earn the least amount of money in similar position.

Sexuality: Queer racism is the intersection of race and sexuality and produces inequities between race-sexualities.

(Kendi, 2019)
PLAN SHEWING THE STOWAGE OF 130 ADDITIONAL SLAVES ROUND THE WINGS OR SIDES OF THE LOWER DECK BY MEANS OF PLATFORMS OR SHELVES (IN THE MANNER OF GALLERIES IN A CHURCH) THE SLAVES STOVED ON THE SHELVES AND BELOW THEM HAVE ONLY A HEIGHT OF 2 FEET 7 INCHES BETWEEN THE BEAMS: AND FAR LESS UNDER THE BEAMS. See Fig 1.
States placed white males ‘on patrol’ to stop African Americans from causing issues in white neighborhoods.

1700s

“Slave Patrols”

States prevent voter registration. Voter taxes and property-owning requirements limited rights.

1890

“Grandfather” Clauses
Nixon started the war on drugs. Punitive actions for addiction.

Increase funding for police officers and prisons. The Act cemented the affects of Nixon’s 'Rockefeller Drug Laws'.

Trayvon Martin shot and killed by George Zimmerman. Zimmerman clamed self-defense under the Stand Your Ground Law.
**Definitions**

**Dehumanization**

Dehumanization is the denial of full humanness to others, and the cruelty and suffering that accompany it. A practical definition refers to it as the viewing and treatment of other persons as if they lack mental capacities that we enjoy as human beings.

**Projection**

A defense mechanism in which the human ego defends itself against unconscious impulses or qualities (both positive and negative).

**Afro-Pessimism**

A critical framework that describes the ongoing effects of racism, colonialism, and historical processes of enslavement including the Trans-Atlantic slave trade and their impact on structural conditions as well as personal, subjective, and lived experience and embodied reality.
**Thingification**

The fact or process of turning something into a thing; reification. Also transformation of human beings into thing-like beings which do not behave in a human way but according to the laws of the thing-world. (Ross, 2020)

**Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome**

The multi-generational trauma experienced by African Americans that leads to undiagnosed and untreated posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in enslaved Africans and their descendants. (DeGruy, 2017)

**Dysphoria**

A dissociative disorder, that results in those affected adopting negative attitudes, behaviors, and mannerisms towards Black Americans towards their own race or White Americans towards Blacks.
Current Factors

Poverty
US Census Bureau indicated 26.2% of Black families and 10.1% of White families live in poverty.

Prison
AA make up 6% of the population but 40% of prison pop (Barish & DuVernay, 2016).
98.4% serving life sentences under law provision are AA.
75% of those in prison for drugs are either AA or Hispanic.
There are more AA males in the criminal justice system presently than enslaved in 1850 (Mullholland, 2017).

Substance Use Disorder
Underrepresentation of AA and Hispanic males in alcohol treatment residential facilities and a 20% reduction in treatment completion rates in both outpatient and residential facilities (Bluthenal et al., 2007).
Racial Disparities in Substance Use Disorder Research

**Substance Abuse Disorder**
- AA 9.5%
- CA 9.3%

**Treatment Completion**
- AA 11%
- CA 46%

**Factors Associated with Retention**
- Criminal Justice Coercion and Case Management resulting in reentry into prison as strongest variable
- Subsequent Mistrust in the system by AA
- Availability of treatment approaches that address systemic problems (Cooper et al., 2010)
• In 2017, among non-Hispanic Blacks the opioid-related overdose death rate was 12.9 deaths per 100,000 people. It was the third highest opioid-related overdose death rate compared to other race/ethnicities.

• In 2017, non-Hispanic blacks had the highest percentage of opioid-related overdose deaths and total drug deaths attributed to synthetic opioids when compared to other race/ethnicities and the national population.

• In 2017, though Black/African Americans represented 12 percent of the U.S. adult population they made up a third of the sentenced prison population. In 2012, they accounted for 38 percent of the sentenced prison population in the U.S. and 39 percent of the population incarcerated for drug-related offenses.
Racial Disparities in Deaths due to Lethal Force by Law Enforcement (DeGue et al., 2016)

Victims of Police Brutality
- CA: 52%
- AA: 32%

Fatalities
- 2.8 times higher among blacks than whites even though black victims are less likely to be armed than whites.

Other Findings via US Department of Justice 2011
- Black and Hispanic drivers are more likely to be pulled over, ticketed, and searched during traffic stop.
- Blacks experienced disproportionately higher arrest rates and are 3 times more likely to experience any use of force.
Figure 1. An intersectional model of ethno-racial trauma in Latinx immigrant communities. The model explicitly considers the ways in which intersecting historical and structural systems impact the well-being, health, and resources available to Latinx individuals, families and communities, underscoring social inequities,
BLM: Black Lives Matter

- Is this statement a Political or Human Rights Issue?
- Are Policy and politics embedded in issues around race?
- Do racial wounds occur in a sociopolitical context?
- Can we separate BH from politics if we are to be thorough?
- Do politics Impact BH?
BLM: Black Lives Matter

- BLM developed as a way of re-humanizing blacks in response to a growing list of unarmed black males being killed by police officers
- “When black lives matter all lives matter”
- Also as a means of protesting systemic racism and racist policy and advocating the development of antiracist policy (Reich, 2018)
BLM Resistance (Hooker, 2016)

- 2014 First BLM protests in response to the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson met with disproportionate police repression against protestors
- Concept that black lives matter is not indicative of crisis but rather politics as usual is a modern-day form of racism and means to silence blacks into an inferior position
- Concept that “black anger” is not a legitimate response to racial terror and violence
- Concept of peaceful acquiescence to democratic loss such as seen in the Civil Rights Movement
- Romanticization shifts attention away from black loss
Black liberation must entail “ways of contesting the absolute authority of the law” because the law can and does act to reproduce injustice and inequality. (Angela Davis)
White Privilege

Inherent advantages possessed by a white person on the basis of their race in a society characterized by racial inequality and injustice.
Definitions

Privilege

A special right, advantage, or immunity granted or available only to a particular person or group.
Whiteness studies is the study of the structures that produce white privilege,[1] the examination of what whiteness is when analyzed as a race, a culture, and a source of systemic racism,[2] and the exploration of other social phenomena generated by the societal compositions, perceptions and group behaviors of white people. Zeus Leonardo defines whiteness as "a racial discourse, whereas the category 'white people' represents a socially constructed identity, usually based on skin color".

Superiority

The quality or state of being high or higher in quality. The belief that you are better than other people.

Unspoken White Solidarity

Solidarity: Unity (as of a group or class) that produces or is based on community of interests, objectives, and standards.
Dueling Consciousness
Vacillation between ideas of segregation and ideas of assimilation (Kendi, 2019).

Aversive Racism
A form of contemporary racism that, in contrast to the traditional form, operates unconsciously in subtle and indirect ways. Aversive racists regard themselves as nonprejudiced but, at the same time, harbor negative feelings and beliefs about members of minority groups.

White Fragility
Discomfort and defensiveness on the part of a white person when confronted by information about racial inequality and injustice.
The belief that racial group membership should not be taken into account, or even noticed.

Color Blindness

The concept that upholding racist ideas is immoral, lending to the idea that racism equates to blatant forms of racism (Deangelo, 2018)

Good/Bad Binary

Belief that minority racial groups are culturally or behaviorally inferior and supporting of cultural or behavioral programs to develop that racial group (Ibram X. Kendi, 2019)

Assimilationist
Bobo and Zubrinsky’s (1996) meta-analysis showed individual and institution discrimination contribute to the high levels of racial segregation. Based on patterns of discrimination in the housing market, the analysis supported the prejudice hypothesis (e.g., hostile attitudes toward out-groups).
Pathological Racism

From Ambiguity to Mainstream

Pathological forms of bias/racism, such as racial motivated arson, hate crimes, and institutionalized poverty, constitute a public health problem (Bell, 2003)

Goldman (2004) hypothesizes racism as presentation of symptoms based on a disorder such as paranoia or other symptoms of a personality disorder. Furthermore, the author suggests that not only racism, but sexism, ageism, and heterosexism may be further magnifications of the same symptoms.
PLAN SHEWING THE STOWAGE OF 130 ADDITIONAL SLAVES ROUND THE WINGS OR SIDES OF THE LOWER DECK BY MEANS OF PLATFORMS OR SHELVES (IN THE MANNER OF GALLERIES IN A CHURCH) THE SLAVES STOWED ON THE SHELVES AND BELOW THEM HAVE ONLY A HEIGHT OF 2 FEET 7 INCHES BETWEEN THE BEAMS: AND FAR LESS UNDER THE BEAMS. See Fig 1.
During the 1950s, the United States was the world’s strongest military power. Its economy was booming, and the fruits of this prosperity—new cars, suburban houses and other consumer goods—were available to more people than ever before.

(HISTORY.COM EDITORS/THE 1950s)
Awareness

- Recognition of the nuances of one’s own and other cultures.
- Understanding racism as a system into which we were all socialized and conditioned to view white as superior.

Competent Therapist

- Always working on own assumptions
- Works on understanding client’s world view
- Aware of one’s own thoughts and feelings
- Review of scientific literature (Sue, 2006)
Cultural Competency

The ability of individuals to use academic, experiential, and interpersonal skills to increase their understanding and appreciation of cultural differences and similarities within, among, and between groups.

Anti-Racism

The policy or practice of opposing racism and promoting racial tolerance. Antiracist expresses the idea that racial groups are equal and none need developing, supporting policy that reduces racial inequity (Kendi, 2019).

Colorblind Awareness

Awareness of (The belief that racial group membership should not be taken into account, or even noticed as a strategy for managing diversity and intergroup relations) as harmful to cultural competency.
A Holistic Approach

What does a Culturally Sensitive Practice look like? (Dunbar, 2004)

- Acknowledge whiteness, face up to its benefits and advantages/ “capital”
- Recognize this is not a black person’s issue, but a human issue
- Strive to gain insight on own biases and short comings
- Address Training deficits related to diversity
- Evidenced based treatment does not work for everyone
- Training focused on Understand client worldview Empathy

- Organizational Changes
- Vision reflects MCV
- Values and Seeks diversity
- Actively engages in equal access
### Culturally Competent Workplace and Organizational Change
(Lloyd & Hartel 2010)

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<th>Facets of intercultural competence</th>
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<td>Cognitive competencies</td>
<td>Includes the ability to accurately process information regarding culturally different others and culturally different practices</td>
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<td>Affective competencies</td>
<td>Includes positive emotional responses toward culturally different others and when faced with culturally different practices</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behavioural competencies</td>
<td>Includes acting in a positive and appropriate manner when interacting with culturally diverse others</td>
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Lloyd and Hartel (2010) developed an intercultural competencies classification system which provides a multifaceted framework to increase work team inclusion.

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<th>Cognitive complexity</th>
<th>Learning goal orientation</th>
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<th>Like/enjoy contact with dissimilar others</th>
<th>Tolerance for ambiguity</th>
<th>Ability to regulate own emotions</th>
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“Unintentional behavior is perhaps the most insidious form of racism... The major challenge facing counselors is to overcome unintentional racism and provide more equitable service delivery” (Ridley, 1995)
A Holistic Approach

New Conceptual Models of racial, Ethnic, and Indigenous Trauma

- Evidenced based treatment does not work for everyone
- Wounds occur in a sociopolitical context and current PTSD treatments lack cultural relevance for most POCI (Comas-Dias, Hall, & Neville, 2019).

Empirical Research on Racial, Ethnic, and Indigenous Trauma

- There are clear empirical evidence supporting the association between experiences with racial discrimination and depression, SA, and other BH factors among POCI (Comas-Dias, Hall, & Neville, 2019).
A Holistic Approach

Conceptualizing and Challenging Microaggressions and Racial Ideologies

- Finding alternatives to the common passivity
- Challenging and educating the perpetrators and systems in place
- Developing strategic micro-interventions to make the invisible visible (Comas-Dias, Hall, & Neville, 2019)

Sue (2006):

*Table 1. Concrete Steps to Take in Improving Cultural Competency in Treatment*

- Self-awareness and stimulus value
- Assessment of client
- Pretherapy intervention
- Hypothesizing and testing hypotheses
- Attending to credibility and giving
- Understanding the nature of discomfort and resistance
- Understanding clients’ perspective
- Strategy or plan for intervention
- Assessment of session
- Willingness to consult
A Holistic Approach

Conceptualizing and Challenging Microaggressions and Racial Ideologies

- POC have been dealing with RACISM their whole lives.
- Ask questions, do not assume.
- Educate yourself for yourself.
- Awareness of over pathologizing
- Empathetic listening (Diangelo, 2018)
- Understand Worldview is highly impacted by Culture (Sue, 1978).
- Internal locus of control and responsibility is most characteristic of Western counseling approaches (Sue, 1978).
Based on Hoffman and Hoffman’s integrated model:
Barriers
“Denial is the Heartbeat of Racism, beating across ideologies, races, and nations. It is beating within us.” (Ibram X. Kendi)
Barriers to Treatment

- Racial and Ethnic minorities are less likely to receive behavioral health treatment than White Americans (Kohn-Wood & Hooper, 2014).
  - African Americans report lengthier waiting periods, less initiation of treatment, more barriers to treatment participation (e.g., lack of childcare, lack of insurance, lack of knowledge about available services), and shorter lengths of stay in treatment than do White Americans (Acevedo et al. 2012; Brower and Carey 2003; Feidler et al. 2001; Grant 1997; Hatzenbuehler et al. 2008; Marsh et al. 2009; SABHSA 2011c; Schmidt et al. 2006).
  - In SABHSA’s 2010 NSDUH, 33.5 percent of African Americans who had a need for substance abuse treatment but did not receive it in the prior year reported that they lacked money or the insurance coverage to pay for it (SABHSA, CBHSQ 2011).
  - African Americans and Latinos are less likely than White Americans to receive residential treatment and are more likely to receive outpatient treatment, even when they present with more serious substance use problems (Bluthenthal et al. 2007).

- Factors impacting access to behavioral health treatment include clinicians’ degree of cultural competencies and awareness, limited transition from PCP to behavioral health professionals, and limits related to behavioral health coverage (Kohn-Wood & Hooper, 2014).
Barriers to Treatment

- Providers understanding of cultural factors impacted case conceptualization, diagnoses, and treatment planning (Kohn-Wood & Hooper, 2014).
  - Historically, the behavioral health system has shown bias against African Americans, having been used in times past to control and punish them (Boyd-Franklin and Karger 2012; Jackson 2003).
  - African Americans, even when receiving the same amount of services as White Americans, are less likely to be satisfied with those services (Tonigan 2003).

- Clinicians improve cultural competencies in practice through the following: continued education on culturally competent practices, develop diverse treatment teams, tailor treatment to the client, and advocate for culturally sensitive policies (Kohn-Wood & Hooper, 2014).
Clinical Biases

- Preoccupation with the out-group is typically experienced as intrusive, provocative, and potentially disabling to the client (Dunbar, 2004).

- Adverse arousal in relation to out-group are triggers associated with denigrated out-group which leads to anxiety (Dunbar, 2004).

- Relationship-damaging behaviors toward an out-group are narcissistic-liable reactions to a client from the out-group (Dunbar, 2004). For example, culturally sanctioned behaviors by an in-group clinician toward an out-group client.
Reducing Clinical Biases

- Particularization involves reframing of generalized out-group behaviors to the understanding of the client (Dunbar, 2004).
- Empathy activation seeks to establish a prosocial response to the client by means of therapeutic relationship (Dunbar, 2004).
- Structured analysis (e.g., clinical hypotheses or treatment plan) integrates process-oriented behaviors in the treatment of presenting symptoms (Dunbar, 2004).
Case Example:
Mr. Smith
Barriers to Moving Forward

- “Denial is the heartbeat of racism” perpetuates the trauma (Ibram X. Kendi, 2019)
- Racism as a virus that mutates to more covert forms that support the more overt forms (slavery to penal system, redlining etc.)
- Oversimplified definition of racism: dichotomy in thinking only bad/immoral people can be racist
- Failure to identify white supremacy in the culture we live in
- The separation of politics and BH despite the impact of politics on BH
- Unwillingness to understand modern forms of racism
- Defensive moves means to silence and keep comfortable equilibrium: Denial, anger, crying etc.
- Concept of objectivity that tells us it is possible to be free from race/bias (Diangelo, 2019)
Racist and Anti-Racist on a Continuum
(Not fixed identities)


References


Thank You

Dougan and Walden Wellness, PLLC
www.dwellness.org