

Intersection of Race, Trauma, and Mental Health

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DR. CHRISTINE
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Introduction

/Dr. Christine Coleman, PhD, LMFT
(she/her)

/Where mental health meets DEIB

/Licensed therapist, speaker, consultant,
and coach, Founder, Sol Sisters, Inc.

/Personal Mission: to destigmatize
mental health across cultures and
organizations

/As seen in: HBR, Vogue, Fast Company,
Huffpost, MSN, and Variety





Overview

/Define race, trauma, and mental health

/Identify the intersections across race, trauma, and mental health

/Establish a deeper understanding BIPOC mental health

/Gain practical tools that promote behavioral health equity



Community Agreements

- /Uphold what is confidential
- /Show up authentically
- /Create emotionally safe space
- /Respect for experiences and opinions

What this is:

- /safe, inclusive, supportive, educational

What this is not:

- /judgmental, defensive, therapy



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Race + Racism

/Race

Race is a division of people based on physical characteristics.

White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

Ethnicity is a categorization based on language or common ancestry.

Nationality refers to citizenship in a particular nation

/Racism

a form of prejudice that assumes that the members of racial categories have distinctive characteristics and that these differences result in some racial groups being inferior to others.

(negative emotional reactions, stereotypes, discrimination)



Mental Health + Stigma

/Mental Health

Includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices.

/Stigma

A set of negative and often unfair beliefs that a society or group of people have about something.



What are common mental health stigmas you've encountered?



Trauma

a serious event that causes a person to fear for their life or safety

3 E's

/Event

/Experience

/Effects

Intergenerational Trauma

the transmission (or sending down to younger generations) of the oppressive or traumatic effects of a historical event



Vicarious Trauma

the indirect trauma that can occur when we are exposed to difficult or disturbing images and stories second-hand



Intersections Across Race, Trauma, and Mental Health

What are the forms of privilege and oppression you hold based on the intersectional model?

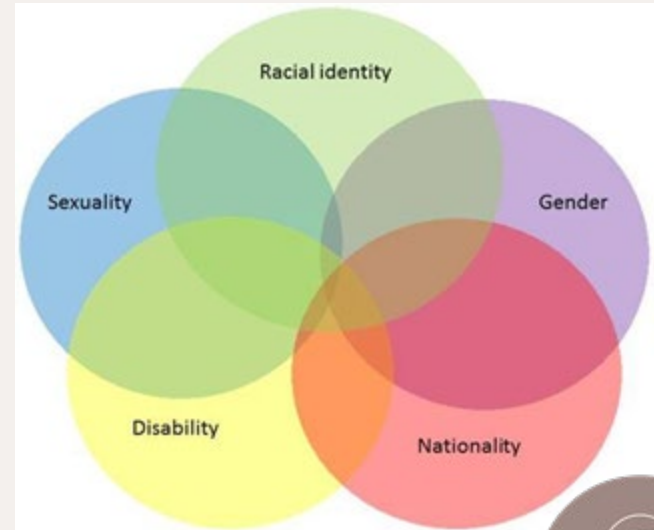
Example:

Privilege

- US born
- English speaking
- middle class
- straight, cisgender
- able-bodied

Oppression

- Mexican and Iranian
- woman



Understanding BIPOC Mental Health

/anxiety

/panic disorder

/social phobia

/generalized anxiety disorder

/post-traumatic stress disorder

/racial battle fatigue

/race-based traumatic stress

/depression

/imposter syndrome

/code switching

/trauma bonding

/microaggressions to “major” aggressions



Tools That Promote Behavioral Health Equity (1)



For Clinicians

- /conduct intersectional self-examination
- /consider issues of discrimination + connection to mental health
- /recognize and celebrate differences across clients
- /explore history of racism in scientific ideologies
- /lean into decolonized psychology frameworks
- /educate yourself on culturally responsive mental health approaches
- /extend appreciation for indigenous science
- /consider sliding scale + additional resources



Tools That Promote Behavioral Health Equity (2)



For Allies

- /conduct intersectional self-examination
- /consider shifting into accomplice (listen → act)
- /recognize and challenge implicit bias
- /listen and take up less space
- /admit when a mistake has been made and offer an apology
- /share what you don't know and ask for help
- /seek professional support to work through guilt or shame
- /trust BIPOC and advocate for them
- /remember we are all figuring it out



Tools That Promote Behavioral Health Equity (3)



For BIPOC

- /prioritize your mental health and belonging
- /pay attention to your automatic stress responses (fight, flight, freeze)
- /pick your battles
- /take breaks from triggering content
- /add in or let go
- /physical movement
- /self care and/or community care
- /radical rest and joy
- /mindfulness and meditation

- /develop a positive racial identity

- /seek professional help



Alexandria

Racial Stressors:

- /microaggressions
- /racial bias
- /unfair distribution of work
- /increased stress and anxiety

How to Support:

- /group therapy + individual therapy
- /workplace boundaries
- /prioritize mental health and wellness
- /emphasize racial and gender-based pride



Reflection

/ What have you learned today?

/ How will this information benefit you?

/ How will you put what you have learned into practice?



Thank you!

Q&A



Stay In Touch!



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