Racial Trauma and Communities of Color: Assessment and Treatment

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RACIAL TRAUMA AND COMMUNITIES OF COLOR: ASSESSMENT AND TREATMENT

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INTRODUCTION

▪ Chief Diversity Officer, Spalding University
▪ Assistant Professor, School of Professional Psychology
▪ Coordinator, Collective Care Center

▪ Education
  ▪ PsyD, MA, Clinical Psychology, Spalding University
  ▪ MPA, Wright State University
  ▪ BS, University of Louisville
  ▪ ABPP, Clinical Psychology
  ▪ Certificate, Strategic Health care Leadership, Cornell University

▪ Research and clinical interests
  ▪ Black male psychology
  ▪ Multicultural Psychology
  ▪ Racial Trauma treatment
Dr. Steven Kniffley Jr.
Assistant professor, school of professional psychology, Spalding University; associate director, Center for Behavioral Health, Spalding University

Out of K.O.S.
Black Masculinity, Psychopathology, and Treatment
Steven Kniffley Jr., Ernest Brown Jr., and Bryan Davis

Black Males and the Criminal Justice System
Edited by Jason M. Williams • Steven D. Kniffley Jr.

Forty

40
The Afrocentric Psychologist

EMPOWER OTHERS

THE HEALTHCARE ADVOCACY AWARD

The Healthcare Advocacy Award is presented to an individual who has worked to raise awareness of health challenges in their region and worked to affect change.

HONOREE: STEVEN KNIFFLING JR.

SPALDING UNIVERSITY

According to the literature, BIPOC individuals report almost daily experiences of racism and discrimination which have contributed to increased rates of poor mental health and suicide.

Why This is Important

The role BIPOC individuals have in the health system is not well understood. BIPOC individuals may not receive appropriate care due to systemic racism and discrimination.

Additionally, BIPOC individuals are more likely to experience mental health problems. They may experience depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Advocacy Efforts

To address these challenges, BIPOC healthcare professionals have been working to improve care for BIPOC individuals. They have worked to increase access to mental health services, reduce stigma, and provide culturally appropriate care.

CELEBRATING THE 2020 MEDISTAR HONOREES

The Afrocentric Psychologist has been working to raise awareness of the importance of mental health for BIPOC individuals. They have been working to increase the availability of mental health services, and to reduce the stigma associated with seeking help.

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Provide definitions for racism and microaggressions.

Define race related stress.

Explore the experience of racial trauma and its impact on psychological and physical health.

Discuss the assessment, treatment of racial trauma using the Kniffley Racial Trauma Treatment Model.
INSPIRATION

- Ubuntu
- Sawubona
- Sankofa
- “If you conquer the enemy within, the enemy without can do you no harm”
WHY TALK ABOUT RACIAL TRAUMA?
96% of Black Americans report experiencing racism and discrimination daily.

The rate of depression for Black males has quadrupled in the last two decades.

Suicide is the third leading cause of death for Black males ages 15-24.

High earning Black women have the same risk for low birth weight babies as low earning White women.

The Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism found that hate crimes are at their highest level in a decade with African Americans being the most targeted group.
DEFINING RACISM

Use of power and privilege at the individual, institutional, and cultural levels to oppress culturally diverse individual’s, based on perceived biological inferiority characteristics

Used to justify the generalizability of dominant racial group values

Used to assess how well non-dominant group members adhere to dominant cultural standards
Microaggressions

- Commonplace verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicates hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults people of color.
Microinsult- communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person’s racial heritage.

Microassault- Explicit racial derogations characterized primarily by a violent verbal, nonverbal, or environmental attack meant to harm the victim.

Microinvalidation- communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or lived experience of a person of color.
EXAMPLES OF MICROAGGRESSIONS

- Microinsult - “You are a credit to your race” “Why are your people so loud”
- Microinvalidation - “I don’t see color,” “If you don’t like it here go back to your country,” “We are a melting pot,” “We are all Americans,” “Everyone can succeed if they work hard enough”
Microaggressions → Adaptive coping → Exhaustion of adaptive coping → Experience of race-related stress
Black individuals experience significant stress related to individual, institutional, and cultural encounters with racism and discrimination.

Types of race related stress
- Racism-related events
- Vicarious racism
- Daily racism
- Chronic contextual stress
RACE RELATED STRESS VS OTHER TYPES OF STRESS

Race related stress

Sociohistorical emphasis

Chronic

Ambiguity
Race-related Stress

Microaggressions

Racial Trauma
Black individuals experience elevated levels of PTSD which cannot be explained by exposure to physical trauma.

Race-based trauma is the result of chronic experiences racism and discrimination.

Contributes to a constant state of hypervigilance for racially-based slights and micro-assaults at the individual, institutional, and cultural levels.

Over time, individual coping techniques are exhausted, leading to negative health outcomes, caused by race-related stresses.
IMPACT OF RACIAL TRAUMA
Flashbacks/nightmares
Intrusive thoughts
Inability to concentrate
Hyperactivity
Restrictive emotional expression
Depression
Anxiety
**BIOLOGICAL IMPACT**

- Exhaustion of biological coping strategies for racial trauma
- Transmission of maladaptive biological coping responses for racial trauma
Race-related stress, excessive cortisol levels, poor coping behaviors, changes in gene expression, negative health outcomes.
RACIAL TRAUMA AND EDUCATION
Trauma influenced Behaviors and Emotions

Hypervigilance, aggression, irritability, poor decision making, anxiety, sadness

Biased informed perceptions

Lower expectations for achievement, capacity for emotion regulation, social skills, decision making abilities

Higher expectations for deviant behavior, aggressiveness, and learning disabilities

Use of punitive disciplinary practices

Containment vs skill building disciplinary practices

Disproportionate use of suspensions and detentions

Can exacerbate race-related stress and symptoms of racial trauma
RACIAL TRAUMA AND HOUSING
Adverse Housing Policies

- Decreased access to quality health, education, economic resources
- Increased risk for race related stress
RACIAL TRAUMA AND PUBLIC SAFETY
Policing

- Function vs process of policing (e.g., procedural justice, police legitimacy)
- A recent study found that those individuals who report more intrusive police contact experienced increased trauma and anxiety symptoms. Those who reported fair treatment during encounters with law enforcement had fewer symptoms of PTSD and anxiety (Jackson, Fahmy, Vaughn, & Testa, 2019)
THE COLLECTIVE CARE CENTER

SPALDING’S COLLECTIVE CARE CENTER OFFERS A ‘SAFE PLACE’ FOR THOSE FACING RACE-BASED STRESS AND TRAUMA

Center for Behavioral Health's specialty clinic is one of kind in Louisville
WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR RACIAL TRAUMA TREATMENT?

- Experience of a traumatic situation that the client has attributed to their racial background
- High scores on RBTSSS and DLS indicating chronic experience of race related stress and microaggressions
- Low score on MIBI-S indicating low racial identity development
- Experience of trauma related symptoms (e.g., Flashbacks/nightmares, Intrusive thoughts Inability to concentrate, Hyperactivity, Restrictive emotional expression, Depression, Anxiety)
Develop racial identity

Process experiences of racial trauma

Build and practice skills for future racially traumatic events.
Develop Racial Identity (Sessions 1-4)

Process Racial Trauma (Sessions 5-8)

Develop skills for future racial trauma (Sessions 9-12)
CONTACT INFORMATION

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