



# Culturally Adapted CBT as a Model to Address Internalized Racism Among African American Clients

Friday, January 27, 2023  
2pm - 5pm ET

**Live Zoom Webinar**

Presented by:  
Janeé Steele, PhD, LPC  
Char Newton, PhD, LP

Janeé Steele, PhD

## Licensed Professional Counselor

Dr. Janeé Steele is a licensed professional counselor, counselor educator, and diplomate of the Academy of Cognitive and Behavioral Therapies. Dr. Steele is also the owner and clinical director of Kalamazoo Cognitive and Behavioral Therapy, PLLC, where she provides therapy, supervision, and training in CBT. In addition to her clinical work, Dr. Steele is a Board Member of the Academy of Cognitive and Behavioral Therapies, a member of the Academy's Diversity Action Committee, and an Associate Editor of the *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*.



*Char Newton, PhD*

## Licensed Psychologist

Dr. Char Newton is a fully licensed psychologist and in practice at Legacy Mental Health Services, PLLC. Dr. Newton also has over 10 years of experience in clinical, academic, and community settings, including teaching experience at both undergraduate and graduate levels of higher education and is a member of the Michigan Board of Psychology, appointed by Governor Gretchen Whitmer. She was recently awarded the 2022 Distinguished Psychologist Award from the Michigan Psychological Association.



# Learning Objectives



As a result of this webinar, you will be able to:

- Conceptualize the role of internalized racism in mental health challenges experienced by African American clients
- Develop CBT-based, culturally sensitive treatment plans to address internalized racism among African American clients
- Implement CBT-based interventions to address internalized racism among African American clients

# Something to think about...



## **If you are a target of oppression**

- Be aware of anything that might be overwhelming
- Use mindfulness and breathing skills when you need to
- Take a break if necessary



## **If you are an ally or a learner**

- Work toward maintaining a non-judgmental stance
- Recognize defensiveness
- Seek to understand



Icebreaker



# Let's define internalized racism...

- Internalized racism is a negative view of self based on the perceived inferiority of one's own culture or race (Lipsky, 1977). It comes from:
  - Accepting negative racial/ethnic stereotypes about oneself
  - Adopting beliefs about the superiority of the beauty, language, and cultural norms and traditions of White people
  - Adopting ideas and behaviors that reinforce racial oppression (Bivens, 2005)

# Activity: Internalized Messages

- If you are a racial minority, please reflect on this question:
  - Over the course of your life, what are some negative messages of racism that you have internalized or endorsed?
- If you are not a racial minority, please reflect on this question:
  - What are some negative internalized messages of racism you have heard clients or racial minorities internalize or endorse?
- How have you seen these messages impact yourself, clients, or people overall?





## Dr. Char's Internalized Racism Messages

- As a child, I believed that light skin and long straight hair was more attractive or beautiful.
- As a young professional, I believed that to be considered smart, I had to look a certain way and give off a certain image... "The glasses phase." Internally, I believed that I was not smart or valid and that I had to try extra hard to be valid or be perceived as smart by White people.

A photograph of a woman with dark, curly hair, wearing a white t-shirt, sitting on a grey couch and smiling. The background is a plain wall with a small green plant hanging from the top. The image is dimly lit, with the woman's face and hair being the primary light source.

# Conceptualizing the Role of Internalized Racism in Mental Health

# Understanding the Psychosocial Context of African American Mental Health

- African American adults are 20% more likely to experience mental health issues than the rest of the population
- 25% of African Americans seek treatment for a mental health issue, compared to 40 percent of White individuals. The reasons for this drop off include misdiagnosis by doctors, socioeconomic factors and a lack of African American mental health professionals
- Adult Black/African Americans living below poverty are three times more likely to report severe psychological distress than those living above poverty
- While Black/African Americans are less likely than White people to die from suicide as teenagers, Black/African Americans teenagers are more likely to attempt suicide than are White teenagers (8.3 percent v. 6.2 percent)

# Understanding the Psychosocial Context of African American Mental Health

- Only 6.2 percent of psychologists, 5.6 percent of advanced-practice psychiatric nurses, 12.6 percent of social workers, and 21.3 percent of psychiatrists are members of minority groups. According to the National Association on Mental Illness (NAMI), only 3.7% of members in the American Psychiatric Association and 1.5% of members in the American Psychological Association are Black
- African Americans of all ages are more likely to witness or be victims of serious violent crimes. Exposure to violence increases the risk of developing a mental health condition such as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety

# Understanding the Psychosocial Context of African American Mental Health

- African American children are more likely than other children to be exposed to violence, which can have a profound, long-term effect on their mental health
- Some African Americans even see mental illness as a punishment from God. Up to 85 percent of African Americans describe themselves as “fairly religious” or “religious,” and they commonly use prayer as a way to handle stress, according to one study cited by the American Psychiatric Association

# Risk Factors

- Societal influences that provide the context for internalized racism among African Americans include but are not limited to the historical legacy of slavery and segregation, as well as aspects of modern racism such as colorblind racial attitudes and microaggressions, the media, and White supremacy:
  - White supremacy is the underlying framework that rationalizes racial disparities (DiAngelo, 2018)
  - White supremacy depicts African religion and customs as savagery, demonizes African skin-color and phenotypes, and idealizes White beauty, language, and cultural norms (Smedley, 1999)
  - White supremacy depicts White culture as the ideal for humanity and confers structural power and privileges to White people as a group. Through White supremacy, White people have freedom from the psychic weight of race, to move freely in most spaces, and to be reflected as the norm in nearly all aspects of social life (DiAngelo, 2018)

# Defining Racism

- **Racism:** a race-based form of oppression backed by legal authority and institutional control
- Racism differs from prejudice in that prejudice may be defined as stereotypes, attitudes, and generalizations about individuals from a particular social group, while racism reflects systemic limitations to economic and social goods and power
- Racism is not reflective of a person's moral character or intentions. Instead, racism reflects the impact of one's behavior in terms of maintaining systemic race-based inequities (DiAngelo, 2018)

# How is Racism Expressed?



**Cultural racism:** using cultural standards to impose a cultural hierarchy among racial groups



**Biological racism:** the idea that the races have meaningful differences in biology and that these differences create a hierarchy of value



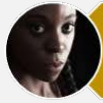
**Bodily racism:** perceiving certain racialized bodies as more animal like and violent than others



**Ethnic racism:** racist policies that lead to inequity between racialized groups and are substantiated by racist ideas about racialized groups



**Colorism:** racist policies and ideas that lead to inequalities between light and dark people (Kendi, 2019)



**Internalized racism:** a negative view of self based on the perceived inferiority of one's own culture or race (Lipsky, 1977)



# Racialized Trauma

- Racialized trauma refers to mental and emotional injury caused by repeated encounters with racial bias, hostility, discrimination, or harassment (Carter, 2007)
- Common ways people are exposed to racialized trauma include:
  - Small, everyday slights such as being followed around a department store
  - Racial slurs
  - Denied opportunities
  - Racial profiling
  - Hate crimes
- Racialized trauma may happen as a result of a direct or indirect encounter with a race-based event

# Internalized Racism

- Internalized racism assists in maintaining a system of racial oppression, and is self-perpetuating (Wilson, 1993)
- Moreover, scholars argue that through internalized racism, there is no longer a need for Whites to enforce the disempowerment or oppression on the oppressed group because they do it themselves (Poupart, 2003)
- Some have argued that the latter is extremely psychologically damaging because it produces a form of self-hate and low ego strength in people of color (Speight, 2007)

# What Current Research is Showing

- Mouzon and Mclean(2017) found that internalized racism was associated with depressive symptoms and serious psychological distress symptoms such as anxiety in African Americans
- Graham et al. (2016) found that internalized racism mediated the relationship between past racist experiences and anxiety symptoms
- Sosoo et al. (2019) also found that internalized racism was linked with psychological distress in African American clients

A photograph of a woman with long black braids sitting on a light-colored couch. She is wearing a light-colored, vertically striped button-down shirt. She is looking towards the left of the frame with a serious expression. Her right hand is raised, palm up, in a gesture. In the foreground on the left, the back of another person's head and shoulder is visible, suggesting a therapy or counseling session. The background is a white brick wall. To the right, there is a wooden shelving unit with a small potted plant on it. The overall lighting is soft and indoor.

# Cognitive Developmental Model of Internalized Racism

# What is CBT?

- CBT is a broad term used to describe theories of counseling that focus on the connection between thoughts and feelings (DiGiuseppe et al., 2018)
- Each approach to CBT is based on the assumption that cognition affects mood and behavior, and changes in mood and behavior can be achieved through changes in cognition (DiGiuseppe et al., 2018)
- As a form of therapy, CBT focuses on identifying and challenging dysfunctional thinking
- As a theory of personality development, CBT argues that our life experiences lead to specific thoughts about ourselves and our world

# Cultural Limitations of CBT

- Like all forms of therapy, CBT cannot be separated from the cultural context in which it was developed. Primary criticisms of CBT include:
  - Eurocentric, individualistic assumptions which may not be suitable for members of more collectivistic cultural groups
  - A lack of attention to environmental influences on client cognitions and reactions
  - Potential to blame clients for problems that are primarily environmentally based
  - Potential to invalidate client experiences with racism, leading to worsened affect or premature termination (Iwamasa & Hays, 2019)

# What is Culturally-Adapted CBT?

- With appropriate adaptations, CBT has several characteristics that make this form of therapy well-suited to addressing racism and its psychological impact. These characteristics include:
  - An emphasis on personal empowerment
  - Attention to client strengths and support systems
  - Affirmation of one's own sense of identity (Iwamasa & Hays, 2019)

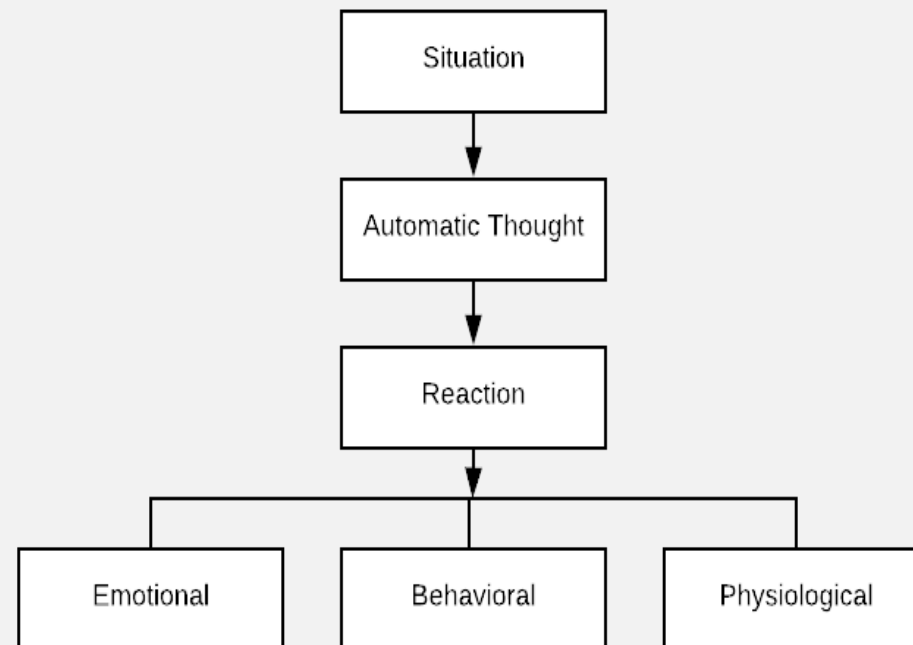
# What is Culturally-Adapted CBT?

- Culturally adapted CBT requires therapists to be intentional in their exploration of how culture influences client concerns. This involves being mindful of:
  - The impact of culture on the therapeutic alliance
  - The importance of cognitive conceptualization practices that include consideration of individual and societal influences
  - The need to contextualize interventions used during therapy to include relevant aspects of the client's cultural worldview



# The Generic Cognitive Model

- CBT is based on the **cognitive model**, which states that it is not what happens to us that determines our reactions, but how we think about what happens to us (Beck, 2020)

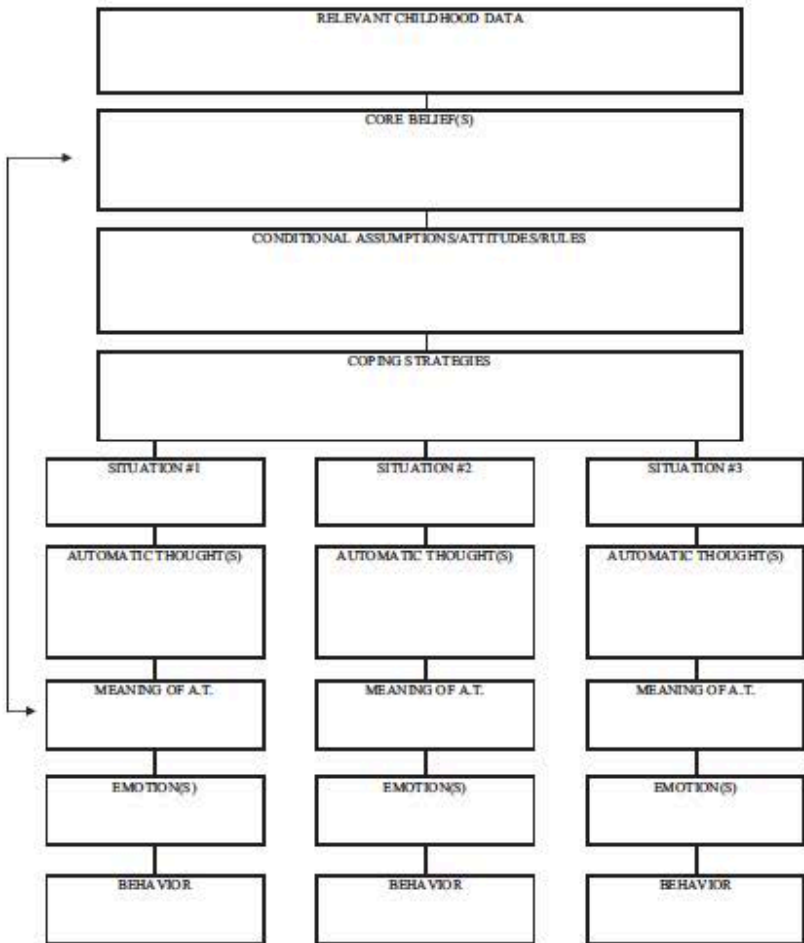


# Cognitive Conceptualization

- Within CBT, the automatic thoughts that cause our reactions in daily situations are thought to be influenced by our core beliefs, which in turn lead to the development of conditional assumptions and negative compensatory strategies (Beck, 2020)
  - **Core beliefs:** Central beliefs about oneself or the world around them
  - **Conditional assumptions:** Attitudes and rules that help individuals cope with their core beliefs
  - **Compensatory strategies:** Specific strategies used to follow the conditional assumptions
- **Cognitive conceptualization:** A map that depicts the relationship between the client's core beliefs, conditional assumptions, and automatic thoughts

Pt's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Diagnosis: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

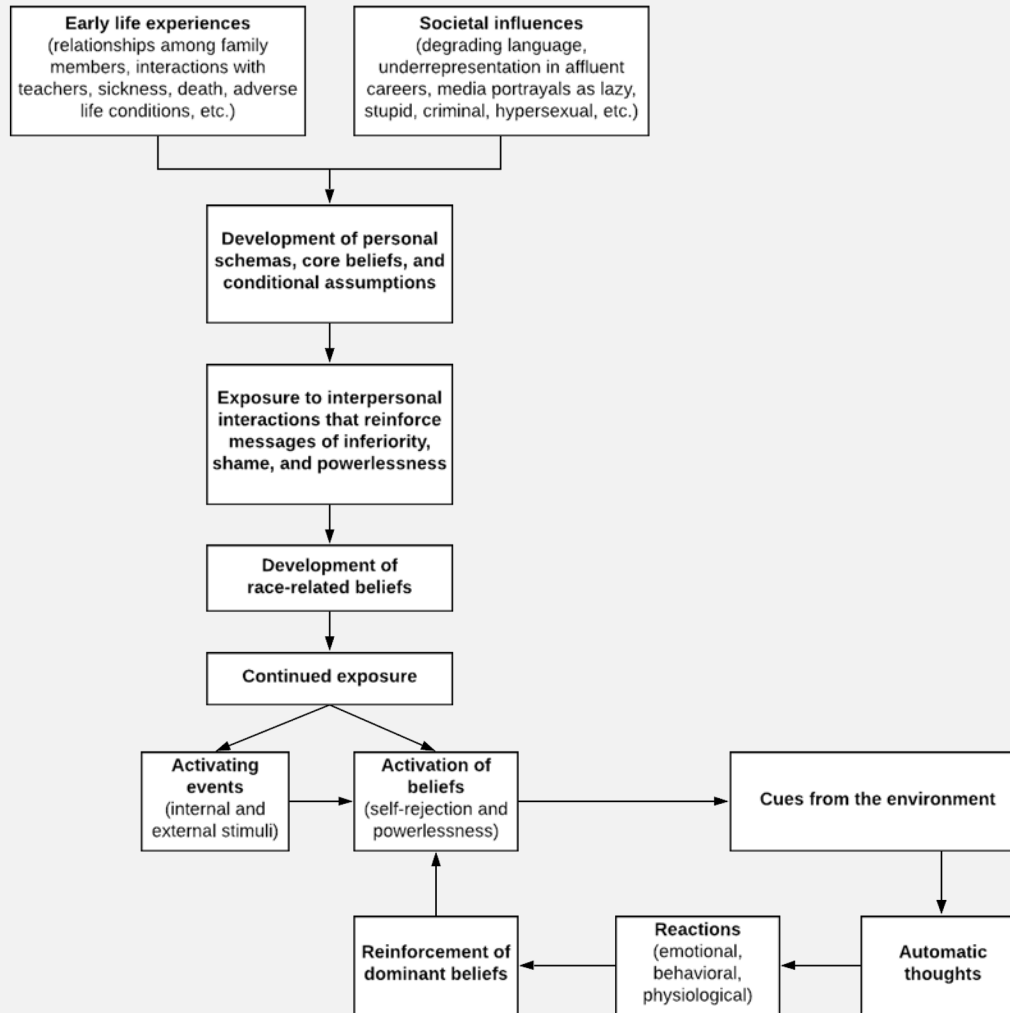
**COGNITIVE CONCEPTUALIZATION DIAGRAM**



Widely reprinted with permission of Judith S. Beck, Ph.D., © 1993. From *Cognitive Therapy: Basics and Beyond* (1995), Guilford Press.

# Cognitive Model of Internalized Racism

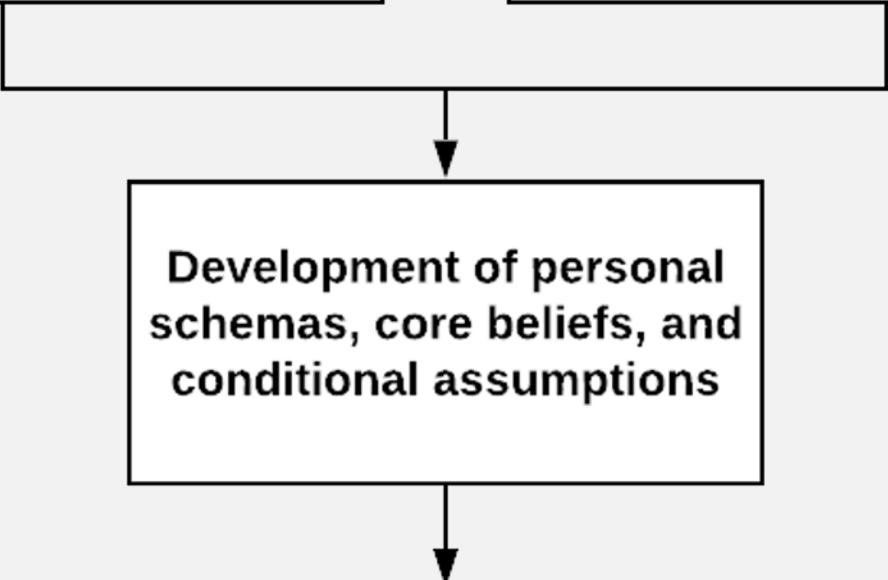
- Describes the role early life experiences and social influences have on the development of core beliefs and conditional assumptions (Steele, 2020)
- Emphasizes the connection between exposure to interpersonal interactions that reinforce messages inferiority, shame, and powerlessness, and the ultimate development of negative cognitions

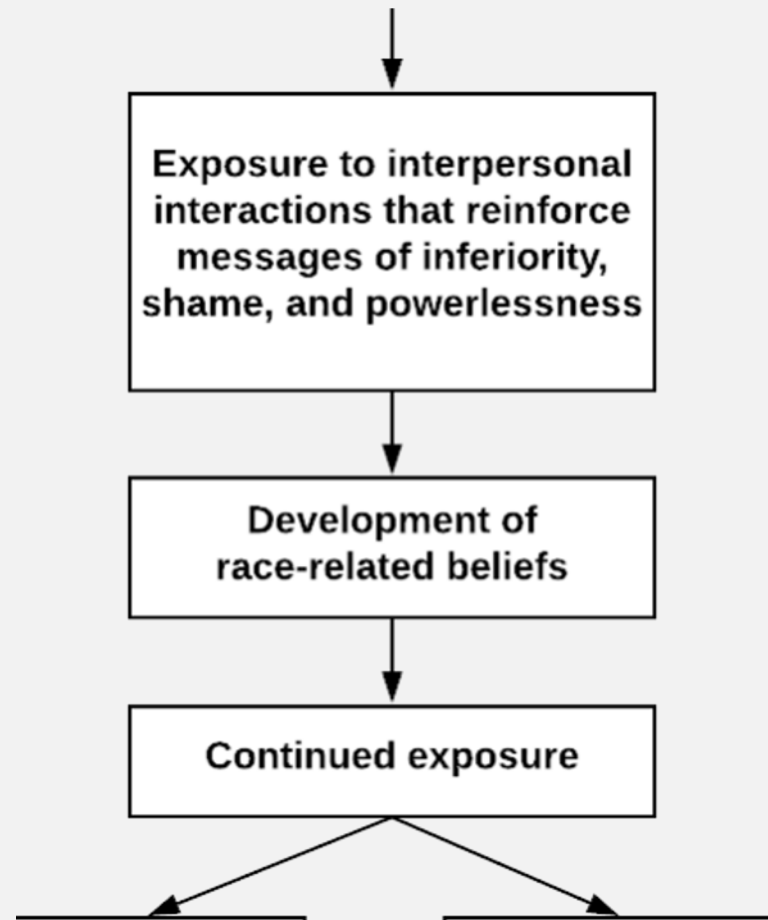


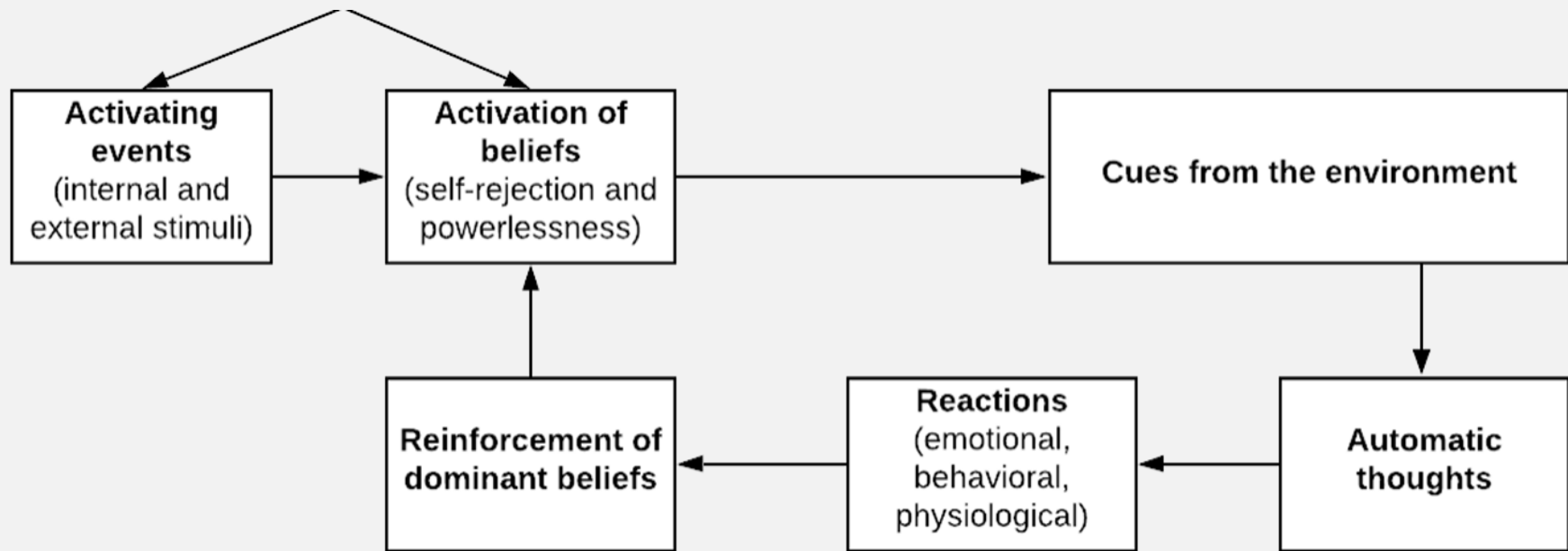
**Early life experiences**  
(relationships among family members, interactions with teachers, sickness, death, adverse life conditions, etc.)

**Societal influences**  
(degrading language, underrepresentation in affluent careers, media portrayals as lazy, stupid, criminal, hypersexual, etc.)

**Development of personal schemas, core beliefs, and conditional assumptions**









# Common Core Beliefs and Compensatory Strategies Associated With Internalized Oppression

<b>Core Beliefs/Schema</b>	
Inferiority	Believing, either consciously or unconsciously, in the supremacy of White culture (Bailey et al., 2014). “Being Black is at times embarrassing or shameful.”
Inadequacy	Ascribing to personal inferiority beliefs surrounding being Black (Bailey et al., 2014). “I’m not good enough.” “I can’t be successful unless I adopt certain interests, communication styles, and standards of beauty.”
Personal blame	Taking complete responsibility for failures or difficulties even when prejudice and discrimination are factors (Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). “All of my difficulties in life are my own fault.”
Powerlessness	Perceiving the inability to initiate change to be greater than the actual limitations of one’s social context (Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). “Things will always stay the same.” “Nothing I do matters.”
Belief in a just world	Believing there must be just reasons for the inequalities among racial groups, such as low morals or inferior intellectual abilities (Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). “Everyone gets what they deserve.”
<b>Compensatory Strategies</b>	
Avoidance	Attempting to cope with feelings of shame, embarrassment, and alienation by distancing oneself from aspects of one’s racial group membership, for example, concealing the neighborhood one is from or isolating oneself from individuals and social settings perceived to confirm negative stereotypes (Watts-Jones, 2002).
Conformity	Adjusting one’s speech, appearance, and behavior to be more similar to the dominant culture, ranging on a continuum from code-switching to overt stigmatization of one’s own cultural norms (Bailey et al., 2014).
Overperformance	Overperforming in occupational, academic, or social settings to meet real or perceived expectations greater than those held for members of the dominant racial group (Palmer & Walker, 2020).
Learned helplessness	Doing nothing when challenged by racism in response to the belief that one has no control over what happens (Bivens, 2005; Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). (Steele & Newton, 2022)

# The Case of Star



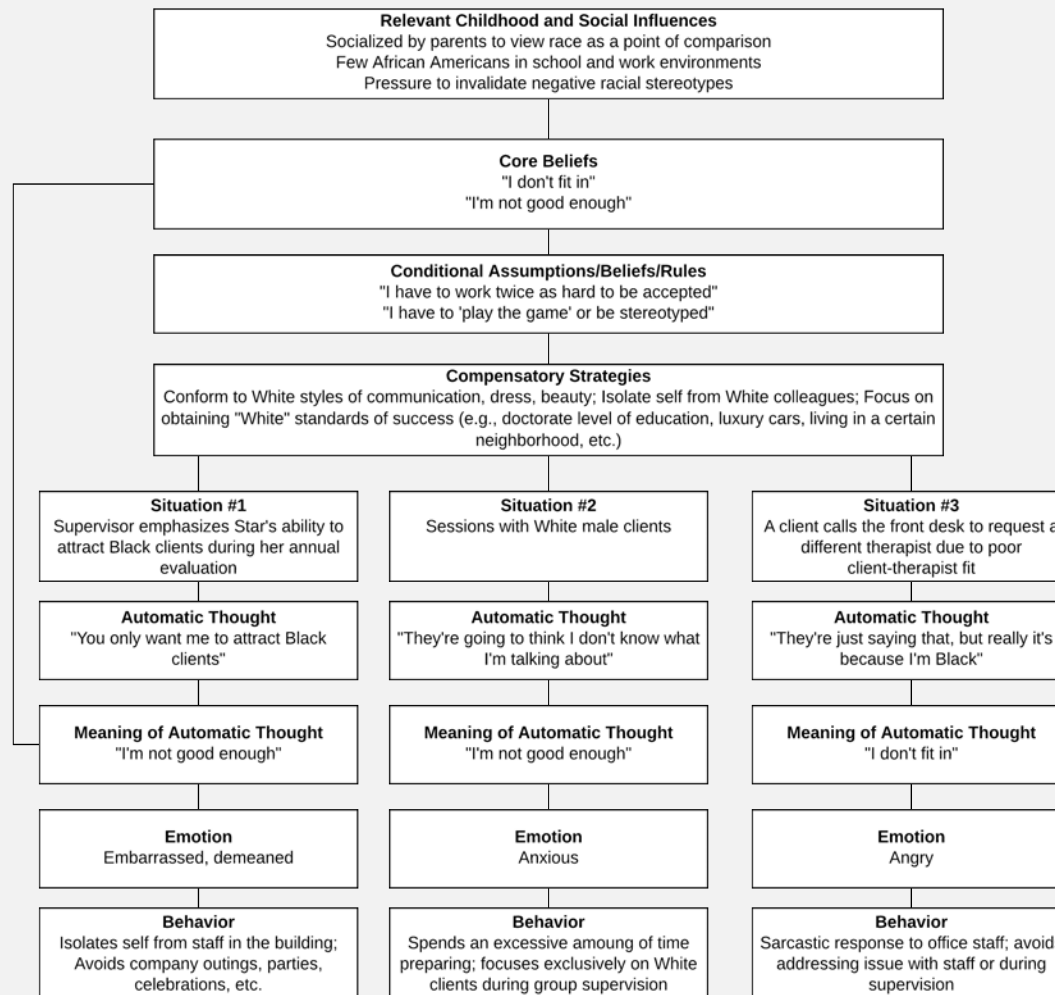
# The Case of Star

Star is a 29-year-old heterosexual cisgender African American woman who grew up in a lower-middle-class neighborhood outside of the metro Detroit area. She was raised in a two-parent household where the value of education was strongly emphasized. Her parents sacrificed financially so she and her two siblings could attend predominantly White private schools and, once there, have the same opportunities as their White peers (e.g., summer camps, family vacations, a college education). When she was a child, Star's parents were vocal about race and often told her, "You have to work twice as hard as Whites," and "Never let White people define you." After high school, Star became a first-generation college student and went on to pursue an advanced degree in the counseling profession. While in college and graduate school, Star excelled academically and socially, graduating with honors and joining a Black sorority. She recently entered her first full-time job and has noticed that it is very a White-male-dominated environment where the voices of people of color are not regularly heard. During staff meetings, Star is often ignored, except on rare occasions when issues of race are discussed. In these instances, Star is looked to as an expert and treated as a representative for all people of color.

# The Case of Star

Star initiated counseling after her last performance evaluation with her supervisor. During the evaluation, the supervisor highlighted Star's contributions to the examination of race issues but did not acknowledge the other ways she contributes to the agency's work environment. As a result, Star has started to feel worried and to question her ability to work effectively with White clients. At times, Star has private closed-door meetings with another Black colleague where she finds support and validation; however, these interactions are few and far between due to Star's drive to be productive. Star finds herself disconnected from her job and avoids socializing with coworkers because she feels unheard and devalued. During her appointments with White, middle-class men, Star feels incompetent and questions her ability to connect with these clients. "Maybe I'm not smart enough" or "They will not hear me" are messages Star often repeats to herself. Star reports an overwhelming sense of sadness and has now entered therapy to address the increasing severity of her symptoms of anxiety and depression.

# Star's Cognitive Conceptualization



# Treatment Plan: Goals

- Goals in Star's case would be to:
  1. Identify the impact of racism and internalized racism on Star's current difficulties with anxiety and depression;
  2. Articulate an individualized set of values not based on imposed Eurocentric ideals and standards;
  3. Increase Star's sense of power in addressing the microaggressions and discrimination in her work environment, especially in terms of describing their impact on her relationships with clients and co-workers; and
  4. Help Star replace her negative compensatory strategies with strategies that have been found effective in dealing with racial and gender discrimination, including prayer, a positive racial identity, and connections with social supports such as the church or family (Steele & Newton, 2022)

# Treatment Plan: Interventions

- Given the nature of Star's case and her treatment goals, interventions during individual therapy sessions would consist of culturally sensitive:
  - Enhanced psychoeducation
  - Cognitive restructuring
  - Behavioral exercises focused on the reduction of her symptoms of anxiety and depression
  - Mindfulness and relaxation exercises (Steele & Newton, 2022)

# Enhanced Psychoeducation

- **Enhanced psychoeducation** involves connecting concepts discussed during psychoeducation directly to clients' lived experiences as members of marginalized groups
- **Critical consciousness:** “the capacity of oppressed or marginalized people to critically analyze their social and political conditions, endorsement of societal equality, and action to change perceived inequities” (Diemer et al., 2017, p. 461)
- The Case of Star:
  - *Black Lives are Beautiful: 50 Tools to Healing from Trauma and Promote Positive Racial Identity* (Steele & Newton, 2023)
  - *The Racial Healing Handbook: Practical Activities to Help You Challenge Privilege, Confront Systemic Racism, and Engage in Collective Healing* (Singh, 2019)



# Adapted Cognitive Restructuring

- **Adapted cognitive restructuring** can help clients explore their concerns in a way that is sensitive to their cultural values, life experiences, and context. Traditionally, cognitive restructuring focuses on teaching clients to examine the rationality of their thinking (Matu, 2018)
- Questioning clients' experiences of discrimination and other race-related concerns, however, can be invalidating and may exacerbate their symptoms
- In contrast, adapted cognitive restructuring focuses on:
  - A. Validating the painful emotions that arise in the face of these experiences
  - B. Acknowledging that we live in a society where these painful experiences occur
  - C. Challenging negative thoughts about self that occur in response to these experiences rather than the experiences themselves (Graham et al., 2013, p. 104)

# Thought Record

CBT is based on the idea that it is not what happens to us that determines how we feel, but how we think about what happens to us. When situations occur, we have specific thoughts about the situations called automatic thoughts. These thoughts produce the emotions we experience. Thought records are a specific type of journaling activity designed to help you become more aware of the connection between your automatic thoughts and feelings. Thought records also help you grow to be more active in challenging and replacing these thoughts. The more you practice, the better you become at thinking in more functional and adaptive ways. Use the chart below to begin replacing your negative automatic thoughts with more positive alternative thoughts.

Situation	Automatic Thought	Emotion	Alternative Thought	Outcome
<p>Supervisor emphasizes Star's ability to attract Black clients during her annual evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What were you doing when you experienced the emotion?</li> </ul>	<p>"You only want me to attract Black clients"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What was going through your mind? Was it words? An image? A memory?</li> <li>• What type of cognitive distortion does this thought represent?</li> </ul>	<p>Embarrassed (75%) Demeaned (80%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What emotions did you feel during the situation?</li> <li>• How would you rate the intensity of each emotion from 0-100%?</li> </ul>	<p>These comments are microaggressions and do not reflect my inadequacies. I might feel powerless right now, but I can learn strategies to help me point out these issues to others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How may racism or other forms of oppression be influencing this situation?</li> <li>• What's the worst that could happen? What could you do then?</li> <li>• What advice would you give to a friend?</li> </ul>	<p>Embarrassed (25%) Demeaned (50%)</p> <p>Starting tonight, I will begin reading a book on microaggressions and role-play my ideas with my therapist at our next session.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you rate the intensity of your emotion now (0-100%)?</li> <li>• What should you do now?</li> </ul>

# Socratic Questioning

- **Socratic questioning:** A structured format of questioning to help clients monitor their thoughts and emotions, evaluate their thinking, and respond in an adaptive way
- This intervention should be introduced only after clients have a firm understanding of the cognitive model and that their thinking in specific situations affects their mood and behavior

# Socratic Questioning

- Socratic questioning can help clients deconstruct the role of race in their thinking and restructure negative thoughts into more adaptive and functional ways of thinking. Some examples include:
  - When did you first realize yourself as a racial being?
  - What did your identity as an African American mean for you at that time?
  - What are the stereotypes associated with being African American?
  - How did you learn these stereotypes?
  - Where did these stereotypes come from?
  - How do these stereotypes affect the way you see yourself and people in your racial group?
  - Who benefits from your belief of these stereotypes?
  - How do these stereotypes support current racial hierarchies?
  - What are some alternative explanations for these stereotypes?
  - What would you like to believe about yourself outside of these stereotypes?
  - What evidence is there to support these beliefs?

# The Downward Arrow Technique

- The downward arrow technique is designed to help uncover the core and intermediate beliefs that lead to negative automatic thoughts in daily situations (Beck, 2020)
- To implement the downward arrow technique, the therapist first listens for automatic thoughts that seem to reflect negative core beliefs. The therapist then asks the client what meaning the automatic thought would have to the client's life if it were true, continuing this process until one or more core beliefs are revealed
- Example questions include: "If that's true, so what?" "What's so bad about..." "What's the worst part about..." and "What does that mean *about* you?" when identifying core beliefs, or "What does it mean *to* you?" when identifying intermediate beliefs (Beck, 2020)

# The Downward Arrow Technique

**Therapist:** I hear that you were pretty embarrassed by this conversation with your supervisor. Tell me more about the thoughts that go through your mind when you think back to that day.

**Star:** I don't know. It's kind of demeaning. It's like they only want me to attract Black clients.

**Therapist:** And if that were true, that they only want you to attract Black clients, what's the worst part about that?

**Star:** I guess that my value is in the color of my skin and I'm probably not a good clinician.

**Therapist:** And what does that mean about you?

**Star:** It means I'm not good enough...

# Historical Review and Modification of Core Beliefs

- **Historical review of core beliefs:** Used to help clients examine how current behavior may be driven by core beliefs developed during childhood
- Consists of the following questions: What made me think the core belief was true? What evidence is there that belief was not true or not completely true? What's another explanation? Looking over the evidence, how do I now view the accuracy of the core belief? (Beck, 2020)
- **Modification of core beliefs:** The process of helping clients to devise more positive and functional beliefs
  - Typically accomplished by helping clients: (a) examine evidence that contradicts the old core belief and (b) reframe evidence that supports the old core belief

# Breakout Groups: The Case of Andre

Andre is a 40-year-old cisgender, African American man who is seeking counseling due to feelings of anxiety and depression after being fired from his place of employment. Andre, who was employed as a plant supervisor, explained that he was fired from his job 1 month ago due to low ratings on back-to-back performance evaluations. Since that time, Andre has experienced an overwhelming sense of sadness and worry and has made little effort to find new employment. In the excerpt below, the therapist speaks with Andre, exploring central themes in his automatic thoughts, and how these themes may reflect underlying core beliefs.

**Therapist:** It also sounds like you felt so nervous when being observed by your operations manager that you even had problems with your memory. Tell me, how did your feelings in this situation reflect your experience as an African American supervisor at the plant?

**Andre:** It's like I was held to a higher standard of performance. Other supervisors did the bare minimum and were never criticized, but I had to go above and beyond to prove my worth. And it still wasn't good enough. Maybe I should just stick to working on assembly lines.

**Therapist:** And if that were true, if your efforts aren't good enough and you should stick to assembly lines, what would that mean about you?

**Andre:** I guess it means *I'm* not good enough...



# Breakout Groups: The Case of Andre

Questions for discussion:

- What relevant cultural experiences are evident in the case of Andre?
- What specific core beliefs and compensatory strategies are evident in this case?
- Based on Andre's history and presenting concerns, what goals and interventions might be appropriate for his treatment plan?

# Incorporating Racial Identity Development



# Cross Model of Black Racial Identity Development

- First developed in the early 1970s by psychologist William E. Cross, Jr.
- Known as the Nigrescence model, it has become one of the most popular and widely researched models of Black racial identity development
- Using this model, psychologists have been able to identify the emotions, thoughts, and behaviors individuals exhibit as they resolve negative feelings about being Black and develop a positive view of themselves as racial beings
- The model consists of four stages:
  - Pre-encounter
  - Encounter
  - Immersion-Emersion
  - Internalization (Vandiver et al., 2001)

# Pre-encounter

- At this stage, the concept of race is characterized by either low or negative salience
  - Salience refers to the importance of race in a person's life. It can range from low to high and be positive or negative
- Attitudinally, this stage is exhibited in three identity clusters: (1) assimilation, (2) self-hatred, and (3) miseducation:
  - **Assimilation identity:** Race has low importance and little personal significance
  - **Miseducation identity:** The individual believes negative stereotypes about Black people
  - **Self-hatred identity:** The individual has internalized stereotypes to the point that they develop a sense of hatred for both themselves and Black people in general (Vandiver et al., 2001)

# Encounter

- An event or a series of events leads to an increased awareness of the meaning of being Black and triggers a change in pre-encounter identities (Vandiver et al., 2001)
- These events take place within the context of personal experiences and observations, education, or activism (Neville & Cross, 2017)

# Immersion-Emersion

- After individuals encounter events that lead to increased awareness of their marginalized racial status, individuals subsequently enter a phase of Black racial identity development known as the immersion-emersion stage
- This stage represents a period of life when individuals begin to embrace Black culture and enthusiastically seek to learn more about Africa and African Americans
- Individuals at this stage may also have attitudes that reflect anger toward society for the oppression of Black people, as well as anger toward oneself for having previously ignored or downplayed the role of race in one's life and are typically transformed into more egalitarian ideals as individuals move into the final stage of Black racial identity development (Vandiver et al., 2001)

# Internalization

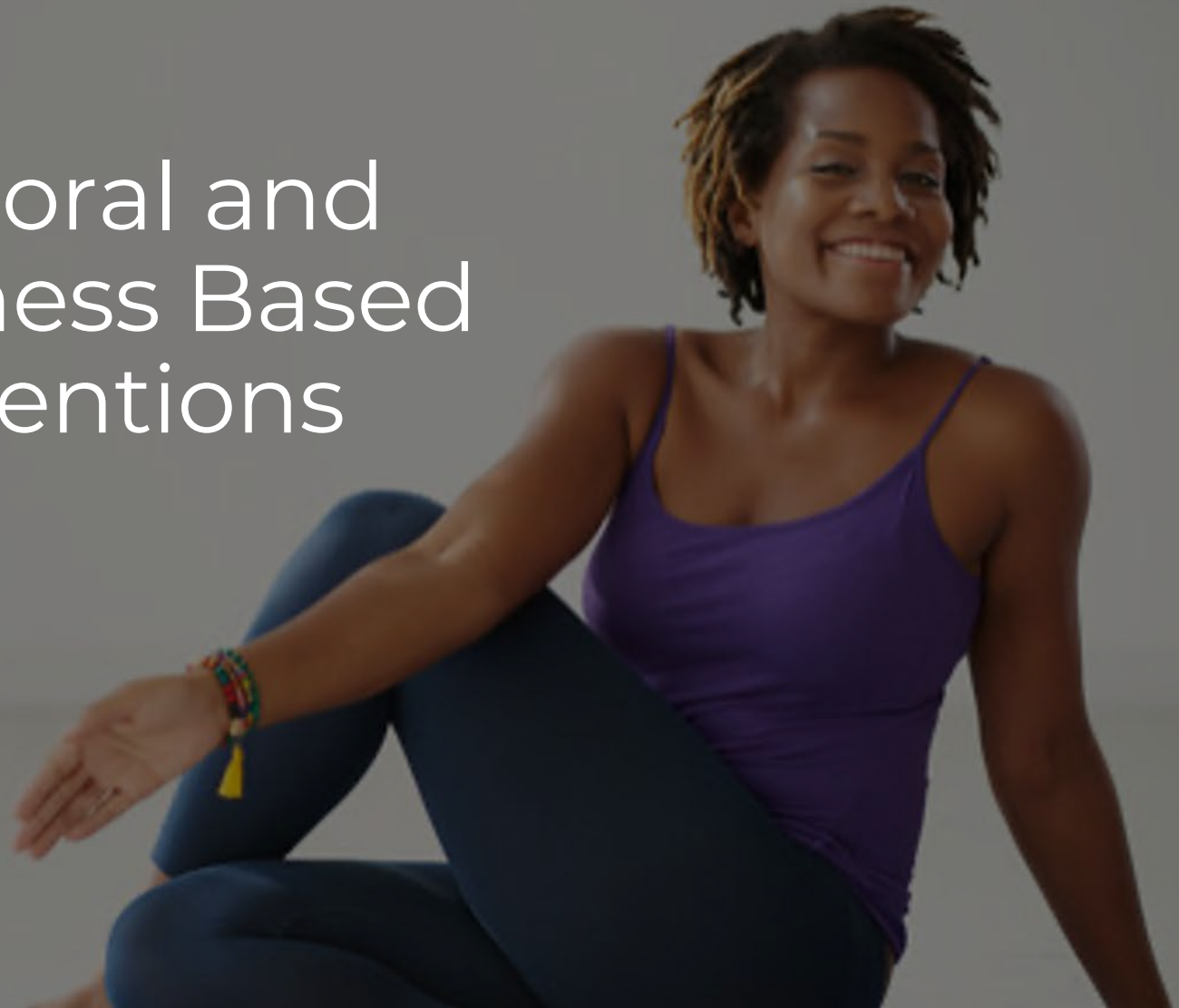
- At this stage, individuals view their Blackness with positivity and have an overall sense of comfort with themselves as racial beings
- This greater sense of comfort and self-acceptance is often accompanied by a shift from pro-White to pro-Black attitudes that result in changes to their overall worldview and values. This may consist of:
  - **Afrocentricity identity:** A worldview characterized by a prizing of traditional Afrocentric principles
  - **Bicultural identity:** Being Black and having another marginalized identity such as being a woman holds salience
  - **Multicultural racial identity:** Focus on accepting Black culture and the cultures of other marginalized groups
  - **Multiculturalist inclusive identity:** Valuing all other cultural groups (Worrell et al., 2001)

# Positive Racial Identity as a Protective Factor

- There is research that supports that having a positive racial identity, may be a protective factor against forms of race-related stress such as racial discrimination
- Positive racial identity may buffer against the negative effects of racial discrimination (Banks & Kohn-Wood, 2007)
- Through enhancing self-concept, self-esteem, and cognitive-appraisal of situations and self, this may help clients develop adaptive coping styles (Neblett et al., 2012)



# Behavioral and Mindfulness Based Interventions



# Reconstruct the Trauma Narrative

- Help clients move beyond stories of trauma to stories of victory and overcoming to claim their strength
- **Activity:** Oral History Interview
- **Directions:** Have a conversation with the oldest member of your family and ask questions about ways in which the family has overcome obstacles. What are some great accomplishments obtained by family members?
- Build a history of your family background and create new messages about yourself.

# In-vivo Exposure

- As an alternative to avoidance, clients are encouraged to use coping mechanisms they have learned to manage their cognitions during situations in which internalized racism comes up
  - **Example:** Me and my glasses dilemma...Give the presentation without your glasses



# Increase Safety

## Activity: Ancestor Vision Board

**Directions:** Put together a picture board of family members you deem as strong or resilient. The board can include words that highlight you, your family, or accomplishments

### Reflection Questions:

- As you look at your board, how do you feel?
- What positive thoughts come to mind as you look at your board?
- What thoughts can you anchor yourself with as you move throughout your week?





# FINDING YOUR TRIBE

**Instructions:** A tribe can be described as individuals who have your back, offer social-emotional support, help you deal with race-based issues, and encourage you. Your tribe should be an intimate/small group of people.

**Step one:** Identify the characteristics you would like your tribe members to have.

**Step two:** Identify what you hope to take from the tribe and what you can give to members.

**Step three:** Identify tribe members for the different domains of your life, e.g., work, church, community.

**Step four:** If you're not able to identify people you can include in your tribe, brainstorm ways you can connect with others. Examples include volunteer, join a community group that supports your racial identity, or join a ministry at your house of worship where you can meet others.

**Step five:** Find ways you can nurture the development of your tribe, e.g., monthly in-home meet-ups to check-in with one another about your experiences connected to issues around race and racism.

# Relaxation

- Invite clients to think about how they can use prayer, mediation, culturally responsive podcast to develop new thoughts about themselves
- **Example: Black Lives Matter Meditation for Healing Racial Trauma**
  - A 17-minute guided meditation using mindfulness and affirmation (loving-kindness)
  - <https://soundcloud.com/drcandicenicole/black-lives-matter-meditation-for-healing-racial-trauma>

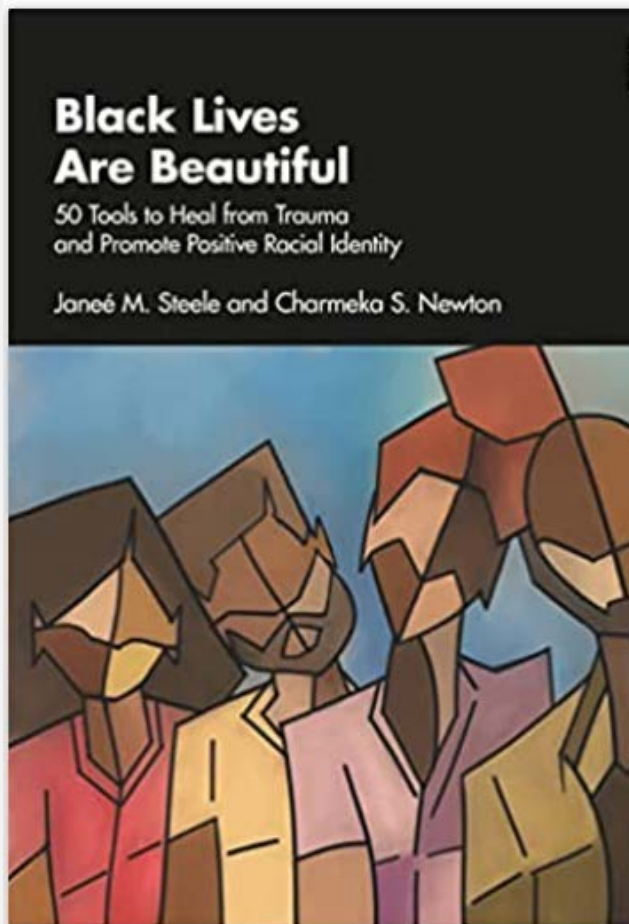
# Music that Heals

- **Racial Trauma Healing Playlist:** Encourage clients to create a playlist of songs that empower or speak encouraging messages to them
- In session, you can help the client process the songs they selected through looking for patterns and themes in the songs
- In session, you may also help them develop positive self-affirmation cards using the words of the songs

# Affirm Yourself With What You Wear

- What we wear can impact how we feel. Encouraging clients to wear apparel that supports who they are as a person of color can help them feel good about themselves
- <https://wearyourjourney.com/>
- Legendaryrootz- A lifestyle brand for Black Women to authentically express themselves through powerful, statement-driven apparel
- Relievethebar- University of Michigan Black Alumni Apparel #BlackWolverines





# Bibliotherapy: Black Lives Are Beautiful

- Use books to help clients affirm who they are and help them develop healthy cognition
- [https://www.amazon.com/Black-Lives-Are-Beautiful-Positive/dp/1032117427/ref=tmm\\_pap\\_swatch\\_0?\\_encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=](https://www.amazon.com/Black-Lives-Are-Beautiful-Positive/dp/1032117427/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=)

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