

A woman with dark, curly hair is shown from the chest up, wearing a white cable-knit sweater. She has a distressed expression, with her hand pressed against her chest. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey. The title text is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font.

MENDING THE WOUNDS OF RACIALIZED TRAUMA

Strategies and Interventions to Promote
Healing and Insight

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This workbook is designed to provide information regarding the topics covered. It is not an attempt to render psychological, financial, legal, or other professional services. If mental health services are needed, please contact a local provider.

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MENDING THE WOUNDS OF RACIALIZED TRAUMA

Race-based events such as those witnessed in today's sociopolitical climate have a negative psychological effect on Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities and leave them feeling wounded. These wounds, known as racialized trauma, occur as a result of repeated encounters with racism, prejudice, and discrimination, and lead to symptoms similar to those experienced with other forms of trauma and adversity. In order to provide competent care to these individuals, it is imperative that mental health professionals develop the dispositions and skills necessary to understand racialized trauma and to promote restoration and healing. Throughout the pages of this workbook, you'll find theory specific and body-centric interventions to help clients think differently about their problems, cope with their raw emotions, and increase self- and community empowerment. We hope you find them beneficial and we applaud you on your continued efforts to provide culturally responsive care to your clients and the community.

-Janeé M. Steele

-Charmeka S. Newton

LEARNING OBJECTIVES



DEFINE

Define racialized trauma and its physical, emotional, and mental impacts.



IMPLEMENT

Implement approaches designed to produce insights and help clients think differently about their problems using therapies such as culturally adapted CBT.



UTILIZE

Utilize body-centric strategies such as breathing, mindfulness, and relaxation exercises to help clients cope with their raw emotions and defensive reactions.



DEVELOP

Develop interventions to promote self- and community empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

MENDING THE WOUNDS OF RACIALIZED TRAUMA

Racialized trauma refers to mental and emotional injury caused by repeated encounters with racial bias, hostility, discrimination, or harassment (Carter, 2007). Individuals who suffer from racialized trauma experience the same emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and physiological symptoms as people dealing with other forms of trauma (Carter, 2007). For example, people with racialized trauma fear for their safety and often become hypervigilant, or “on guard” for new or repeated threats to their safety. These individuals may also withdraw from their friends and family, have difficulty trusting others, and experience distressing symptoms such as nightmares, flashbacks, and intrusive thoughts.

In order to effectively address racialized trauma, clinicians must have a good understanding of the overall nature of trauma and its treatment. This involves two types of approaches: top-down approaches and bottom-up approaches. Top-down approaches are designed to help clients think differently about their problems using therapies such as CBT. Bottom-up approaches, on the other hand, are designed to help clients cope with their raw emotions and defense reactions using body-centric strategies such as breathing, mindfulness, and relaxation exercises.

On the next page, you will find a case study designed to help you think about how you might apply top-down and bottom-up approaches with clients experiencing racialized trauma. After the case study, you'll find worksheets and informational guides you can put to immediate use with your clients to further assist you with this process.

THE CASE OF DARYL

MEET DARYL



Daryl is a 47-year-old Black heterosexual male who is married with two sons (ages 14 and 16 years). Daryl is college educated and holds an MBA degree. Due to receiving a promotion at work, his family recently relocated to a rural community with low racial diversity. Daryl and his family have been living in this new community for 7 months and in this short time have experienced multiple instances of racism. Daryl is the only senior-level Black professional on his job and finds that his suggestions during meetings are often skipped over or not heard. Recently, he gave a suggestion to which no one responded, however, when his White colleague gave the same suggestion minutes later everyone rallied behind the idea and agreed to execute the suggestion. Daryl was so upset he

excused himself from the meeting and went to the bathroom to run cold water on his face in an effort to calm himself down. While in the bathroom, Daryl looked at himself in the mirror and said, "I just don't get it I'm college educated, and these people just don't respect me. I can't win." Daryl wanted to cry but he kept it together, put a smile on his face, and returned to his office.

Daryl and his wife have also had difficulties with their 14-year-old son's school because the school wants to place their son, Cameron, in remedial classes. In his prior school, Cameron excelled. Cameron tends to be a hands-on learner who when bored or not challenged enough tends to get distract and loses focus. At Cameron's prior school, they understood his learning style and put him in more challenging classes. With this approach, Cameron excelled and had no behavior issues. Daryl and his wife believe their son is being labeled and discriminated against due to be a Black male child.

Daryl is increasingly worried about being able to keep his job and advocate for his children in what he deems a racist environment. Daryl has been trying to practice self-care by taking his oldest son, Alexander, golfing every Sunday afternoon. Last Sunday afternoon, two White men approached Daryl and Alexander and asked if they had seen a golf club the men left on the hole. Daryl politely stated, "We haven't seen your club. I'm sorry and hope you find it." About 5 minutes later, the same men approached Daryl and Alexander again, stating, "We know you took our club. We left it on the hole you were just playing. Give it back." Daryl was triggered and believed he and his son were being accused because they are Black. Daryl hopped out of his golf cart and said, "You know what? I want you to look at these clubs. They are custom with our names on them." Daryl began to take every club out of their golf bags and throw them on the ground, shouting, "Does this look like yours? Does this look like yours?" His son Alexander asked him to stop, stating he was making a scene. Daryl continued yelling and found himself fighting back tears as they left the golf course. This situation inspired Daryl to finally reach out for counseling.

PROCESSING THE CASE OF DARYL

Addressing racialized trauma using top-down and bottom-up approaches requires practice, skill, and intentionality. After reviewing the case of Daryl, respond to the questions below to consider how you might apply CBT and body-centric strategies to promote insight and healing with this client.

Top-down Considerations:

1. What relevant cultural experiences define the case of Daryl?

2. What specific core beliefs and compensatory strategies are evident in this case?

3. Based on Daryl's presenting concerns, what goals and cognitive interventions might be appropriate for his treatment plan?

Bottom-up Considerations:

1. What body-centric strategies might you use with Daryl?

2. What culturally congruent rationale would you provide Daryl for use of these strategies?

3. As a therapist, how comfortable to do you feel implementing body-centric interventions?

4. With what aspects of body-centric strategies do you feel not at ease? What might be some of your fears or hesitations with implementing these strategies?

5. How can you address some of your fears concerning the implementation of body-centric strategies?

Bring In the New

Sometimes after people of color have experienced racism or discrimination, they may begin to engage in something called internalized racism. Internalized racism is conscious or subconscious acceptance of a racial hierarchy where one group is deemed to be better than another.



Due to internalized racism, you may have beliefs about yourself that result in you feeling unlovable, helpless, or worthless. Replacing these beliefs with more affirming and true beliefs can have a positive impact on how you think about yourself, which in turn can affect how you think and react to experiences of racism.

Below, write down any beliefs about yourself that reflect unlovability, helplessness, or worthlessness. Then replace these beliefs with new messages that allow you to be functional and adaptive.

Negative Core Belief

Example: "I'm not good enough"

New Core Belief

Example: "I may experience some difficulties, but I am generally capable and skilled at what I do"

Coping Cards

Be kind to your mind

Use the coping statements below to challenge negative thoughts you may have as a result of racialized trauma, or develop your own

I come from survivors. I am a survivor.

What I won't do is give up.

My value is not determined by society's standards.

I am loved.

I am powerful.

I matter.



Negative → Positive

My negative thought: _____

Evidence for my thought:

Evidence against my thought:

How can I reframe my negative thought to be more functional?

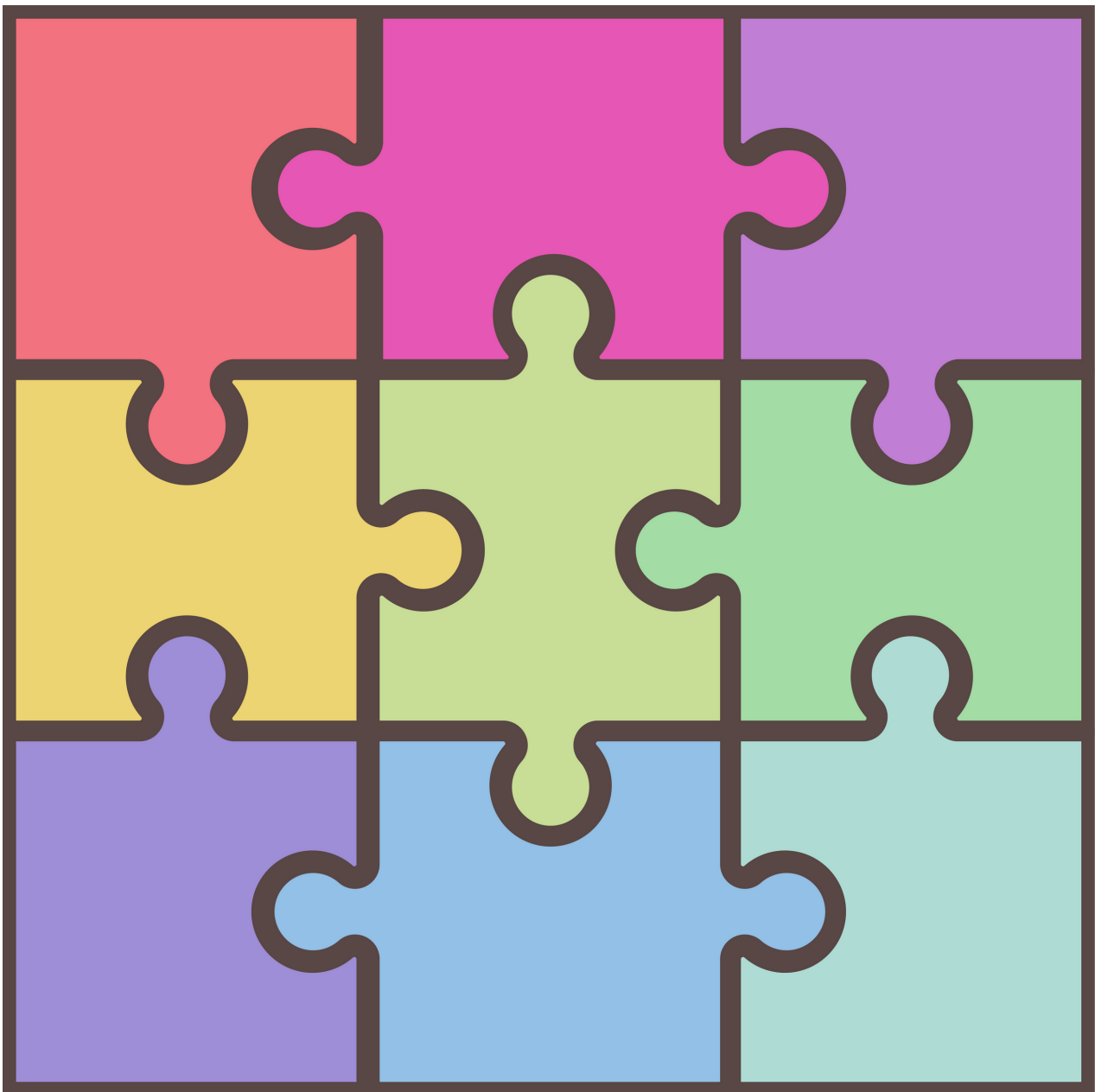
Thought Record

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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What were you doing when you experienced the emotion? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What was going through your mind? Was it words? An image? A memory? What type of cognitive distortion does this thought represent? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What emotions did you feel during the situation? How would you rate the intensity of each emotion from 0-100%? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How may racism or other forms of oppression be influencing this situation? What's the worst that could happen? What could you do then? What advice would you give to a friend? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you rate the intensity of your emotion now (0-100%)?

A PIECE OF YOU

Culture is defined as the customs, languages, practices, beliefs, and rituals that are passed down through generations. Please take a few moments and in the puzzle pieces below, either write or draw an aspect of your culture that is significant to you. Include things that are meaningful for me to understand as we embark on this treatment process together. For example, if religion is a big part of the culture you grew up in, you may write "religion" or draw a cross or another religious symbol.

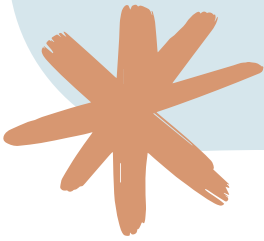


HARMONIZE WITH OTHERS

Part of healing from racialized trauma is learning how to connect or harmonize with others who share your lived experience. There are many ways we can harmonize with others for healing, including playing games, drumming, singing, cooking, and braiding or styling each others hair.

HOW CAN YOU HARMONIZE WITH OTHERS?

List some ways you can start harmonizing with others based on how you enjoy connecting.



WHEN CAN YOU HARMONIZE WITH OTHERS?

Based on your lifestyle, how will you incorporate harmonizing with others into your daily, weekly, or monthly schedule?



symbolic breathing

One of the ways racialized trauma impacts our bodies is through dysregulated breathing. Learning how regulate your breathing can help you to discharge negative energy and soothe your symptoms of anxiety. Follow the steps below, setting a timer for an amount of time that feels comfortable for you.

1. Find a symbolic object that is representative of who you are as a person of color.

2. Lay on the floor, on your sofa, in your bed, or wherever you feel comfortable.

3. Grab your object and place it on your stomach. As you breathe, make sure your object is rising on your stomach with every breath you take inward and falling with every breath you release from your body.

4. As you continue to breathe, think about your object. Reflect on why you honor that object. Let your mind consider its goodness, and beauty. This item is a reflection of the goodness and beauty of who you are.



HUM A TUNE THAT INSPIRES

Songs are a great source of inspiration and affirmation. Humming an inspiring tune can interrupt negative thinking and redirect your mind toward your goals. So, hum as you work, drive, or engage in your daily life activities. Afterwards, take note of how your body feels. Hopefully, it grounds you and gives a reason to smile and know that things are going to get better.

My playlist of songs that inspire:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

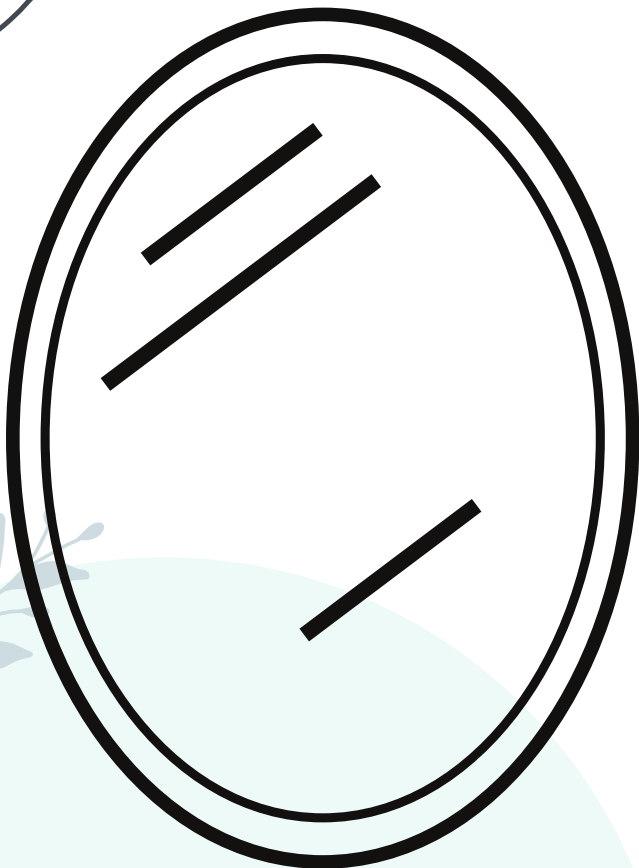


Mirror, Mirror

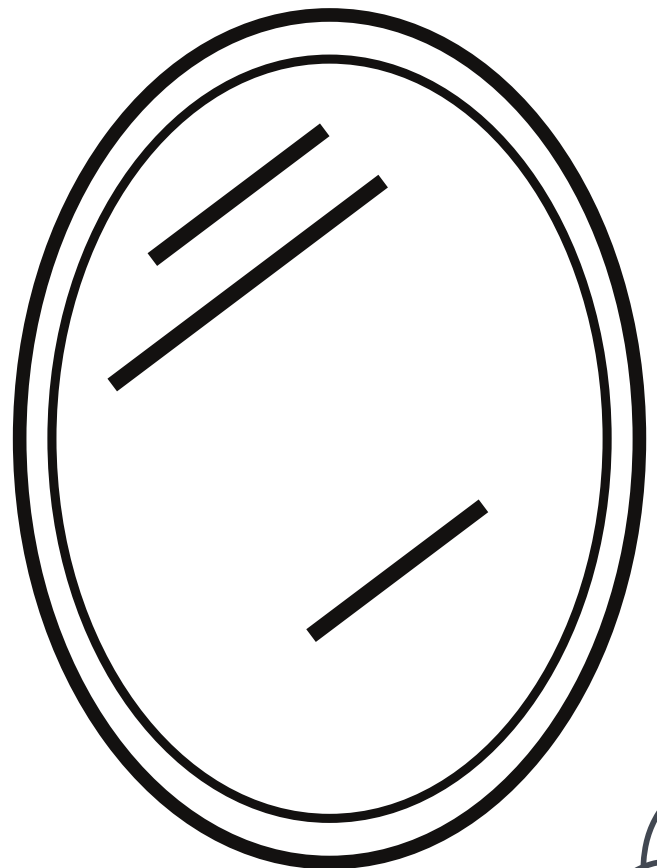
Eurocentric standards of beauty can cause some people of color to have negative thoughts about aspects of their physical appearance such as their hair, skin color, or body shape. Affirming your physical beauty can result in greater body appreciation and less negative self-talk about this aspect of yourself.

In the first mirror below, write down negative messages you have heard about the physical appearance of people who belong to your racial group. In the second mirror, replace these messages with more positive and affirming messages.

Negative Messages



Positive Messages



1. Engage in yoga

Find a yoga class that is rooted in or inspired by your cultural tradition, for example Kemetic yoga

2. Mediate

Consider using encouraging affirmations or scriptures

3. Move your body

Find a drumming class that allows you to move and release unhealthy energy and emotions that are connected to racialized trauma

SELF REGULATE

Because racialized trauma involves the body's protective response, having strategies to soothe the mind and settle your body is key to healing. Develop your toolbox of strategies from the list provided or select your own.

4. Laugh

Find a comedian of color who may speak about race and racism and laugh - laughter is good for the soul

5. Volunteer

Join a non-profit that works toward creating social equality. This can help you make a difference and feel empowered

6. Engage your senses

Add soothing scents to your environment, for example, incense

7. Choose your own self-regulation strategies

THANK YOU!

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