

Dialectical Behavior Therapy and Racism

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Disclaimer

- ▶ May be difficult, triggering, overwhelming
- ▶ Use skills: Wise mind,
- ▶ Mindful, Observe,
Non-judgmental stance,
Willing stance
- ▶ Debating details may be invalidating
- ▶ Let us choose to listen

"if i say my house is on fire
and you say 'all houses matter,'
well that may be true,
but all houses aren't
on fire right now.
my house is."
-talib kweli

Being a Black American: Individual/Bio/Psycho/Social Harms

“Being black is bad for your health. And pervasive racism is the cause” (Vestal, 2020)

- ▶ Black Americans are 2x as likely to have diabetes as White persons
- ▶ Significantly more likely to die of stroke
- ▶ 10% more likely to have some form of heart disease
- ▶ Black Americans, same risk of MH illness than White counterparts, but receive substantially less treatment
- ▶ Shorter life span, babies pre-term, higher risk of SIDS
- ▶ “Adultification” of Black American children
- ▶ And sadly, the list goes on and on and on and on...

(Black, 1986; González, 2018; Smith, Bentley-Edwards, El-Amin, & Darity Jr., 2018; Vestal, 2020)

Definition of Terms

- ▶ Racism: hatred or intolerance, one's own race is superior, policy or system can adopt this belief
- ▶ Systematic Racism: racism is embedded into the system, parts of the system, laws/rules perpetuate racism
- ▶ White privilege: unearned advantages, appear to be non-racial- no big deal, may appear to be perfectly natural by the recipient, all just by virtue of being or appearing to be White (Fernando, 2017)

(Dictionary.com; Fernando, 2017; Sue et al., 2007)



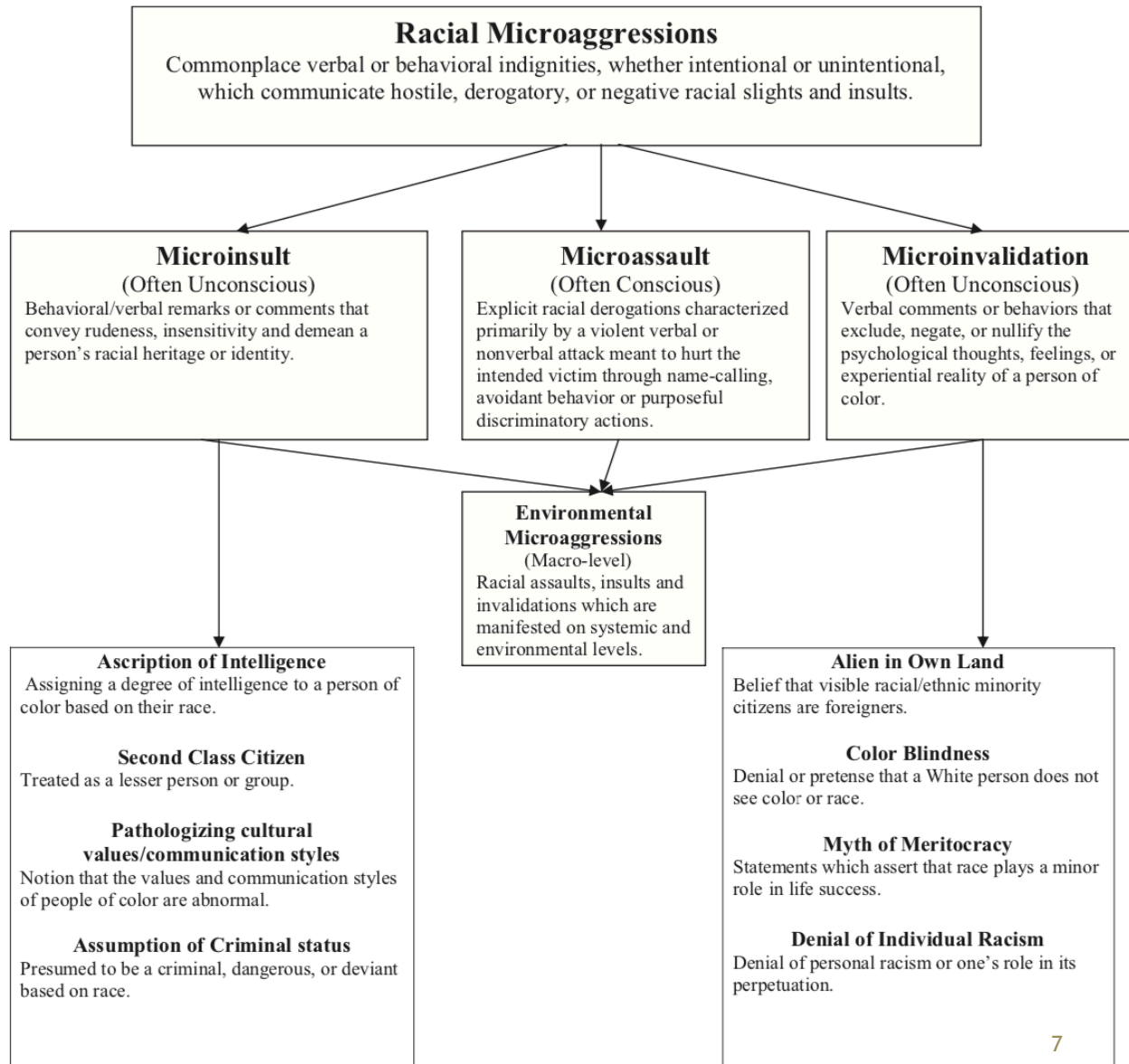
Photographers: Chris Buck & Julia Fullerton

Definition of terms

- ▶ Micro-aggression
 - ▶ Racial Micro-aggression: Verbal or behavioral, communicate hostile, derogatory, negative racial insults
 - ▶ Microinsult (often unconscious)
 - ▶ Micorassault (often conscious)
 - ▶ Microinvalidation (often unconscious)

(Sue et al., 2007)

Figure 1
Categories of and Relationships Among Racial Microaggressions



What now?

- ▶ We are all fallible
- ▶ Provider Bias, Aversive racism or Implicit bias- is subtle, difficult to identify and quantify
 - ▶ Lack of training
 - ▶ Lack of awareness, “racism does not exist”
- ▶ Cultural Humility (choose humility over White Savior Complex)
- ▶ DBT Therapeutic Relationship - Relationship between equals?
 - ▶ Knowing this.... can failing to discuss this be a Therapy Interfering Behavior- Therapist? (TIB-T)
- ▶ Cultural Dialectics
- ▶ DBT Culturally Adapted for Black Americans?
 - ▶ Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective (BEAM)
 - ▶ Social justice-informed Mental health literacy (SJM).
 - ▶ “Mental health education framed in the social-historical context of inequality that aids in the skills building, healing and liberation of communities.”

I UNDERSTAND THAT I
WILL NEVER BE ABLE
TO UNDERSTAND COMPLETELY.
BUT I STAND WITH YOU
AND I WILL NOT LET YOU
DO THIS ALONE.
YOU WERE NEVER
MEANT TO.



Resources

APA On Discrimination

https://www.apa.org/topics/discrimination?_ga=2.255912267.1943926138.1592547366-1054024735.1592547366

BEAM

Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective

<https://www.beam.community/>

Black Lives Matter Meditation

http://drcandicenicole.com/2016/07/black-lives-matter-meditation/?_ga=2.212919508.1943926138.1592547366-1054024735.1592547366

Black American NAMI

https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Identity-and-Cultural-Dimensions/Black-African-American?_ga=2.212919508.1943926138.1592547366-1054024735.1592547366

Civil Rights

<https://civilrights.org/>

Fernando, S. (2017). Institutional racism in psychiatry and clinical psychology. Palgrave Macmillan.

Article on Black Health Literacy

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/why-black-mental-health-literacy-matters_b_5939b099e4b014ae8c69decf

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- ▶ Vestal., C. (2020) *Racism is a Public Health Crisis, Say Cities and Counties*. [Pewtrusts.org](https://www.pewtrusts.org)