



Innovations in Counseling (Part 12 Session 9)

Racial Macroaggressions, Racial Battle Fatigue, and Racism-Related Stress in Counseling

Webinar Follow-up Question and Answer Session with Dèsa Karye Daniel, PhD, NCC, LMHC, Asia Lyons, EdD, and Diandra A. Walker, MS

Question from Anonymous:

As a White counselor, how can I best support my colleagues and friends of color who may be experiencing racial battle fatigue?

Answer from Presenter:

Do your own work! Too often, we want to help others before we are equipped with the skills to manage our experiences. How comfortable are you with addressing anti-Blackness in your practice? How do you engage in cultural repair? What do your antiracism practices look like? Do you require others to teach you? How do you speak up and use your power to support others? This starts with speaking up in meetings, checking on students and colleagues regularly, and building a community practice of care. Reading books is a start but putting antiracist practices in place and reviewing your policies are critical. Without critical self-exploration, you could cause harm without realizing it.

Question from Anonymous:

What do you do if you work on a team and you want to empower everyone else's ability to rest, but that means less rest for you? I want to be the person that can support my team and create a culture of rest, but I can't figure out how to do that and give myself rest.

Answer from Presenter:

It is important to ask yourself, what is the impact of your busy? These are opportunities to reevaluate the effectiveness of your team's workload. If it feels impossible to rest, then your team is doing too much, which can ultimately lead to burnout. Creating a culture of rest while ensuring you also get the rest you need can be challenging but rewarding. This starts by modeling the behavior you want to see in your team by prioritizing your own rest. Setting boundaries with clear guidelines including downtime. There are opportunities to create moments of rest by scheduling no meeting times throughout the work week. Showing you are willing to prioritize your rest and your family while encouraging others to do the same will change the culture of your team.

Question from E. McBride:

What are some affirmations you say to yourself when you're feeling the effects of racial battle fatigue?

Answer from Presenter:

We all use different things to support our work and affirm our wellness. Some affirmations are, “What is true for me right now?” I am healthy. I have a beautiful home. I am a support to my community. I start by listing the things and people I am grateful for. A longer affirmation one of the presenters uses and says once a day is, “I now reclaim my power and call my energy back to me. I release any attachments, drains, or influences that have scattered my energy. I am the sole owner of my personal power, and I choose to reclaim it fully. I affirm that my energy is sacred, vibrant, and aligned with my highest good. I draw back all fragments of my energy from past experiences, relationships, and situations. I integrate and harmonize my energy, restoring balance and strength within myself. I am in control of my own life, and I radiate confidence, purpose, and resilience. I am whole, complete, and empowered in every aspect of my being. My power is mine, and I embrace it with gratitude and love.”

Question from C. Edwards:

Do you think having White allies at work is helpful when we experience racism in the workplace? If so, how do we recruit those allies?

Answer from Presenter:

Yes, having White allies in the workplace can be helpful when addressing racism and racial battle fatigue in the workplace if they are willing to speak up! Allies can help amplify marginalized voices, advocate for equitable practices, and create a more inclusive environment. However, ensure they are holding themselves accountable and not furthering harmful practices. This can be accomplished by facilitating difficult conversations where White folks actively listen without barriers. Highlight the benefits of community care and wellness when we actively work against racism. Recognize the efforts of your allies and you for coming together to create a stronger community. Lead by example; BIPOC folks also have to actively mirror allyship for LGBTQ+ communities and address harmful gender norms. Finally, make sure there is a feedback mechanism where everyone is able to process and address what could not be working. Only celebrating the wins without addressing areas of growth is not supportive of long-term community support. For White women, I highly suggest reading *White Women: Everything You Already Know About Your Own Racism and How to Do Better* by Regina Jackson and Saira Rao.

Question from K. Ratliff:

We use *The Racial Healing Handbook* in our program and I was wondering about your thoughts on how to address the impact of White guilt that comes up in the classroom. I’m sensitive to the burden of students of color experience that can contribute to racial battle fatigue.

Answer from Presenter:

Start by creating a brave space for all students to share their experiences without blame or interruptions. As a starting point for classroom norms, I require students to read “From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces: A New Way to Frame Dialogue Around Diversity and Social Justice” by Brian Arao and Kristi Clemens. Acknowledge that feelings of guilt can arise and validate their feelings as part of the learning process. Reframe these feelings as learning experiences and opportunities for action and change. Encourage students to move beyond their guilt towards actions they can take to support marginalized communities. Focus on allyship and how they can create additional resources and opportunities to learn within their communities. Deep reflection is an important part of this process. What are they learning and how are they using what they know towards change? From here, bring in how the experiences of marginalized students are equally as important and that BIPOC communities are not there to support working through their guilt. Finally, make feedback a part of the process. Both feedback on what is working and what might need to be improved. Remember, this is work we as faculty must also do as well.

Question from Anonymous:

I am a CMHC (clinical mental health counseling) student, a POC, and first-generation immigrant. I am very inspired with all the information you all shared—thank you! I am curious if there are some resources specifically talking about other racial aggression towards racial groups like Brown people. I find myself in similar situations at times, for example, having to educate others. The experiences are sometimes similar but can be very different.

Answer from Presenter:

There are quite a few articles on racial battle fatigue focused on Brown folks specifically, especially in academia. Look for works by Rita Kholi and Dr. William Smith. I highly recommend exploring the *Anti-Racist Guide* (<https://www.antiracistguide.org/the-guide>), which includes books, movies, podcasts, and other resources.

Most of these books are freely accessible via your library:

White Tears/Brown Scars: How White Feminism Betrays Women of Color by Ruby Hamad

Hood Feminism by Mikki Kendall

Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race by Reni Eddo-Lodge

So You Want to Talk About Race by Ijeoma Oluo

All the White Friends I Couldn't Keep by Andre Henry

Pedagogy of the Oppressed by Paulo Freire