

decolonizing therapy

decolonizing therapy is an emerging movement within mental health care that seeks to challenge and transform traditional therapeutic practices rooted in Western paradigms. This approach emphasizes recognizing and addressing the historical and ongoing impacts of colonialism, systemic oppression, and cultural erasure on individuals and communities. Decolonizing therapy advocates for culturally responsive methods that honor diverse identities, worldviews, and healing traditions outside dominant Western frameworks. By integrating indigenous knowledge, social justice principles, and community-based practices, this approach aims to create more equitable and empowering mental health services. This article explores the foundations of decolonizing therapy, its importance in clinical settings, practical strategies for implementation, and the challenges faced in shifting therapeutic norms. The discussion also highlights the role of therapists, clients, and institutions in fostering decolonized mental health care environments. The following sections will provide a comprehensive overview to deepen understanding and encourage adoption of these vital practices.

- Understanding the Concept of Decolonizing Therapy
- The Importance of Decolonizing Therapy in Mental Health
- Key Principles and Approaches in Decolonizing Therapy
- Practical Strategies for Implementing Decolonizing Therapy
- Challenges and Considerations in Decolonizing Therapy

Understanding the Concept of Decolonizing Therapy

Decolonizing therapy refers to the process of critically examining and restructuring therapeutic practices to dismantle colonial influences and promote culturally affirming care. It challenges the dominance of Eurocentric psychological models that often marginalize or invalidate the experiences of indigenous, racialized, and oppressed populations. This approach acknowledges how colonial histories have shaped societal structures and mental health paradigms, contributing to disparities in access, diagnosis, and treatment outcomes.

Historical Context and Origins

The origins of decolonizing therapy are rooted in broader decolonization movements that seek to reclaim autonomy and cultural identity for colonized peoples. In mental health, this involves recognizing how colonialism has disrupted traditional healing systems and imposed Western norms that may not align with diverse cultural realities. Early advocates emphasized the need to incorporate indigenous epistemologies and challenge the pathologization of cultural differences.

Defining Features of Decolonized Mental Health Care

Decolonized therapy prioritizes cultural humility, community engagement, and social justice. It seeks to validate multiple ways of knowing and healing beyond biomedical models, integrating practices such as storytelling, spiritual rituals, and collective healing. This approach also stresses the importance of therapist self-awareness regarding their positionality and potential biases.

The Importance of Decolonizing Therapy in Mental Health

Decolonizing therapy plays a crucial role in addressing mental health disparities and promoting equity. Traditional therapeutic models often fail to consider the cultural, historical, and social contexts that influence clients' mental health. By incorporating decolonized approaches, therapists can provide more relevant, respectful, and effective care for marginalized populations.

Addressing Systemic Inequities

Colonial legacies have entrenched systemic inequalities in mental health care access and quality. Marginalized groups frequently encounter barriers such as discrimination, cultural misunderstandings, and lack of representation among practitioners. Decolonizing therapy works to dismantle these barriers by fostering inclusive environments and advocating for systemic change.

Enhancing Therapeutic Outcomes

Culturally responsive therapy can improve engagement, trust, and treatment effectiveness. Recognizing clients' cultural backgrounds and incorporating their values supports empowerment and resilience. Decolonizing therapy promotes healing that aligns with clients' identities and lived experiences, which is essential for sustainable mental health improvements.

Key Principles and Approaches in Decolonizing Therapy

Several foundational principles guide the practice of decolonizing therapy, focusing on cultural respect, power dynamics, and collaborative healing processes. These principles challenge traditional hierarchical models and emphasize partnership between therapist and client.

Cultural Safety and Humility

Cultural safety involves creating therapeutic spaces where clients feel respected, understood, and free from cultural harm. Therapists practicing cultural humility acknowledge their limitations in knowledge and remain open to learning from clients' cultural expertise. This principle encourages continuous self-reflection and adaptation.

Anti-Oppressive Practice

Anti-oppressive frameworks address power imbalances by challenging racism, sexism, colonialism, and other forms of oppression within therapy. This approach encourages therapists to recognize and counteract systemic forces that affect clients' mental health and access to care.

Community and Collective Healing

Decolonizing therapy often extends beyond individual treatment to include community-based and collective healing practices. Emphasizing interconnectedness and social support reflects many indigenous and non-Western conceptualizations of well-being.

Incorporation of Indigenous and Traditional Healing

Respecting and integrating indigenous healing methods, such as ceremonies, herbal medicine, and oral traditions, enriches therapeutic options. This approach validates diverse epistemologies and promotes holistic well-being.

Practical Strategies for Implementing Decolonizing Therapy

Therapists and mental health organizations can adopt various strategies to integrate decolonizing principles into practice. These efforts require commitment to ongoing education, community collaboration, and organizational change.

Training and Education

Incorporating cultural competency, anti-racism, and decolonization topics into professional training helps prepare therapists to deliver culturally responsive care. Workshops, seminars, and supervision focused on these areas are essential components.

Client-Centered and Collaborative Approaches

Engaging clients as active participants in their healing promotes empowerment and respect for their cultural knowledge. Therapists can use flexible treatment plans and incorporate clients' cultural practices and preferences.

Building Community Partnerships

Collaborating with indigenous groups, cultural organizations, and community leaders strengthens culturally grounded services and supports holistic healing networks. These partnerships facilitate resource sharing and mutual learning.

Policy and Institutional Advocacy

Advocating for policies that support equitable access, diverse representation, and funding for culturally specific programs advances decolonizing efforts within mental health systems.

Examples of Implementation

- Integrating traditional ceremonies or healing circles into therapy sessions.
- Developing treatment materials in clients' native languages.
- Recruiting and supporting therapists from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Creating safe spaces for discussing historical trauma and identity.

Challenges and Considerations in Decolonizing Therapy

While decolonizing therapy offers significant benefits, several challenges must be addressed to realize its full potential. These challenges involve structural barriers, resistance within institutions, and complexities in balancing diverse worldviews.

Resistance to Change

Entrenched systems and professional norms may resist shifts toward decolonized practices. Some practitioners may lack awareness or feel unequipped to implement culturally grounded methods.

Risk of Cultural Appropriation

Incorporating indigenous or traditional practices requires careful respect and collaboration to avoid appropriation or misrepresentation. Ethical engagement with cultural knowledge holders is essential.

Balancing Western and Indigenous Frameworks

Integrating multiple healing paradigms requires sensitivity to potential conflicts and contradictions. Therapists must navigate these complexities thoughtfully to provide coherent and respectful care.

Resource Limitations

Many mental health settings face constraints related to funding, staffing, and training opportunities, which can limit the implementation of decolonizing therapy initiatives.

Frequently Asked Questions

What does 'decolonizing therapy' mean?

Decolonizing therapy refers to the process of challenging and transforming traditional therapeutic practices that are rooted in Western, colonial perspectives, to create more inclusive, culturally sensitive, and equitable approaches that honor the diverse backgrounds and experiences of marginalized communities.

Why is decolonizing therapy important?

Decolonizing therapy is important because traditional therapy often overlooks or invalidates the cultural identities and historical traumas of marginalized groups, which can lead to ineffective or harmful treatment. It aims to address systemic inequalities and create therapeutic spaces that respect and integrate diverse cultural worldviews.

How can therapists begin to decolonize their practice?

Therapists can start by educating themselves about colonization's impact on mental health, recognizing their own biases, incorporating culturally relevant frameworks, collaborating with communities, and adopting a more holistic and intersectional approach to healing.

What role does cultural humility play in decolonizing therapy?

Cultural humility involves an ongoing process of self-reflection and learning about clients' cultural backgrounds without assuming expertise. It is essential in decolonizing therapy as it fosters respect, openness, and adaptability in therapeutic relationships.

How does colonial history affect mental health in indigenous and marginalized communities?

Colonial history has resulted in intergenerational trauma, loss of cultural identity, systemic oppression, and socioeconomic disparities, all of which contribute to higher rates of mental health challenges in indigenous and marginalized communities.

Are there specific therapeutic models that support decolonizing therapy?

Yes, models such as Indigenous healing practices, narrative therapy, liberation psychology, and community-based approaches support decolonizing therapy by centering clients' cultural contexts and promoting empowerment.

Can decolonizing therapy benefit clients from non-indigenous backgrounds?

Absolutely. Decolonizing therapy promotes inclusivity and cultural sensitivity that benefits all clients by challenging dominant paradigms and fostering a more personalized and respectful approach to

mental health care.

What challenges might therapists face when trying to decolonize their practice?

Therapists may encounter challenges such as lack of training, institutional resistance, personal biases, and difficulty integrating non-Western healing methods within conventional frameworks.

How can institutions support the movement to decolonize therapy?

Institutions can support this movement by incorporating decolonial perspectives into curricula, hiring diverse staff, funding community-led initiatives, and creating policies that prioritize cultural competence and equity in mental health services.

What impact does decolonizing therapy have on client outcomes?

Decolonizing therapy can improve client outcomes by creating safer, more validating spaces that acknowledge cultural identities and systemic factors, leading to increased trust, engagement, and more effective healing processes.

Additional Resources

1. Decolonizing Therapy: Embracing Indigenous Healing Practices

This book explores the integration of Indigenous healing traditions within contemporary therapeutic practices. It challenges Eurocentric approaches and advocates for culturally sensitive methods that honor ancestral knowledge. Readers gain insight into how decolonizing therapy can promote holistic well-being and community resilience.

2. Therapy Beyond Borders: Challenging Colonial Narratives in Mental Health

Focusing on the impact of colonialism on mental health frameworks, this book critiques dominant therapeutic models. It offers alternative approaches that prioritize marginalized voices and experiences. The author emphasizes the importance of cultural humility and reparative justice in clinical settings.

3. Healing from Colonization: A Guide to Culturally Responsive Therapy

This guide provides therapists with tools to recognize and address the lasting effects of colonization on clients' mental health. It highlights the significance of incorporating cultural identity and historical context into treatment plans. Practical strategies for fostering empowerment and resilience are also included.

4. Reclaiming Wellness: Decolonizing Psychotherapy Practices

Through a collection of essays and case studies, this book examines how psychotherapy can perpetuate colonial power dynamics. It advocates for models that decentralize Western paradigms and center Indigenous and marginalized perspectives. The text encourages clinicians to engage in self-reflection and systemic change.

5. *Unlearning Colonialism in Counseling: Pathways to Liberation*

This work addresses the unconscious biases embedded in counseling theories and practices rooted in colonial history. It presents frameworks for therapists to unlearn harmful narratives and cultivate liberatory approaches. Emphasis is placed on collaboration, cultural respect, and social justice.

6. *Decolonized Minds: Transforming Mental Health Care for Indigenous Communities*

Specifically focused on Indigenous populations, this book discusses how mental health care can be transformed by prioritizing cultural traditions and community-led initiatives. It critiques the imposition of Western diagnostic criteria and treatment modalities. The author highlights successful programs that embody decolonized principles.

7. *Radical Healing: Decolonizing Trauma Therapy*

This book delves into the intersections of trauma, colonial history, and therapy. It proposes radical healing practices that acknowledge collective and historical trauma among oppressed groups. Therapists are encouraged to integrate social justice perspectives and community healing into their work.

8. *Therapeutic Sovereignty: Indigenous Approaches to Mental Health*

Focusing on Indigenous sovereignty in mental health care, this book champions self-determined therapeutic practices. It explores how Indigenous epistemologies and methodologies can redefine healing processes. Readers are invited to rethink power dynamics and embrace relational care models.

9. *Decolonizing the Therapist's Mindset: A Journey Toward Equity and Inclusion*

This reflective work guides therapists through the process of decolonizing their own beliefs and clinical approaches. It combines personal narratives with theoretical insights to foster greater equity and inclusion in therapy. The book is a call to action for ongoing learning and transformative practice.

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decolonizing therapy: Decolonizing Therapy Jennifer Mullan, 2023-11-07 A call to action for therapists to politicize their practice through an emotional decolonial lens. An essential work that centers colonial and historical trauma in a framework for healing, *Decolonizing Therapy* illuminates that all therapy is—and always has been— inherently political. To better understand the mental health oppression and institutional violence that exists today, we must become familiar with the root of disembodiment from our histories, homelands, and healing practices. Only then will readers see how colonial, historical, and intergenerational legacies have always played a role in the treatment of mental health. This book is the emotional companion and guide to decolonization. It is an invitation for Eurocentrically trained clinicians to acknowledge privileged and oppressed parts while relearning what we thought we knew. Ignoring collective global trauma makes delivering effective therapy impossible; not knowing how to interrogate privilege (as a therapist, client, or both) makes healing elusive; and shying away from understanding how we as professionals may be participating

in oppression is irresponsible.

decolonizing therapy: Decolonizing Therapy Jennifer Mullan, 2023-06-20 A call to action for therapists to politicize their practice through an emotional decolonial lens.

decolonizing therapy: A Psychospiritual Healing manual with integral psychedelic therapy , 2024-03-28 The invitation to write a foreword for this book came at an opportune time in the development of the field of psychedelic-assisted therapy, amid the emergence of the future iteration of mental health services, delivered by the promises of the psychedelic renaissance. Also alive in this context are the substantial individual, social and cultural repercussions of a global pandemic on mental health and human behavior. A growing body of research shows encouraging clinical results in treating trauma, depression, demoralization, end-of-life existential issues, addiction, and eating disorders using MDMA, psilocybin, ketamine, and other psychedelic medications. However, the field of psychedelic-assisted therapy has gained accelerated support from donors, the medical establishment, and corporate investors in recent years. Along with the enthusiasm, recognition, funding, and media coverage directed toward psychedelic-assisted therapy, ethical standards; the lack of adequate training; and issues of accessibility, sustainability, diversity and inclusion are increasingly becoming part of the movement's forefront. These gaps in the emerging field highlight the need for more guidance and structure around ethical, clinical, and social considerations for these innovative treatments. This book can serve as a cornerstone for the field of psychedelic-assisted therapy at this time. This essential contribution offers a depth-oriented, somatic and relational therapeutic approach, emphasizing the imperative of ethical standards, the relevance of the therapeutic use of touch, the significance of the unconscious in the construction of symbolic meaning and intersubjective processes, and the need for trauma -informed approaches while centering liberation psychology and decolonial practices. The topics covered in this book and the themes embraced by the authors are of great relevance and are not yet comprehensively articulated in existing publications on psychedelic-assisted therapy. The diverse authors of this book approach their chapters based on their diverse social and cultural identities, as well as their extensive clinical experience providing psychedelic-assisted therapy in government-approved clinical research, private practice, and nonprofit organization settings. Their contributions aim at a vision of psychedelic-assisted therapy centered on decolonial practices, attuned to the somatic, imaginal, cultural and relational dimensions of being, allowing the emergence of transpersonal processes. Each chapter elaborates practical and theoretical aspects of this treatment modality through a unique theoretical framework, providing inspiration and guidance to readers working in this field as well as those compelled to psychedelic work for personal transformation.

decolonizing therapy: Feminist Intersectional Therapy Joanne Jodry, Kathleen McCleskey, 2025-04-15 How can we apply fourth wave feminist and intersectional theories in therapy? Feminist intersectional therapy can be an essential tool for clinicians struggling through new territories of suffering under today's oppressive cultural, social, and political norms and systems. Feminist Intersectional Therapy: Fourth Wave Clinical Applications is a foundational text that provides an advanced understanding of feminist and intersectional theories, and how they can be applied within the mental health disciplines. Editors Joanne Jodry and Kathleen McCleskey collaborate with other educators and clinical practitioners from a range of identities, professions, and theoretical orientations. Going beyond a single rigid framework, the author collective builds on feminist theory's foundational roots, infused with intersectional theory, to conceptualize multiple, flexible clinical applications with original models and creative techniques. This book addresses fundamental topics across all clinical mental health disciplines, from ethics and human development to various clinical modalities—individual, relational, family, group therapy, and clinical supervision. Specialty areas that are covered include spiritual issues, crisis intervention and trauma, substance use, career counseling, and sexual topics. It also discusses specific individuals with diverse identities—children, adolescents, and older adults; disabled individuals; BIPOC individuals; individuals with nondominant gender and affectional identities; and those from other oppressed and privileged identity groups. Lastly, this book explores future directions for feminist intersectional therapy, from higher education

pedagogy to research.

decolonizing therapy: *Advancing Equity-Focused School Counseling for All Students* Sam Steen, Shekila Melchior, Amber Brenae Sansbury-Scott, 2023-12-18 Using author narratives, this book brings attention to racial disparities that currently exist in schools within the historical context of pivotal legal cases in America while emphasizing the importance of assessing and supporting students through a culturally appropriate lens that recognizes student strengths. The authors provide current and historical frameworks through which school counselors can develop a more socially just and liberation-orientated school counseling program. These frameworks center and unveil the ways in which social rank, segregation, and racism influence development, particularly for Black and Brown children. The book underscores the value of community partnerships and the role of strategic partnerships to support a college culture, particularly for student populations with historically limited access to higher education. Readers will also learn about misconceptions of racially and ethnically minoritized children and the related impacts on misdiagnosis and overrepresentation in special education. School counselors looking to ensure equity and social justice within their classrooms, analyze their own privilege, and support students of all backgrounds will find this timely text indispensable in creating a program that fosters understanding and growth.

decolonizing therapy: *Art Therapy for Social Justice* Savneet K. Talwar, 2018-07-27 Art Therapy for Social Justice seeks to open a conversation about the cultural turn in art therapy to explore the critical intersection of social change and social justice. By moving the practice of art therapy beyond standard individualized treatment models, the authors promote scholarship and dialogue that opens boundaries; they envision cross disciplinary approaches with a focus on intersectionality through the lens of black feminism, womanism, antiracism, queer theory, disability studies, and cultural theory. In particular, specific programs are highlighted that re-conceptualize art therapy practice away from a focus on pathology towards models of caring based on concepts of self-care, radical caring, hospitality, and restorative practice methodologies. Each chapter takes a unique perspective on the concept of care that is invested in wellbeing. The authors push the boundaries of what constitutes art in art therapy, re-conceptualizing notions of care and wellbeing as an ongoing process, emphasizing the importance of self-reflexivity, and reconsidering the power of language and art in trauma narratives.

decolonizing therapy: *Cultural and Social Justice Counseling* Farah A. Ibrahim, Jianna R. Heuer, 2015-08-21 This timely volume gives readers a robust framework and innovative tools for incorporating clients' unique cultural variables in counseling and therapy. Its chapters identify cultural, societal, and worldview-based contexts for understanding clients, from the relatively familiar (ethnicity, gender, age) to the less explored (migration status, social privilege, geographic environment). Diverse cases illustrate how cultural assessments contribute to building the therapeutic relationship and developing interventions that respect client individuality as well as group identity. In these pages, clinicians are offered effective strategies for conducting more relevant and meaningful therapy, resulting in better outcomes for client populations that have traditionally been marginalized and underserved. The appendices include the Scale to Assess Worldview© (Ibrahim & Kahn, 1984), The Acculturation Index© (Ibrahim, 2008), and the Cultural Identity Check List-Revised© (Ibrahim, 2007). Among the topics covered: Cultural identity: components and assessment. Worldview: implications for culturally responsive and ethical practice. Understanding acculturation and its use in counseling and psychotherapy. Social justice variables critical for conducting counseling and psychotherapy. Immigrants: identity development and counseling issues. Designing interventions using the social justice and cultural responsiveness model. Cultural and Social Justice Counseling is a profound source of knowledge for clinicians and students in mental health fields (counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, psychiatric nurses, social workers) who are working with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds, including those working in international settings, with clients across cultures, and with sojourners to the US.

decolonizing therapy: *Narrating, Framing, Reflecting 'Disability'* Wilfried Raussert, Sarah-Lena Essifi, 2024-11-18 Fostering a dialog between Critical Disability Studies, American

Studies, InterAmerican Studies, and Global Health Studies, the edited compilation conceptualizes disability and (mental) illnesses as a cultural narrative enabling a deeper social critique. By looking at contemporary cultural productions primarily from the USA, Canada, and the Caribbean, the books' objective is to explore how literary texts and other cultural productions from the Americas conceptualize, construct, and represent disability as a narrative and to investigate the deep structures underlying the literary and cultural discourses on and representations of disability including parameters such as disease, racism, and sexism among others. Disability is read as a shifting phenomenon rooted in the cultures and histories of the Americas.

decolonizing therapy: *Racial Wellness* Jacquelyn Ogorchukwu Iyamah, 2023-11-07 A guide and workbook centered on self-care, healing, and empowerment for Black, Indigenous, and people of color—from racial wellness visionary and designer Jacquelyn Ogorchukwu Iyamah. As a society, we rarely talk about how racism affects the holistic health of Black, Indigenous, and people of color. Author and healing-informed designer Jacquelyn Ogorchukwu Iyamah refers to racism as “the multifaceted abuser” because of the ways it affects the emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual wellbeing of BIPOC. Whether these communities are experiencing microaggressions or overt racism, they are constantly forced to practice resistance. Using her background in social welfare and interaction design, Iyamah seeks to stimulate revolutionary healing for communities of color, shifting the conversation from racial trauma to racial wellness. This powerful book helps BIPOC understand, reflect, and cope with racial trauma. Divided into five sections—emotional wellness, mental wellness, physical wellness, spiritual wellness, and our interconnected wellness—Iyamah lends readers a gentle hand on their journey toward racial wellness by providing ways to heal on individual, interpersonal, and institutional levels, while encouraging deeper reflection through insightful journal prompts. Filled with uplifting affirmations, tender reminders, love letters, and helpful graphics sprinkled throughout, *Racial Wellness* is as informative as it is comforting, offering communities of color the opportunity to rest, rehabilitate, and rebuild.

decolonizing therapy: Generation Dread: Finding Purpose in an Age of Climate Anxiety Britt Wray, 2023-10-03 “Generation Dread is a vital and deeply compelling read.”—Adam McKay, award-winning writer, director, and producer (*Vice*, *Succession*, *Don't Look Up*) “Read this courageous book.”—Naomi Klein, author of *This Changes Everything* “Wray shows finally that meaningful living is possible even in the face of that which threatens to extinguish life itself.”—Dr. Gabor Maté, author of *When the Body Says No* When we're faced with record-breaking temperatures, worsening wildfires, more severe storms, and other devastating effects of climate change, feelings of anxiety and despair are normal. In *Generation Dread*, Britt Wray reminds us that our distress is, at its heart, a sign of our connection to and love for the world. The first step toward becoming a steward of the planet is connecting with our climate emotions—seeing them as a sign of our humanity and empathy and learning how to live with them. Britt Wray, a scientist and expert on the psychological impacts of the climate crisis, brilliantly weaves together research, insight from climate-aware therapists, and personal experience, to illuminate how we can connect with others, find purpose, and thrive in a warming, climate-unsettled world.

decolonizing therapy: Occupational Therapies Without Borders E-Book Dikaïos Sakellariou, Nick Pollard, 2016-09-23 The new edition of this landmark international work builds on the previous two volumes, offering a window onto occupational therapy practice, theory and ideas in different cultures and geographies. It emphasizes the importance of critically deconstructing and engaging with the broader context of occupation, particularly around how occupational injustices are shaped through political, economic and historical factors. Centering on the wider social and political aspects of occupation and occupation-based practices, this textbook aims to inspire occupational therapy students and practitioners to include transformational elements into their practice. It also illustrates how occupational therapists from all over the world can affect positive changes by engaging with political and historical contexts. Divided into six sections, the new edition begins by analyzing the key concepts outlined throughout, along with an overview on the importance and practicalities of monitoring and evaluation in community projects. Section Two explores

occupation and justice emphasizing that issues of occupational injustice are present everywhere, in different forms: from clinical settings to community-based rehabilitation. Section Three covers the enactment of different Occupational Therapies with a focus on the multiplicity of occupational therapy from the intimately personal to the broadly political. Section Four engages with the broader context of occupational therapy from the political to the financial. The chapters in this section highlight the recent financial crisis and the impact it has had on people's everyday life. Section Five collects a range of different approaches to working to enable a notion of occupational justice. Featuring chapters from across the globe, Section Six concludes by highlighting the importance and diversity of educational practices. - Comprehensively covers occupational therapy theory, methodology and practice examples related to working with underserved and neglected populations - Gives a truly global overview with contributions from over 100 international leading experts in the field and across a range of geographical, political and linguistic contexts - Demonstrates how occupational injustices are shaped through political, economic and historical factors - Advocates participatory approaches which work for those who experience inequalities - Includes a complete set of new chapters - Explores neoliberalism and financial contexts, and their impact on occupation - Examines the concept of disability - Discusses theoretical and practical approaches to occupational justice

decolonizing therapy: *The Enduring, Invisible, and Ubiquitous Centrality of Whiteness*

Kenneth V. Hardy, 2022-05-17 A comprehensive collection on the topic of whiteness from writers in the field of mental health and activism. Whiteness is a pervasive ideology that is rarely overtly identified or examined, despite its profound effects on race relationships. Being intentional about naming, deconstructing, and dismantling whiteness is a precursor to responding effectively to the racial reckoning of our society and improving race relationships, addressing systemic bias, and moving towards the creation of a more racially just world. In this collection of essays, scholars from a variety of backgrounds and trainings explore how the longstanding centering of whiteness in all aspects of society, including clinical therapy spaces, has led to widespread racial injustice. Contributors include: David Trimble, Lane Arye, Jodie Kliman, Ken Epstein, Toby Bobes, Cynthia Chestnut, Ovita F. Williams, Gene E. Cash Jr., Carlin Quinn, Christiana Ibilola Awosan, Niki Berkowitz, Jen Leland, Mary Pender Greene, Hinda Winawer, Bonnie Berman Cushing, Michael Boucher, Robin Schlenger, Alana Tappin, Timothy Baima, Jeffery Mangram, Liang-Ying Chou, Irene In Hee Sung, Ana Hernandez, Robin Nuzum, Keith A. Alford, Hugo Kamya, and Cristina Combs.

decolonizing therapy: *Homecoming* Thema Bryant, Ph.D., 2023-09-19 A road map for dismantling the fear and shame that keep you from living a free and authentic life In the aftermath of stress, disappointment, and trauma, people often fall into survival mode, even while a part of them longs for more. Juggling multiple demands and responsibilities keeps them busy, but not healed. As a survivor of sexual assault, racism, and evacuation from a civil war in Liberia, Dr. Thema Bryant knows intimately the work involved in healing. Having made the journey herself, in addition to guiding others as a clinical psychologist and ordained minister, Dr. Thema shows you how to reconnect with your authentic self and reclaim your time, your voice, your life. Signs of disconnection from self can take many forms, including people-pleasing, depression, anxiety, and resentment. Healing starts with recognizing and expressing emotions in an honest way and reconnecting with the neglected parts of yourself, but it can't be done in a vacuum. Dr. Thema gives you the tools to meaningfully connect with your larger community, even if you face racism and sexism, heartbreak, grief, and trauma. Rather than shrinking in the face of life's difficulties, you will discover in *Homecoming* the therapeutic approaches and spiritual practices to live a more expansive life characterized by empowerment, healthier relationships, gratitude, and a deeper sense of purpose.

decolonizing therapy: *The Motherhood Myth* Vanessa Bennett, 2025-08-19 A guide to reclaim your Self as a mother—realize why it's hard, reassess boundaries, recognize archetypes, and revolutionize how you parent and partner “A lifeline for any mother ready to stop repeating patterns and start reclaiming her power.” —Shefali Tsabary, PhD, New York Times bestselling author It's no

secret that the transition to motherhood can be difficult. We're fed myths that we should know how to be mothers, that it should be effortless, that we'll parent harmoniously with our partners... when the reality is anything but. The Motherhood Myth offers the profound support that mothers so desperately need—not just an explanation of the challenges but a nuanced understanding of why we're experiencing them and, most crucially, how we can navigate through them. Vanessa Bennett, a therapist and mother, has sat with countless clients navigating the same pain points she faced. Motherhood is an initiation into a new way of being, but most of us have lost touch with the myths, stories, and ancestral knowledge that once guided us through this radical shift in identity. The Motherhood Myth draws on depth psychology to support us through this transition by: • Exploring the patriarchal social and cultural forces that impact parenting today • Introducing key archetypes, along with their golden and shadow qualities • Illuminating the importance of initiation as we shift from one way of being to another... and how this is missing for many women today • Sharing stories that illustrate archetypes in action—from the goddess Kali to the tale of Demeter—and how we can see ourselves in these myths • Asking provocative questions about intimacy, consent, and connection • Creating shifts in our lives to claim our sovereignty and identity as Mother In each chapter, Bennett shares relatable personal or client stories as well as practical tools to help us discover and embody an unshakable sense of Self. She also provides skills and scripts to increase capacity for conflict, vulnerability, and discomfort. As Bennett explains, "I want to shout from the rooftops that life is not meant to be simply 'gotten through' or endured." This guide can help you "navigate not just the initial shift into parenthood but also the continual evolution with more ease, authenticity, and self-compassion."

decolonizing therapy: *Measuring the Effects of Racism* Robert T. Carter, Alex L. Pieterse, 2020-07-21 A large body of research has established a causal relationship between experiences of racial discrimination and adverse effects on mental and physical health. In *Measuring the Effects of Racism*, Robert T. Carter and Alex L. Pieterse offer a manual for mental health professionals on how to understand, assess, and treat the effects of racism as a psychological injury. Carter and Pieterse provide guidance on how to recognize the psychological effects of racism and racial discrimination. They propose an approach to understanding racism that connects particular experiences and incidents with a person's individual psychological and emotional response. They detail how to evaluate the specific effects of race-based encounters that produce psychological distress and possibly impairment or trauma. Carter and Pieterse outline therapeutic interventions for use with individuals and groups who have experienced racial trauma, and they draw attention to the importance of racial awareness for practitioners. The book features a racial-trauma assessment toolkit, including a race-based traumatic-stress symptoms scale and interview schedule. Useful for both scholars and practitioners, including social workers, educators, and counselors, *Measuring the Effects of Racism* offers a new framework of race-based traumatic stress that helps legitimize psychological reactions to experiences of racism.

decolonizing therapy: *The Sage Encyclopedia of Multicultural Counseling, Social Justice, and Advocacy* Shannon B. Dermer, Jahaan R. Abdullah, 2023-11-21 Since the late 1970s, there has been an increase in the study of diversity, inclusion, race, and ethnicity within the field of counseling. The SAGE Encyclopedia of Multicultural Counseling, Social Justice, and Advocacy will comprehensively synthesize a wide range of terms, concepts, ideologies, groups, and organizations through a diverse lens. This encyclopedia will include entries on a wide range of topics relative to multicultural counseling, social justice and advocacy, and the experiences of diverse groups. The encyclopedia will consist of approximately 600 signed entries, arranged alphabetically within four volumes.

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across various identities from race, gender, and class to immigration status, sexuality, spirituality, and body size, emphasizing the importance of viewing client's presenting concerns within the contexts of their lives. Chapters also model counselor self-awareness so readers can assess their strengths, identify their hidden assumptions, and evolve past basic cultural sensitivity to actively infusing social justice as an ethical stance in professional practice. Included in the chapters: · Culture-infused counseling, emphasizing context, identities, and social justice · Decolonizing and indigenous approaches · Social class awareness · Intersectionality of identities · Clients' spiritual and religious beliefs · Weight bias as a social justice issue · Culturally responsive and socially just engagement in counselling women · Life-making in therapeutic work with transgender clients · Socially-just counseling for refugees · Multi-level systems approaches to interventions While Counseling in Cultural Contexts is geared toward a student/training audience, practicing professionals will also find the case study format of the book to be informative and stimulating.

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