



Collective Attempts to Break from White Body Supremacy

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Imagination and curiosity are fundamental to collective liberation. It is not enough to know what we are fighting against. We must also practice and strive to build radical, liberatory alternatives in our everyday lives and relationships. The authors have asked why it is easier to imagine climate catastrophe more readily than the end of the



Figure 1 Publicly available on <https://www.gjcpp.org/en/article.php?issue=40&article=245>

systems and culture of racialized capitalism and white supremacy? These systems are designed to make radical imaginations seem impossible and narrow curiosity and vision. We desperately need examples of how groups of white-

"The practices [described in this article] undertaken by the group of white therapists and psychologists are a gesture toward anti-racist imaginings; striving to disrupt social and institutionalized white body supremacy."

identifying peoples (referred to here as “white bodies”) are trying to imagine anti-racist possibilities, strengthen anti-racist curiosity, and work towards anti-racist alternatives.

Highlights

White bodied peoples can challenge racist status quos through culture-building and anti-racist curiosity.

Relational and group work is necessary to build individual and group resiliency.

Professionals attempting to do anti-racist community development must be willing to reflect on the ways in which they are responsible for anti-racist work.

Nine mental health therapists and psychologists came together in a larger mixed-race group to organize and bring author and anti-racist culture builder Resmaa Menakem to Seattle, Washington. After the event, these therapists continued meeting in the hopes of building sustainable white, anti-racist culture in their community.

Methods

The authors used a narrative description of the formation and practices of a small group of white anti-racist-striving mental health professionals in the United States. This article outlines the two-year history of the group's formation, details projects and processes group members worked on, and offers a close analysis of the scholarship and activism informing their approaches. The authors demonstrate how anti-racist, trauma-informed culture-building can use the inner work necessary for individual resiliency and an outward focus on the larger political and social contexts.

Results

- Building sustainable anti-racist cultures is deliberate work. It demands that white bodies identify ways that white people (often unconsciously and unintentionally) uphold and maintain white supremacy.
- White bodies, existing in white supremacy culture, have not had to develop complex, agile, resilient tools and strategies to identify and interrupt white supremacy. Those dedicated to anti-racism need to develop capacities including the ability to recognize white supremacy, not just as a system but as a living and evolving culture that has been (and continues to be) transmitted in myriad ways.
- White bodies struggle with how to weave interpersonal and relational anti-racist culture-building with movement and organizing work more broadly. It is critical for white anti-racists to explore how to do relational work alongside organizing action towards liberation.

HOW DID A COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY PERSPECTIVE INFORM YOUR WORK?

The authors see their exploration as situated in the history of critical Community Psychology and the importance of archiving community-based work being done in the hope of effecting social change. Specifically, the authors utilize research akin to Martín-Baró's (1986) emphasis on the recovery of historical memory, to identify the intellectual and activist legacies brought to their work.

What Does This Mean For?

Research and Evaluation: It is important to document community-based anti-racist culture building both for knowledge building and documenting anti-racist imagination praxis.

Practice: Community-based anti-racist movements and white anti-racist culture building are necessary and must be connected to anti-racist clinical and larger healing work. White psychologists, therapists, social workers, and healers can (and should) invest in their own internal and relational resilience-building within anti-racist work.

Similar Settings: We share our experiences with those working in the healing professions and ask them to take an anti-oppressive lens and invest time, resources, and collective energies in building anti-racist community and culture. Those operating from positions of power and privilege must see that undoing white supremacy and building anti-racist culture is white peoples' work (that must be done in collaboration and with leadership from black and indigenous people of color).

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