

Slide 1

**weitzman institute** inspiring primary care innovation

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Slide 2

**DECOLONIZING MENTAL HEALTH CARE:**  
THE JOURNEY OF PERSONAL REFLECTIONS FOR INCLUSIVE CARE

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Department - Minneapolis, MN



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Slide 3

### Agenda for the workshop

- Introduction
- Land Acknowledgement
- Psychoeducation
- Reflection(s)
- Practices & Theories
- Questions

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**Land Acknowledgement**

*"The Civil Rights and Social Justice Section of the American Bar Association acknowledges that Washington, D.C. – where the offices of our Section staff are located and where we would be holding this meeting if we had been able to hold it in-person – is located on the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Piscataway and Anacostan peoples, who have served as stewards of the region for generations. Washington, D.C. is surrounded by just over a dozen tribal nations that thrive along the Anacostia and Potomac River watersheds, Chesapeake Bay area, and the states of Maryland, Virginia, and Delaware. Washington D.C. sits on the ancestral lands of the Anacostans (also documented as Nacatchtank), and the neighboring Piscataway and Pamunkey peoples. We gratefully acknowledge the Native Peoples on whose ancestral homelands we gather, as well as the diverse and vibrant Native communities who make their home here today. We are grateful for their past and continued stewardship of this land. We are committed to supporting the Indigenous members of our community and we celebrate the resilience, strength, and enduring presence of Indigenous people demonstrated around the world." - American Bar Association*

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Slide 8

**Definitions**

- Racism
  - Structural/Institutional
  - Cultural
  - Individual
  - Internalized
  - Reverse
- Microaggressions
- Discrimination
- White Supremacy
- Colonization
- Intergenerational/Historical Trauma

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**Racism**

- Racism: The belief that humans may be divided into separate and exclusive biological entities called "races", that there is a causal link between inherited physical traits and traits of personality, intellect, morality, and other cultural and behavioral features; and that some races are innately superior to others (Britannica, 2023).
- Political
- Economic
- Education
- Civil Rights

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### Specific forms of Racism

- **Structural/Institutional**
  - The processes of racism embedded in policies, laws, and societal practices that give advantages to racial groups deemed superior, while racial groups deemed inferior are disadvantaged.
- **Cultural**
  - The spread of the ideology that certain groups are inferior through language, values, media, and symbols.
- **Individual**
  - Where individuals or companies discriminate against racial groups, whether intentionally or without intent.

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11.1

### Specific forms of Racism

- **Internalized**
  - When racism and white supremacy affect the minds of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) to the point where they begin to believe that they are inferior because of their own race.
- **Racial trauma**
  - Traumatization that results from experiencing racism in any of its many forms.
- **"Reverse"**
  - This term is in quotes to emphasize that it's a falsified term that should not carry any actual value.
  - Arose in direct response to affirmative action and race conscious admission policies in the 1970s.
  - It was a term created by and for white people who perpetuate racism by denying their privilege in all its forms and by claiming that fighting to improve the lives of BIPOC is "racist" against white people.

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### Microaggressions

- The everyday slights, insults, putdowns, invalidations, and offensive behaviors that people experience in daily interactions with generally well-intentioned individuals who may be unaware that they have engaged in demeaning ways (adapted from Sue et al., 2007)
- Examples include phrases such as:
  - "What are you?" "Where are you *actually* from?"
  - "you don't talk/act like a \_\_\_\_\_ person"
  - Stereotypes

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Discrimination

- **Discrimination** refers to the differential treatment of members of different ethnic, religious, national, or other groups.



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White Supremacy

White supremacy is a term used to characterize various belief systems central to which one or more of the following key tenets:

- 1) white people should have dominance over people of other backgrounds, especially where they may co-exist;
- 2) white people should live by themselves in a whites-only society;
- 3) white people have their own "culture" that is superior to other cultures;
- 4) white people are genetically superior to other people.



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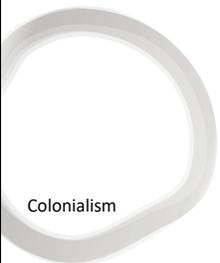
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Colonialism

- When one nation subjugates another, conquering its population, exploiting it, often forces its own language and cultural values upon its people. (Bakemore, 2019)
- Not a modern phenomenon
- Frequently used to describe the settlement of North America, Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Algeria, and Brazil, places that were controlled by a large population of permanent European residents
- Currently places like Puerto Rico are a territory of the United States, they are states, and citizens of PR are required to pay federal taxes without equal representation.
  - "Puerto Ricans never asked to be colonized, never asked to be denied their Puerto Rican citizenship and never asked to have U.S. citizenship imposed on them, they are colonial subjects of the United States- Professor Jacqueline N. Forti-Guzman
- COLONIALISM IS ALIVE AND WELL



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**Decolonizing Mental Health**

We have a global mental health crisis.

- "The dominant Eurocentric lens that guides our practice fails to tell a complete and accurate story of why we are sick and how we get well."
- Our current approach to mental health is steeped in colonialism.
- The existing system serves a very small percentage of people.



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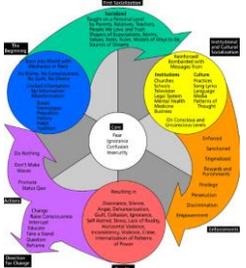
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What does decolonizing mental health mean?

We seek to find healing and meaning in cultural affirming practices.

We decenter health care and mental health care away from the dominate white, heteronormative, patriarchal, gender binary narrative.



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Slide 24

WORLD Channel



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How are we decolonizing mental health?

<p><b>Etta</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Referring to culturally affirming agencies in our communities when necessary</li><li>• Collectivistic approach to healing</li><li>• Decreasing barriers to accessing services</li><li>• Creating and building holistic health Group for female identifying students at Patrick Henry High School</li><li>• Strengthening partnerships within school-based community</li></ul>	<p><b>Cecilia</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Low cost/free services at the SBC</li><li>• Challenge psychiatric expertise (underdiagnosis or misdiagnosis)</li><li>• History of the DSM</li><li>• Decrease pathologizing behavior of BIPOC people</li><li>• 504 Plan/IEP</li><li>• Creating a group therapy model for high school girls</li></ul>
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**WHITE  
SUPREMACY &  
MENTAL HEALTH**

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**Eurocentric Values and World View**

Individualism	A rigid time orientation
Competitiveness	Judeo-Christian beliefs
Dualistic thinking	Patriarchy
A belief in control over nature	The Protestant work ethic
Hierarchical decision-making processes	Future orientation
Standard on English language (reading/writing)	"Objective/rational" thought
	Property ownership
	Nuclear family structure

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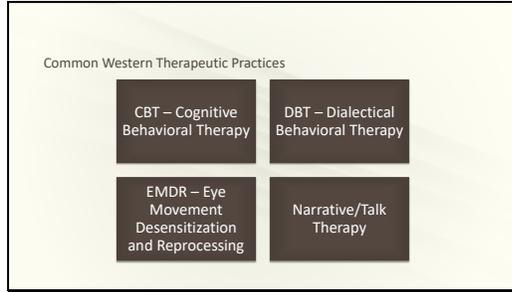
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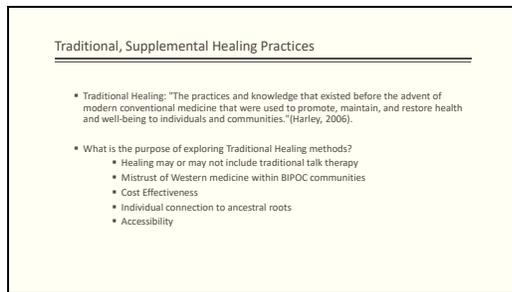
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**Increasing Access to Supplemental Healing Practices**

Community agencies are offering:

- Scholarships
- Affordable memberships
- Free or donation-based classes

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**Reflection 2**

- How realistic is it for you to incorporate supplemental healing practices into your work?
- Are you connected to practitioners who offer alternative/traditional modalities of healing?
- How connected are you to non-conventional individuals/agencies/organizations in your community?

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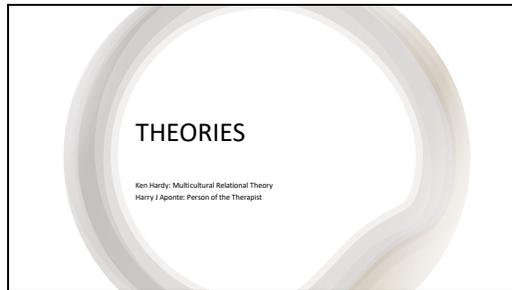
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**THEORIES**

Ken Hardy: Multicultural Relational Theory  
Harry J. Aponte: Person of the Therapist

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Multicultural Relational Perspective (MRP) – Ken Hardy

Multicultural relational perspective is a philosophical stance and approach to clinical practice and training.

3 core principles include:

- Reality is a subjective experience
- The "self" is a major organizing principle in relationships
- The "self" is comprised of multiple dimensions

According to the MRP, this is one of the first critical steps to becoming more accountable, socially just, and a culturally attuned practitioner.

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Person of The Therapist (POTT) – Harry J Aponte

- Main point of POTT is to use self that emanates or comes from the personal depths of the individual who is conducting therapy
- A strategy about how therapists use themselves
- This is about us as clinicians – developing a conscious, purposeful, and disciplined access to our humanity within our professional role in therapeutic relationships
- Idea that we as therapists view the therapeutic process at its core a person-to-person human encounter

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Aponte's Critical Questions

Aponte asks two critical questions:

- How does the therapeutic relationship make therapy work?
- How do we train therapists to use the therapeutic relationship to achieve their goal? How can this be expanded to other helping professionals?

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POTT model places emphasis on the importance of us as therapists being able to both identify with and differentiate ourselves from our clients.

- We need to be able to do this at any given time in the therapeutic process
- We also need to be able to see ourselves in the client's issue at the appropriate moment
- Get in touch with the aspect of the clients' struggle and resonate with our own human qualities and vulnerability
  - This form of empathic resonance has both affective and cognitive elements
  - Resonance can look like:
    - Issues similar to the ones we have experienced
    - Can be a reflection in how we struggle with the respective issue

## Identification & Differentiation

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To share this intimate connection with a client, WE MUST be able to differentiate from the client and their experience.

*\*Think of Bowen's Concept of Differentiation\**

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## Differentiation as POTT

- Has to do with our sense of self and grounding in self
- Speaks to the ability of the therapist in a clinical moment to be connected with the client, also while retaining the freedom to relate, assess and intervene with clients as they need in the "here and now."
- Clinicians need to be able to:
  1. Have knowledge of self
  2. Have ability to assess their Self
  3. Have practice managing them selves

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What does use of self ACTUALLY look like?

Important to know/remember:

1. Effective use of self is a common factor in virtually all forms of therapies

1. Common factors are:

1. The Relationship
2. The Assessment
3. The Intervention

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The Relationship

Identification	Differentiation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Discover within ourselves issues and their underlying dynamics that in some way resonate with those of our clients in any particular circumstance.</li><li>▪ Find as needed similarities and/or parallels in our own lives to the SES, ethnicities, cultural fabrics, and personal values.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Identify where we end, and our clients begin in their interactions with the therapeutic process – client's freedom to choose change.</li><li>▪ Recognize moments where our personal connections with our clients meet and end at the boundaries of professional frameworks.</li><li>▪ The need to remain differentiated at any stage of the process.</li></ul>

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The Intervention

Identification	Differentiation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Infuse our interventions at will with our personal, emotional, and cognitive dispositions that synch with what the clients themselves are then disposed to take in.</li><li>▪ Establish appropriate circumstances of interventions within the socio-cultural framework on our clients through the associations we have made through our own socio-cultural experiences.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Intervene from a place of personal freedom that fits where we need to be in the relationship with our clients.</li><li>▪ Intervene as needed from the clarity about and commitment to our own professional rolls within the complex and multilayered relationships we have our with clients.</li></ul>

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