

## Recognizing Healing-Centered Community Practices as a Complement to Trauma-Informed Interventions and Services

August 26, 2020

### Participant Question & Answer (Q&A):

1. *Will there be discussion re: healing the trauma induced by racial microaggressions particularly anti-Black microaggressions?*

Guest speaker Oyatunde Amakisi is open to participating in a discussion on utilizing Transformative Justice to address anti-Blackness as a systemic and cultural source of generational and personal trauma. Feel free to contact [amakisi@gmail.com](mailto:amakisi@gmail.com).

2. *How can community members help support community healing?*

I am a firm believer that you always begin with yourself, especially during this pandemic. Do a serious evaluation of your resources, skills, and areas of interest. Find out what programs exist in your neighborhood to volunteer or share resources. Neighborhood block clubs, government websites, and social media often share listings of community programs and club gives Check on the elders in your neighborhood. Share hygiene kits with sex workers and the unhoused in your community. Share fresh fruit and healthy snacks with children in your neighborhood. Volunteer or start a community garden.

3. *I'm often struck by the 'wounded healer' concept. The service provider that has experienced their own childhood trauma (often unworked) and their influence on the trauma of others. Will we be discussing the impact of personal trauma of the service provider?*

Healer, heal thyself. This is an important conversation. All service providers should actively work on healing their own trauma. Organizations like Joyful Heart include healing resources for service providers. There are progressive funders who require an internal healing component for organizations seeking funding.

4. *The process of working together is about creating the model, BUT THE MODEL must have a purpose...please address this.*

The purpose is system change for the good of the majority, not the 1%. And the beauty of this moment is the necessity to create new models; experiments in building power.

The purpose of transformative healing justice is to live in a society where our full humanity is expressed and acknowledged. We are creating the model through practice. Pancho Arguelles from the Living Hope Wheelchair Association describes it as building the plane as

we fly it and creating the landing strip at the same time. The model we are creating understands that change happens when we work collaboratively with the community, whether you are a service provider or a grassroots organization. The healing aspect is to recognize the value of relationship, culture, and working in a healthy way. For generations, we are taught that we must sacrifice ourselves. Providers, activists, and organizers were left burned out, cynical, and sacrificing their personal lives to be of service. We are learning to do this work in a healthier way. We are setting boundaries, healing our personal trauma, and working together as partners instead of competition. We are creating a space to have a personal life and giving our best to the people we serve.

5. *How do we combat/overcome activists who believe that voting does not work? In some instances, activists also participate in a form of voter suppression (I think), going as far using their often large social media platforms to speak against it. How can we/ the other side compete with these voices?*

We start by listening to each other and sharing the reasons why voting is important. A small number of people chose not to vote because of the influence of community activists. The real challenge to voter suppression is gerrymandering, elected officials using their positions of power to disenfranchise voters, political groups intimidating voters at polling sites, and misinformation being spread through social media. The counter to these detrimental practices is supporting and promoting officials or candidates whose platforms meet the needs of the community. Educating your community on the laws regarding voting in your city or state. Shaming or blaming disenfranchised voters for systemic inequities turns people off instead of encouraging them to vote. In many states across the country, formerly incarcerated people are denied the right to vote. There are groups like the New Georgia Project in Atlanta that provide direct support and in person community engagement to get the community to vote. Find organizations who are doing this work locally and nationally and lift their work. Finally, hold political officials accountable. Raise the conversation beyond just voting and waiting for politicians to fix the problems in our communities.

6. *Along the lines of defining community into trauma-informed.....I love the idea of “practice-based evidence.” As a public health prof, how can we introduce this concept as more than an anecdotal concept in a sphere where “evidence-based practice” is the norm? With this idea, as activists, are we destined to be removed from what is thought of as the knowledge “academy?”*

We have a generation of organizers who are documenting our work. Pleasure Activism and Emergent Strategy by Adrienne Marie Brown, Beyond Survival by Ejeris Dixon and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, Youth to Power by Jamie Margolin, and many others. In every movement, the majority of the work is done by people whose names we will never know. Their work shifts movements and each generation build on their work.

7. *I am a professor of women's studies and work with the faculty union on my campus. We have formed an Anti-Racism & Social Justice Council as well as a White Anti-Racist Committee. I'm looking for tools to bring to the white folks who want to disrupt systemic racism on their campuses that respects the importance of "nothing without us is for us". Ideas on how we can collaborate with our colleagues of color without engaging in cultural taxation/white "neediness"?*

- Establishing accountability & transparency processes. How can your colleagues of color trust that you are meaningfully engaging in this work? This doesn't necessarily mean announcing all of the work you are doing for the sake of getting acknowledgment, but rather making the information available as a form of accountability. This can mean ensuring colleagues of color know that they can observe the White Anti-Racist Committee if you all choose, share your processes somewhere accessible to others, or have a report-out process in the Council. This also involves ensuring that your colleagues of color understand that you are actually doing the difficult work of understanding white supremacy and racism, and are making concrete changes that hopefully everyone will feel.
- Identify opportunities to compensate colleagues of color for their expertise and time, ensuring that their contributions are optional and avoid "cultural taxation."
- Praxis has a resource - [Praxis' Working Principles for Health Justice and Racial Equity](#), & accompanying assessment tool - that may be of interest to the Council as a whole for ensuring meaningful and authentic collaboration between colleagues.
- [20 Books to Read About White Privilege and Being Anti-Racist](#)

### **Resources:**

- [Dr. Joy DeGruy's work on post-traumatic slave syndrome](#)
- [New York Times 1619 Project an interactive project directed by Nikole Hannah-Jones](#)
- [Beyond Survival by Ejeris Dixon & Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha](#)
- [Emergent Strategy](#) and [Pleasure Activism](#) by adrienne maree brown
- [The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House by Audre Lorde](#)

If you would like to contribute to our running Q&A, and resource list please email [jenna@thepraxisproject.org](mailto:jenna@thepraxisproject.org).