Yale Psychiatry RebPsych Thursday Sessions

RebPsych 2020: Decolonizing Mental Health

Deconolizing the Psychoanalytical Space: A Study-Dialogue Group on Structural Racism and Whiteness for Psychotherapists

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Decolonizing the Psychoanalytic Space: A Study-Dialogue Group on Structural Racism and Whiteness for Psychotherapists   
Presenters: Jody Leader and Linda Luz-Alterman  
Thursday, November 5, 2020  
Transcriber: CF, CM  
  
Flavia DeSouza: I see attendants coming in. We will start in a few minutes.   
  
Hello everyone, welcome to another session of RebPsych 2020. Our theme is decolonizing mental health. I am Flavia DeSouza, a recent graduate and part of the RebPsych organizing committee as a student. Our transcriptionists, Christy and Christine, will provide captioning this evening. Kyle helps with IT. Thank you to you all.   
  
Instructions to access the live captioning are posted in the chat. Thank you.   
  
Yale University acknowledges that indigenous peoples and nations, including Mohegan, Mashantucket Pequot, Eastern Pequot, Schaghticoke, Golden Hill Paugussett, Niantic, and the Quinnipiac and other Algonquian speaking peoples have stewarded through generations the lands and waterways of what is now the state of Connecticut. We honor and respect the enduring relationship that exists between these peoples and nations and this land.   
  
This is but one step - recognition - in the larger process of decolonization.   
  
This educational series aims to broadly explore decolonizing mental health, in theory and practice. Last week we talked about the role of music in improving mental health and further decolonizing our minds and mental health. I will post the links so you can see the recording as well as sign up for the remaining two sessions. Videos and transcripts will be posted online.   
  
I'm thrilled to introduce Jody Leader and Linda Luz-Alterman. We are fortunate to have them.   
  
Jody Leader is a dancer, social justice activist, philanthropist, and a psychologist/psychoanalyst in private practice in Brookline, Mass. She works with adults and couples. She is a graduate and faculty member at the Massachusetts Institute for Psychoanalysis.  
  
Linda Luz-Alterman, Ph.D. is a graduate, supervisor and faculty member at the Massachusetts Institute for Psychoanalysis and Lecturer (part-time) in the Department of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School in Boston. She is a psychologist and psychoanalyst in private practice in Cambridge, MA and co-facilitates study/dialogue groups on structural racism and whiteness.  
  
Please use the chat and Q/A function to ask questions and make comments. Use I statement and be thoughtful in your storytelling. Avoid detailing stories of distress or violence that may re-traumatize others. Take space to talk and make space for others.   
  
Jody Leader: Thank you so much, Flavia. I am Jody. My pronouns are she/her/hers. I'm a white, straight, cis woman with short curly brown hair and glasses. I'm wearing a grey long sleeved sweater and scarf.   
  
Dr. Linda Luz-Alterman: My pronouns are she/her/hers. I am a straight, cis white woman. I am wearing glasses and a sweater.   
  
Jody Leader: I acknowledge and pay respects to elders, past and present, the stewards of the land, and the seven generations past and present.   
  
Dr. Linda Luz-Alterman: I acknowledge the people from whose land I speak today. I recognize and honor their rich history and traditions, as well as other people who lived in this area where I speak and work today.   
  
I'm going to start with opening words, the same as I start my study/dialogue words. Fanon writes, "decolonization, which set out to change the order of the world, is clearly an agenda for total disorder. It can't be accomplished by the wave of a wand or a gentlemen's agreement. Decolonization can only be understood and be self-coherent insofar as we can discern the history making movement that gives it form and substance." *The Wretched of the Earth*   
  
[Reading quote from book.] At the same time, in the spirit of the title of the conference, we're setting out to expose and make explicit what has been hidden and unseen, though often in plain sight - the genocide of the people who historically lived on this land. The theft of this land. The kidnapping of Black people to make money for white people who took the land.   
  
We don't think this is a simple or straightforward process. We see this in the responses of the many members of our group who engage in deep personal examination of themselves and the history they've been taught. We're making this visible, the white supremacy and beliefs that go along with colonization.   
  
Jody Leader: We're here to talk about a series of dialogue groups that we've been co-facilitating in Massachusetts for the past three years. We're grateful to MIP and the MIP president for believing in us and folding these offerings into their education process.   
  
MIP has been a white-led organization. Most of the analysts are white. Linda and I have been participants and dialogists for these groups and the benefit has been amazing. Our awareness of white supremacy has increased 10 fold. The groups are free and open to all licensed mental health providers.   
  
In the fall, we offer a group for education. In the spring, we offer a group for unpacking whiteness.   
  
Most of the people who sign up for these groups are white. Each session is 90 minutes long and they meet once a month for six months. This fall, the history of structural racism group had 24 people sign up. Our limit is 12, so we created another session. We're so grateful for the collaboration of everyone who works with us.   
  
We're following our actual study dialogue group session structure tonight. Thank you to my sister, Kristen Leader, who created these slides. I'm going to screen share now.   
  
This is the structure of our study-dialogue groups. This is the structure of tonight's presentation as well. We start with the land acknowledgement and opening words, which could be a poem or a quote. We do a check-in. Linda will talk about out that. Then we have preparing for the conversation - a silent reflection. Then there's an open discussion. We summarize some themes. We talk about the next session of the dialogue group and what the materials will be, and then we have closing words, like a poem or quote.   
  
Dr. Linda Luz-Alterman: This is when we do a check-in. We come together and make ourselves present in the group. We introduce ourselves in the first group. We share name, preferred pronouns, how we identify racially, and then share when you were first aware that you had a racial identity. We've already said our names and pronouns.   
  
I identify as racially white. But only in the last several years, since I've been doing this work and looking at race, that I myself have a race. I am racialized. There are consequences of that for me and my work.   
  
Jody Leader: I ambivalently identify as white. Whiteness is a social construct created to perpetuate white supremacy. I realized I had racial identity in college after reading some books from Peggy McIntosh. I had been taught to see racism as individual acts of meanness, not an invisible system conferring dominance to my group.

Linda Luz-Alterman: We encourage people to engage their own emotional experience and history around race. We try to interrupt the academic tendency of introducing your academic pedigree. Each person has time to talk. We discourage cross talk and there will be time for back and forth talking later.   
  
This structure supports intentional communication. It invites everyone to have their voice heard at the beginning and to share space.   
  
Then the prompt asks people how they are, what stayed with them from the last meeting, if they noticed things in their world with a new lens, etc. We ask prompts that help participants reflect on their experience of the material in the syllabus, take in the discussion on the group, and take on the world in new ways. We are mindful that this is not group therapy.   
  
Jody Leader: I'm aware this may seem strange. You've not seen the syllabus yet. We'll get to that. You'll see why there is all of this intentionality. In our first meeting of the study-dialogue group. We tell the participants how develop the group. We thought we would spend time doing this now.   
  
This is our story. In 2014, Linda and I co-taught a clinical seminar at MIP. The candidates are students in their first year training to become psychoanalysts. Though the focus was clinical cases, we decided to make race an explicit card. We invited candidates to talk about their own racial identity and that of their patients.   
  
We were surprised with how well students took to this and read the articles assigned. Race has been present at MIP. Even though most of the people at MIP are white, race is present. Race hadn't been part of the curriculum in the training to be psychoanalysts.   
  
One class will stand out in our mind. It was after Michael Brown and Eric Gardner had been murdered by police and the Black Lives Movement took hold around the country.   
  
One student talked about a student who was an Ivy League student. The student did not reveal anything about their race and class. The students were shocked to learn this person was from a wealthy background, with professional parents, and was Black.   
  
The candidates had to look at how these details challenged their assumptions and beliefs. After class, two candidates met after class for drinks. Our class was meeting in Central Square, which is in Cambridge, Mass. They saw that a Black Lives Matter march was coming through. They were at Harvard Square. They saw the movement was passing the bar.   
  
They got their things and went to a Black Lives Matter die in down the street. They told us about it the next time they met. For Linda and I, after seeing the impact, this focus on race, and the impact it had on the candidates, and the need for mental health clinicians to have a place to learn about race, we created a study-dialogue for mental health professionals.   
  
We started our group in 2017. We read many articles, sent articles and new material to each other, we watched videos, we listened to podcasts, etc. We were hashing out our versions and challenging each other’s racial ideas and assumptions. We faced our own white euro-central values. Linda went on a road trip to the south to see civil rights landmarks.   
  
When we proposed this group, it was something new that had never been done before, to our knowledge, at MIP, our institute. We didn't know what the response would be. Our incoming president, Deborah Dawd [sp?] was working on challenging aspects of our organization that perpetuate whiteness.   
  
Under this leadership, MIP set up an anti-racist stance. They set up an immigration group, discussion on race, MIP reads book project on race and whiteness, and a racial equity task force.   
  
Linda Luz-Alterman: Now I will talk about our purpose in developing this group. First, I want to say that I have to credit Jody with bringing the idea of talking about race to the clinical seminar we taught.   
  
I had taught first year seminar at MIP before. I never thought about bringing race into the discussion. Clearly race is present because whiteness is a race. It was never brought in as something to talk about. Jody brought this idea up. I knew she had been doing a lot of work herself through her church and personally on race.   
  
I had been doing some reading on my own. I said yes, let's do it. It was definitely Jody's wonderful idea. Our purpose in developing this group was to create a space where mental health professionals can have difficult discussions about race and sit with discomfort together. They can bear the discomfort, shame, etc. and talk about it anyway. We are trying to undo white supremacist ways of being that are established in our minds as a right.   
  
We are trying to expose ourselves and clinicians to materials that change the bias and viewpoint we grew up with. When some of the clinicians read the materials, they ask why we weren't taught it growing up. We weren't taught it because the forces of systemic racism didn't want us to know. Those blank spaces, those absences, were a history of brutality, cruelty, greed, and were implicated in our parents, teachers, elders, and passed down to us.   
  
It's also responsible to ask why we didn't ask or notice. Children get the message early on that these questions about history are not welcome. Since many of us benefit from white supremacist policies, we're not inclined to notice or act.   
  
Jody Leader: I will talk a bit about the structure and curriculum sources for these groups. We borrowed and adapts formats used in two other settings. The first was at Tufts University. Linda's husband teaches at Tufts and was one of the first members of their dialogue group about whiteness.   
  
He generously shared the structure and curriculum of that group. The second setting was from my home church for the past 24 years. There, I helped develop a short term "waking up white" group for my follow parishioners. We tailored these materials for the needs of experienced mental health clinicians. We acknowledge these come from organizations that are traditionally white and established in colonialism. There are so many other healing methods used by cultures.   
  
Some of discussed in the Reb Psych presentation on Liberating Psychiatry. This was the first presentation on the keynote of the conference. Linda and I learned a lot from Stephanie and Xochi.   
  
Linda Luz-Alterman: We did. When my husband became part of this dialogue group on worthiness at Tufts, it was originally an informal group although they now do it through the university, he would come home with these readings, articles, books, etc. to talk about what he was reading, and to talk about what he was talking about in his group. I wanted to be in a group myself. That was part of my motive in starting this study-dialogue group with Jody.   
  
I will say something about the rationale for the structure we used. We did adapt the structure and curriculum for our groups to use with mental health clinicians. Many anti-racist workers and writers have invoked the importance and necessity of white people engaging in a deep process of self-examination. Carmen Lopez, an educator and citizen of the Navajo Nation, this was at a panel of Native educators at Harvard University last fall. She said this is not accomplished through a workshop or training, but through a deep engagement with each other and ourselves. The work is lifelong.   
  
Yvonne Williams said white people need to look closely at structural racism in the United States. Layla Saad, the author of *Me and White Supremacy* writes this is deep, raw, challenging, personal, heartbreaking, and heart expanding work. That was a quote from her. She encourages others to do this to process the painful feelings that come up so they can move forward.   
  
She cautions them not to turn to Black, Indigenous, or other people of color to do this emotional labor. White therapists need to be better prepared to work with those who come to us for help, especially people of color, and being able to talk about race without being defensive or fragile to use Robin DeAngelo's word. We create a safe, brave space for conversations we may not be able to have about racial issues in daily life.   
  
They share in the hard work of racial awareness, conflicts or concerns, and engaging with each other. This works because it's over time and not a one shot experience.   
  
They relate to the curriculum materials and their own experiences with race.   
  
Jody Leader: This may be a good time to talk about the atmosphere. Before COVID, we asked people to come to my home and engage in appetizers and things. This came from the Psychoanalytic Institution of Northern California.

Before convening the group, we light a candle in the center of the circle. This helps people focus and enter the space together.   
  
The atmosphere is also impacted by Linda's and my relationship as friends and colleagues. This helps with educating and transforming. We offer this because, if anyone is thinking about doing this, the relationship of the cofacilitators makes a big difference.   
  
Linda and I check in before each class. We share concerns and go over the evening structure. This all allows for spontaneity and the emergence of vulnerability of the participants. Without that, there can be no transformation.   
  
Dr. Linda Luz-Alterman: Now we're going to talk about our syllabus. Jody will put up the learning objectives and an outline later. A note about the source of our materials. People learn about structural racism and whiteness at different times in their lives, careers, etc.   
  
We develop groups for people who are aware of this history and for people who are at different places on the path. We use a range of media - articles, videos, podcasts - to appeal to different learning styles. Some people learn visually, through listening, or through reading. So, our materials appeal to different ways of learning.   
  
The sources vary from online sources like slate.com to traditional media like the New York Times, to academic sources, etc. We seek out materials written by Black, Indigenous People of Color.   
  
Jody Leader: This is for one syllabus. Not for the whiteness one.   
  
Dr. Linda Luz-Alterman: Yes. So, we describe the history of the US structural racism, including redlining, the GI bill, mass incarceration, lynching, slavery, and land theft and so on.   
  
We identify ways that structural racialized inequities perpetuate a caste system, impacting work health care and more.   
  
We explain how the impact of structural racism enters into our clinical work. We include at least one clinical article about race, psychoanalysis, and psychotherapy.   
  
We identify ways we can take action as citizens to disrupt white supremacy. You can attend a Black Lives Matter rally, call legislators to encourage them to vote against harmful policies and encourage them to remove symbols of colonization and oppression.   
  
Now we're going to look at the syllabus.   
  
Jody Leader: How long is our syllabus?   
  
Dr. Linda Luz-Alterman: Like 6, 7, 8 pages long. This is a very bare bones look at the syllabus. We'll take a closer look at one session. You can get an idea what that looks like.   
  
We start with the genocide of Native Americans and the taking of their land. We really go through a trajectory, starting with the history of slavery. We talk about emancipation and reconstruction and what happened after that when laws were passed, the 13th, 14j, and 15th amendments, which were ostensibly made to give Black people and former slaves rights. But there was fine print that made the laws either unenforceable or allowed slavery and forced labor under certain situations.   
  
This leads to convict leasing, including the Immigrant Exclusion/Incarceration act, and how it impacts incarceration now. We look at redlining and other forms of exclusion that really prevented the accumulation of wealth on the part of Black people. We added a last class this year on the double pandemic of COVID19 and racial injustice, focusing on the health disparities experienced by People of Color during this time.   
  
Here's a description of our first class. We start with two chapters from the book An Indigenous People's History of the United States by Dunbar-Ortiz. She's a professor emeritus. This talks about history from the perspective of Indigenous people, and it's not what most of us were taught in schools.   
  
We look next at a time-lapse map that shows the theft of Indian land between 1776 and 1887. He made this map to accompany a book he wrote, *West of the Revolution . . .*   
  
Then we read "The other within: white shame, Native-American genocide." This is a paper we read where she recognizes genocide of Native Americans through her people's experience of the Holocaust. She talks about toxic shame, that prevents us for taking useful action. Focusing on restorative justice.   
  
Jody Leader: We try to have a clinical article specifically for experienced clinicians in every session of the study dialogue group. That's another thing.   
  
Dr. Linda Luz-Alterman: Yes. The other thing I wanted to say is, the syllabus is always evolving and changing. We do this as a course. We don't think of it that way, but we do it that way. All of the participants are asked to fill out an evolution and we look at that, we change the class based on feedback we get, new materials, and what is going on in the moment. We're always finding new materials.   
  
So now we have our open discussion.   
  
Jody Leader: Yes. This is the syllabus for the Unpacking Whiteness group. Flavia is going to post the syllabus for everyone as a Google doc, that's available to all, with all the different materials.   
  
Now is the time in the group structure that we prepare for open discussion. I'm going to screen share the guidelines for engagement.   
  
Help share emotional and airtime space fairly.

Speak your truth.

Speak for yourself.

Stay engaged.

Try on new ideas.

Experience discomfort and expect/accept non-closure.

Moments of silence are okay.

What is shared in the group stays in the group.  
  
We always ask if folks in the group want to edit these, add anything, or want more clarification. And we also say, even though we want to make sure people aren't sharing stories they've heard so they don't identify people in the group, we do want them to share experiences of the group. It helps to be in dialogue with colleagues, friends, and family.   
  
Dr. Linda Luz-Alterman: Spreading the word about what they're learning.   
  
Jody Leader: Exactly. You can see this is intentional. We prepare for discussion. We found that giving people a few minutes of silence to prepare for discussion encourages mindfulness and discourages impulsivity.   
  
So, we review the homework or articles they read, then ask for 2-3 minutes of silence. We invite them to write or draw to prepare their minds.   
  
Tonight, we will show you part of a group on the structure of racism and then take a brief break. Now, we will show you an interactive map of the Atlantic slave trade. You will see representations of slave ships, ships carrying enslaved Africans, crossing from Africa to South America, Central America, and North America. This is hard for many to watch.   
  
We are especially mindful this may be difficult for African Americans whose ancestors came here on these ships. If this is too hard for you to watch, please take care of yourselves and step away from the screen.   
  
I will screen share. Okay, hold on.   
  
I have to do this again. I'm going to stop my screen share. Then, I will do this again.   
  
Oh, here it is, okay.   
  
Can you see that, Linda?   
  
Linda Luz-Alterman: Yes.   
  
Jody Leader: Okay. I will hit "play."   
  
You will look very closely. In 2015, Andrew Jahn and Jamelle Bouie created this video called "The Atlantic Slave Trade in 2 Minutes." It animates more than 20,000 ship trips catalogized. These occurred between 1545 and 1860. You can see the number on the screen. That is the year. It's 1632, 1634, 1635, etc. By the conclusion of the Transatlantic slave trade at the end of the 19th century, at least 2 million people did not survive the journey. On this map, each dot represents a boat and a journey full of enslaved Africans. The larger the dot, the more enslaved people are on board the ship. I can pause at any time.   
  
I can then click on a dot to get more information about this ship. I will click on is dot. It tells me that this ship is *The Fort Amsterdam tot Cormantijn.* This ship from the Netherlands left the president day Republic of the Congo with 539 people and arrived in Surinam with 503 people.   
  
We'll keep playing.   
  
Linda Luz-Alterman: Let's see if we can find one coming to the United States.   
  
Jody Leader: Good idea.   
  
Here's a ship. This is called *The Young Margaret* from Great Britain. They left Gambia with 298 people and arrived in Maryland with 265 people. At least 30 people died. It made two journeys and transported over 400 Africans.   
  
Linda Luz-Alterman: In the interest of time, people can see the ships are proliferating as time goes on. There are more and more sailing.   
  
Jody Leader: Yes, and you can pause and click on any dot. It gives you more information on each ship.   
  
Okay. So, different thoughts and feelings might be coming up for you right now. Maybe you're thinking about your own ancestral history. We're going to maybe take a break right now.   
  
Maybe we'll take about three minutes.   
  
Flavia DeSouza: I would encourage participants to sit in silence for part of that time and reflect. We will return at 6:55pm. It's 6:52 right now.   
  
Linda Luz-Alterman: Thank you, Flavia.   
  
[Break]  
  
Flavia DeSouza: So, we will start.   
  
Jody Leader: In the group, we normally have about 40 minutes or so to process materials. Tonight, we only have about 10 minutes.   
  
Linda Luz-Alterman: Yeah, I was going to say we have to limit it to 10 minutes.   
  
I just want to say, about the video, this video really brings the slave trade to live. It makes it really real. It's very difficult to watch. Right now, instead of the deep discussion we would have with our participants, we would like to invite anyone who would like to share their response to the video to do so in the chat. As Jody said, we will have about 10 minutes for this. I think Flavia will be looking.   
  
Flavia DeSouza: I am monitoring the chat. For those who have typed in questions, we will get into the questions towards the end.   
  
Linda Luz-Alterman: Yes.   
  
For me, I can say that every time I watch this video, I am just struck, again. I am of Portuguese descent on one side of my family, my father's side. Until I watched this video, I did not know about the role of Portugal in the slave trade. I think the majority of the ships that crossed the Atlantic were Portuguese ships. They were a major player. They started the trade, the kidnapping of African people and bringing them to South America. It was just shocking to me. It made me look further into the history of Portugal, and their colonial and imperial practices.   
  
Flavia DeSouza: Thank you for sharing that. When we were reviewing the materials before tonight, that was the first time I had seen the website. My eyes are drawn to a particular place. You did something meaningful to me. You said let's look at a ship going to the North America and United States area. I think of Jamaica, the land of my birth. I'm drawn to the number of black dots that go to the Jamaica/Cuban area in the Greater Antilles. We think about how many persons died.   
  
What a project it must have been to gather the information is report it back to us. Someone else said here in the chat, it was two heavy minutes.   
  
Linda Luz-Alterman: Yes, very heavy.   
  
Flavia DeSouza: They capture a few centuries. Another person said there was a shocking amount of slave trades to South America. Their question is whether that changed over time.   
  
Linda Luz-Alterman: My sense of that, from watching the video, is that as ships start going to North America, they continue to go to South America. Brazil was a major site of deportation over their ships and many other countries in the Caribbean and South America.   
  
Flavia DeSouza: One of the participants is asking for a link to the video to be posted to the chat. They missed that. They missed that portion of it.   
  
Jody Leader: Sure, I can do that right now.   
  
Are there any other reactions from the participants?   
  
Jody Leader: Any reactions?   
  
Dr. Linda Luz-Alterman: This is where, if there are no more...oh, I see something.   
  
Flavia DeSouza: People are having different experiences. One person is showing their emotion through tears, seeming sadness. Another person says they found the video too abstract. One of the things that's difficult about the online space is it's more difficult to get behind what people are experiencing. But I thought it important to share those two different responses.   
  
Jody Leader: Yes. When I was setting up the links, I was thinking about how impersonal it is. Ideally, say, we have a picture of a person who was on that ship. Their name. Their journey. You know?   
  
Flavia DeSouza: Another person says, I feel anger and sadness about the pain experienced and the humanity denied. It still happens.   
  
A great question: What modern day institutions represent the modern day slave ships?   
  
Dr. Linda Luz-Alterman: A terrible fact is that the ships at that time were covered by banks, insurance, and other financial institutions. A lot of our financial practices stem from this period of time, such as mortgages and the investment in debt. But the debt, or the "property" was enslaved African people. There are many links to contemporary capitalism that date back to that time.   
  
Flavia DeSouza: Some other chat responses, in response to the modern day slave ships. You talked about institutions that backed them. One person said cages at the border and jails. Another person said capitalism in general.   
  
Another important remark I see here, a person says that they learned that most of the ships had a physician on board to ensure the slaves stayed alive, so the medical profession was deeply involved in slavery and the slave trade.   
  
Jody Leader: Thank you for being here. Thank you for this.   
  
Dr. Linda Luz-Alterman: I also want to thank people for all of their responses.   
  
Jody Leader: Yes, definitely. They're still coming in. Thank you all for sharing.   
  
For our closing words, we're going to offer a quote from Chakira.  
  
Dr. Linda Luz-Alterman: She is a psychologist and training in psychoanalysis. She is a talented Latinx psychologist and a poet and a writer. She actually has a chapter in a recently published book on liberation psychology.

Jody Leader: This comes from a paper published recently in a special issue of Gender and Sexuality, in which I think 9 or 10 Indigenous or Black People of Color, women, wrote about decolonizing psychoanalysis and talking back.   
  
"By centering the margins straddling the borderlands and meeting in the space between, we can discover the liberatory potential of psychoanalysis. It will be Cara el pueblo. Get off the couch, into la comunidad. To break down walls that reinforce artificial borders. It will be awake and aware, it will be woke. It will be intersectional and post-colonial. It will be in service of liberation. It's not only a link to free speech, it will advocate for bi, multi-analytical . . . it will be poetry and prose. It will not hide behind neutrality. It will stand firmly by the side of the oppressed. Psychoanalysis without borders. This is the future. The future is now. "  
  
That is the end of our presentation.   
  
Flavia DeSouza: Thank you both for the presentation and thank to participants for sharing thoughts, emotions, and knowledge. We have a few questions here that I think would take us to the end of the time we have together.   
  
Jody Leader: We have until 7:30 EST, right?   
  
Flavia DeSouza: Yes. A question from Lucia - thank you for the work you do. In addition to personal and formative work to decolonize clinical work, how do you think we can approach the necessary transformation of psychoanalytical concepts impregnated with Eurocentric, white, and patriarchal conceptions?   
  
Jody Leader: Great question. The leadership has to be on board for transformation at this level to take place. Linda?   
  
Dr. Linda Luz-Alterman: I think it's a great question and it's one that doesn't have a simple answer. But a place to start is looking at some of the language we use in psychotherapy and psychoanalysis. These concepts came from 19th century colonialist, anthropological, ideas that were grounded in white supremacy. Ideas about pathology. The word primitivity stems from anthropological ideas about non-white, non-Christian people. We need to find new words, new language, to describe what we're doing and who we're working with. The language alone is steeped in, as you say, these white/patriarchal/Eurocentric conceptions.   
  
Jody Leader: And some of this is going on. I'm thinking about the article in Gender and Sexuality. One author writes about climean [sp?] theory through a non-patriarchal lens. I'll get that link and put it in the chat. There are authors out there.   
  
Dr. Linda Luz-Alterman: There are other models, there are people who are developing new models of psychotherapy that are trying to break out of this. I heard some of this in a different conference on decolonizing psychology. Dr. Carmen Vasquez talking about a sharing of stories between therapists and clients, that she is doing with clients. Other people are using models aimed to break up the fee and pay structure, finding other services of functioning so they can offer free or low-cost treatment or therapy. There are people who are really trying to do, they're trying to sort of pull apart our usual way of doing business.   
  
Flavia DeSouza: Thank you both. Another question here is looking at proliferation of materials. We talked about concepts and materials and language. One person asks, have you written this curriculum into a handbook for others to use? I'm curious how others can use this.   
  
[Audio cutting out]   
  
Keep that in mind as you answer.   
  
Jody Leader: You just froze.   
  
Flavia DeSouza: I can repeat the question. The question is whether you wrote this into a handbook that others can use. They are curious about how others can use this. Do you have plans to do a train the trainer model with this? I wanted to ask one more question before we ended, so you can keep that in mind as you respond.   
  
Linda Luz-Alterman: We have not written this curriculum into a handbook, but we should probably talk about it, Jody. [Laughing]   
  
People are using this curriculum. They are using this structure and curriculum. They are adapting it to their own purposes. Someone from our group last year is using it. She is doing a multi-week workshop in her church group.   
  
There is a group, at least one group, at Harvard Medical School that is using this with their medical staff. These are people who will be going to different countries, eventually. They will be working with people in different cultures. They felt they wanted a way to educate themselves and do this work to prepare for that.   
  
At least one Boston hospital group has consulted with us. We are sharing our syllabus. I work with people to adapt what we use for mental health clinicians for use with whoever the participants are, whatever discipline or group the participants or group is coming from. It can be easily adapted for others to use.   
  
Jody Leader: Flavia just shared the syllabuses. They are Google Doc links open to everybody. She just shared that in the chat.   
  
Linda Luz-Alterman: Did you want to add to what I said, Jody?   
  
Jody Leader: Yes, it's easy to share the syllabus. I think it takes a lot more time to share the structure, creating the atmosphere, etc. which is what we tried to do in this hour long presentation. That adds to the ability of this group to be transformative.   
  
We haven't concisely put this into a handbook or something. We're in the middle of thinking about doing that. We're not there yet. The structure is important, as is the relationship between the facilitators, and the intentionality is important in addition to the syllabus. Also, doing it on Zoom is very different doing it pre-COVID when we were in person. Lighting a candle online doesn't have the same effect as in person.   
  
Linda Luz-Alterman: I'm glad you brought that all up, Jody. I want to add to that. What you were just talking about is that we create what we call, in psychoanalysis, a holding environment. I imagine you can think about what that was. It comes from Donald Winnicott. It applies developmentally to children. They are held in an emotionally nurturing environment. We do this as therapists. I think Jody and I do this in our group. We create a holding environment that enables people to do the work of growing, changing, and facing these things. I think that is an important part of it, as well. We would have to find a way to describe that, as we sort of pass this along.   
  
Jody Leader: Absolutely.   
  
I'm seeing one question, Flavia, do you mind?   
  
Flavia DeSouza: Go ahead. I was going to ask about the question Crystal shared.   
  
Jody Leader: That's what I was going to ask. Go ahead.   
  
Flavia DeSouza: She says thank you for doing this hard but extremely important work. Have you every expanded racism and bias to other groups, such as Asian and Hispanic groups.   
  
Jody Leader: Thank you, Christopher, for asking this group. This brings in my development and Linda's. Every semester, I think we present this, and I realize what we're not doing.   
  
For instance, we didn't have anything in the syllabus on the Immigrant Exclusion Act, on the internment or incarceration of Japanese people during World War II. That's a part of structural racism in the United States. There was the way Chinese people were excluded for many years. Of course, there's what is going on at the border right now. There's racism against Latinx people, Central America immigrants, etc. The answer is yes, we have expanded.   
  
We need to do so much more. I'm humbly so aware of how much more, and how we don't get it all right. Did you want to add anything more about that, Linda?   
  
Linda Luz-Alterman: The focus is on structural racism and whiteness. We do bring in different readings and other pieces from time to time. I'm remembering that in our first year we did have an article. It was a piece from *The New York Times* who was written by a writer for *The New York Times.* It was published in the times. It was called *An Open Letter to the Woman who told my Family to Go Back Where We Came From.* This was a person on the Upper East Side at brunch with their family. A woman started yelling at them. It started a dialogue at *The New York Times.* It created an important dialogue in our group, as well. We bring these in from time to time.   
  
Steve in the chat is referring to *Psychoanalysis in the Barrio*, that's a wonderful book. There is also a video, a movie, that came after *Black Psychoanalysts Speak.* This is about psychoanalysis in a barrio. That book is taken from or inspired by that; I think it went that way.   
  
There is a lot of materials. The class is only 6 sessions, 90 minutes each. There's not enough time. There's never enough time to do more.   
  
Flavia DeSouza: I think we might actually have time to respond to this last question. We'll have it there. In some ways, I think you've started responding to it by sharing resources that we may not be familiar with.   
  
Wendy asked if you could give more examples of psychoanalytic language that is problematic.   
  
Jody Leader: That's a great question.   
  
Linda Luz-Alterman: That is a very good question. There are other examples that are not coming to my mind at the moment. I would refer you to the book *Indigenous Populations of the Mind* by Celia Brickman [sp?] who has done extensive scholarly work in anthropology and really looking at the roots of psychoanalysis and the language. They make direct connections between the language of anthropologists, who were going to places like Samoa and other Pacific Islands, and other cultures, and the ways in which they were describing the people that they were finding there, through a euro-centric and white supremacist lens.   
  
Those descriptions were then used. That language was then unseeded in medicine and psychoanalysis. They're not coming to my mind at the moment.   
  
Flavia DeSouza: Thank you.   
  
As we wrap up, I want to ensure that it is okay for the participants to use the material you have shared, both variably and parts of the syllabus. If there are concerns or direction you have for people who would like to use them, if you could, please give us some direction.   
  
Jody Leader: That's a great idea. The syllabus should ideally be used in the context of what we talked about in this hour. There is the structure and intentionality of setting the atmosphere and those aspects.   
  
I would strongly recommend that those sharing the syllabus with others or using it themselves, I think our wonderful transcribers Christine and Christy, we will have a transcription because of them. You can go overusing the syllabus. I'm thinking about this off the top of my head. You can use the syllabus and the structure that Linda and I carefully laid out. You can establish a solid relationship with your co-facilitator. As much as we can, we're happy to be available to talk to you about it, if anybody wants to contact us. I'm happy to put my email in the chat.   
  
I'll get back to you if you want to talk on the phone about these groups or doing this. Thank you for that.   
  
Linda Luz-Alterman: I would add something else to think about. It is the issue of a mixed race group versus a group for white people and a group for people of color. It can be difficult, particularly if there are one or two people of color in ones of these groups. It can be hard to listen to white people processing, and to learning things, that many people of color know. That's just something else to think about.   
  
If it's a group that is more half and half, people of color and white people, that may be better. Somebody won't feel like the lone person of color listening to white people. They may not feel like people are looking to them for the answers.   
  
That's another consideration.   
  
The materials in the syllabus, people are free to use them. They're in the public domain. A lot of the materials we have are on websites. Others are not. Those are not ones we have links to. You would have to find those on your own.   
  
Flavia DeSouza: With the minute we have remaining, I want to thank the participants. Thank you for putting effort into this work group, for modeling it today, and for sharing with us this evening. The conversation has picked up nicely. It's too bad it has to end soon. I want to give everyone a warning before it ends.   
  
Jody Leader: [Laughing]   
  
Flavia DeSouza: When the Zoom ends, it ends. There will be no more chatting in the webinar room. If you have any outstanding questions or want to talk more, Jody Leader has generously shared her information in the Zoom webinar chat so you can reach out that way. She shared her information.   
  
Thank you, all.   
  
Jody Leader: Thank you for your wonderful facilitation.   
  
Linda Luz-Alterman: Thank you to you, Flavia and for Reb Psych for offering this conference.   
  
Flavia DeSouza: I'm biased,but I think it's been good for Reb Psych to share this. It shouldn't be, but it's ground breaking.   
  
Linda Luz-Alterman: It's has been tremendous.   
  
Flavia DeSouza: I'm going to stop recording now.   
  
Linda Luz-Alterman: Bye.   
  
Jody Leader: Bye.   
  
Flavia DeSouza: It's not working. It says it's recording.   
  
Okay. I'm not sure if I did this correctly. I know that we're still here. The attendees are down to 20.   
  
Jody Leader: I didn't mean to do that.   
  
Flavia DeSouza: I'm wondering if we didn't record the session. I'm trying to end the recording and it says it's still recording.   
  
Linda Luz-Alterman: Gosh.   
  
Flavia DeSouza: Kyle, did you see if it recorded?   
  
Kyle Finn: It said it recorded the whole time.   
  
It's probably a feature of cloud recording that it's still going even though you tried to end it. We don't use it because it's not HIPAA compliant.   
  
Flavia DeSouza: Okay, I'm going to end recording so people listening don't have to hear more of this.   
  
Okay, bye.   
  
[End Zoom meeting]