Title: "Combatting the conspiracy of silence: Clinician recommendations for talking about racism-related events with youth of color"

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Race-based violence has dramatically increased in the past year. Both personal experiences of racist attacks on members of minority groups, including Black and Asian individuals, as well as the frequent portrayal of police brutality in the media, has negatively affected children's psychological wellbeing. Racial minorities need our support inside and outside of the therapy room, but clinicians may not have the training and tools to address the issues related to racism in a genuine and helpful way. The authors provided the following guidance to clinicians on how to support youth of color and their families:

1. **Self-Reflection and Preparation:** Reflect on your own racial identity, biases, and privilege, and integrate self-reflection in your everyday clinical practice.

    a. ***Ask yourself:*** *"How have I been socialized to think about race? How have these socialization messages shaped my beliefs about the role of racial topics in the therapeutic space?*
    a. *What is my intention or purpose for discussing race, ethnicity or culture with this client?*
    b. *How might my racial background and other aspects of my social identity limit or enhance my ability to understand the emotional and psychological impact of racism?*
2. **Setting the Foundation to Talk about Racism-Related Events:** Using the DSM-5 Cultural Formulation Interview, CFI Supplemental Modules 6 (Role of Cultural Identity) and 8 (Patient-Clinician Relationship) as well as the UConn Racial/Ethnic Stress and Trauma Survey (UnRESTS©), clinicians are recommended to explore the client's racial identity, cultural sensitivity, and indicate that the therapy room is a safe space to discuss these topics.

a. Some of these measures are available on the APA's website: https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm/educational-resources/assessment-measures

1. **Broaching Racism-Related Events with Youth in Developmentally Appropriate Ways:** Broaching is the introduction of topics related to race, culture and ethnicity to deliver a culturally responsive intervention. Broaching can help the clinician identify how strongly the client identifies with their race. Moreover, broaching, if done in a developmentally appropriate manner, can break down perceived power imbalances between the therapist and the patient. If working with children, one may also encourage

the parents to support the child as they cope with racism-related stressors, and ask the parents if they believed it would be important for the therapist to do so, as well. An example of introducing such topics would be:

a. *"I like to ask my clients about their cultural background, including their race and ethnicity, because these factors can shape how kids view themselves and the types of experiences they have."*
    a. *"Coming to therapy can often make people feel a bit nervous, and those nerves might be even stronger if your therapist seems a lot different from you in terms of age, gender, race or other characteristics. I'm wondering how you're feeling about working with me, knowing that we differ in some of these ways?"*

2. **Allowing Youth to Lead the Discussion:** Take a non-judgmental stance, be empathic and validate the feelings of your client. If needed, scaffold the discussion using a feeling chart, provide opportunities for alternative expression in art or play). Do not challenge their stance by asking about the evidence supporting that their experience was discriminatory, but rather use Socratic questioning to reframe what the incident may mean about the aggressor (e.g., racist encounter being a sign of the aggressor's incompetence).
3. **Use Strength-Based Approaches to Promote Racial Healing:** Some youth of color may find healing and empowerment if they participate in community action (e.g., volunteering for local anti-racist initiatives). Others may rely on the strengths of their larger family. Some parents of minority youth may teach their children tools to cope with discrimation (e.g., building awareness for bias), others may teach them about cultural heritage and traditions. Help youth find the best coping strategies.
4. **Promoting Healthy Social Media Use:** Viewing racism-related deaths may be traumatic. Addressing media use in the therapy room and brainstorming about strategies that may mitigate the negative effects of such experiences on youth's psychological wellbeing is critical. Some strategies may include limiting the access to certain websites, limiting social media use or discouraging youth to use social media entirely.
5. **Debriefing:** Allow time at the end of the session for debriefing. Asking the child how they felt about the conversation on race and discrimination can build trust and rapport.

Please share:

- Would you add any other recommendations to this list?
- What did you find to be the most useful tool for your work with minoritized youth?
- Please share how you addressed racial discrimination and race-based violence in session with your minoritized youth patients.