

#BAPCA2015

The Being of the White Therapist – Sheila Haugh & Colin Lago

Resource Guide

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About Sheila Haugh

I have worked as a client-centred therapist, supervisor, and trainer for over 25 years. Recently I have taken the approach into coaching, leadership, and management training in the Czech Republic and Romania; combining this with the continuing training of person-centred practitioners both in Czech Republic and the UK. The on-going experiences of working cross-culturally in all these areas, maintaining a UK practice via Skype and nurturing only my second tomato crop and the one celeriac plant (I don't remember my Nana's tomato plants being this bushy, but the celery looks good)) has been, as ever, challenging, exciting and never boring!



About Colin Lago

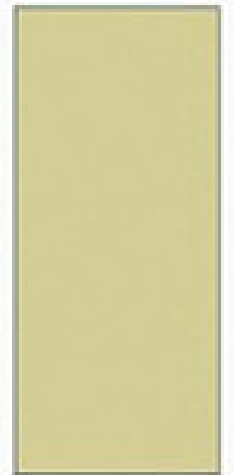
Colin Lago was Director of the Counselling Service at the University of Sheffield, U.K. from 1987 – 2003. He now works as an independent counsellor, trainer, supervisor and consultant and visiting lecturer to the Universities of East Anglia and Strathclyde.

Trained initially as an engineer, Colin went on to become a full time youth worker in London and then a teacher in Jamaica. Colin was profoundly influenced by the writings of Carl Rogers long before he trained as a counsellor. Deeply committed to “transcultural concerns” he has had articles, videos and books published on the subject. He has recently been awarded a D.Litt for his contributions to the literature on multicultural therapy.



THE BEING OF THE WHITE THERAPIST

SHEILA HAUGH & COLIN LAGO
BACPA, 2015



STRUCTURE OF PRESENTATION

- Our intention for this presentation
- Why should we examine Whiteness?
- Assumptions behind our presentation
- Why does this topic matter?
- The sociological and the psychological
- White Racial Consciousness Model
- Ways forward

- “Even though no one at this point really knows exactly what whiteness is, most observers agree that it is intimately involved with issues of power and power difference between white and non-white people.” (Op cit p.4)
- “This collective white denial of privilege inhibits questions and public reflection on how being white may provide benefits” (Op cit p.15)

- “One difficulty in studying the white self is that, until recently, it was an invisible and non-researched category, even difficult to name and not perceived as a distinctive racial identity. Even today, most white Americans either do not think about their whiteness at all or else think of it as a positive or neutral category” (Op cit p.78, from Vera, H. et al 1995, p.296)
- White skin privilege and the advantages that accompany it are not necessarily obvious to those who are white and middle class.” (Op cit p.80, from McIntosh, 1992.)

- “The goal here is not to elicit white feelings of guilt for white racism but to encourage insight into the nature of historical oppression and its contemporary manifestations.” (Kincheloe et al, 1998, p.19).

WHY EXAMINE WHITENESS?

- I can choose accommodation without fearing that people of my 'race' cannot get in or will be mistreated in the places I have chosen.
- I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help, my 'race' will not work against me.
- If my day, week or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it has 'racial' overtones.
-
- I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my 'race'.
- I can turn on the television or open the front page of the newspaper and see people of my 'race' widely represented.

ASSUMPTIONS BEHIND THIS PRESENTATION

- Being white brings with it a number of advantages
- The power invested in whiteness and in being white impacts on others – usually detrimentally. We call this racism
- We can legitimately talk of 'institutional racism'
- There is no reason to suppose that the profession of counselling and psychotherapy does not suffer from institutional racism, that includes the PCA and us in here

- This is not a competition between our individual levels and experiences of oppression
- That all of us here wish this to be different and are committed to not abusing our white advantages and getting rid of racism in all forms

WHY DOES AWARENESS OF OUR BEING
AS A WHITE THERAPIST MATTER?

THE SOCIOLOGICAL AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL

THE SOCIOLOGICAL

The invisibility of whiteness as a racial position in white (which is to say dominant) discourse is of a piece with its ubiquity...Research- into books, museums, the press, advertising, films, television, software- repeatedly shows that in Western representation whites are overwhelmingly and disproportionately predominant, have the central and elaborated roles, and above all are placed as the norm, the ordinary, the standard." (Dyer, R. 1997. p.3.)

There is no more powerful position than that of being 'just' human. The claim to power is the claim to speak for the commonality of humanity. Raced people can't do that- they can only speak for their race. But non-raced people can, for they do not represent the interests of a race. The point of seeing the racing of whites is to dislodge them/us from the position of power, with all the inequities, oppression, privileges and sufferings in its train, dislodging them/us by undercutting the authority with which they/ we speak and act in and on the world. (Dyer, R. 1997, p.2)

WHITENESS AND POWER

'even though no one at this point really knows exactly what whiteness is, most observers agree that it is intimately involved with issues of power and power difference between white and non-white people.' (1998)

Whiteness, as a set of normative cultural practices is visible most clearly to those it definitively excludes and those to whom it does violence. Those who are securely housed within its borders usually do not examine it.

Frankenberg

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL

- What colour are you – when did you notice your colour?
- The impact of changing your language?
- Have you been ignored because you are white?

KÜBLER-ROSS

- Denial
- Anger
- Bargaining
- Depression
- Acceptance

WHITE RACIAL CONSCIOUSNESS MODEL

STAGE ONE

CONTACT STAGE

1. Becomes aware that BME people exist,
2. Characterizes naively interactions and knowledge about BME people
3. Tends to ignore differences or regard them as unimportant (people are people),
4. Is unaware of self as racial being (does not know what it means to be White),
5. Becomes aware of societal pressures that accompany cross – racial interactions,
6. Seeks resolution through withdrawal of approach.

STAGE TWO

DISINTEGRATION STAGE

1. Becomes aware of racism, which leads to guilt, depression and negative feelings. Is forced to acknowledge that he or she is White,
2. Is caught between internal standards of human decency and external cultural expectations,
3. Responds to this dilemma in one of three ways:
 - a. Over identifies with BME (minorities)
 - b. Becomes paternalistic towards BME (minorities)
 - c. Retreats back into the White culture

STAGE THREE

REINTEGRATION STAGE

1. Becomes hostile towards BME (minorities) and more positively biased toward own racial group (prejudice)
2. Overtly or covertly becomes anti – BME (minority)
3. Views or perceives BME (minority) traits as negative

STAGE FOUR

PSEUDO – INDEPENDENT STAGE

1. Intellectually accepts and becomes increasingly curious about BME (minorities) and Whites
2. Becomes interested in racial group similarities/ differences
3. May have cross – racial interactions or may be limited to special BME people, (those who are similar to Whites)

STAGE FIVE

AUTONOMY STAGE

1. Accepts racial differences and similarities with appreciation and respect,
2. Does not perceive differences as deficits or similarities as enhancers,
3. Actively seeks opportunities for cross – racial interactions.

WHAT PEOPLE OF COLOR WANT FROM WHITE ALLIES (KIVEL)

Respect us	Listen to us
Find out about us	Don't make assumptions
Don't take over	Stand by my side
Provide information	Don't assume what's best for me
Resources, money	Honesty
Take risks	Talk to other white people
Don't take it personally	Interrupt racist jokes
Understanding	Don't ask me to speak for my people
Teach your children about racism	Support
Speak up	Your body on the line
Don't be scared of my anger	(Face issues of loss)

WORK FOR RACIAL JUSTICE (KIVEL)

Assume racism is everywhere, every day...

Notice who the centre of attention is and who is the centre of power

Don't confuse the battle with the war. (Behind particular incidents and interactions are larger patterns. Racism is flexible and adaptable. There will be gains and losses in the struggle for justice and equality. Don't call names or be personally abusive.

Notice how racism is denied, minimised and justified

Support the leadership of people of colour

Understand and learn from the history of whiteness and racism

Learn something about the history of white people who have worked for racial justice. Don't do it alone

Understand the connections between racism, economic issues, sexism and other forms of injustice

Talk with your children and other young people about racism

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What is the Person-Centred Approach?

The person-centred approach is based on the theory and philosophy of Dr Carl Rogers. It is a non-directive approach to being with another; that believes in the others potential and ability to make the right choices for him or her self, regardless of the therapist's own values, beliefs and ideas.

Who are BAPCA?

The British Association for the Person-Centred Approach (BAPCA) is an organisation that embraces and promotes the person-centred way-of-being: the striving to create relationships based in genuine acceptance and empathic understanding.

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