Peer Support as A Resiliency Asset for Black and Brown Communities

Dr. Masica Jordan Alston

DEFINITIONS

Culturally Responsive Practices
Involves tailoring services and resources to respect and include diverse cultural norms, beliefs, and identities within a community. Cultural responsiveness occurs along a continuum – “competence” does not exist.

Asset-based Framework
An approach that emphasizes building upon existing strengths, skills, and resources in individuals and communities to promote positive outcomes.

Recognition of Resilience
Trauma survivors often display remarkable resilience in coping with and recovering from their experiences. Asset-based models acknowledge and honor this resilience, emphasizing the strength and courage of individuals who have faced adversity.
“The Color of Change in Crisis”

Black and Brown communities make up the largest ethnic and racial minority groups in the United States
'We Are Living in a Racism Pandemic,' Says APA President

George Floyd
Ahmaud Arbery
Breonna Taylor
Philando Castile

Latinx population in the United States is the largest ethnic minority group, comprising around 19% of the total population

- The Latinx poverty rate is higher than the national average
- Latinx individuals face health disparities, including higher rates of certain chronic conditions like diabetes
- Limited access to healthcare services due to factors like language barriers and lack of health insurance can impact health outcomes
- Rates of depression and anxiety can be higher among Latinx individuals due to various stressors, including immigration experiences and discrimination
- Stigma surrounding mental health is prevalent in many Latinx communities, which can discourage individuals from seeking help

Presented by: Masica Jordan Alston, EdD, LCPC, CPRS, RPS
“The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.”

— Albert Einstein

“The virus of racism as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.”

Step 2:
Understand the symptoms of the virus
How do you respond to a “Racism Pandemic?"

“A Virus is a piece of code which is capable of copying itself and typically has a detrimental effect, such as corrupting the system or destroying data.”

“Racism is a learned behavior which is capable of being retaught and always has a detrimental effect, such as corrupting the system or destroying lives.”

Resilience of Minority Populations in the Face of Disaster, Trauma, & Racism

• Historic resilience of Black & Brown populations
• Survival Skills
• “This is not our first disaster, and it won’t be our last.”
• Strengths
• How have you overcome traumatic experiences in the past?
• How have you dealt with racism in the past?
• Role of Religion and Spirituality

So, how can Peers help....
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Step 3: Treat the Virus... What are some of our treatment options?

The Importance of Peer Support in Minority Communities

Cultural Understanding
Reducing Stigma about MH and SUD services
Shared Experiences
Empowerment
Trust
Access to Resources
Advocacy
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Presenter’s Tip: mnemonic phrases are great

Who remembers: Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally

Explains the order of operations ('PEMDAS' or 'BODMAS') in plain terms, points out ... is turned into the mnemonic phrase "Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally"

EEE GRTS “Eat Grits” will help you recall the

8 eight primary culture-shaping areas of influence...

The 8 Systems of Influence: Understand where the virus exists

There are eight primary culture-shaping areas of influence over each society they are:

01 | Education  
02 | Environment  
03 | Entertainment  
04 | Economy  
05 | Government  
06 | Religion  
07 | Technology  
08 | Sociology

Each one of these systems must be assessed for existence for the presence of racism simultaneously. To leave one out would be similar to treating a pandemic in one city but leaving the city beside it untreated—eventually the virus spreads to the adjoining city.
“The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.”

-Albert Einstein
Guidelines for Peer Recovery Professionals

- Perceived “ism” can be equally traumatic
- Try not to personalize the client’s response or anger
- This is not about you but about your client’s experience of “isms”
- Don’t be defensive
- Try to understand the client’s perspective
- Allow persons to share their stories or narratives
- Do not debate whether or not racism was involved

When a Black or Brown Client Raises the Issue of Race or Racism

- Be open
- Say “Tell me more about it.”
- Elicit the Client’s narrative or story about the experience
- Ask what the client was feeling when the incident occurred
- Validate the client’s feelings
- In Cross-racial situations, ask how the client feels discussing this issue with a peer from another culture/race
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Are All Evidenced Based Practices Culturally Responsive?

Developing ASK Ready Peers...

Self-Assessment Activity ...
Jordan Peer Recovery’s ASK Model
Cultural Development Model
For Building A Culturally Responsive Approach

Developing cultural responsiveness is a process rather than an endpoint

The **ASK-Jordan Peer Recovery model** includes 3 components:

1. A set of questions you will **ASK** yourself
2. **ASK** activities
3. Questions you will **ASK** your peers to deliver culturally responsive peer support

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**ASK YOURSELF QUESTIONS**

Asking yourself key questions will ready you to build cultural responsiveness. **ASK** yourself the following questions:

1. **WHO** - Who are you? You need to know who you are “culturally” in order to strengthen your capacity to deliver culturally responsive supports.

2. **WHAT** - What biases do you have? Be honest with yourself in your response. What individuals or groups do you associate with that support these biases?

3. **WHEN** - When have you benefited from maintaining these biases? When did you develop those biases? When is your earliest recollection of those biases being learned and/or expressed?
ASK YOURSELF QUESTIONS

Asking yourself key questions will ready you to build cultural responsiveness. ASK yourself the following questions:

4 WHERE - Where did you learn those biases?

5 WHY - Why should you work to deconstruct those biases?

6 HOW - How can you move beyond those biases? How do you challenge others who express these biases?

ASK ACTIVITIES

Active Listening
Active listening includes thinking about the feeling behind the content or the emotion involved. The emotion gives evidence of the real intent of the conversation, which will help you identify if the person is upset, inquisitive, or acting on another emotion and allow you to respond appropriately. In addition to listening for total meaning, you should also avoid mental distractions when building cultural responsiveness through active listening. This means listening with focus and not becoming involved in mental chitchat about how you are going to respond to a person or question.

Visit Cultural Institutions
Visiting cultural institutions in your community is a great resource to have a greater awareness of the rich culture of others.
**ASK ACTIVITIES**

**Empathy**
It is the art of seeing and feeling the situation of another, walking in another person’s shoes, or seeing the world as that person sees it. Empathy involves understanding that person’s perceptions and the conclusions that person draws about his or her life experiences.

**Effective Engagement**
Engagement should be mutually beneficial and a reciprocal learning experience in which you learn from one another. Focus on the behaviors and the situation, not the person.

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www.JordanPeerRecovery.com

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