

Dear Colleague

Thank you for your interest in Psychologists HEAL Racism! We are pleased to share with you a model that each of us has found to be profoundly useful in our journey to gain increased awareness and more effectively counter effects of racism personally, socio-culturally, and institutionally.

The present model defines racism as the oppression of people who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, or People of the Global Majority. Racism, defined in this way, is a relatively new phenomenon in human history. It had a beginning, and therefore, it can have an end. We believe that listening to one another is part of what is needed to end racism.

The ending of racism will require institutional change. But people are part of institutions, and change will begin with as well as be sustained and built upon by us. For us to be effective agents for change, we need spaces to connect with one another and process the cognitive and emotional effects of living in a society in which White supremacist ideology is pervasive, and in which we have seen harsh acts of racism in the news and on social media if not experienced these ourselves. This is designed to be one space for such connection and processing. While sharing and listening are core components of this process, the Psychologists HEAL Racism model differs from listening circles in that the primary goal is not to foster understanding of each other's perspectives or beliefs. Although understanding of one another's perspectives is likely to be enhanced, the core goal is to reflect upon and process our own emotions related to our experiences with racism and other forms of oppression.

This introductory series for Psychologists HEAL Racism is designed as a voluntary activity for faculty, staff, and trainees in psychology doctoral and postdoctoral programs, and we believe that the voluntariness is critical. The series includes six 2-hour sessions plus one 8-hour or daylong workshop. Further practice with the sharing and listening skills is expected to take place between each group session (approximately 30min for each practice session in a dyad or triad is anticipated).

The first of the sessions is designed to provide an initial introduction to the framework and practice of Psychologists HEAL Racism. It is expected that this session will allow potential participants to decide whether they want to participate further in the series. The expectation is that those who choose to continue will do so with intent to engage fully, and to share as well as listen, with the understanding that participants may take breaks or skip turns to share at their discretion. It is understood that this work will involve challenging and, in some cases, deeply upsetting material and that someone may opt to participate but then later decide that it does not make sense for them to continue with the series.

Beyond the introductory meeting, there will be five further sessions, with opportunities to engage in sharing and listening with a partner between each session. Three of the sessions are designed for everyone. One is just for students or trainees, and one is just for faculty and staff. At times the group is expected meet all together and at times in affinity groups, if possible. Finally, there will be a daylong workshop that will complete the initial training in and experience with this model.

There will be opportunities to process thoughts and emotions around racism in general, as well as within your training program. We expect that you will gain awareness of your own thoughts and emotions around racism and leverage that will allow you to better counter the effects. We also expect you'll have the chance to learn from one another's experiences and form stronger alliances. We expect that this model will provide you with a set of listening skills, somewhat different from those used in therapy, that

might be applied to further conversations and processing around race and racism. You also will have access to the outlines and guidelines used so that you might use these to facilitate sessions with others.

We hope this model is useful to you, as it has been to us. We ask you to enter the work with an attitude of kindness toward and respect for yourselves and one another, and to be open to sharing as well as listening to other people's truths. We ask you to have a "willingness to be disturbed" (Wheatley, 2002) as you confront difficult thoughts, emotions, and realities. We also ask you to keep part of your attention focused on the hopefulness of our shared intention to connect with one another, counter effects of racism, and move toward social justice, equity, and inclusion.

The development and piloting of this model has been made possible by the Association for Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC). We welcome you to contact us with questions.

In partnership,

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