

INTER/INTRA/TRANS GENERATIONAL TRAUMA

Cycles Worth Breaking

UNSAFE INTER-PERSONAL SPACES

- Slavery
- Colonization
- Oppression
- Genocide/ethnic cleansing
- Hate
- Forced displacement
- Systemic racism/marginalization
- Family violence/"secrets"

I will push you to an edge of a cliff, then blame you for falling

HURT PEOPLE NEED TO HEAL

- More than PTSD
- It didn't start with you
- But it can, and it should, stop with you

THE IDEOLOGY OF HATE

- Ignorance, lack of exposure to different backgrounds
- Fear of “the other”, xenophobia, in-group/out-group mentality
- Fear of ourselves/lack of self-compassion
- Filling a void (this is how deviant groups attract and trap their recruits)
- Societal, cultural, religious, and political factors/misinterpretation and out of context quoting of a sacred text (but aren't we supposed to see God's face in every face?)
- Unresolved, trans-generational trauma (is it a choice?)

HATE CIRCUITS

- **Subcortical structures:** the insula and putamen (both activated in love and intense intimate romance, are also involved in preparing for aggressive moves).
- **Cortical structures:** the frontal lobe (love, fascinating enough, causes de-activation of judgment and clouds reason more than hate does).

HATE CYCLES

The longer and more frequent you are exposed to a hated or a loved face, the more your brain is programmed and trained to respond accordingly. There is indeed a very thin line between the two most constructive or destructive human emotions: love and hate.

This provides a golden opportunity for the fields of technology and psychology to collaborate and offer attractive alternatives to violence. We need collectively to reclaim the podium and change the narrative by focusing on love instead.

The role of us, caregivers, is vital here. We cannot claim to be non-racists if we support systematic racism. It is not enough to be non-racist, we need to actively strive to become anti-racist, as individuals, teams, families, and communities.

IMPACTS OF HATE ON THE PSYCHE

Damaging self-esteem

Doubting one's own beauty

Losing one's voice

Trauma sucks out joy

“Acting out” what you don't have the words for

Shutting down, lashing out, or even resorting to violence or self-harm

Internalized racism

Missing out on shared beauty (traumatized children grow older faster)

JUSTICE IS ESSENTIAL FOR HEALING

- Don't laugh at racist jokes, rather interrupt, don't let your silence speak for you
- Make a conscious effort to get to really know people who are "different" than you
- Learn about diverse cultures and traditions, show authentic curiosity, and be genuinely interested. This might entail getting out of your comfort zone and trying new things
- Think before you speak, and ask if you are not sure, weigh your words, because language matters
- Be a role model, be vocal in opposing discriminatory views and practices, and challenge unfair policies and procedures
- Don't make assumptions, examine your own prejudices and explicit and implicit bias
- Explore the unfamiliar. Firsthand exposure is enlightening and gives perspective
- Work on projects with members of groups different than your own. Human connection heals the wounds of ignorance and hate
- Be a proactive parent, expose your children to diversity, and show them how to safely stand up for justice
- Support anti-racist causes

WHAT TO DO **IF YOU ARE THE...**

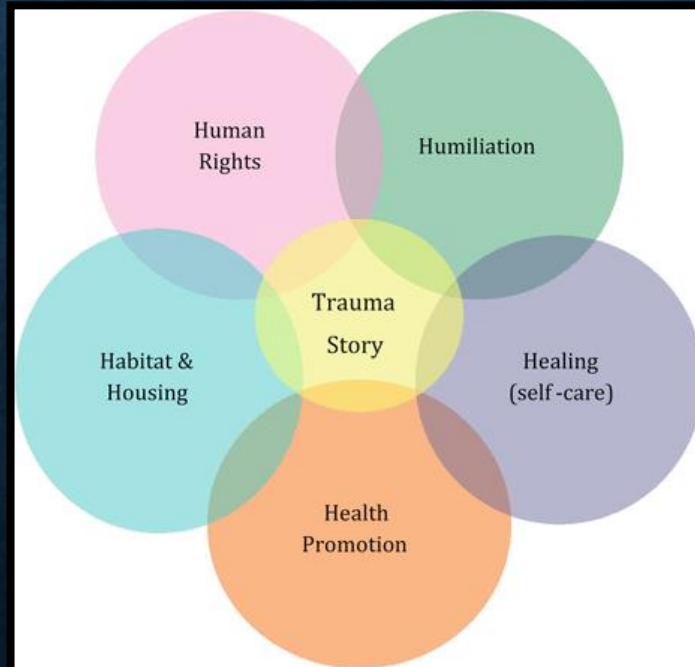
- **Perpetrator: STOP** (Stop literally, Take a deep breath, think of Options, and Pick the one with best value), appeal to your forebrain (logical/rational mind) to weigh your choices and examine your humanity and morality
- **Bystander: ACT** (Assess safety, Connect/cause a distraction, and Take a stand), trust your midbrain (emotional mind) to detect the smoke and sound the alarm
- **“Victim”:** RISE (Raise your voice/speak up, Involve, examine Safe options, and Exit with dignity), you might have to resort to your hindbrain (primitive/reptilian mind) to survive

THE POWER OF JUSTICE

- There is no healing without justice. We need to speak against genocide and ecocide. Justice brings order and beauty. We obey the law, but we are not powerless when others don't.
- Injustice is a personal and social cancer, if cannot be treated, it needs to be cut.
- The ideal city is open to all who choose to enter. The road to the ideal city is covered by our listening and empathic presence.
- Injustice makes us sick. Treating humans unfairly causes them physical and emotional distress. Injustice is ugly because it tears apart two basic rules: people should not harm each other; and people should help each other to the extent within their limits and means.
- Because all environments can be transformed into healing habitats, we condemn the silent abuse of nature and our animal partners.
- All humans have the right to a culturally effective healthcare.
- Justice is not equal to the law, it is fairness. Laws can be legal, but neither fair nor equitable.
- In the human rights field, healing is often ignored. Individuals and communities in refugee camps drown in despair, while lawyers argue their legal status in fancy court rooms.
- Storytelling to those interested in restoring justice can pull people out of isolation, shame, and humiliation.
- I will be acting in bad faith if I ignored the monumental task of ending human violence while my patients struggle to cope with atrocities of unspeakable horror.

WHAT CAN YOU REALISTICALLY DO AS AN INDIVIDUAL?

- Try to reduce the aggression in your everyday life towards everyone around you.
- Work on restoring human dignity.
- Engage beauty.
- Choose compassion, use language like “what should I know about you? We will get through this together”.



THINGS THAT HELP

- Honest self-inventory, discovering and working on our conscious and unconscious bias
- Getting educated. We don't have to visit every country or speak every language in order to have cultural humility
- Refusing to hate, and actively working on embracing love
- Not sugar-coating the issue or downplaying it, rather calling it exactly what it is
- Not placing the burden of fighting hate on the shoulders of its recipients
- Speaking up, safely. Confronting safely all forms of aggression, because hate and violence don't happen in a vacuum, they happen because they are allowed to happen, and they will stop happening when they are no longer tolerated

IMPACTS OF GENERATIONAL TRAUMA

- Poverty
- Correctional pipeline
- Low education and employment rates
- Foster system and state agencies

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

- But I wasn't part of that history (we all are)
- Acknowledge your privilege (use it to lift others)
- Be an ally, empower people, expect resistance (trust is a privilege to be earned)
- Support cultural healing rituals and practices
- Examine and challenge your policies, procedures, and practices
- Nurse your own wounds
- Take care of your loved ones
- Healing requires safety, truth-telling, justice, and reconciliation

REFERENCES

- *The Psychology of Hate*: Allison Abrams, LCSW
- *The Power of Justice*: James Mason, PhD
- *Healing Invisible Wounds*: Richard Mollica, MD