



Book Review: *Therapy in Colour: Intersectional, Anti-Racist and Intercultural Approaches by Therapists of Colour*; Edited by: Isha McKenzie-Mavinga, Kris Black, Karen Carberry and Eugene Ellis; Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2023, 352 pages

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Therapy in Colour is a pioneering and insightful exploration penned by a collective of therapists from diverse backgrounds, sharing their profound clinical and personal experiences within the therapeutic landscape. Authored by therapists from the Black, African and Asian Therapy Network, a community comprising counsellors and psychotherapists of Black, African, Asian, and Caribbean heritage in the UK (BAATN, 2022), this edited text offers a rare and invaluable perspective on their journeys as clinicians, trainees, and educators in the realm of mental health. The book aims to convey their perspectives on anti-racist and inter-cultural therapy practices in the UK through firsthand narratives derived from the lived experiences of therapists of color. Rooted in their personal journeys, the text provides a comprehensive examination of how race, ethnicity, culture, and their intersections with historically marginalized perspectives manifest throughout the trajectories of therapists of color in different professional capacities. Encompassing the client-therapist relationship, therapist training, clinical practice, supervision, self-care, and integrating various theoretical orientations within the broader socio-economic context of the UK, the book features insights from 27 experts in the psychological domain.

Specific to practitioners in the field of dance/movement therapy (DMT), the themes of creativity and embodiment weave through most of the text, even though many authors lack a direct background in DMT. The transformative power of DMT lies in its unique ability to tap into the creative and transcendental dimensions of movement, distinguishing it from other body-oriented disciplines like somatic psychotherapy (e.g. Tantia, 2016). DMT surpasses the exploration of bodily sensations by integrating the expressive language of dance, unlocking profound emotional and spiritual experiences. This creative approach facilitates individuals in accessing deeper layers of the

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psyche, fostering personal growth and self-discovery that extends beyond the purely physical realm. Carmen Joanne Ablack (pp. 230–243) dedicates an entire chapter to sharing the profound influence of dance/movement on both embodied and relational levels throughout her 30 years of practice as a therapist of color. The acknowledgment of how dance and movement serve as expressive venues for these therapists' professional experiences is evident in Chapter 7 (Puricelli-Culverwell, p. 131), Chapter 10 (Grillo, p. 171), and Chapter 11 (Lovatt, p. 185). As trauma becomes a significant topic for therapists and clients from minority backgrounds, many authors highlight the embodied experiential aspects of their journeys, such as the embodied process in Welch-Moring's ancestral constellations work (pp. 290–292). In the broader context, amid the current era of AI, embodiment holds intrinsic value, contributing to human civilization and humanity. Consequently, this book significantly enriches the scholarship in this field from a social justice perspective.

One of the strengths of the book lies in its authentic and unfiltered narratives. The authors draw from their own clinical encounters, unraveling the complexities of the client-therapist relationship through the lens of their unique cultural and ethnic backgrounds. The candid discussions provide readers with a deep understanding of the challenges and triumphs faced by therapists of color as they navigate the intricacies of therapeutic practice.

Organized into five sections, it (1) navigates themes of color, creativity, and anti-racist reflections, (2) delves into the historical, present, and future dimensions of psychological field training, (3) explores Continuing Professional Development (CPD), including supervision and self-care, with a specific focus on mental, spiritual, physical, and emotional well-being, (4) centers around therapeutic needs and psychological wellness within the context of identity, culture, and a sense of belonging, and (5) examines clinical practice through an intersectional lens.

Part I of the book sheds light on clinical practice, offering a perspective that resonates deeply with this reviewer as a Chinese, East Asian immigrant, able-bodied cisgender female therapist and educator who underwent international training and conventional degree programs to practice in the USA. For example, in Chapter 1, Thomas demonstrates culturally sensitive approaches aimed at engaging people of color (POC) who are struggling with distrust in the healthcare system as a result of societal racism and prejudice. The chapter mirrors my own clinical work with POC, and these approaches will provide support for this client group, to address their internalized racism and intergenerational trauma. The whole section addresses issues such as bearing witness to the racist gaze (Keval, pp. 51–61), processing countertransference from white clients' unconscious racist states of mind (Santos, pp. 75–83), and bridging differences through creativity (Boxill, pp. 62–74). This level of relatedness creates a transcendent experience, validating and mirroring my own journey through attunement. What sets this book apart is the authors' personal perspectives, resembling the collective storytelling inherent in many non-Western healing traditions, which is historically neglected within the Western psychotherapy (Kottler, 2014). As highlighted by several authors, the presence of *allies* (e.g. Coleman & Gibson, p. 117; Puricelli-Culverwell, p. 131) on the therapists' journeys enhances the collective healing and professional growth. This sense of connectedness extends to trainees and educators, who will find immense value in the abundance of personal stories and case

vignettes shared in the book, serving as powerful teaching tools (Khosla, pp. 86–97) and offering firsthand glimpses into the multifaceted realities of clinical practice as therapists of color.

Part II centers on the formal education of therapists through degree/certificate programs. The authors, drawing from their experiences as trainees and later educators, illuminate the disparities and nuances within training programs, skillfully intertwining personal anecdotes with discussions on systemic challenges. These challenges encompass issues such as the lack of representation within the cohort (Stephens-Morgan, p. 136) and faculty (Coleman & Gibson, pp. 108–110), as well as the importance of establishing supportive networks (Puricelli-Culverwell, pp. 120–122) and implementing practices that bring safe and nurturing environment for students to thrive. This section serves as a valuable resource for both students and educators, offering guidance on fostering a more inclusive and culturally sensitive approach in pedagogy. In Chapter 6, Coleman and Gibson provide insights into the impact of representative mentorship on professional development, sharing both supportive and challenging mentorship experiences. Chapter 7, authored by Puricelli-Culverwell, outlines an action plan for networking to build a diverse and inclusive community. In Chapter 8, Stephens-Morgan narrates her career development story as an art therapist, emphasizing creativity through her visual art-making process. Given that creativity serves as a shared healing agent across various creative arts therapy modalities, this story resonates broadly with creative arts therapists, including dance/movement therapists. The collective advocacy presented in this section underscores the pressing need to address the core topics of cultural competency and humility in therapeutic education for a more inclusive and diverse training environment.

Part III of the book engages in crucial conversations about supervision, self-care, resilience, and the paramount importance of cultivating a supportive community for POC within the therapeutic profession. The authors share their strategies for preserving emotional well-being amidst the distinctive stressors encountered by therapists of color, making this book a beacon of guidance for those navigating similar paths. Notably, both Chapters 10 and 11 adopt an embodied approach to explore the well-being of therapists of color consistently exposed to trauma in the profession. These chapters present methods to acknowledge the therapist's own trauma manifestation in various professional settings (Lovatt, pp. 182–186) and underscore practical tools, such as dancing, singing, or screaming, as well as active participation in groups and forums, aimed at releasing tensions stored in the body (Grillo, p. 171).

The illuminating integration of various psychotherapy models and the intersectionality of race, ethnicity, and personal identity takes center stage in Part IV and V. Chapter 15 by Carmen Joanne Ablack particularly resonates with the field of DMT, as the author emphasized the role of dance/movement in the “embodied experiencing-relational learning”. The lived experiences recounted in this chapter offer nuanced insights into the embodied and relational journey of a therapist of color, fostering a deeper understanding of the challenges and triumphs they navigate. DMT educators can leverage the vignette in the chapter as a catalyst for open dialogues on cultural competence, diversity, and the impact of systemic factors on therapeutic relationships. The case vignette provides practical illustrations of culturally sensitive approaches, serving as a valuable resource for educators striving to instill a more

inclusive perspective in their training programs. In essence, the personal stories and the case vignette act as bridges between theory and practice, enriching the educational experience and equipping trainees and educators with the tools needed to navigate the complexities of a diverse and evolving therapeutic landscape.

While *Therapy in Colour* provides a rich tapestry of insights into the experiences of therapists of color, it is important to acknowledge its limitation in terms of geographic context. The authors, all based in the UK, offer a perspective shaped by the socio-economic atmosphere and the unique relationship with the country's imperialism and colonialism. Dance/movement therapists outside the UK will have to exercise caution when applying the book's materials in different cultural and national settings. Consider, for instance, how the process of embodied experience and meaning making for the body (Grillo, p. 161) might shift within diverse social contexts. Additionally, reflecting on the varied manifestations of the body's "provoked ancestral memories" (Lovatt, p. 173) in the realms of psychotherapy and supervision prompts intriguing questions worth contemplating. The contextual variations in socio-economic dynamics and historical legacies can significantly impact the practice of therapy. It is crucial for readers to recognize and adapt the lessons from *Therapy in Color* to their specific cultural landscapes, ensuring that the nuanced differences in societal structures and historical contexts are considered. While the book serves as a valuable resource, its application should be approached with sensitivity to these contextual variations to foster a more inclusive and globally relevant understanding of therapeutic practice.

In essence, *Therapy in Colour* is not just a book; it is a testament to resilience, authenticity, and the collective strength of therapists of color. Through their stories, the authors pave the way for a more inclusive and empathetic future within the field of mental health. This book serves as an integral resource not only for psychotherapists but also for dance/movement therapists seeking a deeper understanding of cultural competence and diversity within their practice. Rooted in the experiences of therapists of color in the UK, the book's narratives and insights can inspire and inform the field of dance/movement therapy. By showcasing the significance of cultural humility and offering a roadmap for recording scholarship from a POC perspective, the book becomes a guiding light for practitioners and educators alike. Its potential to shape formal education systems and bring enriched cultural perspectives to clinical practices, coupled with the importance of preserving oral histories from diverse practitioners' lived experiences, makes it a compelling recommendation for dance/movement therapists looking to foster inclusivity and sensitivity in their work. However, readers are advised to approach the application of these insights with caution, recognizing the need for contextual adaptation in different cultural and geographical settings. In summation, this book offers dance/movement therapists a transformative journey towards a more culturally sensitive and empathetic therapeutic landscape.

Declarations

Ethical Approval This article does not contain any studies with human participants or animals performed by any of the authors.

Conflict of Interest The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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