

REDEFINING A SAFE SPACE FOR EVERYONE:
CLINICAL APPROACHES TO WORKING WITH QUEERS OF COLOR
AND ADDRESSING INCLUSION IN ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLES

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DISCLOSURE

- Financial Disclosure

- ❖ None

- Non-financial Disclosure

- ❖ Board Member of Tarab NYC

OUTLINE OF PRESENTATION

- Limitations on presentation
- What factors affect privilege in alternative lifestyles?
- Discussion of kink/BDSM spaces and impact on POC
- Discussion of community and clinical interventions

LIMITATIONS OF PRESENTATION

- Not enough research
- Topics are delineated though many community structures (such as kink/BDSM, poly) overlap
- More intersectional perspectives needed (think of how to include persons with disabilities, marginalization of trans community members)

UNPACKING PRIVILEGE IN NON-TRADITIONAL LIFESTYLES

- Leisure time?
- Income? Type of employment?
- Family responsibilities? Childcare?
- Residence?

UNPACKING PRIVILEGE IN NON-TRADITIONAL LIFESTYLES

- Identity based on preferences rather than racial stereotypes
- Less research conducted in studies
- Minimal popular culture presence compared to White counterparts as poly and kink/BDSM

HOW DOES THE BDSM/KINK SCENE INFLUENCE QUEER POC?

- Partners often draw on social hierarchies to create scenes and play
- Popularity of race play in dom/sub relationship framed in race play
- Economic disparities among different demographics

WHAT MAKES KINK/BDSM SPACES UNSAFE?

- Objectification of POC based on race stereotypes
- Indifference to non-consensual racialized comments or fetishes
- Arguments about sexual freedom automatically discredit POC who challenge or questions stereotypes in race play

PRIVILEGES IN POLYAMOROUS LIFESTYLES

- Navigating multiple social spaces that partners may not be able to do
- “There’s no people of color because they don’t come to our events.”
- Shaming for non-monogamous lifestyle occurs, but impact on person widely varies based on privilege

PRIVILEGES IN POLYAMOROUS LIFESTYLES

- Access to providers that address sexual/reproductive health needs
- Less stigma attached to White persons regarding transmission of STIs

WHAT FACTORS INFLUENCE VISIBILITY IN POLYAMORY?

- Residential setting
- Family values of poly persons (biological, adoptive, chosen...)
- Financial independence and autonomy
- Energy for other relationships

HOW CAN I MAKE THE KINK/POLY COMMUNITY MORE INCLUSIVE FOR POC?

- Educate yourself on racial dynamics/structures
- Refrain from engaging play in racialized context unless you absolutely have consent from partner
- Incorporate POC in planning events and leadership in groups in addition to co-sponsoring events

HOW CAN I MAKE THE KINK/POLY COMMUNITY MORE INCLUSIVE FOR POC?

- Reach out to other organizations and offer incentives to come to events
- Seek feedback from attendees after parties and events
- Support organizations that ensure access to affordable and adequate sexual/reproductive healthcare

WHAT APPROACH SHOULD I TAKE IN MY WORK WITH POC WHO IDENTIFY WITH AN ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLE?

Themes likely to come up in therapeutic work

- Managing isolative experiences in kink/poly spaces while having anxiety around ostracism from family/friends
- More uncertainty of “fitting in”
- Hyper-awareness around stigma of “BDSM is a ‘white thing.’”

WHAT APPROACH SHOULD I TAKE IN MY WORK WITH POC WHO IDENTIFY WITH AN ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLE?

Themes likely to come up in therapeutic work

- Isolation and lack of emotional support around race play
- Feeling of disconnection or distance from community events
- Alienation from community depending on identity of most members

THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS?

COMMENTS?

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