

© Springer International Publishing AG 2018

Jay Lebow, Anthony Chambers and Douglas C. Breunlin

Encyclopedia of Couple and Family Therapy

10.1007/978-3-319-15877-8\_823-2

# Decolonizing Couples and Family Therapy: Social Justice Praxis in Liberatory Healing Community Practice

Rhea Almeida<sup>1</sup>, Lisa Dressner<sup>1</sup> and Willie Tolliver<sup>2</sup>

(1)The Institute for Family Services, Somerset, NJ, USA

(2)Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College, 2180 Third Avenue, 10035 New York, NY, USA

**Rhea Almeida (Corresponding author)**

Email: [rheaalmeid@gmail.com](mailto:rheaalmeid@gmail.com)

**Lisa Dressner**

Email: [ldressner@comcast.net](mailto:ldressner@comcast.net)

**Willie Tolliver**

Email: [wtollive@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:wtollive@hunter.cuny.edu)

## Without Abstract

“There is no thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.” *Audre Lorde*  
Conventional wisdom distilled from Western psychology focuses on the emotional connectivity of couples as an indicator of their health. Nevertheless perforations from oppressive forces seriously impact the development and security of couples lives. These lived experiences lacerate the emotional bonding of a couple. Therapeutic attention to the mature and healthy bond of a couple necessitates the process of naming and disrupting oppressive forces that shape the spaces and places in which emotional bonding of a couple occurs.

## Coloniality Matrix of Power

One of the most powerful weapons of the colonial matrix of power is hiding crimes against indigenous and enslaved peoples and keeping all of those harmed by the crimes “linked” to the sickness of a conquering society. The control of history, knowledge, health, and justice are features of the colonial matrix of power, or coloniality (Mignolo [2011](#); Quijano [2007](#)). The representation of different social identity groups in any given society is created and controlled by groups that have greater social, economic, and political power. In general, the category of “other” is ascribed to individuals who belong to underrepresented, marginalized, or oppressed social identity groups. This is done to differentiate groups from the more valued, more powerful social groups that set the standard for normative lived experiences in a given society. These groups install and legitimize the dominant societal norms that are more familiar in a given society. Subjugated knowledge about social values and life experiences of marginalized populations is rendered invisible. The demand of coloniality

requires that we live through one mask. The masks of Latinos, Blacks, Asians, Native Americans, workers, students, athletes, elderly, youth, teachers, social workers, psychologists, and family therapists are therapeutically processed through the single knowledge system of emotionality. The matrix of coloniality is a major site for the wounding of couples and families. Coloniality is a phenomenon in the asserted postcolonial era that maintains a dominance of world structures by modern-day colonizers in the form of restricted resources, life opportunities in the lives of disadvantaged groups (Grosfoguel [2011](#), [2013](#); Maldonado-Torres [2007](#)), and implicit cultural imperialism. Castro-Goméz ( [2010](#)) argues that in modern colonialism, or coloniality, domination by force is not the only method of domination. Another method of coloniality is discourse about “the other” embedded within the everyday lives of both colonizers and colonized. For example, whiteness was the first cultural and geographical imaginary of the world system from which the ethnic division of labor and the transfer of capital and raw material were legitimized globally (Battalora [2013](#)). This set the staging for coloniality.

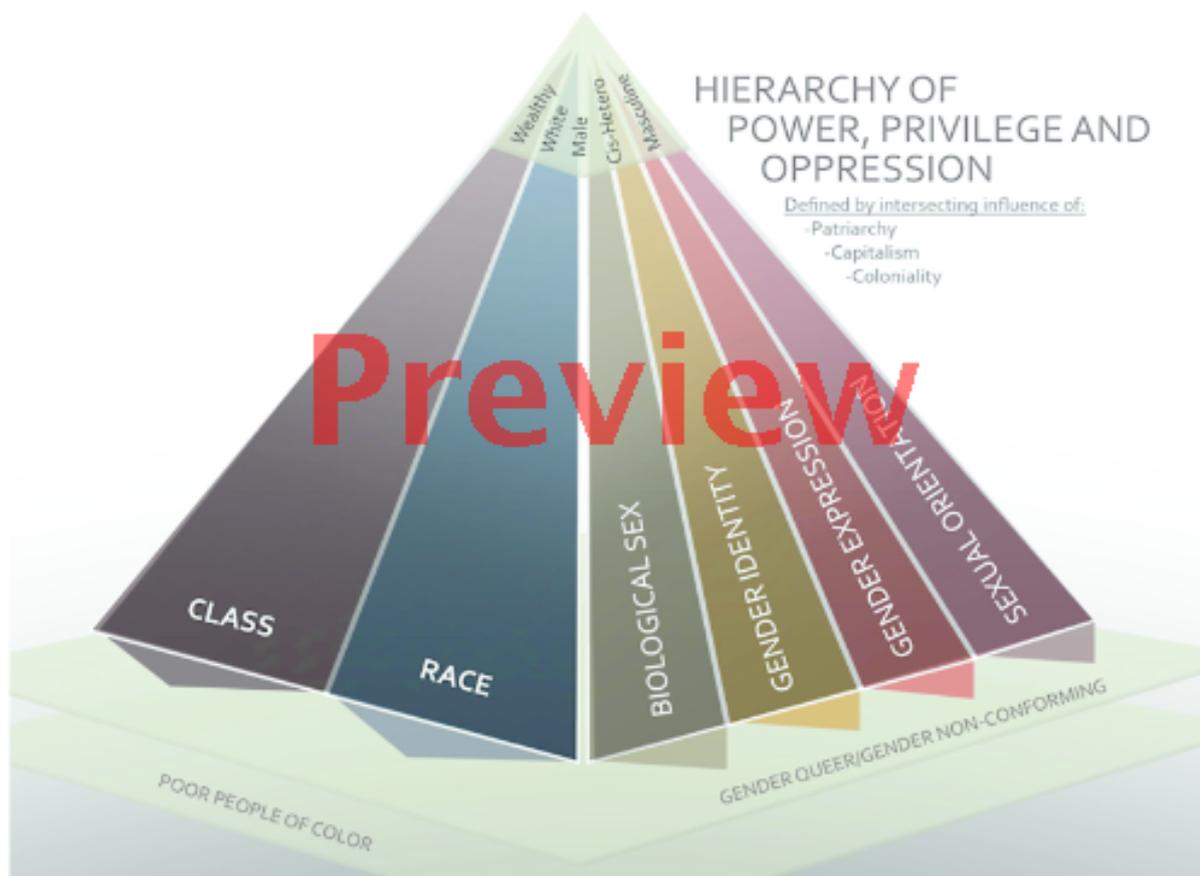
Quijano (2000) describes coloniality as manifesting in at least three interconnected and interdependent forms:

**Systems of hierarchies:** racial division and classification as the organizing principle of White supremacy

**Systems of knowledge:** privileging of Western or Eurocentric forms of knowledge as universal and objective

**Societal systems:** reinforcing hierarchies through construction of the state and specific institutions to regulate, segregate, and diminish decolonizing systems of healing and lived experiences

Examples of these hierarchies and categorizations are visible in all of the ways our lives are compartmentalized into silos. The silos of the social services and the prison industrial complexes, physicians and big pharma, big Agri, and education are shaped by a principle of corporate profits at the cost of human lives. The academic disciplines that produce professionals to populate the silos are cordoned off from one another’s scholarship, and professionals in mental health or health are bifurcated as advocates or clinicians, academics, or activists. The list is endless and constitutes a powerful capitulation to the hierarchies established by coloniality. These hierarchies are directly contiguous with the formation of healthy families and healthy functioning couples, with emotional bonding being but one factor in the analysis and healing of healthy couples (Fig. [1](#)).



**Fig. 1**  
Hierarchy of power, privilege, and oppression (Almeida [2016](#))

Gathering knowledge about the lived experiences of subjugated identities requires a deep understanding of the powerful structures that create such uneven access to social and cultural capital. This knowledge is essential to the formation of pathways for emancipation and liberation, even for couples.

## Intersectionality

The concept of intersectionality originated from Black and Chicana feminist theory (Anzaldúa [1987, 1999](#); Collins [2000, 2004, 2009](#); Crenshaw [1994](#)), as well as developing world feminism and queer theory. It requires the analysis of systemic power, privilege, oppression, and social location/standpoint to be used in understanding multiple social identities held by human beings (Harding [2003](#); Hankivsky and Cormier [2011](#)).

Intersectionality holds that classifications such as gender, race, class, and other signifiers of identity cannot be examined in isolation from one another. They interact and intersect in individual's lives, society, and social systems and are mutually constitutive. It highlights how people with multiple identities can be excluded from certain initiatives meant to "even the playing field," such as affirmative action, because such efforts focus on only one oppressed identity, rendering other identities invisible. Intersectionality decodes the "colonial matrix of power" and creates a foundation for decolonizing and liberation praxis.

Multiple identities coexist and complicate the ways in which we typically think of class, race, gender, and sexuality as social, political, and economic problems. It reflects the complexity and fluidity of lived experiences along multiple trajectories of hierarchies and overcomes the challenge of compartmentalizing the pillars of privilege, domination, and oppression.

## Liberation Praxis

Liberatory healing practices have distinct foundational strategies that draw from knowledge across academic disciplines to disrupt and dismantle the residuals of colonial structures. The structures impact clients, practitioners, and students who engage in teaching and learning contexts in search of healing for themselves and their communities (Almeida et al. [2015](#)).

Relationships are formed and structured inside of established systems that dispense power, privilege, and oppression based on social identities. Strategies of liberatory healing through decolonizing include:

- Transparency and the naming of structures of dominance
- Redrawing the boundaries of inclusion
- Disrupting the hierarchical categories of coloniality around racialization, class, gender, sexual identity, etc.
- Desegregating healing spaces
- Being free of living the script of coloniality
- Affirming and developing knowledge and practices from border spaces across disciplines and geographic localities
- Sharing social and political capital to create pathway toward economic capital

## Redrawing the Boundaries of Trauma

Trauma can occur with a single event in one's life like an illness, rape or sexual assault, sudden loss of employment, and death within a normative trajectory of the life cycle. Other forms of trauma are experienced when loss accompanies sudden death that challenges the lived experiences and normalcy of the life cycle like the death of a child, and multiple examples of the brutal separation of children from their parents as in foster care or political migration histories. The experience of targeted identities could be a trauma limited to a specific time in the life cycle like bullying; loss of a parent; loss of ableness through illness, accident, or political terrorism; and other similar life-threatening events.

All of these traumas however can be situated within a family or community where there is intergenerational and or historical trauma. Intergenerational trauma transports these experiences from one generation to another (DeGruy [2005](#); Brave Heart et al. [2011](#); Doucet and Rovers [2010](#); Jacobs [2011](#)).

Historical trauma has life-altering consequences in current generations as witnessed in the development of illnesses such as PTSD, depression, and type 2 diabetes all disproportionately occurring in Native and African American communities (Walters and Simoni [2009](#)). For these communities healing is particularly complex as the injury and lack of sustained dignity continue on a daily basis.

When trauma manifests in persons located within the contours of historical and intergenerational trauma, healing occurs within the knowledge space of these experiences. Trauma that manifests in persons situated within a legacy of entitlement or advantages also necessitates the naming of these legacies that complicate the healing process if left invisible. This type of trauma is evidenced in the current rage and despair of many White poor communities struck by opioid tsunamis.

Addressing trauma through a matrix of perforations occurring at the colonial wound involves:

- Addressing intergenerational trauma and its insidious wear on the body and soul
- Focusing on historical trauma and migration loss
- Restructuring parenting hierarchies post-trauma in families with children
- Paving the sense of hopelessness with inspiration and dignity

In practice, operationalizing this analysis requires building critical consciousness accompanied by strategies of empowerment and accountability.

## Building Critical Consciousness

Although couples will experience varying emotions based on their own lived experiences and embodiment of the varying social identities constructed by society, building critical consciousness creates a platform for liberation (Du Bois [1903/ 1994](#); Freire [1999](#); Almeida [2003](#); Almeida et al. [2007a, b](#)). Gathering knowledge that structural forces exist and control all levels of social, economic, and political interaction provides clients with what Mignolo ( [2009](#)) refers to as strategies of epistemic disobedience.

The method used to raise critical consciousness with couples and families is through the use of popular film vignettes, music, social media, and a variety of tools (Almeida et al. 2007; Hierarchy of Power Privilege and Oppression; Appendix I; Appendix II). The tools are intended to detoxify personal issues while simultaneously inviting larger context conversations, for example, conversations about the trajectory of gender identities. From the outset there is a restructuring of therapeutic conversations taking the therapy out of the realm of the personal to the political, from the intrapsychic to the social, and from the interior to the exterior. This process is crucial as it creates a platform from which healing strategies are created.

Following an initial consultation, couples are moved into cultural circles for a period of 8 weeks. During these 8 weeks, they are offered language and analysis to name power, privilege, and oppression for the dialogue and inquiry that unfolds. This allows for a linking of internal couple dynamics and their issues and multiple identities to the larger societal context where the norms of socialization around gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and other lived experiences are incubated.

## Application of the Approach in Couples Therapy: The Power of Language

“They get on the walls. They get in your wallpaper. They get in your rugs, in your upholstery, and your clothes, and finally in to you.” *Maya Angelou.*

## Samantha and Allen

Not uncommon to most couples, Samantha and Allen defined their problem as one of communication difficulties. Samantha in her late thirties identified herself as Japanese and Chilean who grew up in both places before her family relocated to the United States. She speaks both languages fluently. Samantha is the youngest of three siblings with two older brothers born to middle-class parents. She teaches languages at a private high school. Allen identified as African American, an only child also born to middle-class parents, who spent most of his life in New Jersey. After being laid off from a position at a Media Arts Center in NYC, he decided to open a fitness center. While it did well for a brief time, the recession and loss of many customers made it impossible for Allen to sustain the business. He picked up a few hours a week working for another fitness center. During their 5-year marriage, he worked for the first year and has been unemployed since then. What they defined as communication problems centered mostly around her wanting to have a child and his reticence to move into parenthood, as well as what he described as her “nagging” him to get a job and help around household responsibilities. He claimed his unemployment was the reason for his refusal to consider having a child at this time. When Samantha suggested that she could continue to support the family if he took on the responsibility of raising their child, it was a solution he was uninterested in pursuing. They were moved into the separate gender circles to begin the process of developing critical consciousness.

*This is the juncture at which the narrow bounded marker of couples as a closed system is challenged. The concept of couples both as an autonomous unit and disconnected from their contexts of socialization is a feature of coloniality.*

In the circles they watched film vignettes like *Pretty Woman*, *Jungle Fever*, *Straight out of Brooklyn*, *Hope Springs*, *Mississippi Masala*, *Love Jones*, *Crash*, *Girl Fight*, and others. These films’ depiction of social, political, and economic markers are used to begin the multiple gendered conversations including masculinities and femininities.

The clips of movie dialogues reflect the intersections of class, race, gender fluidity, and sexual orientation, all of which intrude into a couple’s life. In this case Allen’s unemployment, particularly as a Black man, intruded on his masculinity. Similarly the gendered pressure to have a child with age as a compelling barrier was a great concern to Samantha. In assessing the degree of sexual intimacy, they both reported having sex around once or twice every few months.

Using the tool called “Money, Sex, and Responsibility” (Ault-Riche [1994](#)) that assesses for both of their responsibilities around the second shift, it was apparent that Samantha did the bulk of household responsibilities that included cooking, cleaning, grocery shopping, and laundry of common items like sheets and towels. They both did their own personal laundry. Allen took on scheduling car maintenance and caring for his dog, which he brought into the marriage. Regarding financial contributions, he paid for his cell phone, gas, and his car servicing. This tool quantifies contributions to the second shift in terms of daily, weekly, monthly, and annual tasks (Almeida et al. 2007). Samantha scored considerably higher than did Tony, which offered them an analysis of part of their relationship in concrete terms. This information is shared by both of them in their respective circles. *The focus remains on societal norms that perhaps informing second-shift decisions, resisting the default to explore inner contributing familial patterns, a potentially pathologizing course.*

When exploring Allen's choices to disengage from the second shift especially since he was not fully employed, he reflected on perhaps sharing responsibilities, but would not consider using a mop or cleaning bathrooms, reflecting rigid masculinity.

In her circle Samantha saw the graphic pattern of Tony's nonparticipation in a partnership. She continually offered excuses such as he did not understand what was being communicated to him by the men and the therapists. She believed that things needed to be broken down for him, as it often needs to be done with the teens in her class. She was challenged to interrogate the ways in which she infantilized him by having her reflect on all of the ways he was competent in some aspects of his life. She became painfully aware of the disconnect between them. Not having knowledge about how power in relationships operated, she overemphasized the personal decontextualized dynamics. Perhaps her efforts, unwittingly to balance the power in their relationship, were to assume a level of literacy that kept her stuck in this relationship. During this period Allen informed her that he would be traveling to Hong Kong with a male friend to clear his head. When asked about his affordability for this trip, he remained vague. She learned later that his mother paid for it.

*Here is a space where interrogation of intergenerational patterns is relevant.*

While both of Allen's parents were frustrated and concerned about his refusal to take up any work even if it was not within his projected hopes, it became clear that his mother supported him financially much to the chagrin of his father.

## **Empowerment: Dismantling Subjugation**

Empowerment first occurred through transparency and the naming of structures that threaded gendered norms into this relationship shaping it in many ways.

Redrawing the boundaries of inclusion occurred through embracing this couple within a multiracial, multi-gendered healing circle, ending their isolation. Simultaneously hierarchical categories of coloniality around race, class, gender, and sexual identity were disrupted.

## **Accountability: Dismantling Dominance**

Following his trip to Hong Kong, Allen decided he would take a break from therapy. Samantha was angry and disappointed but still wanted to explore healing for them and their future. The therapists (a team of therapists work with the couple) contacted him, and he indicated he planned to return soon. Shortly afterward Samantha convinced him to join her in a fertility consult. Test results from that consultation showed she was positive for herpes. After fierce denials he acknowledged having a brief affair during their marriage. This new information confirmed for Samantha the fact that they were in fact living single lives in the corridor of couplehood.

## **Couple Two**

In the next vignette, we introduce Jeff and Mary and their two sons Jeff Jr. and David. Liberatory strategies, outlined below, were part of their healing experience. Raising critical consciousness, promoting empowerment, and accountability to different members of this system was accomplished through the use of:

*Movie vignettes that included Gridlocked and When a Man Loves a Woman, two movies shown together, juxtaposing a single, poor person of color trying to access substance abuse treatment with that of a married White upper-class woman. The tools invite clients, families, and communities to create or draw from their ancestral rituals to address generational trauma.*

## Transparency Around Shared Conversations and Strategies for Change

Jeff and Mary are a White, working class family in their early forties with sons Jeff Jr., 14, and David, 11. Both parents were in recovery for many years and connected to an AA community. However, like many other couples in AA, sobriety brought a new set of challenges, in their case a dissatisfied marriage. They both expressed frustration with their high school education and limited careers. Jeff was a carpet layer and Mary worked as an office manager at a pharmaceutical company. Mary was very angry and wondered if their marriage was salvageable. After participating in the dialogue and inquiry of the critical consciousness process and understanding the multiple dimensions of misuse and abuse of power, she was able to start naming the behaviors that were eroding their relationship. She was better able to understand how her experience of being overburdened in her marriage was linked to Jeff's lack of participation in second-shift responsibilities, economic abuse through making unilateral decisions about family purchases, and emotional abuse as he derailed most of her efforts to speak with him about her concerns. These experiences coupled with the challenges of raising two sons (one who was beginning to use drugs and alcohol) led Mary to contemplate divorce.

Jeff engaged in a similar process of developing critical consciousness in his circle of men and viewed vignettes that focused on the range of male norm socialization, White privilege and power, and control within heterosexual and LGBTQ relationships. This informed his understanding of how he had absorbed patriarchal messages of masculinity that were threatening both the health of his marriage and his relationships with his sons.

*The cultural circles made it possible to redefine the root of the problem as stemming from influences of a patriarchal society. Patriarchy emphasizes masculinity as individualistic, stoic, and homophobic, therefore making avoiding femininity and characteristics/tasks associated with this socialization of manhood essential. Rather than a problem that is unique to this couple, understanding patriarchy gave them hope that there were possibilities outside of closed couple model.*

Within their cultural circle that was multiracial and socioeconomically diverse, inclusive of single individuals and LGBTQ couples, Jeff and Mary began to tease out their self-identification as victims signified by their working class status. The obfuscation of whiteness has not provided the language or interrogation for such identities (Pewewardy and Almeida [2013](#)). They were able to claim more of their privilege as White, heterosexual individuals who, in spite of financial strains due to their limited education, were still able to access treatment keeping their addictions private from their workplaces. At this juncture they began to explore and redefine their couple and family values, countering much of what they learned in their prior therapy. The prior focus was within the interior of their relationship – lending support for one another's professional goals, assignments to spend free time with just one another, and listening assignments to offer reflective feedback to each other. They questioned the commercial definition of relationships, which assumed that all love, caring, and connection ought to come from two people in an isolated context – the couple. It is important to note that this limited and

harmful delineation of couplehood is a construction of coloniality exported globally as the gold standard. Couple relationships that are supported and embraced within collective family and community circles are not present in much of this discourse on couples.

The transparency of a healing circle, where individuals from similar and different and social locations questioned, explored, tried out, and broadened new definitions of couples and family, created possibilities that pushed well beyond the constraints of the initial borders that Jeff and Mary defined for themselves.

## Empowerment: Dismantling Subjugation

Jeff and Mary's transition from identifying primarily with their locations of oppression had a positive impact not only on their relationship but with that of their sons as well. The circles opened up spaces for Jeff Jr. and David to develop critical consciousness as young White men. As Mary and Jeff created an alternative definition of marital satisfaction, considering their couplehood in a larger community context – where LGBTQ couples, single men and women, couples of color, and those more financially burdened than them worked together on all types of life cycle challenges – their perspective about their marriage and family shifted. Jeff examined his family of origin and the ideas that were passed along around men and second-shift responsibilities, and he began to assume a more equal role in the tasks in his home. He also addressed the trauma he experienced at the hands of his father from humiliation of his masculinity to frequent instances of physical brutality. Mary spoke of the trauma she experienced growing up at the hands of her father who divorced her mother when she was 9 years old. She is certain that he was some sort of government spy, and it was believed that he murdered one of their female family friends but was never charged. He had numerous guns and often threatened her and her siblings. She left home at the age of 16 and started to abuse substances at that time. Mary also talked about the shame she experienced because of her small family home. In avoiding invitations for guests to visit their home, there was another layer of isolation to their lives. Through unpacking her complicity with a patriarchal notion that her husband should be the ultimate rescuer and provider, she was able to grasp the rage she often directed toward Jeff. Both Jeff and Mary succeeded in their journey to increase their education. Jeff became a realtor and Mary a nurse.

*This linking of societal influences of capitalism, patriarchy, and White supremacy to generational patterns within a family and the passing on of this legacy to future generations are a hallmark of liberatory healing practices.*

## Accountability: Dismantling Dominance

In the community circles, Mary began to observe that Jeff would lead in challenging other men's misuses of power in relationships. She noted how this witnessing brought her a sense of pride and purpose in their relationship and the legacy they were creating together for their family. As their consciousness developed around their multiple identities, linking sources of oppression and privilege, and their choices around exercising their privilege responsibly both within their relationship and the outside world, they described an increased sense of peace and security. One example of this is when Jeff took his youngest son David to a national conference on White privilege at the suggestion of the therapeutic team and paid for by some members of the healing community that were in a position to invest in this activity. This benefit of social capital in a healing endeavor exemplifies the ways in which the healing community engaged in the process not only to invest in Jeff and David but toward the greater good of the larger community. This experience for David became his gateway as a young

White man living in a White, blue-collar community to excel in his academics and participate in a summer travel abroad program. Moving this couple from a focus on purely the interior of their lives to broader lived experiences positioned them as both contributing to and benefitting from a larger healing community. This was the impetus for their transformational shift.

## Conclusion

Human beings derive meaning in social contexts. Rarely do the human beings who call those social contexts home construct the social contexts in which human beings live. Forces much larger than the individuals living within the structures termed couple, family, community, and/or nation shape societies. Societies are not innocuous spaces created to ensure the healthy growth and development of all of its members. Societies are a mix of all that has happened along the trajectories of their existence. In countries whose very existences were achieved through colonization, there are multiple origin narratives; however, the narratives that achieve prominence are those of the conquering society. The conquering society establishes the norms of what constitutes standard behavior. In the United States, the norms for couples, sexuality, success, and status are all based in ideas that have political purposes, yet the ways of being are offered as the gold standard, and as a result people are legally prosecuted and/or randomly murdered for failure to comply.

The well-being of a couple is inextricably tied up with the well-being of society. In the absence of a society that nurtures the well-being of all people in ways that are equitable, liberatory practices undertaken in healing communities stand as an alternative to a one-size-fits-all focus on individuals. It is our epistemic right to present this approach to couple therapy to stand alongside the dominant Western psychology that does not critique its White supremacist and patriarchal origins.

## Cross-References

[Fairness](#)

[Gender](#)

[Historical Trauma](#)

[Minority Stress](#)

[Power](#)

[Racial Trauma](#)

[Social Construction](#)

[Socialization Processes](#)

[Social Role Theory](#)

[Torture](#)

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Questioning Binary Norms of Socialization

**1.**

Avoiding historically femininity and behaviors with cisgender women's role (housework, childcare, gender nonconforming activities and occupations).

**2.**

Seeking stereotypically hypermasculine appearance – large upper-body muscular build – projecting physical strength and shading/avoiding color. Patina of seriousness around sports and not in fashion or makeup.

**3.**

Restrictive emotionality, suppression of range of feelings (except for anger), emotional distance, avoidance of affect in self and others.

**4.**

Seeking social status and self-esteem via achievement, competition primacy of work/provider role, earning power.

**5.**

Self-reliance, avoidance of dependency on others even on intimates and friends.

**6.**

*Aggression* (sometimes alternating with avoidance/denial) as a means of conflict resolution.  
*Toughness and leadership* in the face of adversity.

**7.**

Striving for inherited patriarchal dominance in relationships and control over others in the family.

**8.**

Non-relational attitudes toward sexuality, and objectification of others, use of pornography rather than erotica as means for arousal.

**9.**

Homophobia and transphobia, fear/anger at members of the LGBTQ\* community/gender nonconforming people and rigid adherence to a gender binary.

**10.**

Seeking stereotyped feminine looks and behavior. Thin Barbie dollesque or the sexualized model of a cisgender woman. Choosing historically female roles and over focus on second-shift responsibilities.

**11.**

Comfortable with a range of emotions except anger and adopting the caretaker role.

**12.**

Seeking social status and self-esteem vicariously through heterosexual partnering.

**13.**

“Acquiescing to non-equal sharing in second-shift responsibilities.”

**14.**

Normalization of heterosexual coupling.

## Appendix 2: Cultivating Spaces for Gender Fluidity and Nonconformity

**1.**

Expanded emotionality: the willingness to express the full range of emotions, including exuberance, joy, love, wonder and awe at things beautiful, fear, sadness, remorse, disappointment, and allowing oneself to express all of the highs and lows of the human experience.

**2.**

Embracing and accepting of expanded gender expressions to be fluid for all.

**3.**

Balancing work and family life: seeking pride through contributing both within the world of work and as an active participant in family and community life.

**4.**

Embracing relatedness over individualism: valuing collaboration with all human beings and with the rest of the natural spiritual world.

**5.**

Valuing shared power of relatedness: striving to create equal partnerships with adults and relationships with children that engender feelings of being loved and respected while also providing appropriate limits and structure.

**6.**

Challenging and resisting cisgender hetero male definitions of sexuality and inviting expressions along the trajectory of gender identity and sexual orientation.

**7.**

Rethinking and embracing positive sexual roles across gender expressions for all individuals, including elders, all sizes, and different experiences of ableness.

**8.**

Interrupting homophobia/transphobia: embracing gender identities and sexual orientation as fluid identities for all.

## References

Almeida, R. (2003). Creating collectives of liberation. In T. J. Goodrich & L. B. Silverstein (Eds.), *Feminist family therapy: Empowerment in social context* (pp. 293–305). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

[CrossRef](#)

Almeida, R. V., Dolan Del Vecchio, K., & Parker, L. (2007a). *Transformative family therapy: Just families in a just society*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Almeida, R., Vecchio, D.-D., & Parker, L. (2007b). Foundation concepts for social justice based therapy: Critical consciousness, accountability, and empowerment. In E. Aldarondo (Ed.), *Promoting social justice through mental health practice*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Almeida, R. V., Hernández-Wolfe, P., & Tubbs, C. (2011). Cultural equity: Bridging the complexity of social identities with therapeutic practices. *International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work*, 3, 43–56.

Almeida, R.V., Melendez, D., & Paéz, J. (2015). Liberation-based healing. *Encyclopedia of Social Work*. Online Publication Date: December 2015.

Almeida, R.V., (2016). *Hierarchy of Power, Privilege & Oppression Graphic*. Somerset NJ: Institute Family Services.

Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands/la frontera: The new mestiza*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.

Anzaldúa, G. (1999). *Borderlands/la frontera: The new mestiza* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.

Ault-Riche, M. (1994). Sex, money, and laundry: Sharing responsibilities in intimate relationships. *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy*, 6(1), 69–87.

[CrossRef](#)

Boss, P. (2006). *Loss, trauma and resilience: Therapeutic work with ambiguous loss*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Brave Heart, M. Y. H., & DeBruyn, L. M. (1998). The American Indian holocaust: Healing historical unresolved grief. *American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research*, 8(2), 60–82.

[CrossRef](#)

Brave Heart, M. Y. H., Chase, J., Elkins, J., & Altschul, D. B. (2011). Historical trauma among indigenous peoples of the Americas: Concepts, research, and clinical considerations. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, 43(4), 282–290.

[CrossRef](#)

Battalora, J. (2013). *Birth of a White Nation: the invention of white people and its relevance today*. Houston TX: Strategic Book Publishing & Rights Co.

Castro-Gómez, S. (2010). *La hybris del punto cero: ciencia, raza e ilustración en la Nueva Granada, (1750–1816), segunda edición*. Bogotá, Colombia: Editorial Pontificia Universidad Javeriana.

Collins, P. H. (2000). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.

Collins, P. H. (2004). *Black sexual politics: African Americans, gender, and the new racism*. New York: Routledge.

[CrossRef](#)

Collins, P. H. (2009). Foreword: Emerging intersections—Building knowledge and transforming institutions. In B. T. Dill & R. E. Zambrana (Eds.), *Emerging intersections: Race, class, and gender in theory, policy, and practice* (pp. vii–xiii). New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Crenshaw, K. W. (1994). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. In M. A. Fineman & R. Mykitiuk (Eds.), *The public nature of private violence: The discovery of domestic abuse* (pp. 93–118). New York: Routledge.

DeGruy, J. (2005). *Posttraumatic slave syndrome: America's legacy of enduring injury and healing*. Portland: Joy Degruy Publications.

Doucet, M., & Rovers, M. (2010). Generational trauma, attachment, and spiritual/religious interventions. *Journal of Loss & Trauma*, 15, 93–105.

[CrossRef](#)

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1903/1994). *The souls of black folks*. New York: Dover.

Fanon, F. (1963). *The wretched of the earth*. New York: Grove Press.

Freire, P. (1999). *Pedagogy of hope: Reliving pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

Grosfoguel, R. (2011). Decolonizing post-colonial studies and paradigms of political economy: Transmodernity, decolonial thinking, and global coloniality. *Transmodernity*, 1(1), 1–36.

Grosfoguel, R. (2013). The structure of knowledge in westernized universities: Epistemic racism/sexism and the four genocides/epistemicides of the long 16th century. *Human Architecture*, 11(1), 73–90.

Hankivsky, O., & Cormier, R. (2011). Intersectionality and public policy: Some lessons from existing models. *Political Research Quarterly*, 64, 217–229.

[CrossRef](#)

Harding, S. (2003). How standpoint methodology informs philosophy of social science. In S. P. Turner & P. A. Roth (Eds.), *The Blackwell guide to the philosophy of the social sciences* (pp. 291–310). Oxford: Blackwell.

Jacobs, J. (2011). The cross-generational transmission of trauma: Ritual and emotion among survivors of the holocaust. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 40(3), 342–361.

[CrossRef](#)

Maldonado-Torres, N. (2007). On the coloniality of being: Contributions to the development of a concept. *Cultural Studies*, 21, 240–270.

[CrossRef](#)

Mignolo, W. D. (2009). Epistemic disobedience, independent thought and decolonial freedom. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 26(7–8), 159–181.

[CrossRef](#)

Mignolo, W. (2011). Geopolitics of sensing and knowing: On (de)coloniality, border thinking and epistemic disobedience. *Postcolonial Studies*, 14(3), 273–285.

Pewewardy, N., & Almeida, R. (2013). Articulating the scaffolding of white supremacy: The act of naming in liberation. *The Journal of Progressive Human Services, 25*(3), 230–253.

Quijano, A. (2000a). Colonialidad del poder y clasificacion social. *Journal of World Systems Research, XI*(2), 342–386.

Quijano A. (2000b). *Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America. Nepantla, 1*(3), 533–580.

Quijano, A. (2007). Coloniality and modernity/rationality. *Cultural Studies, 21*(2–3), 168–178.  
[CrossRef](#)

Walters, K. L., & Simoni, J. M. (2009). Decolonizing strategies for mentoring American Indians and Alaska natives in HIV and mental health research. *American Journal of Public Health, 99*(1), 71–76.  
[CrossRef](#)