

Title: Storytelling as Clinical Intervention for the African Diaspora

Taysue Morris, a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor with a unique and diverse lived experience, is dedicated to advocating for and serving underrepresented communities and dismantling stigma and negative perceptions within culturally diverse communities, particularly those in the African American community.

Taysue Morris is a first-generation Liberian American. She holds an MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from Johns Hopkins University and is pursuing a Ph.D. in Counseling at The George Washington University. Taysue is serving as a middle school counselor at Two Rivers Public Charter School and, in 2022, Taysue founded The Morris Foundation, a non-governmental organization with a mission to provide trauma-informed counseling and support to children and families in Liberia who are still dealing with the effects of the civil war. She is also the proud author of the children's book, "Daughter of Diversity."

Dr. Bagmi Das is an Assistant Professor of Counseling at the George Washington University. Her expertise is in the fields of trauma intervention, family therapy, and multicultural and social justice development in counselors in training (CITs). Some of her additional areas of interest include multicultural counseling and support seeking behavior across cultural contexts. Her recent research projects look closely at trauma experience in populations experiencing intersectional barriers to mental health.

Dr. Das is licensed as a Marriage and Family Therapist in California and Virginia. She has counseled adolescents and families in various contexts including in-home therapy, group homes/residential treatment centers, community mental health centers, high schools, career centers, and post-secondary institutions. Her breadth of experience within different systems and in working with diverse clients and families informs her research agenda.

NBCC Proposal

Africa is a "linguistic paradise" because countries across the continent are characterized by many different languages (Obikudo, 2016, p.1). and researchers have seen that oral communication (Roya & Ngcobo, 2023), specifically storytelling, has been an integral part of African cultures for centuries (Yenika-Agbaw, 2011).

Storytelling serves as a means of passing down traditions, preserving familial and cultural identity, and fostering intergenerational community bonds, and it must be considered as a mental

health intervention in African communities and for African community members (Stewart, 2008).

This presentation addresses a literature gap. Prior research identifies culture as an important consideration within advocacy for systemic approaches, however previous scholars do not discuss A) how culture is understood when expressed through storytelling, B) how the lack of cultural expression through storytelling can impact mental health, or C) how cultural expression through storytelling can be leveraged by clinical staff or institutions to support a diverse client population (Srivastava, 2019). We will explore the power of one's narrative and emphasizes the potential of storytelling as a mental health intervention in African communities. Given the unique cultural and historical significance of storytelling within African culture(s), this proposal aims to shed light on its therapeutic potential and provide guidance to responsible and ethical therapeutic intervention implementation. The learning objectives include

1. Understand storytelling traditions of various cultures of the African diaspora
2. Review literature on the use of storytelling in therapeutic intervention.
3. Conceptualize the power of storytelling of the African diaspora

References

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