

INFORMATION SHEET

Whiteness as traumatogenic and iatrogenic: A pluralistic exploration of racialised violence and resistance in the clinical encounter.

You are invited to take part in the above research study. To help you decide, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it involves.

Please take some time to read the present information sheet carefully. If there is anything which is unclear, or if you would like more information please get in touch. Feel free to take some time to decide whether to participate or not.

What is the purpose of the study?

My name is Guilaine Kinouani, and I am a PhD student in the department of Psychosocial Studies at Birkbeck College, University of London.

This study is being carried out as part of my doctoral studies. The aims of the thesis are fourfold;

Firstly, to explore the dynamics and processes activated when race-based material and associated trauma or distress, experienced outside the clinic, are brought to the clinic.

Secondly, to examine within the clinical encounter, mechanisms of reproduction (in particular those of repetition, re-enactment, mirroring) in relation to whiteness and coloniality and, their psychosocial impact.

Thirdly, based on the data obtained, to propose ways of working with racism and racial trauma which may foster healing, disrupt the reproduction of whiteness and coloniality and thus reduce racialised harm in therapy.

Finally, and by way of process, to honour African philosophy and values. In particular, to hold as central to the undertaking, community engagement, emancipation and resistance.

What are the research questions?

The main research questions are as follow;

1. How do clinicians/therapists engage with race-based material?
2. How does 'the community' - here people racialised as Black - experience race-related interventions in therapy?
3. What associated dynamics and processes become activated which engage whiteness and coloniality?
4. What principles may be derived to improve clinical work with racism and racial trauma based on the findings of the project?
5. What African-centric liberatory and emancipatory principles may be produced from the stories collected and experiences reflected upon – including mine?

How will you go about answering your research questions?

I am planning to carry out and analyse two empirical (group) case studies and some associated one-to-one interviews.

The first study (group one or the median group) will use a large group methodology, which is to say a relatively large group of up to 35 participants, will meet monthly over ten group sessions, to explore and reflect upon racism in psychotherapy.

The second study (group two or the lived experience group) will be a smaller group composed of up to eight participants, it will meet weekly for 10 weeks, and be focused on the lived experience of bringing race and racism to psychotherapy.

Who are you inviting to take part?

For the first group, we are inviting three main groups of people to take part 1) people with lived experience of bringing racism to therapy 2) mental health professionals and therapists and 3) 'lay members' or community members at large, with an interest in the subject matter.

For the second group, we are only inviting people who identify as Black and who have experience of bringing racism to therapy. **Black in the context of the study will include those who identify as Black African, Black Caribbean, Black British, Black 'other' and 'mixed Black' (to be of mixed ancestry with one Black parent as per above).**

Participants in the one-to-one interviews will be those seeking to take part in the lived experience group (and will therefore also identify as Black and would have received psychotherapy).

When do I need to be available?

Selection for the study will take place in the summer of 2022 but the main data for the study will be collected from October 2022 to August 2023, this is when the groups will take place. More precisely:

If you are joining group 1 (the median group), you will need to be available for ten monthly group sessions from October 2022 to July 2023 (likely to be held the first Wednesday of every month from 18h00 to 19h30 online via Zoom – start date to be confirmed).

If you are joining group 2 (the lived experience group), you will need to be available for two to three one-to-one interviews with me in the summer of 2022 which will be followed by 10 weekly group sessions from January 2023 to March 2023 (likely to be held on Monday evenings from 18h00 to 19h30 online via Zoom – start date to be confirmed).

Will I have to join both groups?

No. You are only expected to join one of the research groups. One-to-one interviews will only be carried out with those seeking to join the lived experience group.

What will happen if I take part?

Firstly, you will be asked to complete 'a request form' to manifest your interest in taking part. This request form will ask you for some basic demographic information. This is requested in order to ensure relevant representation in the study. As a result, we cannot guarantee that all those requesting to take part will be offered a place.

If you join the first group/study, you will be invited to discuss with others your understanding of racism in therapy over the course of ten monthly meetings. This is an unstructured group and so that means participants will not be guided in their reflections beyond being provided with the aims of the study and its title. I will facilitate and moderate the group. Each session will take place online, via Zoom and last 1h30 minutes.

If you join the second group/study or the lived experience group, you will be invited to discuss your lived experience of bringing race related material to therapy over the course of 10 weekly meetings, with others. This, too, is an unstructured group and so participants will not be guided in their reflections. However, I will facilitate and moderate the group. Here too, sessions will take place online, via Zoom and last 1h30 minutes.

The one-to-one interviews for those joining the lived experience group, will last up to 1h30 minutes, I anticipate. Within them I expect participants to share relevant biographical information, their motivation for starting and where relevant ending therapy as well as their own understanding/experience of racism in therapy.

All research conversations will take place via Zoom and will be recorded.

Do I have to attend all the sessions of the group I join?

Ideally yes. You should make every effort to attend all relevant sessions, they will be planned in advance so you can organise yourself. However, if you are interested to take part and believe you may only miss one or two sessions maximum, we will not exclude you from the project on this basis. If you anticipate missing a session, let us know as soon as possible and re-join the group for the next planned session.

Will what I say and my participation in the study be treated confidentially?

All information that is collected about you throughout the research will be kept strictly confidential by myself and members of the research team (my supervisors).

Your identity will be protected during the data analysis process and within any subsequent dissemination and publication by the research team (e.g., pseudonyms will be used).

Still, it is important that you understand the limitations of confidentiality within the current project. Within group formats it is difficult to fully guarantee confidentiality since upholding it is not only dependent on the researchers but also on the participants. However, everyone taking part is expected to treat other participants' personal information confidentially. And this expectation will be made clear.

Further, confidentiality may be restricted if you disclose information that raises concern about your safety or the safety of others, in this case it may be necessary to inform an appropriate third party without your consent.

Nonetheless, prior to any restriction of confidentiality on my part, my supervisors will be contacted to discuss any possible concern, unless the delay would create a significant risk to life or health.

How will the research data be handled?

Every effort will be made to protect your personal data.

Zoom files of the actual interviews/conversations (recordings) will be stored onto my password protected computer so that they may be transferred for transcription or transcribed by myself post-interview/group.

I anticipate seeking professional support for the transcriptions. Zoom files will be transferred electronically online but will be password protected or encrypted.

The interview transcriptions will be stored onto my password protected computer. They will be retained post-PhD in an anonymised form for re-analysis, scholarly and publication purposes.

Following completion of the PhD, all Zoom recordings will be retained for three years post-PhD after which point, they will be safely discarded.

Completed request forms containing demographic information and completed consent forms received via post as part of the research, will be printed, stored in lockable cabinets. They will be retained for three years post-PhD after which point, they will be safely discarded.

Raw data will not be disseminated outside of the above parameters; however, analyses and anonymised quotes may be disseminated as part of relevant academic publications, manuscripts and/or training/community feedback mechanisms.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

It is possible that participation in this study may cause emotional distress in some individuals. As such, every participant will be provided with sources of potential support (a list of which will be provided to you).

You will have access to that **list of relevant support** should you feel the need to access its suggested sources, throughout the study and after.

I will be available should you wish to discuss your participation or make contact for support or advice, and you are at all times free to decide what to share and whether or not to answer questions asked of you in the study.

Should you be distressed or disturbed outside group sessions and choose not to make contact with me to discuss your experience, we would encourage you to bring back your experience to the group you join, should you feel able to.

You will be given the opportunity to be debriefed fully at the end of your participation in the study, should you wish to discuss your experience.

Large group discussions are known to give rise to strong feelings and emotions. Difficult dynamics can be expected and in part these are linked to unconscious group processes. We expect this to be particularly the case in the first group given the thorniness of the subject under investigation. If you are new to group analysis, you are invited to read the **study introductory sheet** on the same.

It is anticipated that, if you are in therapy and join the lived experience group in particular, some therapeutic shifts may occur as a result of you being in the study. For example, you may experience the need to bring research related issues to your therapy or become more concerned with or sensitive to how your therapist handles race related issues.

Please feel free to consult your therapist about your decision to take part. Although it is entirely up to you whether you share with your therapist your participation in the study, not doing so may impact your relationship with them and the therapeutic process, we would therefore encourage you to do so.

If you are no longer in therapy, you may look at your experience of therapy from a racialised lens as a result of your participation, which may engender feelings of loss if you come to realise your experiences of racism were not attended to as they could have.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

It is not possible to promise that the study will help you personally or professionally. However, the opportunity to reflect on issues related to racism in therapy with others with that interest (and/or of similar professional backgrounds) may help move your thinking forward and help you to better attend to racialised needs in your own clinical work.

Further, from a lived experience perspective, research suggests people often find that being given time and space to share experience of othering, marginalisation and discrimination with others with similar experiences, is empowering and personally enriching.

It is also possible that as a result of your participation, you may feel better able or willing to articulate your experience of racism with your therapist or even seek to have racialised experiences attended to, which may support your healing, growth or development.

Finally, please bear in mind that this is an important study centred on racial thus social justice.

It will likely make significant contribution to knowledge both in terms of group analytic and psychosocial research methods. Further, it has the potential to help improve the mental health care of people of colour. And this is a social imperative, given on-going race inequality within the mental health field. The findings of the studies will be widely disseminated.

What if something goes wrong?

In the unlikely event that a participant causes or experiences significant disturbance or distress in one of the groups, they may be removed from the study, for their safety and that of other participants. This decision will not be taken lightly and wherever possible in conjunction with my supervisors.

Should this be required, the participant withdrawn will be offered the opportunity to have a debrief conversation with me to discuss their experience and if necessary, be signposted to relevant resources. They will have the option to contact my supervisors.

More broadly, if you take part and are dissatisfied with the way the way you have been treated as part of the study or wish to raise a concern about this study, please contact me in the first instance, I will try my best to answer your queries (gkinou01@student.bbk.ac.uk). If you are still dissatisfied and wish to make a formal complaint, you can do so by contacting my supervisors.

Who are the research supervisors?

The project supervisors are;

Professor Stephen Frosh (s.frosh@bbk.ac.uk)

Professor Jo Winning (j.winning@bbk.ac.uk)

What will happen to the results of this research study?

The findings of the project will be written up in the form of a thesis for my PhD in Psychosocial Studies.

I will ask you if you would like to comment on the analyses of the interviews to help with the evaluation of the results. It would be helpful for me to get your feedback by email. However, you do not have to get involved at this stage. Your comments and responses, if you wish to make them, may be included in the thesis, they will also be anonymised.

The findings of the study may be shared online and/or in print via academic publications, books and/or in presentations for the purpose of teaching or training. Findings will also be shared via community events and on social media.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed and given a favourable opinion by Birkbeck College Ethics Committee who raised no objections to it.

Do I have to take part?

No, it is entirely up to you whether you decide to participate or not. If you do wish to take part, I would be incredibly grateful for the support.

You will be asked to sign a consent form if you are selected to take part.

Even if you do decide to take part, you may wish to later withdraw from the study and can do so without giving a reason up to 7 days after your participation in the project. After this point you may still withdraw but as data analyses will start and it may no longer be possible for your data to be removed from aggregated analyses.

I want to take part, what do I do next?

Please only complete a participation '**request form**', in the first instance. If we are able to offer you a place, we will ask that you then send us your **consent form**.

Please note once more that we may not be able to select all those who have manifested an interest in taking part.

Return all documents to gkinou01@student.bbk.ac.uk.

Further information

If you have further questions do not hesitate to contact me (gkinou01@student.bbk.ac.uk) and I would be glad to assist you.

[Thank you for reading this information sheet.](#)