

JUSTICE IN THERAPY CONFERENCE REPORT



blackpsychotherapy.org

August 2025

Foreword



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Justice in Therapy was born from rage and the deep exhaustion that is common to the experience of therapists who exist and work at the margins. After the tokenistic, half-hearted “strategies” that surfaced in response to George Floyd’s murder, it didn’t take long to realise that nothing was going to change beyond the amount of unpaid labour white colleagues expected from those around them. Since then, training providers have continued to justify how their curriculum mostly consists of white men and, in more progressive cases, white women. Black trainees and trainees of colour have continued to endure violence during their training, either dropping out and facing severe financial consequences or gritting their teeth through multiple years of emotional warfare. Qualified, racially minoritised practitioners are expected to cope with the everyday demands of their practice, in addition to microaggressions, stereotyping, unwarranted disciplinary action, and, in some cases, even unfair dismissal. It is ironic that, in a profession where empathy, respect and deep listening are championed as key skills, those who are marginalised often struggle to be the beneficiaries of this culture. Who is holding white supremacy (and all the harmful systems that emerge out of it) accountable for all of this? When institutions fail to politicise themselves and tackle systemic oppression, those who are the most marginalised have the most to lose.

Out of this mess emerged a longing for a time and a place where Black therapists and therapists of colour could explore how to de-centre whiteness personally, professionally, and institutionally. A place where white allies were limited in number to avoid whiteness dominating the conversations. A time for rage to be heard without reprisals. A place where it was no longer necessary for marginalised colleagues to prove their humanity or to prove the soul-crushing impact of racism. After 12 months of imagining these possibilities and being told they were “too radical” and that they would “upset people”, Justice In Therapy was born on the 30th of November 2024.

This day-long immersion, run as an unconference, was the first event of its kind for Black Psychotherapy, and the planning, production, and execution of the event were highly labour intensive, especially with very limited resources and as a team with multiple marginalised identities. We captured a video summarising the day and that can be watched [here](#). The tiered pricing meant that white allies paid more to support racially minoritised colleagues, and, despite concerns that solidarity-based ticketing wouldn’t be financially sustainable and that white colleagues would object to paying more, the unconference sold out a week before it was due to take place. 86 practitioners travelled to Brixton (London) from across the country bringing their rage, grief, relief, and commitment to liberation. We were so overwhelmed by the positive feedback and our desire to include colleagues who were unable to attend in person that, three months later, we repeated the unconference in a virtual format where 100 attendees joined, again from all corners of the UK.

In the pages that follow, you will find out more about justice in therapy from the collective voice of those who attended virtually or in person; however, so much richness was communicated without words in the shared intimacy of moments together. For some, justice was felt in the body; for others, it emerged as a casual conversation or in the midst of heated group discussion. For many, justice wasn’t present at all due to the heartbreak of having to fight an impossibly strong current. So, the work continues; in many respects, it hasn’t even begun.

At Black Psychotherapy, we remain resolute that justice work requires tangible action, and we are committed to doing our part, personally and professionally, to uplift marginalised voices and organise for change. We dream that future generations of therapists won’t need this kind of conference, as justice will be embedded into the fabric of everything that is understood to be therapeutic.

Acknowledgements



A heartfelt thank you to our team members, collaborators, and everyone who attended Justice In Therapy and contributed to our collective body of knowledge with their vulnerability, wisdom, and lived experience. We feel very privileged that so many of you felt able to journey into the unknown with us to do uncomfortable, yet rewarding work. We would also like to thank [The Advocacy Academy](#) for offering their aptly named Liberation Centre as a space for this tender work and a sincere thank you to [Lavanda Films](#) for helping us archive the in-person day with photography and videography.

Justice work requires ongoing connection, collaboration, and solidarity, and we appreciate everyone who has offered us kindness and support in any form. We would like to highlight other UK-based groups and organisations who work in the social justice sphere and encourage you to support their organising efforts as well:

Black and Asian Therapy Network (BAATN)

Black Minds Matter

Campaign for Psych Abolition

Climate Minds Coalition

Feminist Therapy Network

FREEPSY

Liberate Mental Health

Mental Health and Social Justice Network

Mental Health Workers UK 4 Palestine

Muslim Counsellor and Psychotherapist Network (MCPN)

Protect Black Women

Psychologists for Social Change

Psychosis Therapy Project

Psychotherapy and Counselling Union (PCU)

Radical Therapist Network (RTN)

Somali Mental Health Network

The Anti-Discrimination Focus (#TADF)

The Lateef Project

The Red Clinic

Therapy and Social Change Network (TaSC)

Therapists Against Conversion Therapy and Transphobia (TACTT)

Introduction



Black Psychotherapy is a virtual and London-based mental health service consisting of racially minoritised practitioners and trainees who offer decolonial, intersectional, and anti-oppressive talking therapy to racially minoritised communities. Within the service, we see the real-life consequences of injustice within the therapeutic field, which include client experiences of racial trauma, microaggressions, and the loneliness and distress of not being able to bring culture or other aspects of identity to therapy. Our trainee experiences mirror that of our clients, and, as placement providers, we hear, see, and sense the effect of oppressive training on mental health, confidence, and self-esteem, leading to barriers in establishing and maintaining therapeutic practice once qualified.

We don't want to prescribe what justice in therapy should or could look like for you or the action you need to take as a result of reading these findings. Our intention was to use the unconference environment to promote the voices and leadership of those who are the most marginalised and invite those who are ready to listen and take action to be part of the process. We urge those reading this report, and whose identities hold more power and privilege, to take more risks in the face of what is unpopular work and to share their power with others, knowing when to step back, listen, and de-centre themselves from public praise or recognition

UNCONFERENCE STRUCTURE

Justice In Therapy was intentionally structured to promote an environment that would decolonise and democratise learning by centring the wisdom that was in the room, as opposed to inviting (typically white) speakers, billed as “experts”, to impart their knowledge from a stage. Black Psychotherapy offered some broad themes so that the group could explore different aspects of justice in therapy—without prescribing how to structure the discussion or which aspects to focus on. This style of gathering is called an “unconference” and emerged in the 2010s. Each breakout group was invited to choose a scribe and a timekeeper to support with structuring and recording the discussion.

The questions explored are as follows:

Q1. How do we bring justice to our therapeutic practice?

Q2. How do we bring justice to our training and CPD?

Q3. How do we bring justice to our institutions?

Q4. What action do we need to bring about systemic change?

The answers to these questions have been anonymised and grouped into themes. Where each set of answers begins with a question, we encourage you to actively engage with these prompts to establish, deepen, and interrogate your personal engagement with justice work.

Foundations for Justice In Therapy

Before examining the questions, we started the day by exploring the essential ingredients that would enable us to collaborate together, given the multitude of identities and lived experiences in the room. Our intention was to apply a justice-based framework to our relating in order to model anti-oppressive ways of being in community as well as collaborating.



THE SAFETY WE NEED FOR JUSTICE WORK

For those living at the margins, safety is a rare commodity—one that is absent most of the time. Our starting point was to accept this and incorporate it into how we framed the day, rather than oppose reality. Acknowledging that we didn't feel safe and couldn't feel safe, due to systemic oppression, gave us permission to move into whatever safety we had capacity for on the day. We explored what we needed to make justice work as safe as possible for us and for those around us, which started with defining "justice" and clarifying a common language around terminology to build a shared understanding of reality.

THE EMOTIONS OF JUSTICE WORK

We acknowledged our rage as being justified and the need for that to be listened to and affirmed by others. Practising tenderness and compassion towards ourselves and each other was crucial to maintaining the safety of the work and a culture of openness and curiosity. We acknowledged that we felt afraid to do the work, to not do the work, to make mistakes, and to expose the more vulnerable aspects of ourselves. Rather than denying fear, we committed to naming it and leaning in, using it as a motivator for the day. As a group that consisted of a variety of different cultures, we committed to attuning as best we could to each other in order to be able to collaborate effectively.

THE BEHAVIOURS OF JUSTICE WORK

Our behaviours included the internal dimensions of us checking our biases, monitoring our assumption-making, and challenging oppression within ourselves. We also recognised that, externally, we needed to adopt an active position of being supportive, without rescuing or engaging in white saviourism. We affirmed wanting to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for each other in order to be able to build connections in a relatively short period of time.





STRATEGIES THAT SUPPORT SAFETY

We isolated specific strategies that we believed could increase the safety of the collective, which included staying on topic and emotionally staying with what was being shared. We believed that intentionally modelling embodied authenticity would support others to know us and strengthen our collaboration efforts. We also reminded ourselves how helpful it can be to tell ourselves, and each other, that it's O.K. to get it wrong and that justice work needs to allow for mistakes for progress and learning to take place.

A TOOLKIT TO PREPARE FOR JUSTICE WORK

We acknowledged the reality of often not feeling safe enough to have justice-based conversations and how futile and dangerous it can be to attempt to do that, anyway, out of an extreme sense of duty. Sometimes, it's hard to tell whether the conditions meet the requisite degree of safety for justice work to be possible, and we discussed working on a toolkit that includes questions we can ask ourselves or each other before beginning to do justice work. The toolkit could also be used in institutional settings to audit the culture before starting potentially damaging inclusion initiatives.

Black Psychotherapy's Community Guidelines



To further support building a culture of safety, Black Psychotherapy also offered their community guidelines to the group:

SELF-CARE:

Taking care of ourselves and our bodies ensures justice work is sustainable.

OUR IDENTITIES:

It is helpful to remind ourselves and each other that we are multidimensional and that our identities are complex in order to avoid justice work becoming reductive.

OUR POWER:

We have intersecting dimensions of power and privilege given our complex identities, which affects how we relate to ourselves, others, and the work.

STEP IN/STEP ASIDE:

Being mindful of how much space we take up, and stepping aside when appropriate, invites others who may want to step in to do so and supports everyone's voice to be heard.

NON-VISIBLE IDENTITIES:

Some identities are non-visible, which requires us to challenge our assumptions when interacting with others.

LEARNING PROCESS:

Learning about justice principles is a lifelong process, and we're all in different places when it comes to understanding and practising concepts and using justice-based terminology. Using plain English as much as possible is more inclusive, and checking for understanding ensures that what is being communicated is more likely to be heard.

ACCESS NEEDS:

These needs can be static and/or evolving throughout the day and include mental health and wellbeing needs.

Conference Findings



The answers to these questions have been anonymised and grouped into themes.

Q1. How do we bring justice to our therapeutic practice?

We need to balance the need to bring justice for ourselves, both personally and professionally, as well as apply a justice-based lens to all aspects of therapeutic work. This starts with finding ways to process and grieve the pain of living and working under oppression while mobilising towards thinking, acting, and working differently. In order to continue engaging with justice throughout our working lives, we will need to create practices and systems that are sustainable, supportive, and tailored to our needs and intersections. There is no “one size fits all”.

What does justice mean to my clients?

Finding out from clients what justice means to them and how therapy could contribute to bringing more justice into their world was understood as a starting point for justice within therapeutic practice. For practitioners to explicitly identify the politics and systems that contribute to injustice also supports clients to know they can speak freely and that the therapist has enough knowledge and competency to be able to navigate these conversations.

How do I introduce myself at the start of therapeutic work?

Starting a new therapeutic relationship with justice principles in mind means that we need to explore how we introduce ourselves and the work we do, how we position our values, and how we talk about what we know (and what we don't know) in a way that is accessible and easy to understand.

Am I being honest with those I support?

The theme of honesty emerged as the practice of resisting secrecy within the profession. This includes naming internalised oppression and the harm that it is causing/may cause to the client as well as being very explicit about power and difference. Understanding that therapy is structured to reinforce and recreate power imbalances is something that needs to be confronted emotionally by practitioners and brought to clients with transparency. It can be hard to tell clients that we feel powerless about how oppressive systems are impacting us or that we're concerned about our complicity in their harm. However, these conversations build trust and increase awareness of unconscious processes, which, in turn, increases the safety of clients and practitioners. Identifying where therapist and client identities overlap and where they don't can also bring more trust to the relationship and challenge assumptions that therapists who have some shared identities will automatically be able to relate to a client's lived experience.

How can I give myself permission to unlearn oppression in my practice?

We explored what's holding us back from “going rogue” and finding different practices, theories, and models that help us liberate our client work. This can include accessing dreams, as well as intuition, spirituality, and ancestral work, African psychology, being outdoors, workbooks, and somatic approaches. These practices can be helpful in nurturing hope and challenging internalised oppression within clients and therapists and supporting clients to dismantle oppression in their own way and with tools that are appropriate to them and their culture. Increasing our collective ability to work with systemic trauma (including racial, cultural, and faith-based trauma) through developing specific skills and competencies was also highlighted as necessary to be able to meet the trauma marginalised clients bring to the room.

Conference Findings



Could I break with unspoken conventions so that I can get up and move my body when I need to during a session?

We discussed how therapists could model using embodied approaches in their work as well as listen to their bodies throughout a session. When we give ourselves permission to reimagine therapy, this can invite clients to meet their own needs more often.

Could my administrative and financial practices be more aligned with my values?

We agreed that therapists need their work to be financially sustainable; if not, it perpetuates injustice, oppression, and burnout. Once there is enough financial safety, which will look different for everyone, low-cost, negotiated pricing or sliding scale sessions can be offered specifically to those with marginalised identities, without the need for means testing. Volunteering can also be an option, both in clinical and community settings, to bring therapy and therapeutic skills to socially excluded populations.

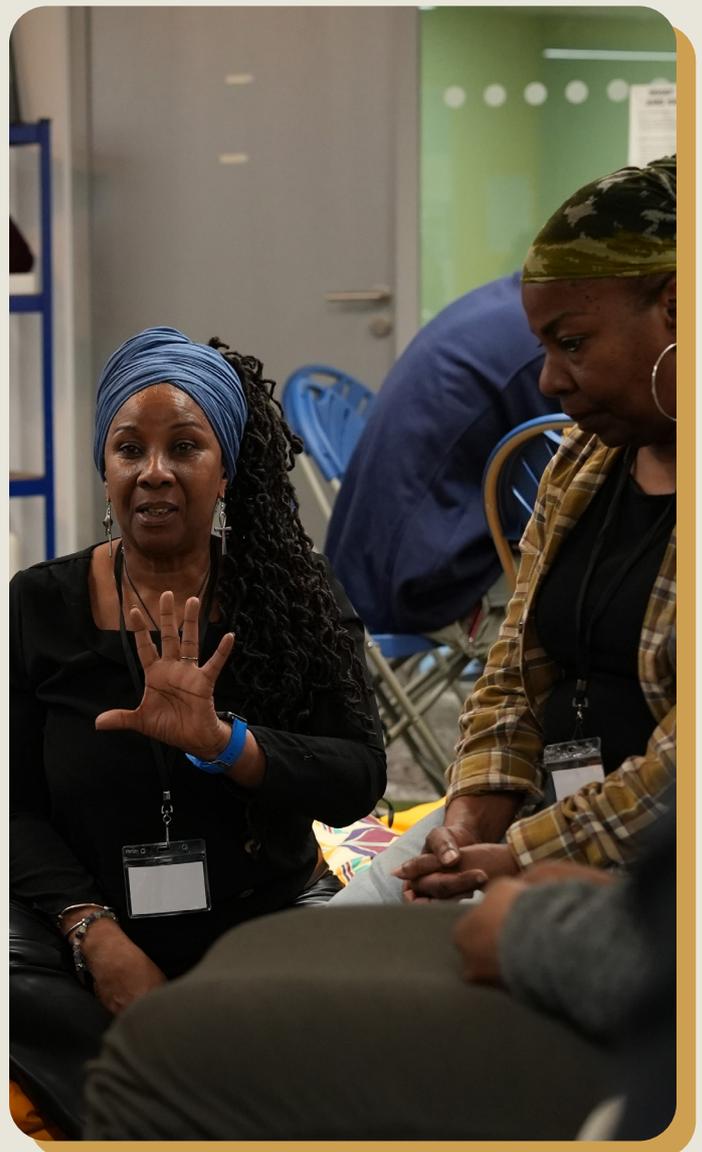
We discussed the opportunity to imbue justice work within our administrative processes when in private practice and to advocate for that to happen as part of working for agencies and services. This includes having a list of culturally specific partner services that clients can be signposted to, asking pronouns and checking they are recorded appropriately, and discussing access needs during assessments. Carrying out audits within private practice and services would also reveal which demographics may have barriers that prevent access to therapy.

Is my supervision meeting my needs?

Our supervisors have the potential to hold us accountable, but they can also enable us and reinforce our blind spots, therefore contributing to systemic harm. Ensuring our supervisor is politicised, adequately informed, and has experience of applying justice-based values can reduce the loneliness of doing justice work in the profession. Using supervision to bring ourselves, and transparently discussing our concerns and failures, requires us to be honest and willing to engage with our learning. We also need to consider how much of our supervision is group-based and communal to de-centre the power dynamics and hierarchies of one-on-one supervision.

What communities am I plugged into that support the justice work I do or want to do?

As many of us know, working as a therapist can be lonely, and practising justice-based values can add to the isolation and affect our mental health. Oppression thrives when we work in silos, so finding communities that sustain us (or creating our own if that isn't possible) ensures we have others we can lean on for support.



Conference Findings



Q2. How do we bring justice to our training and CPD provisions?

We need to balance holding institutions accountable with our capacity to do so and knowing that we are likely to encounter violence in the process. It is grossly oppressive to teach diversity over a few weekends and expect marginalised students to do unpaid labour to educate their cohorts and teachers.

Am I ready to acknowledge that my training either is, or has been, violent?

The training we undertake as therapists has the power to influence how we practice, our sense of self, and our worldview for the rest of our lives. This means that acknowledging institutional violence within our training can bring up grief and many other complicated feelings. Many of us have fought hard to get onto training, whether that's through financial or time-related sacrifices or having to juggle training with work and family commitments. It is particularly devastating to sacrifice so much and find ourselves on the receiving end of trauma, gaslighting, and violence over multiple years. We need space to unpack the violence of our training without having to take action immediately because we're exhausted. We also understand the importance of holding onto some aspects of training that have been helpful and that are more aligned with justice-based principles, so we want to be critical about our learning without having to "reinvent the wheel" and start from scratch.

What can I do to support the embedding of justice work into the curriculum?

Training organisations are unlikely to change unless they receive pressure from their students, alumni, tutors, membership bodies, and the wider therapeutic community. If we're white, we can use our privilege to lobby for a more decolonised and anti-oppressive curriculum. We need allies to actively take on this work, as opposed to expecting Black and Brown peers to take on the majority of the labour. For those currently undergoing training, it is necessary to pivot towards citing authors who are outside of white norms and being overtly critical about what is included in reading lists.

Who decides what is knowledge and what is included or excluded from the curriculum?

We require training institutions to be transparent about who is making decisions about the curriculum and how those decisions are being/have been made. When assessing the curriculum during annual reviews, we need student perspectives to be heard and incorporated so that there is joint ownership around what is being taught. We would like institutions to consult with social justice organisations when designing the curriculum, as our tutors are not knowledgeable enough in these areas. During and after training, it can help to remember that moving away from Eurocentric teaching is an act of resistance in itself.

Have I considered teaching, or could I support a racially minoritised colleague to teach

When those who are marginalised take up teaching roles and/or set up their own training organisations, it benefits both students and the entire profession by de-centring Eurocentric culture and values within the profession. For those who don't want to teach, there are many ways of being involved with education, and it might be possible to collaborate with someone who is interested in doing similar work.

Can I advocate for more history/context being included in training materials?

Psychology theories and practice have a history of being appropriated by dominant cultures and sold back to minoritised communities. De-centring white knowledge systems relies on advocating for training providers to provide education on where the theories come from, which indigenous cultures they were appropriated from, and any violence, oppression, or erasure that took place as part of that scholarship being established.

Conference Findings



Does my training embed cultural competencies and anti-oppressive practice across the curriculum and move away from box ticking?

It isn't acceptable for "diversity topics" to be taught as stand-alone modules placed over one or two weekends, with the aim to meet regulatory requirements, rather than a commitment to doing things differently. Training institutions will continue to perpetuate harm if they don't embed anti-oppressive practice across the curriculum and support students to become culturally competent and attuned by challenging stereotypes and colonial behaviours. Training institutions also need to equip students to take responsibility for their own learning once they go into practice and be able to build on the work they started during their training so that they can build a lifelong reflexive practice.

As a course tutor, do I confidently and competently understand and model justice-based and anti-oppressive principles, theory, and practice?

It is incredibly harmful to expect students with marginalised identities to educate their peers and tutors while participating in training that they have paid for. Training providers need to take responsibility for staff to be adequately trained. The training needs to be ongoing, and a budget needs to be set aside, the way it would be for any other component that is essential to delivery. Line managers also need to monitor competency and performance to ensure training courses meet adequate standards, which means they require education as well for them to know what to monitor.

How do I challenge performative behaviour?

As students, we need to balance our capacity to raise complaints and concerns within institutions and the possibility of reprisals affecting our stress levels and mental health. We need to ask ourselves: Who are our allies? Who is willing to support us? Who can use their power and privilege to ensure these concerns are heard by the right people? Holding institutions accountable takes time, and we need to be realistic about what we're willing to do and how long we're willing to do it for.

How is justice embedded in how professional bodies review courses?

Courses are being approved by professional bodies as being adequate for the general public without any oversight on whether justice-based principles and anti-oppressive practice is going to be included in the curriculum. This means that many new courses are not fit for purpose and that current courses are not assessed with enough rigour or accountability, leading to inadequate education.



Conference Findings



Q3. How do we bring justice to our institutions?

This question brought up a lot of heaviness and hopelessness as we considered the weight of institutional oppression and how difficult it is to bring about change on an institutional level. We explored our role as therapists who are complicit in institutional oppression but also hold the power to change the system because the system is made up of people like us.

Who does therapeutic neutrality serve within institutions, and who benefits from institutional gaslighting?

It's hard to hold institutions accountable for their harmful behaviour because we don't know who is responsible for what, and we're often met with gaslighting, minimisation, and obfuscation as ways for oppression to perpetuate itself. When we understand who the beneficiaries are of these behaviours and who has a vested interest in these behaviours continuing, we also understand who is responsible for harm. A just institution cannot be neutral and sever itself from the reality of systemic inequality.

How do we become unruly, disruptive, challenging, and impolite so that we can build a movement?

Oppression has made us overly compliant, afraid to speak out for fear of upsetting people and being alienated in the profession. Justice requires us to change our mindset and be more courageous since, historically, change has required people to say and do uncomfortable and unpopular things. We need to embrace strikes, protests, and other challenging forms of organising as viable options to lobby for change and bring these issues to the awareness of the general public. Finding co-conspirators is necessary so that we don't feel alone and so that we can build a movement together.

How do we lobby and pressurise professional bodies to make change?

We require collective, collaborative, and strategic action to organise in a way that is purposeful and effective. We need to create stronger networks with each other and know each other's unique abilities and contributions so that we know who to draw on for support and who is best placed to do what.

How do we meet the need to set up our own professional bodies that focus on supporting marginalised communities and doing justice work?

We need to empower ourselves to create the membership bodies we need instead of waiting for the current bodies to change. We need to divest our energy from trying to change governing bodies and start organising to create institutions that are centred on marginalised identities and experiences and led by those with lived experience of marginalisation. We require transparency and strategies to manage power and hierarchy that are currently not in operation, as well as bodies that ensure justice work is ongoing and long-lasting.

How do we centre the needs of communities when working for institutions?

Within institutions, all too often marginalised individuals are turned into statistics, and their humanity is forgotten. To combat this common occurrence, we discussed the importance of understanding the stories that the numbers tell us about what communities need. When we humanise data that is coming out of reports, there is a clearer sense of whether services are managing to deliver and, if so, to what degree. Services need to be transparent about who is receiving support and who is being left behind, and we need more effective processes to hold services accountable when they fail to reach marginalised communities.

Conference Findings



How do we protect whistleblowers within institutions?

Whistleblowers are afraid to raise their concerns for fear of being publicly shamed, harmed, and pushed out of organisations. Many institutions conveniently don't have robust whistleblowing policies and procedures, which makes raising concerns even more unsafe and less likely to happen. Whistleblowing is also seen as taboo and stigmatised (especially within therapeutic institutions), which strengthens the culture of silence and dominance. Whistleblowers need networks of support, and when multiple people raise concerns, it is more likely to create a critical mass, so concerns are less likely to be ignored.

How do we resist attempts to pit marginalised groups against each other?

Oppression thrives when marginalised groups are eroded by in-fighting and competition that undermines the struggle of the other. Practising solidarity is essential to sustainable and long-term justice work, which is intersectional and relies on cooperation, mutual aid, and allyship. Within institutions, advocating for spaces where marginalised groups can meet, network, and support each other ensures more care becomes available and possible within an intersectional framework.

How do I care for myself in the face of institutional violence?

Those of us working as part of institutions face daily trauma and violence, and, without establishing personal and professional networks of care (and self-care), our mental and physical health is going to suffer and deteriorate over time. If we take this violence seriously and act to protect ourselves and what is important to us, we can subvert power and establish the foundations of resistance.



Conference Findings



Q4. What action do we need to bring about systemic change?

We explored the different forms our compassionate disruption could take in order to bring about systemic change. We acknowledge that each practitioner and trainee within our community will have different levels of capacity and expertise that determine the actions that are available to them. Nevertheless, some action is better than no action and the idea of having to be experienced to take action is a colonial myth that needs interrogating. We believe that once we begin compassionately disrupting the world around us, the opportunities and people needed to continue this work will increase. Ultimately, in the words of Audre Lorde, “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house”. This means we need to venture into new territories, moving beyond the colonial framework that shapes our society.

We grouped our ideas for compassionate disruption into seven themes:

Collaboration

- ☀ Communities of collective action
- ☀ Nationwide networks to stop being London-centric
- ☀ Linking up organisations
- ☀ Collaboration between social justice organisations and training institutions
- ☀ Community and people are our tools.
- ☀ Intergenerational collaboration

Spaces

- ☀ More Black spaces
- ☀ Create our own spaces in colleges and universities
- ☀ A community hub where culturally specific resources are shared

Funding

- ☀ Funding/financial backing and defunding/boycotting organisations
- ☀ Investing in marginalised communities (e.g. Black pound)
- ☀ Funded mentorship programmes
- ☀ Sharing resources and finding alternative models outside of capitalism

Communication

- ☀ Amplification of marginalised voices
- ☀ Engaging with the media/press so that marginalised voices can be heard
- ☀ Writing open letters and challenging boards
- ☀ Examining how we use language to resist pathologising and oppressing others and developing alternatives to diagnostic language.

Strategy

- ☀ White allies stepping back and sharing power
- ☀ Emergent strategies
- ☀ Piloting new models for accountability within institutions
- ☀ Organising to pressure professional bodies
- ☀ Map concepts/tools that are already in use to avoid reinventing the wheel.
- ☀ Supporting unionisation through PCU or the creation of new unions
- ☀ Developing a justice index
- ☀ Publishing the results of our justice work on a publicly available website
- ☀ Creating a Glassdoor-style feedback system for courses and an index to rate the amount of anti-oppressive work institutions are doing
- ☀ Embedding justice work, not a few days of “add-on” learning
- ☀ People who benefit from the status quo/existing institutions need to step forward and get involved/challenge institutions.

Education



Alternative provisions

- ☀ Leadership training/mentoring
- ☀ Paying trainers and consultants
- ☀ Incorporating an awareness of classism into justice work
- ☀ Groups for white allies to educate themselves
- ☀ Understand the power we have to make things happen
- ☀ Supporting ourselves and others to teach in order to increase representation

- ☀ Outreach programmes
- ☀ Creating alternative service provisions for marginalised identities and referring clients into them
- ☀ Building more longer-term therapy provisions as an alternative to short-term work



Our Dreams for Justice In Therapy (and the World...)



Where a Black person can go to therapy with a Black therapist or a white therapist and not fear racism confident they can go with their whole self. Where a queer person can go to therapy and not fear that their therapist thinks they are queer because of trauma—and not fear their therapist wants to make them straight. Where deaf people can receive therapy in their own language—sign and become therapists because they can access a decent education in their own language too. Where our fatness, Blackness, femaleness, queerness, and our beautiful impairments are not seen as less than, but as perfect.

To develop a training and body (like UKCP or BACP) by and for Therapists for Justice. Ideally, this would be a network rather than just another hierarchical body that might simply perpetuate power-based institutions and bodies.

Stop seeing culture as a tick box. Diversify staff and students. Acknowledge trauma for all, not a one-size-fits-all mentality. Doctors train on all illnesses; why can't we train on all people?

Collective healing of the wound that is separation from the land, ancestral practice and our inherent worthiness.

National and regional institutions of learning and connection on decolonisation.

A space (can be online) to hold the names and resources of doers in therapy (historical + current) where clinicians and communities can draw sustenance.

A free Palestine in our lifetimes.

For everyone in this room to be invited to write a chapter in a book about justice in therapy.

Therapy training that is collaborative, disruptive, decolonial, and queer and encourages constructing new ways of relating and practising.

I want white folks to step down to make space for Black/ brown voices to be heard.

For trainees to have the burden of educating racist and privileged trainers relieved.

A resurrection of the Black Panthers and of an uprising of students in every institution of education, especially in psychotherapy trainings, to claim control of their own trainings and to demand their institutions condemn the genocide in Palestine.

A world where paid-for therapy is no longer needed because our communities have healed from capitalism, neoliberalism, colonialism, and there are strong and vibrant networks of independent support available for all.

Stronger networks and solidarity in addressing injustice between marginalised groups.

New generation of Black, Brown, and POC therapists being funded and supported.

Therapeutic support that's embedded in community and linked to other groups/types of support.

More spaces where young Black men can discuss their frustrations and anger at discrimination experiences without being seen as a threat.

Spaces of belonging and dignity that bring us back into relationship with ourselves and others.





Black African psychology as a standard option for psychology/psychotherapy institutions taught by professionals from the global majority.

For our experiences not to be framed as “too political” as an excuse to limit the conversation, the organisation’s accountability and ignore our plight.

More professionals from the global majority and significantly fewer clients from this community sectioned/incarcerated.

Stronger networks and solidarity in addressing injustice between marginalised groups.

I want white supremacy in therapy and in the world to be composted—for new and colourful growth to emerge.

For there to be so many therapists of colour, both in general practice and also in positions of power, that this event [Justice In Therapy] becomes redundant. Also, for clients to have default access to culturally competent therapists.

Conclusion

Oppression has a way of undermining our dreams and making us believe that change isn't possible and that we're not even worthy of the future we imagine. Our dreams are assumed to be too far-fetched, too threatening, or too impractical due to lack of funding, time, and stamina.

This gives way to apathy, which then reinforces the dominant culture, along with the oppressive norms that come with it. Our commitment to dreaming is the belief that different futures aren't just possible; they're within our reach. This is essential for our survival as well as our mental wellbeing.

Our dreams are the north star we return to when we struggle to remember who we are and what is important to us. We need to talk about our dreams, take action in the direction of our dreams, and form communities where our dreams can be held and known in the intimacy and compassion that comes with solidarity. Justice in therapy started as a dream, and from that dream emerged power, wisdom, and hope, as well as compassion towards the wounds we're carrying from the oppressive systems we're forced to navigate.

Many connections were sparked by the shared work that took place, and they have led to friendship, offers for support and mutual aid, and partnerships that centre justice-based principles. To find ways to love and care for each other, especially within systems that dehumanise us, is a radical act of resistance that is capable of building movements and sustaining long-lasting transformation.

Through justice work we can tend to the here and now while keeping an eye on the horizon as our struggle transcends our lifetime and relies on many future generations working together for liberation. We hope that our dreams will be seen and known by future therapists and that they will become an everyday occurrence in a world where we have institutions that meet our needs and education that contributes to healing rather than detracting from it. In the meantime, we will continue to use our power and rage to advocate for marginalised voices and to decolonise our practice as we continue to decolonise our minds and support those around us to do the same. If the ideas we've shared above have been meaningful for you, we invite you to get in touch and join our subversive mycelial network of care and liberation. You can contact us at info@blackpsychotherapy.org.



