



PARENT INFANT
FOUNDATION
2025

Yvonne Osafo
Anna Godfrey

Culturally Reflective and Racially Aware Infant-Parent Psychotherapy: ...becoming a settled presence in your community

...a registered charity providing both **training** for professionals as well as **infant-parent psychotherapy** for families.

... aims to keep the baby **'in the midst'** of thinking and practice and empower infant-family relationships through effective multidisciplinary work.

...seeks to model **relationship-building** as our primary task, in the community with babies and parents, as well as with our local health, social and community care partners.

...so that babies can be **known and held** more successfully in their local 'village' and families from more deprived areas are better resourced within their local community, their babies more able to thrive.

At the heart of our work are the values of **compassion, hospitality, diversity and inclusion.**



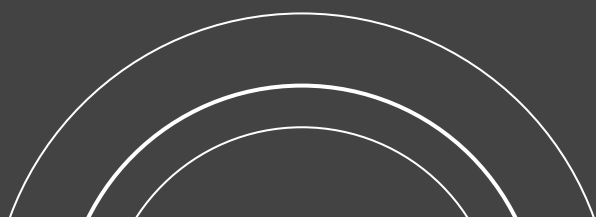


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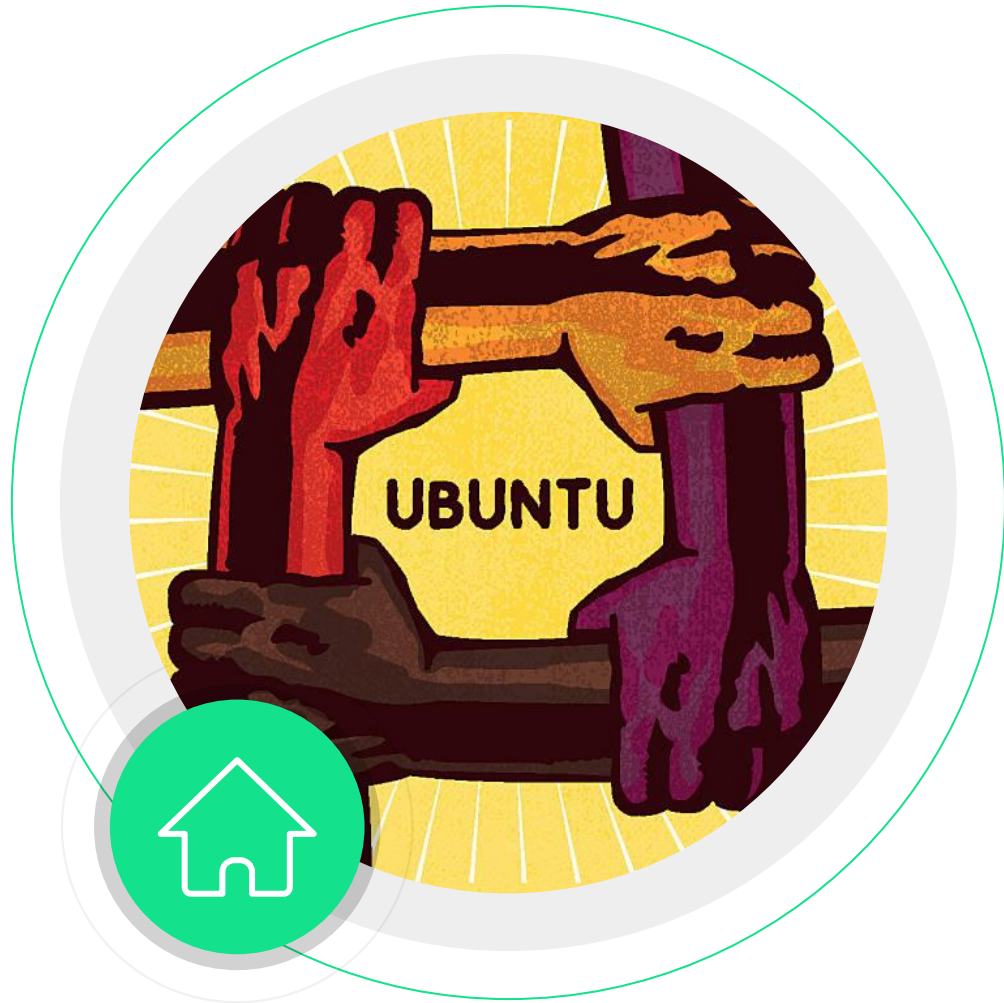
Family culture is present in all caregiving interactions. It is within culturally informed relationships that all development unfolds. Children learn to experience, regulate, and express emotion as defined by their cultural communities. Children form protective relationships with caregivers that can ensure their safety within inequitable and racist environments. Children bring their cultural self to learning environments using exploration, yet some are encouraged while others are punished.

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Dr Barbara Stroud, Zero to Three, © 2021



**'I am
because
we are'**



"

I needed to know that I was with a professional who knew what they were talking about, that they'd had the right training, experience and 'expertise' in this area and that I was entitled to this help just like everyone else. "

"

I didn't have to think twice about how I was saying it and I felt comfortable about being open. But I think it wasn't because my therapist said and knew all the right things. I think it was because of the relationship we had and how I felt about her. I felt comfortable, I didn't have to hold back. "



"

Culture and race is always important to think about, but not for the sake of it - you need to have a relationship first. "

'MY GRANDMOTHER'S HANDS'

Resmaa Menakem

Your body puts each new body it encounters into one of two categories: safe or dangerous. And many white Americans – no matter what they think or believe – put unfamiliar Black bodies into the dangerous category. This makes it difficult for their bodies to settle when Black bodies are nearby.

This sense of danger does not come out of nowhere. But it also doesn't come from Black bodies. – even though, to white bodies, it feels like it does. It comes from the ideas and images that were created, perpetuated, and institutionalized over hundreds of years – all for the benefit of powerful white bodies.

'Settling is an active response to the trauma of racism: *trauma is all about speed and reflexivity. Slow yourself down and pay attention to your body. Be curious about what is going on there. Lean into your body's experiences and sensations. Do the same with uncertainty...'*

'Clean pain is about letting go of what is familiar but harmful, and it is more likely to happen in a body that can stay settled in the midst of conflict and uncertainty.'

'Dirty pain – the alternative path of reflexively blaming, denying and avoiding difficult feelings.'

Culturally sensitive and racially aware work is an attitude of the body as well as the mind

Learning to...

Observe and pay attention to felt responses

Slow down, settle, reflect and refocus

Adjust positioning and **listen** more deeply to the whole picture and the whole person

Explore the 'Angels' as well the 'Ghosts in the Nursery,' giving rise to a more open and aware view of the infant-parent relationship in context

Integrate new, hopeful observations and experiences

Relationship-build across the system in order to engage the village around the baby



**New experiences
become stories
become culture**

***present in all caregiving
interactions (Stroud)***



Inside my skin

The little girl inside

Can you see me?

Can you hear me?



and belonging makes our bodies feel safe. We experience belonging – or the lack of it – in our bodies.

When we belong, we feel that our life has some value and meaning.

Culture matters deeply to human bodies because culture creates a sense of belonging...

Change culture and you change lives. When strategy competes with culture, culture wins every time.

If enough people do the same thing over and over, or if they share something with each other enough times, eventually it becomes culture.



Resmaa Menakem,

My Grandmother's Hands

**Who are you going to bring this to next?
Think of trustworthy relationships in
which you can learn to tolerate and
reflect on the feelings which racism
evokes?**

**This is a marathon and not a sprint; we
can't 'think' our way out of racism – so
who is the community (professional or
otherwise) that will hold you as you learn
to relate in new ways rather than go back
to default positions?**

**What new ideas and
sensations/ feelings
have you become
aware of today?**

**We need to settle our bodies so
that others can feel settled
around us – and we need to
practice this together. What
practices might support you in
your professional setting to
have difficult conversations?
(Slowing nervous system
down, storytelling, eating &
celebrating, use of imagination
and the arts)**



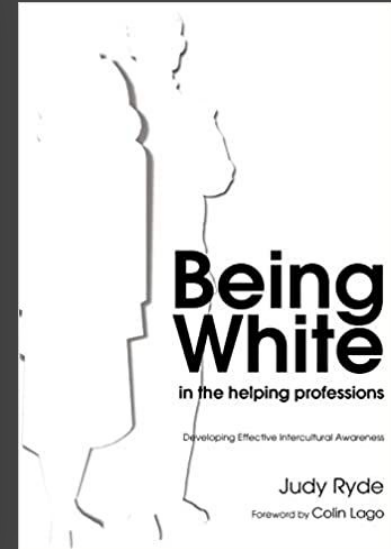
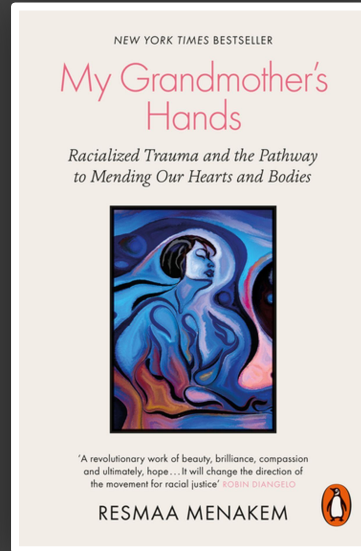
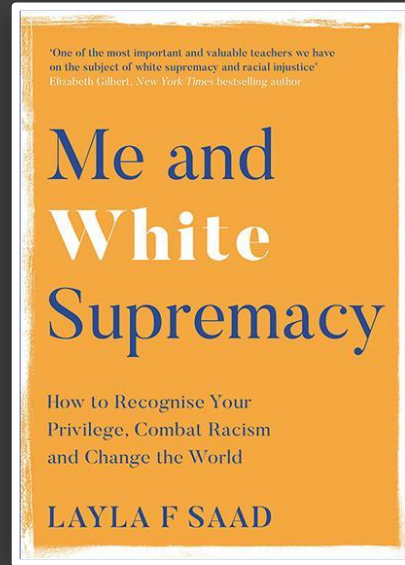
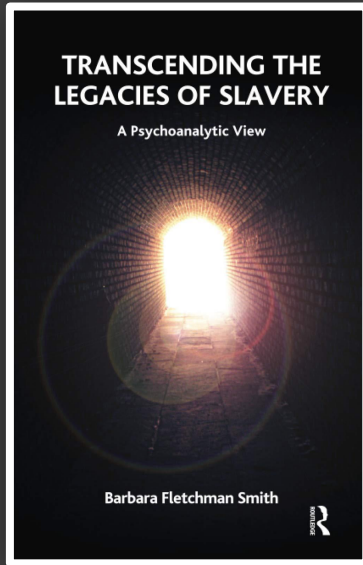
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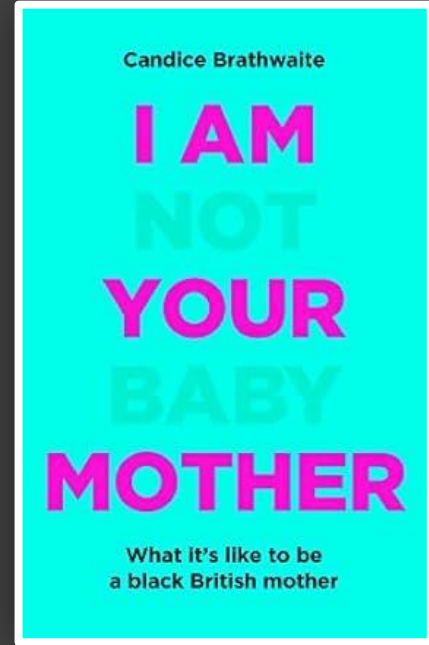
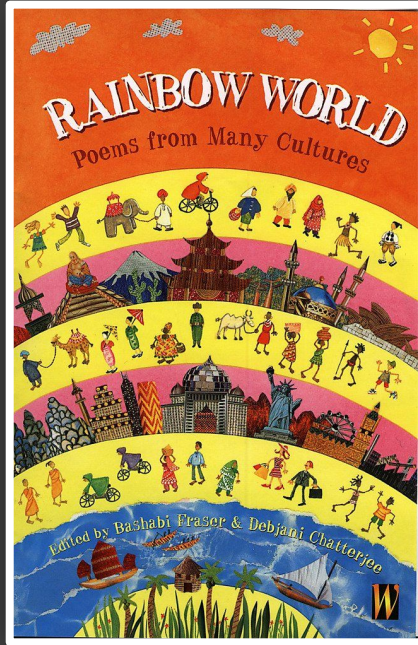
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Becoming informed...



...and exploring imaginatively





Thanks for listening!

Any questions?

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