



4th International Conference on
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The Burdens We Carry: Black Professional Counselors Addressing Racial Trauma in Counseling

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ABSTRACT (up to 300 words)

Racism has had a profound and enduring impact on the lives of individuals in America. This enduring atrocity has resulted in emotional and mental wounds for those from the Global Majority, also known as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). The pervasiveness of racism creates deleterious effects manifesting as race-based traumatic stress (RBTS) or racial trauma (RT). It is the ethical duty of professional counselors to recognize, address, and intervene effectively to support clients in healing from the profound effects of racism and racial trauma. While there is extensive literature on racial trauma, there is a notable gap in the literature regarding the experiences of mental health professionals who work to address racial trauma in counseling.

This workshop presents the findings of a qualitative study that used Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Black Critical Theory (BlackCrit) as a framework for exploring the experiences of Black professional counselors who work with clients impacted by racial trauma. The study employed semi-structured interviews with 10 Black professional counselors, yielding five key themes: 1) Bearing Witness, 2) Collective Woundedness, 3) Barriers and Challenges, 4) Healing-Focused Approaches, and 5) Counselor Preparation and Development.

Participants in this session will gain insights into the nuanced challenges and opportunities encountered by Black professional counselors when addressing racial trauma in counseling. Implications for mental health education, training, and future research will be discussed.



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BIOGRAPHY (up to 300 words)

Dr. Warren B. Wright is a licensed professional counselor (TX) and a national certified counselor in the United States. He serves as a Clinical Assistant Professor at St. Edward's University in Austin, TX. He completed his Doctor of Philosophy in Counselor Education at Sam Houston State University. He obtained his Master of Education in Counselor Education with an emphasis in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from Georgia Southern University. Dr. Wright is the proud owner of Transformational Counseling, Coaching, and Consulting LLC, where he provides individual and couples counseling services. Moreover, Dr. Wright is a 2021 Doctoral Mental Health Counseling Fellow for the NBCC Minority Fellowship Program. His primary scholarly interest includes working with clients impacted by racial trauma, Black counselor identity development, and entrepreneurship in counseling. As a counselor, author, and speaker, Dr. Wright creates space for healing and transformation.

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Mode of Presentation: Workshop

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