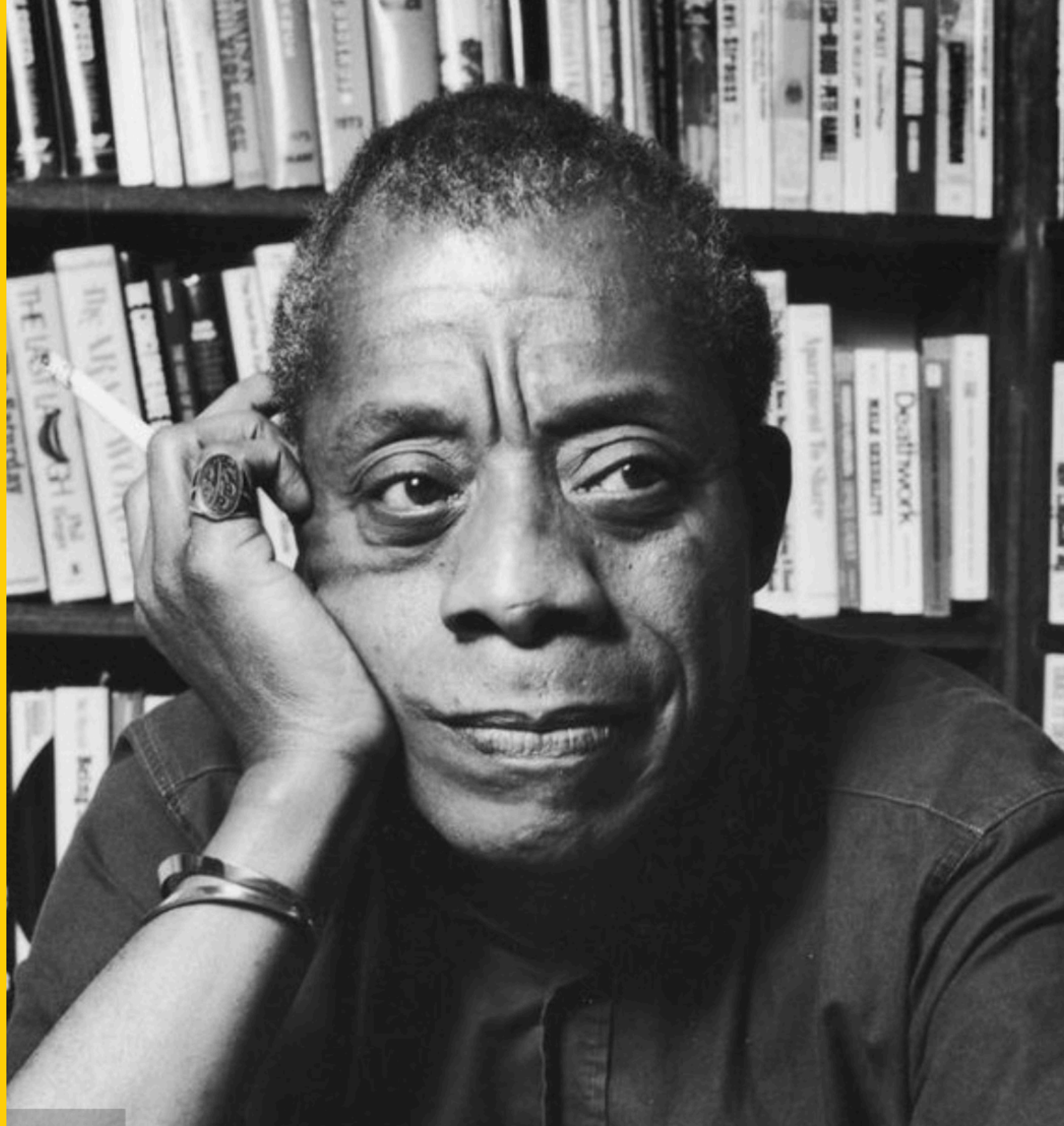




Body & Soul

transforming trauma
with love

#Black Lives Matter



“Not everything that is
faced can be changed,
but nothing can be
changed until it is
faced.”

James Baldwin

The journey to ending dehumanisation

Mind,
Body
& Soul.

In May 2020 we witnessed the brutal murder of George Floyd. This follows hundreds of years of atrocities that have happened across America and beyond. They are manifestations of the deep inequalities that exist not only in America, but also here in the UK.

In the context of a global pandemic, this brutal murder forced the world to open their eyes to the profound injustice and systemic racism that exists today. Here at Body & Soul, we stand unequivocally alongside Black Lives Matter. Our hearts feel the deep pain of the racial injustices, the structural inequalities and the continuous trauma that Black, Indigenous and people of colour experience on a daily basis.

When we speak of racism, Hilliard (1992) helps frame what we understand: “The system that encompasses economic, political, social and cultural structures, actions and beliefs that institutionalise and perpetuate an unequal distribution of privileges, resources and power between White people and people of Colour. This system is historic, normalised, taken for granted, deeply embedded, and works to the benefit of Whites and to the disadvantage of people of colour.”¹

Covid 19 has brought the unacceptable health and social inequalities to greater consciousness and is further evidenced in the report from Public Health England where it is highlighted that BIPOC communities are disproportionately impacted by COVID.² There may be a number of different reasons why this is the case, but without question a key factor is a result of systemic inequalities and racism. In 2018, a report highlighted that Black mothers were 5x more likely to die in childbirth in the UK than white mothers.³

1. Hilliard, Asa G. “Behavioral Style, Culture, and Teaching and Learning.” *The Journal of Negro Education*, vol. 61, no. 3, 1992, pp. 370–377. JSTOR

2. “Beyond the data: Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups”. PHE, June 2020

3. “Saving Lives, Improving Mothers’ Care Lessons learned to inform maternity care from the UK and Ireland Confidential Enquiries into Maternal Deaths and Morbidity 2015-17”. *Maternal, Newborn and Infant Clinical Outcome Review Programme. MBRRACE-UK, 2019.*

In a survey in 2016 of 222 white medical students and residents published in The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, it showed that 50% of them endorsed at least one myth about physiological differences between Black and White people, including that black peoples nerve endings are less sensitive than white peoples.⁴

In most aspects of life, including education, housing and employment, BIPOC communities experience institutional discrimination, which has an adverse impact on life chances. Health research consistently shows worse health outcomes for conditions such as high-blood pressure, diabetes, coronary heart disease, HIV, breast and prostate cancer.

In the UK, the Macpherson Report⁵ and the Windrush Lessons Learned Review⁶ found institutional racism within government and society. We understand the pain, despair and exhaustion in relation to the many promises that have been made about race and injustice, only to then have hopes crushed by subsequent failures of governments to act. We are mindful of the fatigue experienced by many Black, Indigenous and people of colour within our community at Body & Soul.

Body & Soul's existence is rooted in transforming trauma for a population whose needs are often unheard, marginalised by the dominant culture and further exasperated by systemic inequalities. For the last 24 years, we have dedicated 100% of our resources to supporting a predominantly BIPOC community to transform the life-threatening impact of trauma: past, present and intergenerationally.

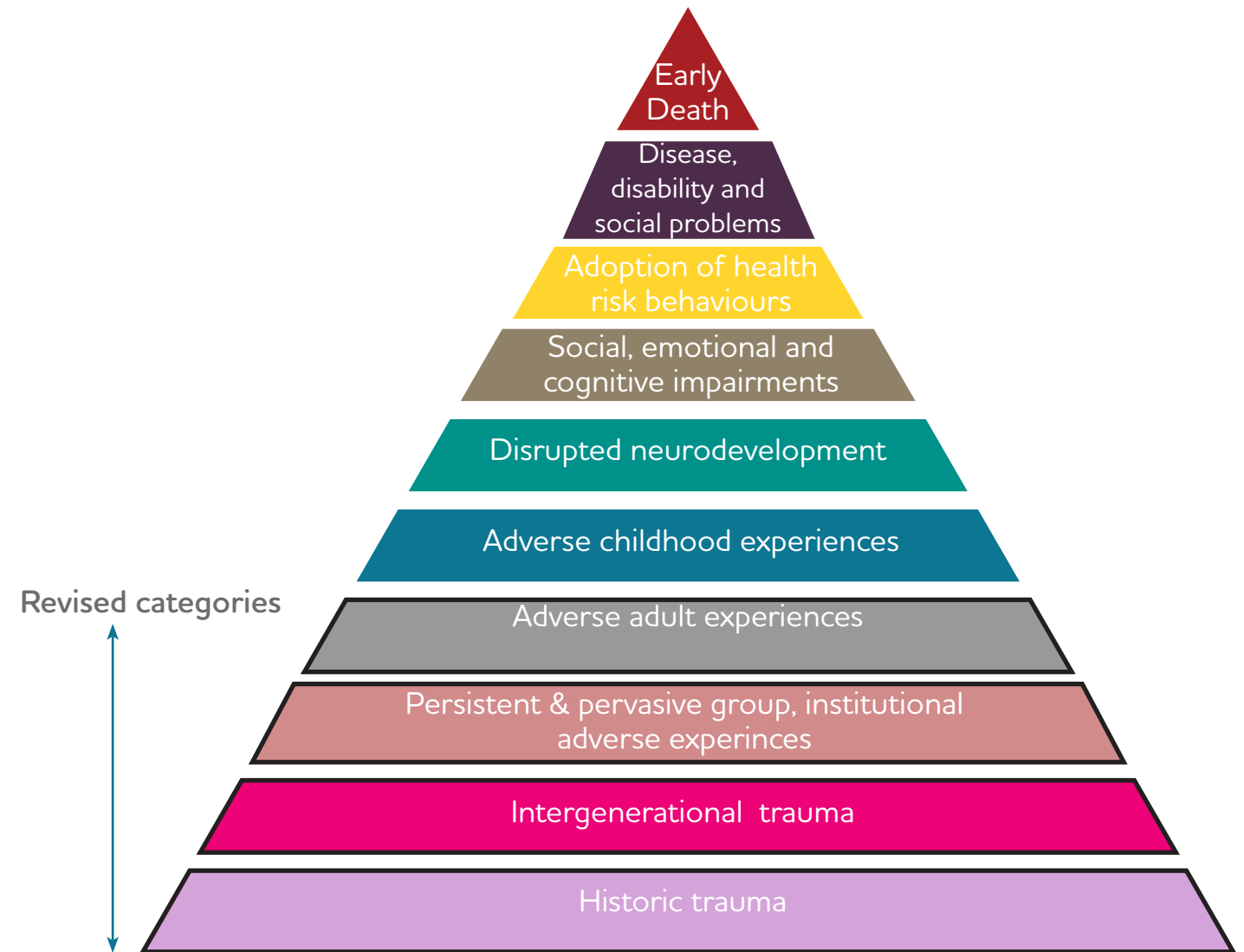
We have reflected on the Adverse Childhood Experiences original pyramid with a greater understanding of racial trauma and the continual experience of microaggressions when living in a hostile environment.

4. Hoffman, K Metal. "Racial bias in pain assessment". *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* Apr 2016, 201516047; DOI: 10.1073/pnas.1516047113. Accessed 15 Feb. 2021.

5. The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry. *Report of an Inquiry by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny*, February 1999.

6. Windrush Lessons Learned Review, *Independent Review by Wendy Williams*, March 2020

Adverse Childhood Experiences re-worked with a lens of racial trauma



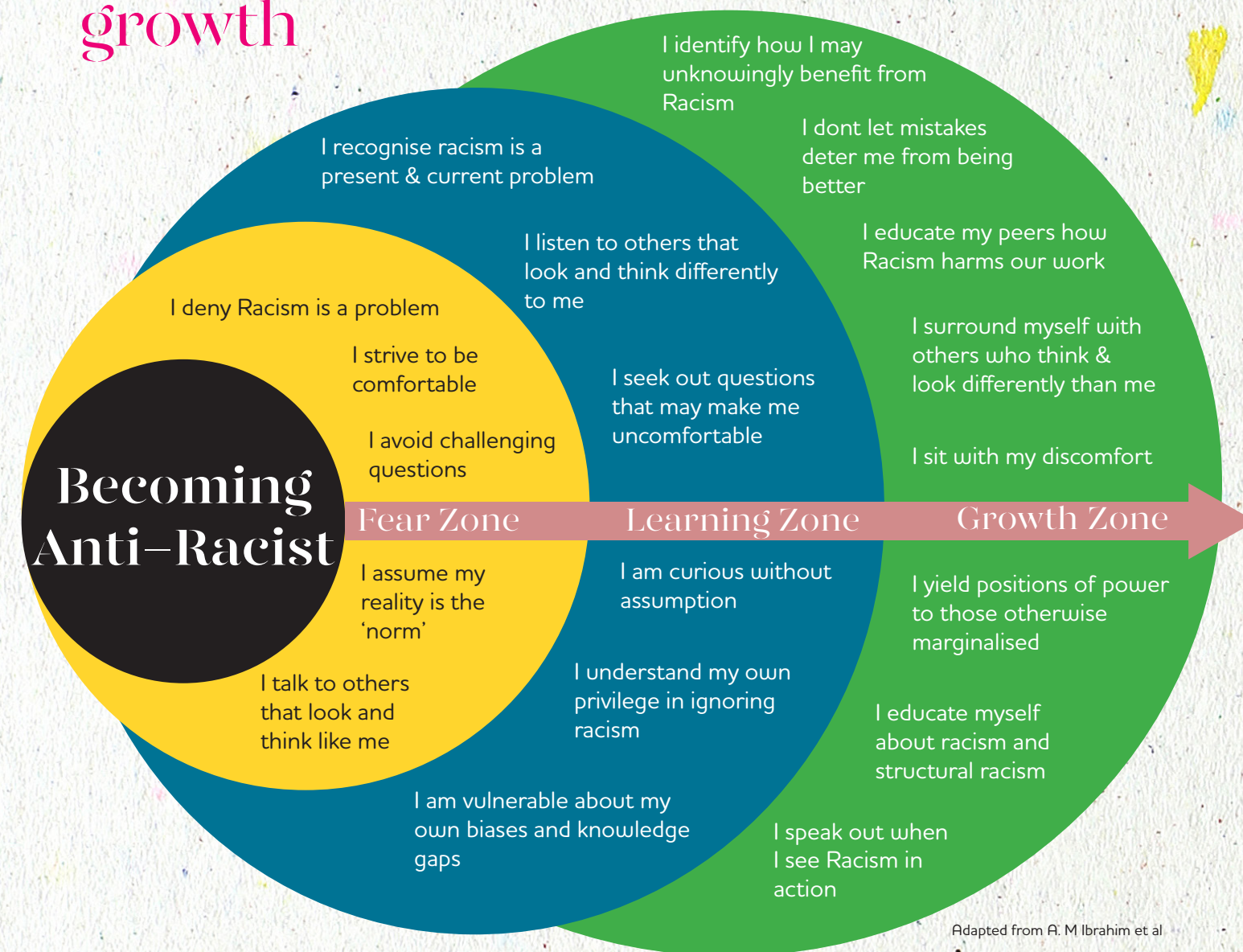
We recognise the continued prevalence of white advantage and this racism having deep roots in the history of the UK, its colonial past and role in the slave trade. Our understanding is shaped by the concept that White Body Supremacy is built around the single falsehood that the white body is the supreme standard against which all other bodies are measured and judged by both structurally and philosophically.

We are committed to a process of reflection, metabolising, learning and growing to ensure we remain awake and are active in creating meaningful change. We all exist in the context of a society rooted in White supremacy and have therefore internalised racism in ways we are often unaware. Understanding power, whiteness and advantage is not about blame, but is an opportunity for each of us to face the reality of how society is structured, and how our conversations require us to be resilient and humble about getting things wrong, misunderstanding one another, and be willing to try again.

“Culture matters deeply to human bodies, because culture creates a sense of belonging and belonging makes our bodies feel safe.”

Resmaa Menakem

Our Commitment to learning and growth





Critical Race Theory Explored

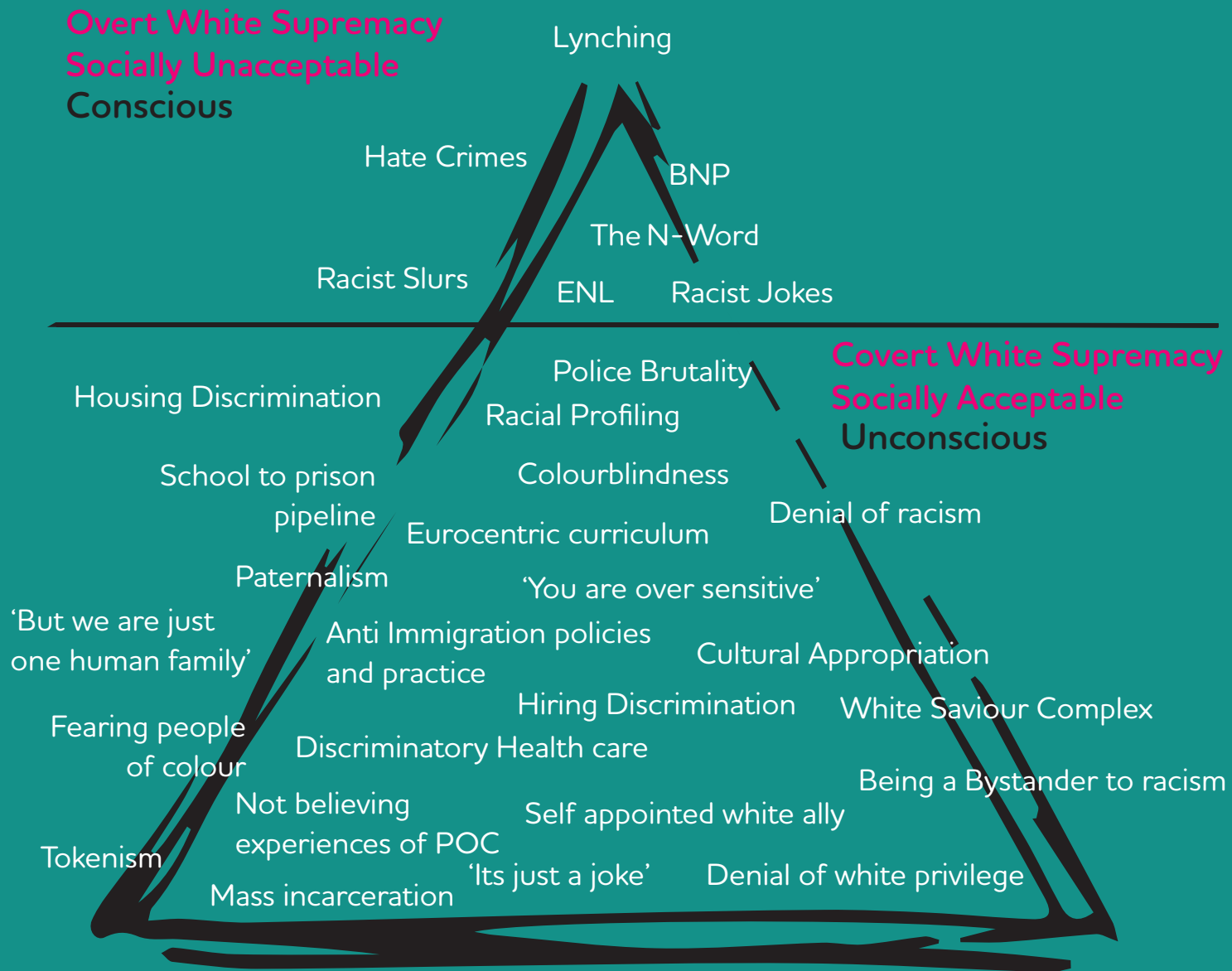
Our reflections have been enlightened through the study of Critical Race Theory (CRT). This is based on the understanding of the centrality of racism in our everyday existence.

Key themes we have explored in CRT that connect to our learning include:

- ♥ Racism is so deeply engrained in the social order that it is often taken for granted as if natural.
- ♥ Racism is not always explicit but operates in a socio-political context where it is more embedded and nuanced.
- ♥ When speaking of white supremacy, we are referring to a political, economic and cultural system in which white people overwhelmingly control power and material resources, and conscious and unconscious ideas of white superiority and entitlement are widespread across a broad array of institutions and social settings.
- ♥ We do not assume that each individual's account represents one singular truth or reality, rather, that their position at the margins of racist society gives a depth of insight.
- ♥ We hold change with openness, but with integrity. We understand at times there is interest convergence and racial equality is then accommodated when it converges with the interests of whites (Bell 1980).
- ♥ While CRT is centrally concerned with the structures and relations that maintain racial inequality, it does not operate to the exclusion of, or disregard other forms of injustice. It is recognised that no person has a single, simplistic unitary identity and we hold this in a framework of intersectionality.

7. Bell, Derrick A. "Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma." *Harvard Law Review*, vol. 93, no. 3, 1980, pp. 518–533. JSTOR.

Triangle of Covert and Overt White Supremacy



“Love without
action is
meaningless.
Action without love
is irrelevant.”


Deepak Chopra

“Something is terribly
wrong if the pain, sorrow
and outrage of a people
makes you more
uncomfortable than
murder itself.”

Rupi Kaur



The days, months and years ahead: An active commitment to love



Body & Soul is committed to being an organisation that is actively anti-racist, anti-oppressive and where all members of our community, whatever their background, colour, identity or belief will feel supported, nurtured, empowered and celebrated. For us, a belief or a policy that is not embedded into the culture of an organisation will often have little impact and in reality, will further harm members of the BIPOC community. We understand culture is a living breathing entity and is an ongoing process. Culture change takes hold and is maintained through consistency and repetition. Below are Body & Soul's core organisational cultural values:

Loving: We believe love is essential to human growth and connection; we will foster an environment that creates healthy, loving attachments.

Optimistic: We are energetically, proactively optimistic that childhood trauma does not have to impact/ limit a person's long-term potential.

Community Focused: We believe a community-based approach is essential in creating positive social/relational patterns and psychosocial connectivity.

Passionate: We will work tirelessly with and on behalf of members.

Bravery: We are willing to ask the tough questions that can be a catalyst for change

Wisdom: Our experience and insight has been distilled into a proven transformational programme of support. We are a learning organisation and we are committed to supplementing this experience with a strong evidence/theoretical base and to sharing our knowledge appropriately to advocate for the wellbeing of our members.

At Body & Soul we feel the pain, trauma, fear and anger in relation to the systemic inequalities our members live with on a daily basis. We feel it in ourselves, for our community & for our brothers and sisters worldwide. Transformation comes from processing this hurt, anger and bewilderment of oppression. This work is personal, professional, organisational and societal.

LOVE

Love is

- Consistent care that brings healing to the body, mind and soul
- A tenacious commitment on behalf of Body & Soul members
- A safe space filled with empathy, holding and clear boundaries
- Seeing the whole person
- Being in relationship
- Showing up to the difficult conversations
- Embracing a listening culture
- Speaking up and making space for others to speak
- Valuing each other and ourselves
- Made visible through the environment, through the language we use, and through our actions
- Showing up authentically
- Being open to being vulnerable
- Being courageous
- Being curious
- Showing up with a willing mindset
- Heart work
- Simply being kind

A portrait of Marjorie Agwang, a Black woman with her hair pulled back, wearing a yellow off-the-shoulder top and a delicate necklace. She is looking directly at the camera with a calm expression.

Radical change is necessary

“

The racial pandemic brings me a heavy heart, knowing that we are still having to fight and protest for justice everyday. We need change to happen.

Being in a society where we are governed by fear and anger is not a society where unity prevails. Our paradigms have to shift so we as a people can look at the issues at hand through a different lens. We will not be able to move forward for the better if we still look through the lens of hate and prejudice. Racial discrimination has been ignored for a long time and it needs to end, it's time to speak out and address these issues which are causing harm, low self-worth, low self-esteem, and as it stands even deaths. George Floyd's death highlighted the major issues which are still standing strong. As a Black woman I have experienced racial discrimination within the workplace and also within my craft. I also became used to it and ignored it for a while due to believing that it would not be received seriously. But staying silent did more damage than good.

I heard a quote recently which said, 'Injustice prevails where hopelessness persists' and I hope for a future where justice, peace, and love prevail. But while hoping, actions also need to be taken. An action can start from you. It starts from us. The little things we do each day to bring a little more peace and change to a broken society. A society, which corrects oppression, peruses peace and maintains love.

Radical change is necessary. Love is necessary. ”

Marjorie Agwang - Trustee

Power



- We value the sharing of power
- We do not hoard power
- We value new ideas from everyone within the community and aim to receive them without defensiveness
- We strive for transparency in decision making, expectations and responsibilities
- We speak for ourselves and do not make our opinion the voice of others
- We care for each other deeply and do not infantilise or condescend
- If we do not know the answer we say we do not know, instead of avoiding responding
- We are committed to everyone developing to be the best version of themselves, there are no heroes at Body & Soul
- We cultivate leadership that understands the inevitability of change
- We nurture collaboration
- We bring intention not to speak with capital letters as though things are final
- We strive not to push our own unprocessed trauma through another human being
- We cultivate both finite and, infinite mindsets
- We are mindful how white bodies can defend against charges of racism instead of examining how racism might actually be happening
- We give time to the process, not just trying to fix with solutions
- We strive for a culture of self reflexivity
- We acknowledge where we bring privilege



Community

We believe in a strong, vibrant, intentional community. A community that is participatory, connecting and where each person has a valuable part to play.

The Body & Soul community is built on a foundation of love. We speak of one another as members, not service users or clients. We strive to counter the notion of ownership of one another.

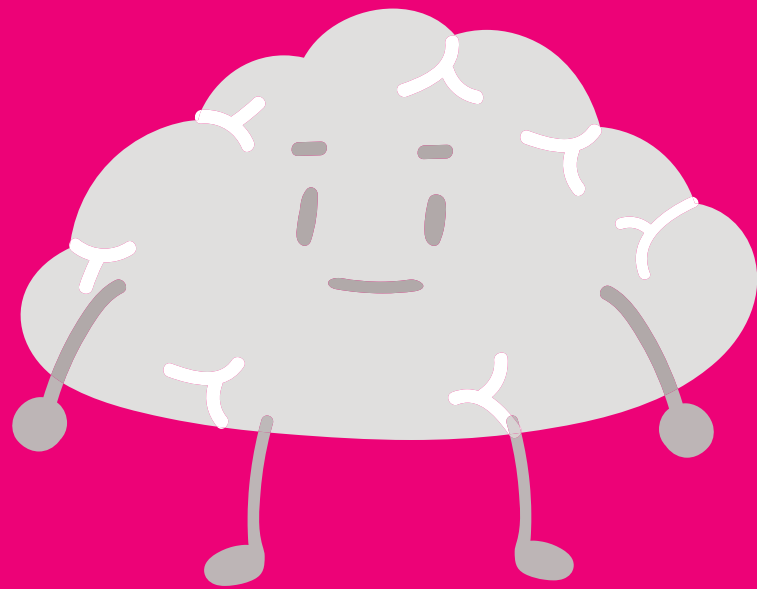
Our membership model embraces co-creation, mutuality and shared journeys where we all have a chance to thrive and emerge into who we are meant to be. We understand our place in the community is fluid and changes as we change.

Bessel Van de Kolk says it like this:

“the most powerful protection against being overwhelmed by stress and trauma [...] is being truly heard and seen by the people around us, a feeling that we are held in someone else’s mind and heart.”

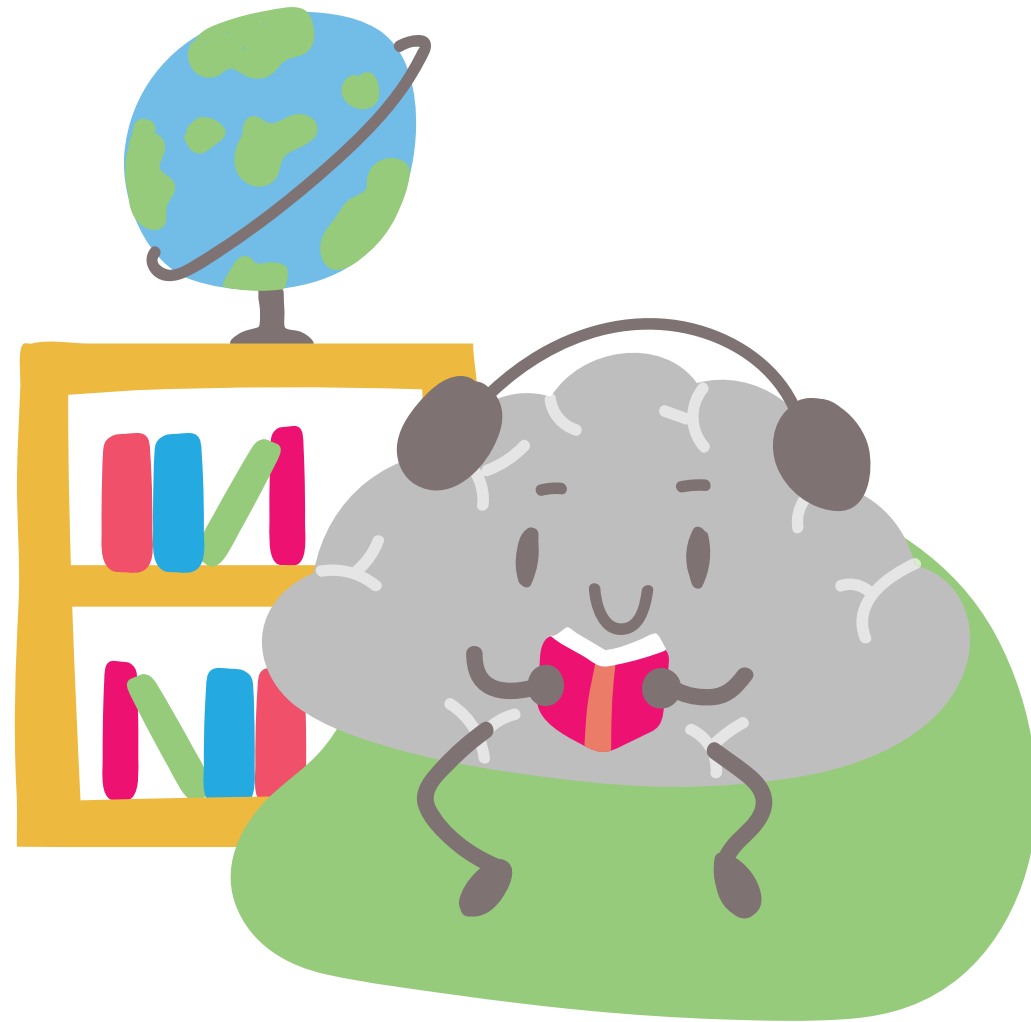
Body & Soul’s community enables people of all ages to connect, build trust, develop friendships, learn and be part of creating a lasting change for ourselves, our community and future generations.

Mind Set



Learning
optimism integrity
attentive courage
trust Authenticity
imperfection curious
fairness empathy
+1 mindset creative
joyful purposeful
activist reflective

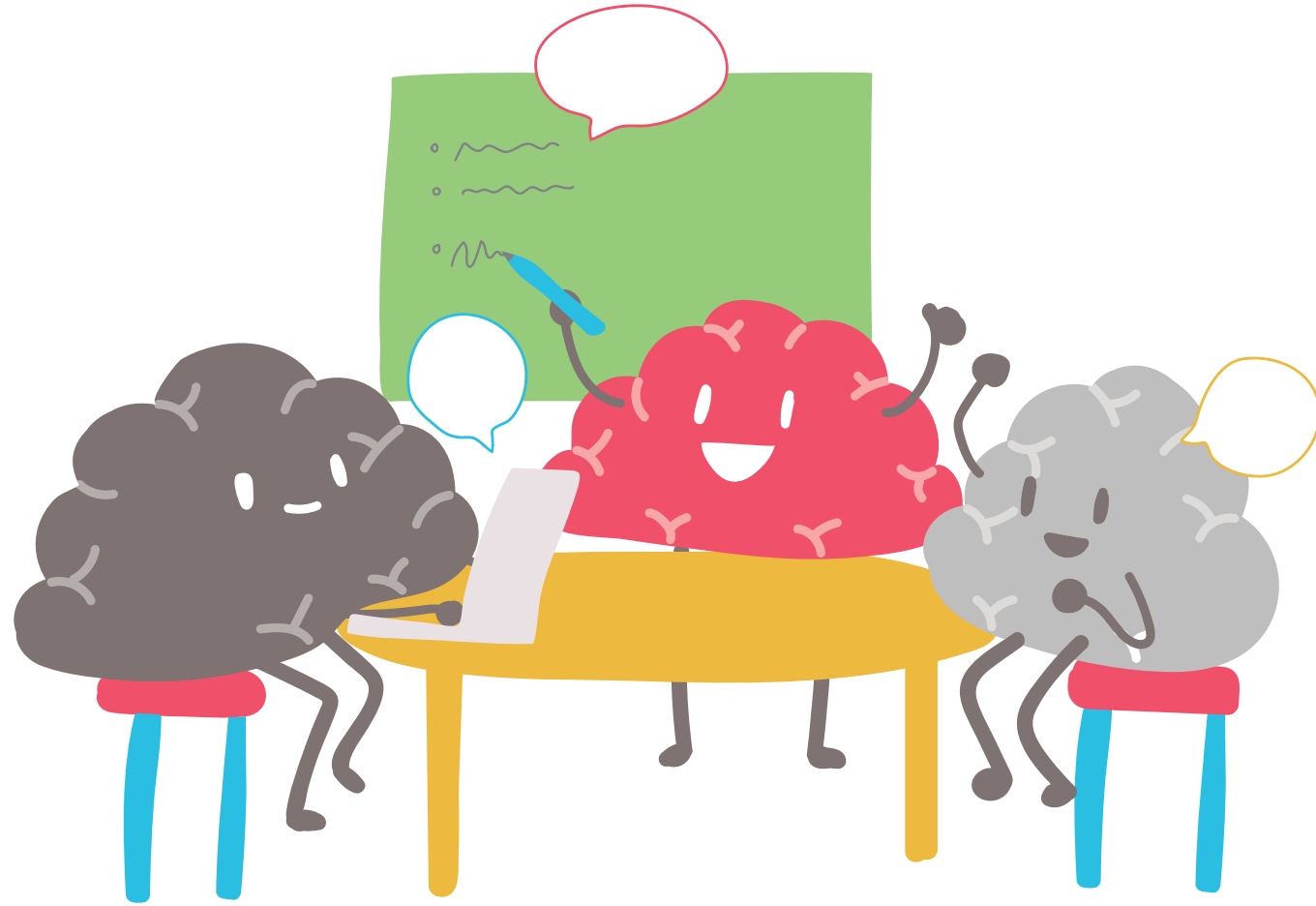
The question for us is, how do these values manifest in behaviours and mindset? How do we commit to a culture that stands for love, inclusivity, diversity and equity, and counter to the prevailing white body supremacy standard that is rooted in today's society?



LEARNING

WE...

- are committed to learning
- take time to process our thoughts and make decisions
- nurture the wise teacher within us, not the inner critic
- welcome diversity of experience both personally and professionally
- are committed to a high learning frame that provides an identity safe environment
- we believe that there are multiple ways to think about ideas, solutions, perspectives - there is no one way
- invest in resources that reflect a global community
- understand many perspectives are rooted in white body supremacy and hold an enquiring, learning mindset
- embrace a culture where learning is embraced from 'mistakes'
- nurture expansive thinking, finite and infinite
- un-learn, re-frame and re-member, knowing how white body supremacy has shaped all teaching
- understand discomfort is often at the root of growth and learning
- create informal learning opportunities with each other, valuing that
- meaningful learning often happens unexpectedly
- strive for a learning structure that occurs without hierarchy
- appreciate learning is through a wide range of mediums; books, podcasts, videos, conversations, experiential and more
- are committed to self education as a foundation to anti-oppressive practice.



BEING IN RELATIONSHIP

WE...

- bring a listening mindset
- say sorry with authenticity
- do not assume who has the answers to a question
- do not do the meeting after the meeting
- hold ourselves and others accountable
- are honest about our capabilities and ask for help when we need it
- bring self awareness to our communication, individually and in a group
- are mindful everyone has their own struggles, even the ones who are quietest
- understand that our language, tone and expressions are shaped by colonisation and white body supremacy and strive to bring a reflective anti racist/oppressive mindset
- strive to be conscious of our judgemental thinking in relation to ourselves and to each other
- do not confuse not agreeing with not understanding
- talk to people, not about people
- do not use politeness as a way to deny the space for people to be themselves
- are committed to bringing unconscious beliefs about fear of conflict to the open
- we use a mix of communication methods in our quest to meet one another's mixed communication styles
- do not worship the written word over other means of communication
- respect boundaries, physical, emotional and psychological



WAYS OF BEING

WE...

- strive to be kind in words and actions even if what we are saying is challenging
- bring our whole self to work
- strive to be in our truth
- bring a +1 mindset to exploration of ideas
- respect and value uniqueness and the intrinsic value of every individual
- bring humility
- are patient and impatient
- are not rigid or dogmatic
- strive to be conscious of how we are experienced by others, nurturing mentalisation
- are validating
- strive to be courageous and show up in our vulnerability
- bring active discipline to our actions, thoughts and behaviours
- take time to reflect and understand where our growing edges are
- know everyone brings their own lived experience
- bring a 'future generation's' thinking to our actions
- understand mistakes are not personal
- strive to hear difference of opinions/disagreements without defensiveness
- are purposeful
- bring passion to what we do
- are give attention to the detail, while also holding the big picture
- are compassionate
- embrace laughter, joy and smiles as much as tears, anger and ambivalence
- are not bystanders
- we do not make assumptions about each other, particularly in relation to protected characteristics
- create opportunities to bring reparations



THE ORGANISATION

WE...

- are all guardians of the culture at Body & Soul
- provide structures that allow honest and vulnerable dialogue
- take time to be curious and understand the work we are engaged in
- recruit for potential not perfection
- do not give more weight to the voices of white bodies
- embrace a culture where we can bring who we are to work
- bring intentionality to what we say, what we do and how we connect
- do not measure success solely on quantifiable data
- take responsibility for ourselves and what we are tasked with
- strive for excellence without fear of mistakes in values as much as in deliverables
- are honest when we don't know the answers
- prioritise collaboration
- hold gatherings (meetings) with purpose
- participate actively
- get on board with a decision once it is made
- are in the business of continual renovation of the organisation
- create brave spaces that allow us to be in our discomfort and comfort
- pay living wages to all
- foster a trusting culture in all we do
- do not make racism or any other inequalities invisible
- are committed to everyone having the right to emotional and psychological comfort
- are committed to an inclusive culture and are mindful of assumed norms, language and behaviours
- are holistic in approach
- think systemically
- are proactive in our approach to health and wellbeing
- embody the archetypes of the coach and guardian
- celebrate with rituals
- we nurture creativity

Invitation to Brave Space

Written by Micky ScottBey Jones

Together we will create brave space.

Because there is no such thing as a “safe space”

We exist in the real world.

We all carry scars and we have all caused wounds.

In this space

We seek to turn down the volume of the outside
world,

We amplify voices that fight to be heard elsewhere,

We call each other to more truth and love.

We have the right to start somewhere and continue
to grow.

We have the responsibility to examine what we
think we know.

We will not be perfect.

This space will not be perfect.

It will not always be what we wish it to be.

But it will be our brave space together,

And we will work on it side by side.

Glossary of words to explore...

Language is always evolving and Body & Soul is committed to approaching words with curiosity and creativity in the frame of reflecting on decolonisation and white body supremacy. Below are a few words as reference points for developing our understanding:

Accountability: A way an individual, organisation or community hold themselves to their actions and goals in a visible and transparent manner. Accountability asks for commitment and for a responsibility to the outcome.

Affinity Groups: An intentional space for those who share an identity to convene for learning, support and connections.

Ally: Someone that makes an active commitment to recognise their privilege (based on gender, class, race, sexual identity, etc) and works in solidarity with oppressed communities in the struggle for justice. An Ally also commits to reduce their own complicity in oppression and invests in strengthening their own knowledge and consciousness of oppression.

Anti-Racist: A conscious decision to make consistent, frequent, equitable choices daily. An anti-racist is someone who is supporting an anti-racist policy through their actions or expression of anti-racist ideas.

Assimilationist: One who is expressing the racist idea that a racial group is culturally or behaviourally inferior and is supporting cultural or behavioural enrichment programmes to develop a racial group.

BIPOC: Black, Indigenous, People of Colour.

Cultural Appropriation: Theft of cultural elements for one's own use, commodification, or profit – including symbols, art, language, customs etc. – often without understanding, acknowledging or respect for its value in the original culture.

Cultural Racism: Cultural Racism refers to representations, messages and stories conveying the idea that behaviours and values associated with white people or “whiteness” are automatically “better” or more “normal” than those associated with other racially defined groups.

Diversity: This includes all the ways people differ and encompasses but is not limited to race, gender identity, sexuality, age, class, physical abilities, neurological differences and more. Diversity in the context of racial justice is about being diverse from the white body supremacy standard. Diversity cannot be silent on the subject of equity.

Implicit Bias: Also known as unconscious or hidden bias, implicit biases are negative associations that people unknowingly hold and are expressed automatically without conscious awareness.

Institutional Racism: Refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. These policies often never mention any racial group, but the intent is to create advantages for white people.

Intersectionality: A prism to see the interactive effects of various forms of discrimination and disempowerment. It looks at the way racism, many times, interacts with patriarchy, heterosexism, classism, xenophobia – seeing the overlapping vulnerabilities created by these systems actually create specific kinds of challenges.

Internalised Racism: The situation that occurs in a racist system when a racial group oppressed by racism supports the supremacy and dominance of the dominating group by maintaining or participating in the set of attitudes, behaviours, social structures and ideologies that undergird the dominating group's power.

Microaggression: The everyday verbal, nonverbal and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages towards people of colour.

Prejudice: A pre-judgement or unjustifiable, and usually negative, attitude of one type of individual or groups toward another group and its members.

Racism: Racism is different from racial prejudice, hatred or discrimination. Racism involves one group having the power to carry out systemic discrimination through institutional policies and practices of the society and by shaping cultural beliefs and values that support those racist policies and practices.

Structural Racism: The overarching system of racial bias across institutions and society. It normalises and legitimises historical, cultural, institutional and interpersonal advantage for white people, while producing adverse outcomes for people of colour.

White Fragility: A state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable (for white people), triggering a range of defensive moves.

White Supremacy: A form of racism centered upon the belief that white people are superior to people of other racial backgrounds and that whites should politically, economically and socially dominate non-whites.



This booklet was inspired by the Body & Soul community, by
activists, by poets, by therapists, by scholars, by scientists,
by creatives and by LOVE