

Thema Bryant – keynote address

Applying Decolonial Psychology to Trauma Recovery

Trauma, ranging from interpersonal to intergenerational, can create severe dysregulation and psychic suffering (Zembylas, 2024). As it potentially disrupts the nervous system, identity, affect regulation, and relationship schemas, trauma can disconnect survivors from the various aspects of themselves as well as their community. As a trauma survivor and trauma psychologist, I have dedicated my career to exploring ways of restoring and healing those severed connections. Exploring decolonial and liberation psychologies awakened me to conceptualizations and frameworks that center reclamation as a form of holistic healing, as well as individual and collective empowerment (Bryant-Davis, 2023; Burrage, Momper, & Gone, 2022). While much of the individually-centered trauma literature focuses on skills based psycho-education and cognitive-behavioral coping strategies, there has traditionally been less, although growing, attention paid to the diverse culturally-grounded, socio-political pathways for survivors to reclaim themselves (Rogers & Bryant-Davis, 2022; Walker, 2017). This presentation will explore the definition of decolonial and liberation psychologies, the pathways they illuminate that can benefit the trauma recovery process, and implications for training/teaching, research, practice, and policy.