Decolonising the Curriculum

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Table of Contents

Abbreviations

ACP UK=Association of Clinical Psychologists UK

BPS = British Psychological Society

DClinPsych = Doctorate of Clinical Psychology

EDI=Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

PPD=Personal and Professional Development

SEP = Service Evaluation Project

Introduction

Global events in recent years such as Black Lives Matter and COVID-19 have highlighted how prevalent racism is and have prompted systemic change (Ong, 2021). The ACP UK recently published their EDI Context and Strategy for Clinical Psychology (2022), which highlights the importance of embedding EDI issues in clinical training and regular funding for EDI research. The BPS acknowledge the presence of racism within the profession and reference the importance of clinical psychologists working with difference and diversity (BPS, 2019). Work is ongoing at a national and local level to adopt a strong anti-discrimination approach to DClinPsych training. DClinPsych courses have adopted varying approaches in their efforts to decolonise curricula. Different factors such as values, teaching methods, access to placements, and staff teams have influenced courses' response (Ong, 2021).

Background

Colonialism is the conscious destruction of a group's cultural values by another group (Adebisi, 2016). Eurocentrism refers to the centring of European cultures (Sesanti, 2019). Decolonisation is a process that aims to challenge the legacy of colonialism and Eurocentricity, and place greater importance on knowledge from other cultures and communities (Maine & Wagner, 2021). Numerous researchers note the importance of improving the content of teaching, methods of teaching, placement experiences, and research opportunities to embed inter-cultural approaches within DClinPsych training and challenge Whiteness within practice (Pillay, 2017; Wood & Patel, 2019). Research has highlighted the importance of DClinPsych training adequately preparing and supporting trainees to address racism, with overt racism becoming more and more apparent in Britain (Minhas, 2019). British clinical psychology typically recruits white people (Scior et al., 2017), which has led to a lack of representation amongst trainees and programme staff on training courses and within clinical settings. Shah and colleagues (2012) document the prevalence of discrimination within clinical psychology, where Black British and British Asian psychologists experience microaggressions and difficulties with white supervisors (Odusanya et al., 2018). Ong (2021) notes how different factors such as the supervisory relationship, team dynamics, DClinPsych training, personal values, and upbringing affect whether someone feels able to explore race and racism.

There is increased discussion about the limited cross-cultural applicability of psychological theories and models, and the need to address Western bias in research

(Prajapati et al., 2019). Researchers note that clinical psychology is dominated by research based on WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, Democratic; Henrich et al., 2010) populations, which impacts on guidelines, funding, and training (Ong, 2021). This is particularly relevant as individualistic therapies such as CBT have reached prominence in recent years, and trainees are expected to demonstrate competence in CBT and one other therapeutic model (BPS, 2019; Ong, 2021). Systemic therapy has been proposed as a useful model within which to consider race and racism, as it accounts for difference and wider influences (Ong, 2021). Roberts and colleagues (2020) explored racial inequality in psychological research. They found that psychological publications rarely explored race, and discussions were notably absent within cognitive psychology. The majority of psychology publications were edited by White editors, and many of the publications that spoke about race were written by White people (Roberts et al., 2020).

Teaching staff and trainees are important stakeholders in curriculum development (Watkins et al., 2018), but power discrepancies between staff and students can affect how students interact with material (Madden & McGregor, 2013). Berg and colleagues (2019) reflect on the benefit of staff modelling how they struggle, stumble, and offend when discussing race. Wood and Patel (2019) also note programme staff reflecting on their own experience can promote participation. This is particularly importance given that black trainees are often expected to lead on discussions about race and culture (Wood & Patel, 2019).

Researchers have documented how students can find decolonial content confronting, where it evokes emotions such as anger, guilt, and anxiety (Alemán & Gaytán, 2017). These feelings can enable avoidance, where students avoid discussing race and racism. Chiodo and colleagues (2014) relate that regular exposure to decolonial content can help students sit with these emotions and tolerate discomfort more readily. Similarly, Kessi (2018) highlights how students welcome the inclusion of more people of colour in higher education institutions, as they feel decolonial content would be taught better and they would be able to relate more readily to them.

Researchers have proposed different ways of exploring race in teaching, such as promoting critical appraisal, exploring values and ethics, encouraging students to share personal reflections, leaving space for discussion, and creating an open nurturing environment that promotes advocacy (Basham, 2010; Castell et al., 2018; Zinga & Styres, 2019). Bezrukova and colleagues (2016) also advocate the importance of combining diversity

training with other diversity initiatives to help consolidate knowledge and promote skill development.

There are criticisms associated with decolonisation in higher education. Researchers relate the process has not led to widespread meaningful change (Zwane, 2019). Daiches (2010) notes the limitations of EDI initiatives, without addressing wider influences, such as socio-political context. Berg and colleagues (2019) reflect on the pull to offer simple solutions, such as offering specific lectures on diversity, which can limit decolonial content being integrated within teaching more broadly. This is important given trainees and programme staff may hold multiple intersectional identities. Madden and McGregor (2013) reflect how it can be difficult to create safe spaces within institutions which are occupied by people from colonised and colonising groups. Byron (2017) also critiques the concept of safe spaces, and suggests they allow people to avoid difficult conversations. Addai and colleagues (2019) suggest it might be more helpful to create brave rather than safe spaces within DClinPsych training. Mason (2015) proposes the concept of 'safe uncertainty' as a position from which to take risks, engage in active learning, explore, adapt, and create. Wood and Patel (2019) reflect how this may encapsulate how trainees and programme staff need to respond when faced with the task of decolonising the curriculum.

Aims

This service evaluation aimed to explore what has already been achieved in terms of decolonising the curriculum, and barriers to doing this from both teaching staff and trainees' perspectives. I also hoped to identify further steps that should be taken to embed inter-cultural approaches and challenge Whiteness in practice.

Method
Design

A qualitative approach was adopted for this SEP, as there is no previous research available regarding decolonising the curriculum on DClinPsych programmes. Focus groups were used in this SEP, as they facilitate participant engagement and exploration of different perspectives (Morgan et al., 1998). Other designs were considered. An online survey would have allowed participants to maintain their anonymity and answer honestly, which may have increased uptake. However, this may have made it more difficult to collect rich data. Collecting descriptive data would have situated the sample. However, all participants are members of the DClinPsych and small numbers took part, which would have made it more

difficult to preserve participant anonymity. Focus groups were conducted over Microsoft Teams with trainees and teaching staff. These lasted approximately one hour.

Participants

84 trainees and staff were invited by email to take part in the evaluation by programme administrators, who act as gatekeepers for the cohort email lists. In total, 8 trainees and 4 members of teaching staff were happy to proceed with the project. Trainees' availability varied across the three cohorts on account of differing placement, teaching, and study days. I was unable to accommodate all trainees who expressed an interest in taking part, despite offering different days/times when the focus group could be held. 8 participants took part in the focus groups (n=4 Trainee focus group; n=4 Staff focus group).

Data collection

An initial email was sent out to all staff and trainees that were part of the DClinPsych programme in Leeds (Appendix A). The participant information sheet and consent form were attached to this email (Appendix B and C). A reminder email was sent three weeks later (Appendix D). Focus groups took place in June 2022 and July 2022 to allow sufficient time for data collection. Focus groups were recorded and transcribed using Microsoft Teams. An interview schedule was developed by the commissioners and the researcher to guide the focus groups (Appendix E). This was peer reviewed by trainees in the University of Sheffield and the University of Surrey. A pilot focus group was facilitated with three 2nd year trainees in April 2022 to enable further refinement of the schedule.

Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was sought and granted by the University of Leeds DClinPsych research ethics committee (DClinREC 21-012) on 1st April 2022. Informed consent was gained in written format, as participants were asked to return completed consent forms (Appendix C). Participant information sheets (Appendix B) outlined the purpose of the SEP, confidentiality, right to withdraw, and storage of data. We encouraged participants to respect the privacy of their peers by not disclosing any personal information from discussions, as we were members of the same course. Participants were made aware prior to consenting that focus groups may explore emotive topics (e.g., racism). Ground rules were suggested and developed collaboratively with participants at the beginning of the focus group. It was made clear that participants could pause, take a break, and/or leave the groups at any time. The researcher was also available to debrief following focus groups.

Data analysis

Focus groups were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to generate initial codes, sub themes, and themes within the data (see Table 1 for further details). Thematic analysis was chosen as the primary research method as it is a flexible approach which facilitates collection of rich data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It also allows researchers to summarise large data sets (Nowell et al., 2017). Initially, I intended to present separate themes for trainees and staff. I coded transcripts separately and began developing potential themes. During this process, I realised there was considerable overlap across groups, and if I created overarching themes and combined codes underneath these themes, I would be able to compare and contrast trainee and staff perspectives more readily. I'll discuss differences between groups within the discussion. An inductive or data driven approach was taken to identify themes to reduce potential bias, as the researcher is a trainee. Nowell and colleagues (2017) note that the application of thematic analysis can lead to inconsistency, on account of its' flexibility. Researchers advocate implementing credibility checks to increase trustworthiness, which will be outlined below (Elliott et al., 1999).

Table 1

Braun and Clarke's (2006) phases of thematic analysis

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:	Transcribing the data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systemic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (level 1) and the entire data set (level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.

| 6. Producing the report: | The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research questionnaire and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis. |

Credibility checks

Elliott and colleagues (1999) advocate the use of credibility checks to increase trustworthiness in qualitative research. The themes and sub themes were reviewed by the commissioners, and a peer on the DClinPsych programme to reduce bias and ensure quality. These were then refined based on their review (see Table 2 for examples of themes, subthemes, quotations, and frequencies). The researcher's role as a trainee who has experienced the curriculum may have enhanced the reliability of findings. The researcher reflected on their views and position in supervision with commissioners, and they kept a reflective journal throughout the process.

Results

Three main themes were generated from the data: 1. Values; 2. Experience on the course; 3. Experience on placement. These main themes and associated subthemes are detailed and discussed below (see Figure 1). Table 2 shows themes, subthemes, quotations, and frequencies.

9

Figure 1

Trainee and staff thematic map of themes and subthemes, based on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1977)
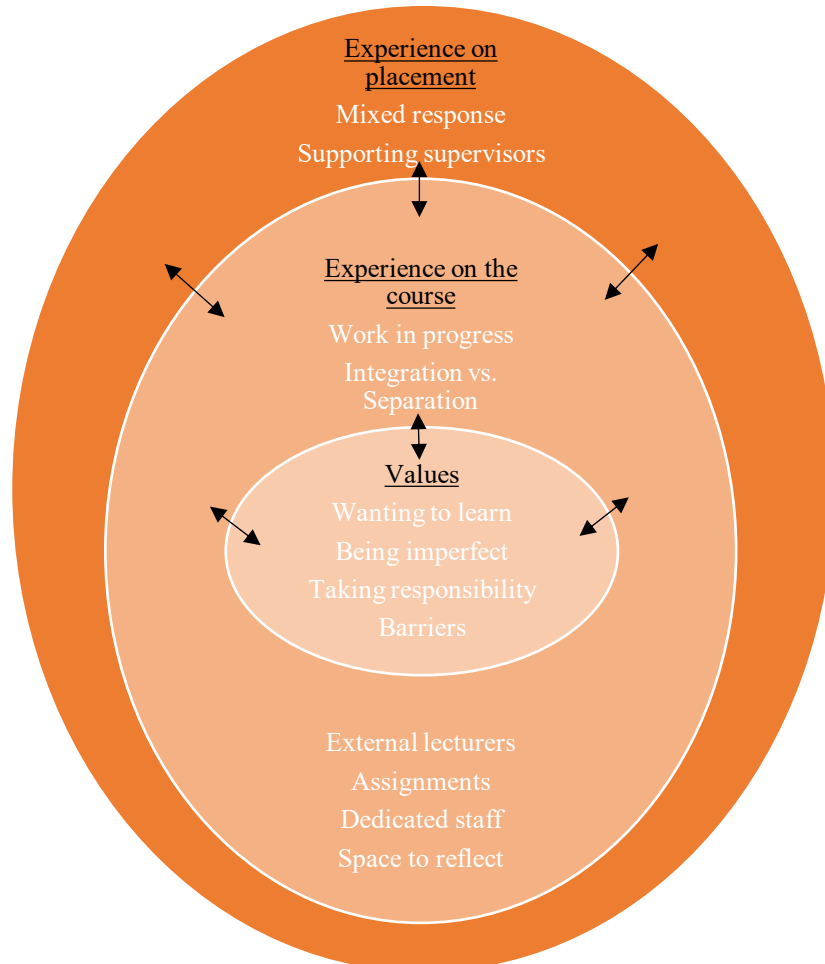
Note: Themes were mapped onto a diagram akin to Brofenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1977) to illustrate how engagement with race and racism is affected by multiple levels of the surrounding environment.

Theme 1: Values

The first theme focuses on the values which guide participants when relating to decolonising the curriculum. This is split into four subthemes: **wanting to learn, being imperfect, and taking responsibility.** A subtheme of **barriers** was also identified, which denotes internal thoughts and feelings which inhibit participants in acting in accordance with their values.

Wanting to learn

All participants noted they wanted to learn more about decolonising the curriculum. Trainees and staff shared that they wanted to access opportunities to reflect and talk about the topic and learn from other people.

"I'd really like to hear more about the history of the profession because I don't think we can understand how to decolonise it, if we don't know how it was colonised in the first place."
(Staff. 1)

Being imperfect

Trainees and staff reported making mistakes and taking risks when trying to work in an antiracist way.

"It takes a bit of bravery. You have to put yourself out there and take some risks sometimes."

(Staff. 2)

Some trainees expressed uncertainty about how much they could contribute, or how to contribute but wanting to try their best to help anyway. One trainee noted that taking risks and embracing imperfection facilitated greater learning.

Taking responsibility

Some staff shared that they felt proud of how the course has responded in a meaningful way to decolonising the curriculum. They referenced the responsibility of the course in putting antiracist practice on the agenda, but also of trainees learning from each other.

Trainees gave examples of taking personal responsibility by choosing assignments that explored racism, even though these were challenging. Some trainees referenced that it can be difficult to always adopt this stance when faced with competing demands. All trainees shared how they felt they held most of the responsibility, and they would prefer if responsibility was more equally shared between trainees, supervisors, and teaching staff.

"It's almost like it's up to you in a way because you could easily not put it in, and maybe you'd still get a good mark. So, it's kind of like it's on you to carry this forward and to critique it and think about it in essays and SEPs and SCS and things like that. I don't know if that's good enough, that it's kind of a choice as to whether we think about it."

(Trainee. 2)

Barriers

All trainees readily identified thoughts and feelings that inhibited them in taking value driven action, and they reported needing prompts and opportunities to enable them to overcome these internal barriers. All trainees referenced lacking confidence and competence when working in an antiracist way. Some trainees reflected that their motivation and drive to engage with the topic had increased which helped them to overcome these feelings.

Some staff also noted that their confidence could fluctuate depending on different contexts, access to training, and ability to practice.

"I think my confidence probably fluctuates depending on my experience. There are times I am left feeling really uncomfortable and need to be really mindful of myself and other times I've given it more thought and I feel more confident."

(Staff. 3)

Theme 2: Experience on the course

The second theme focuses on participants experience on the course. This is split into six subthemes: **work in progress, integration vs. separation, external lecturers, assignments, dedicated staff, and space to reflect.**

Work in progress

Most staff referred to the course as being a work in progress. One staff member referenced the introduction of the antiracism teaching at the beginning of first year, which is a new development.

All trainees reported finding these dedicated teaching sessions very beneficial, but trainees felt strongly that greater importance should be given to decolonial content more generally. All trainees noted that decolonial material was frequently left until the end of lectures, which meant there was little time to reflect on this.

"I feel like a lot of the time it's kind of mentioned or like there's been sometimes where they have said this is something we might come on to. But then we've run out of time, and it's just been left aside."(Trainee. 4)

Integration vs. Separation

All trainees noted how a number of lectures were very focused on antiracist practice, but that an antiracist perspective was generally absent from general teaching, which made it more difficult to apply decolonial content in practice. Systemic teaching was identified as integrating an antiracist perspective well, but trainees felt it was absent from other modality specific teaching. One trainee referenced how the psychosis teaching they had was particularly helpful as it explored different cultural perspectives and how different communities made sense of voice hearing, which was brought to life by the presence of an expert by experience. One trainee referenced how an antiracist perspective seemed to be thought about in terms of adult populations, which meant certain groups of people were being overlooked (i.e., children). Another trainee noted the benefit of having culturally appropriate examples within teaching, but they noted that this was not the norm.

Some staff referenced the difficulty in knowing how integrated decolonial content is as they are responsible for different teaching sessions, but noted it was present in the sessions they were responsible for. They shared the dilemma whether to integrate or separate content, and possible consequences (i.e., integrating content accounts for intersectionality, however having dedicated sessions on each of the protected characteristics ensures coverage).

'Sometimes it is the intersection of those things. It is really quite tricky. It really ensures the

coverage that there is a session on each of the protected characteristics, but we know

oppression happens acutely when those things compound each other.' (*Staff. 2*)

One staff member related that weaving content throughout the curriculum would help people feel more comfortable discussing race.

External lecturers

Trainees and staff reflected on the difficulties faced by external lecturers who must cover a large volume of material in a short amount of time. Some trainees referenced different factors that could impact on lecturers' ability to incorporate an antiracist perspective, such as cognitive capacity and anxiety. One trainee identified that external lecturers may feel pressure to be an expert and noted that teaching that is co-produced may help alleviate this pressure. Both groups noted that lecturers may not be familiar with cohorts and may be unsure how to pitch material. Trainees queried how comfortable lecturers felt exploring

decolonial content if it isn't something they regularly engage with, and how much support they receive from the course. Both groups felt it would be helpful to offer additional support to external lecturers.

"I don't know how much support they get in terms of thinking about that, and if there's not that much support from the course, then it is quite a difficult and scary thing to bring up. If you don't really get the opportunities to think about it within your service, it's not something you are really engaged with for whatever reason, I imagine it would feel really daunting."
(Trainee.4)

Assignments

Staff referenced that they had been consciously setting more assignments focused on diversity.

"I'm going to go with assignments 'yes'. I suppose intentionally we've been trying to pay more attention." (Staff. 2)

One trainee noted how these essays facilitated reflection and allowed them to consolidate what they had been learning. Trainees noted that they made a conscious effort to acknowledge race within different assignments, even when it was not the primary focus. One trainee shared that inclusion of decolonial content should be explicitly referenced on marking schemes.

Dedicated staff

All staff reported valuing having dedicated staff on the course to consult about EDI issues both in a formal and informal context. Staff referenced different ways they had sought additional support and reported finding it very beneficial.

"I think having X and Y on the course has been really helpful, in how it has felt like it has integrity." (Staff. 4)

Trainees also referenced the benefit of having dedicated staff, and access to resources to scaffold their learning.

Space to reflect

All trainees reported wanting more opportunities to talk and think about race. Trainees shared that opportunities to do this were limited on the course, and they needed additional support

from staff to create a greater sense of containment, to enable these conversations to occur. Some trainees reported garnering strength from hearing that their peers were also passionate about antiracist practice. Two trainees highlighted positive examples from neuropsychology teaching sessions where this space was created. They identified how having a number of facilitators enabled this process as they were able to set up a non-judgemental space, offer encouragement, discuss language, and explore people's reactions to teaching.

"If the lecturer sort of hits it head on and is like 'we're not all going to get it right and there's going be language that we don't get right but that's OK, let's have a discussion about it.' I think that sometimes helps free up discussion." (Trainee. 3)

Trainees identified that having more space would enable greater reflection on privilege, with one trainee referencing the benefits of having this space as part of the PPD sessions in 2nd year.

Staff referenced the importance of creating safe spaces. Some staff noted that it is easier to create safety and take risks when cohorts know each other well, as trainees have learnt to support and challenge each other in different ways. Staff felt that it was easier for internal lecturers to support trainees to engage in these discussions, as external lecturers have fewer connections to the course.

Theme 3: Experience on placement

The third theme focuses on experience on placement. There are two subthemes: **Mixed response and Supporting Supervisors.**

Mixed response

Staff noted that they were having more conversations about antiracist practice on placement visits but acknowledged it was very much a work in progress. They tried to have these conversations at the beginning of placement, where staff explore trainees' case load and initiatives in teams. Despite this increased focus, staff related that similar problems occur again and again in terms of patterns of referral and opportunities to work with an interpreter.

Trainees shared that they had experienced positive and negative reactions when introducing new ideas on placement. One trainee shared a positive experience supervising an assistant psychologist and exploring race and culture, using resources distributed by dedicated staff on the programme. Some trainees noted they received a negative response after they introduced

new ideas through training, and they shared it was much easier to apply teaching if placements were open to new ways of working. Trainees referenced that they would like antiracist practice to be prioritised on placement and highlighted on placement paperwork.

"It's quite difficult I suppose when you kind of feel like push back." (Trainee. 1)

Supporting supervisors

Both trainees and staff highlighted the need to support supervisors. Trainees shared that they had to begin discussions on antiracist practice in supervision, and they felt that discussions lacked depth. Staff reflected on the need to help supervisors create a safe space for discussions to take place, and the importance of trainees experiencing supervisors of diversity.

"I wonder if there is also an element of supporting supervisors that trainees can have these conversations safety with supervisors and have opportunities to think about a range of client presentations and demographics and also that they can experience supervisors of diversity aswell ensuring relevance not just in teaching but on placement aswell."(Staff.4)

Some staff referenced how this support could be offered through supervisory workshops.

Table 2

Themes, subthemes, quotations, and frequencies

Theme	Subtheme	Examples
Values	Wanting to learn **(n=8)**	"I guess also kind of learning from other people and hearing other people speak about it." (Trainee. 2)
	Being imperfect **(n=8)**	"I've just been throwing myself into it more and having the mentality that it's better to say something and to go for it and to risk it being clunky and maybe not quite landing and maybe wishing you'd said it in a different way, because to say nothing at all that's more damaging." (Trainee. 2)

Taking responsibility **(n=7)**	"I don't want to downplay our responsibility, getting this on the agenda is part of the course." (Staff. 1)	
Barriers **(n=7)**	"The more I thought about it, the more hesitant I became." (Trainee. 1)	

Experience on the course	Work in progress **(n=8)**	"There is plenty to get right, that we don't get right." (Staff. 2)
	Integration Vs. Separation **(n=7)**	"I think seeing it as something that can be woven through every element of the curriculum as opposed to a standalone session really helps." (Staff. 4)
	External lecturers **(n=8)**	"They tend to teach fewer occasions and they are less aware of what has gone before as a general feature of all teaching but especially around issues of race." (Staff. 2)
	Assignments **(n=5)**	"I think doing the essay really helped me sort of reflect on how I might be using our antiracism lectures, if I hadn't done that essay that wouldn't be so." (Trainee. 3)
	Dedicated staff **(n=6)**	"One of the really helpful things is having X to consult with about some of my teaching". (Staff. 3)
	Space to reflect **(n=8)**	"It's very limited on the course and I feel like a lot of the time it's kind of mentioned or there's been time where they have said that this is something we might come on to. But then we've run out of time, and it's been left aside." (Trainee. 4)

Experience Mixed response		"It feels like it is on the agenda, and it's on the agenda earlier
on placement	**(n=6)**	but you can hear sometimes similar problems cropping up over and over again." (Staff. 1)
	Supporting supervisors **(n=7)**	"It's not been something that's so far really my supervisors have brought up or something that we've really discussed in much detail at all." (Trainee. 4)

Discussion

The key findings, strengths and limitations of the SEP, and recommendations for the course are discussed within this section.

Aim 1: What has been achieved in terms of decolonising the curriculum?

The results demonstrate that key strengths of the curriculum include having access to dedicated staff, an increased antiracist focus within assignments, and dedicated teaching focused on racism. This supports previous research that has advocated the need to consolidate diversity teaching through assignments (Bezrukova et al., 2016).

Aim 2: Barriers to decolonising the curriculum

Trainees and staff identified internal barriers such as thoughts and feelings (i.e., lacking confidence) that inhibited them in taking value driven action. They also identified external barriers such limited space for discussion, lack of representation amongst supervisors, lecturer and supervisor confidence, and lack of integration of decolonial content.

These barriers map onto previous research where different factors influence whether or not race is discussed (Alemán & Gaytán, 2017; Berg et al., 2019; Ong, 2021). It appears that the presence of multiple barriers may make it more difficult to have these conversations, as they have a cumulative effect. Researchers have suggested different ways of overcoming barriers such as regular exposure to decolonial content (Chiodo et al., 2014), minimising power discrepancies between staff and students (Madden & McGregor, 2013), prioritising discussion, critically appraising research, and creating a nurturing environment (Basham, 2010; Castell et al., 2018; Zinga & Styres, 2019). Helping people to identify their values through personal reflection may help them to overcome internal barriers.

Aim 3: What further steps should be taken to embed inter-cultural approaches?

Steps that should be taken include creating greater space for discussions to take place, increasing representation, supporting external lecturers and supervisors, making antiracist

practice on explicit focus on placement paperwork, and integrating decolonial content throughout the curriculum.

Comparison of teaching staff and trainees' perspectives

There were some differences across groups where trainees spoke about the role that assignments played more frequently. They were referenced within the staff focus group, although to a lesser extent. Both groups valued having access to dedicated staff, however this was discussed more readily within the staff focus group. Staff also identified a greater variety of ways they accessed support (i.e., consultation; training; resources) in comparison to trainees (i.e., resources). It may be that assignments and dedicated staff offer trainees and staff different ways of engaging with decolonial content. Trainees discussed their experience on placement more frequently, although it was also acknowledged by staff. As trainees spend the majority of their time on placement, it may be a greater influence for them.

Despite trainees and programme staff occupying different roles in relation to delivery and receipt of teaching, there seems to be a shared experience with both groups referencing similar values and feelings. Researchers note the importance of creating brave rather than safe spaces and working from a position of 'safe uncertainty' to enable people to take risks, engage in active learning, explore, adapt, and create (Mason, 2015; Wood & Patel, 2019). This stance fits with trainees and programme staff, who identified the values of taking risks and wanting to learn as being particularly important to them.

Strengths and Limitations

Key strengths of this SEP are the novel evaluation of decolonising the curriculum from multiple perspectives from those receiving and delivering teaching content, which has been advocated by researchers who relate that both groups are important stakeholders in curriculum development (Watkins et al., 2018). We were able to consider similarities and differences across groups, which increased our understanding and allowed us to think more holistically about recommendations. Several trainees from different DClinPsych courses inputted into the development of the interview schedule and a pilot focus group was facilitated to enhance credibility.

A number of limitations were identified. There was a small number of trainees and staff within focus groups, and findings may be biased towards people who held a particular view. The small number of participants may also limit generalisability. There may have been a social desirability bias present within responses, as all participants were part of the DClinPsych programme. An online survey would have allowed participants to give feedback

anonymously, and may have allowed more people to take part in the SEP. The focus groups took place on Microsoft Teams. We experienced some technical difficulties in one of the focus groups. Offering a face to face focus group may have enabled people to contribute more readily. Combining codes and themes from both focus groups may have meant subtle nuances across both groups were minimized. Finally, the researcher is a trainee who has experience of the curriculum, which could have introduced researcher bias into the analysis of the data and conclusions drawn. However, they checked the themes with the commissioners of the SEP, when conducting credibility checks.

Recommendations

This SEP highlights several recommendations for the Leeds DClinPsych programme. Firstly, the programme should consider offering greater support to placement supervisors and external lecturers. This may be through offering them access to E-learning packages, training, resources, and consultation. Resources and guidance distributed to lecturers and supervisors could include examples of different ways decolonial content has been integrated successfully within teaching, and advice from staff already doing this.

In addition to this, the programme should consider weaving an antiracist focus throughout the curriculum by encouraging lecturers who teach on similar teaching sessions to collaborate more readily with each other, where key priorities can be identified, and sufficient space can be left for reflection. These spaces may also enable lecturers to reflect on their values and barriers to discussing race.

Teaching staff should consider different ways of setting up teaching sessions (i.e., having more than one facilitator), and how they can create an environment where trainees feel comfortable taking risks.

Trainees found it helpful to have the opportunity to engage in assignments that focused on antiracist practice as it helped them to consolidate their learning. The programme should consider including more assignments and research opportunities exploring antiracist practice as a way of allowing trainees to engage with this topic.

In relation to placements, the programme should consider embedding an intercultural focus within placement paperwork, as this may enable more conversations to take place. It may also be helpful for clinical tutors to explore race, diversity, and oppression at each placement meeting.

Similarly, there should be an increased focus on Whiteness, race and racism within supervisory and advanced supervisory workshops, as trainees really valued having these

conversations within supervision. One participant referenced the importance of trainees experiencing supervisors of diversity, and programme staff should reflect on how this can be facilitated.

Dissemination

The results of this SEP have been disseminated as part of the Leeds DClinPsych SEP conference in October 2022. They will be shared at the next Academic and Research Committee and Programme Management Committee in December 2022. The report will be shared with commissioners who are involved in developing and delivering teaching content on the Leeds DClinPsych, who will share these findings with existing and future teaching staff as part of a wider initiative to embed EDI initiatives across the programme as a whole.

Conclusion

This SEP identified strengths, barriers, and areas of development in relation to decolonising the curriculum from both the perspectives of teaching staff and trainees. Furthermore, findings highlight clear recommendations for the commissioners. Although there are limitations associated with the SEP, the aims of the SEP were fulfilled.

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Appendix A: Initial Email to Doctorate of Clinical Psychology Programme

Dear colleagues,

Work is ongoing at a national and local level to adopt a strong anti-discrimination approach to Doctorate of Clinical Psychology training. We would like to capture what has already been achieved and what further steps should be taken in relation to decolonising the curriculum at Leeds. The project is commissioned by Dr Ciara Masterson (Academic Director) and Dr Tansy Warrilow (Equality and Diversity Lead). This is an importance piece of work which we hope will improve the content of teaching and methods of teaching.

Two focus groups have been planned to explore this: one for current trainees and another for course staff. These will aim to identify positive examples of practice, as well as areas of development within the curriculum. It is envisaged that the trainee focus group will take place in June, and the course staff focus group will take place in July.

Participation in these groups is voluntary. If this sounds like something that you would like to be involved in, please read through the participant information sheet and complete the consent form attached. Please provide an electronic signature. Please return the consent form to umcpt@leeds.ac.uk as soon as possible and by Monday 16th May at the latest. Spaces are limited to facilitate collection of data and participant engagement. If too many people express an interest, a random number generator will be used to select participants.

Ethical approval for this service evaluation project has been granted by the School of Medicine Research Ethics Committee DClinPsych sub-REC (DClinREC 21-012).

Thank you for your time.

Ciara Trant

Psychologist in Clinical Training

Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and University of Leeds

Appendix B: Participation Information Sheet

We are inviting you to take part in a focus group in order to capture what has already been achieved and what further steps should be taken in relation to decolonising the curriculum at Leeds. This will hopefully allow us to improve the content and methods of teaching. We are hoping to collect information across the different teaching strands from those involved in delivering and receiving teaching. The ethical approval for this service evaluation project has been granted by the School of Medicine Research Ethics Committee DClinPsych sub-REC (DClinREC 21-012).

What will I be asked to do?

Attend a focus group alongside your peers either online (via Microsoft Teams or Zoom) or in person (Worsley Building, University of Leeds).

Returning forms

By providing an electronic signature and returning the consent form, you are agreeing to take part in the above project. Forms can be returned by emailing them to umcpt@leeds.ac.uk. Completed consent forms will be transferred to university approved secure systems (i.e., OneDrive: University of Leeds) and deleted from my email. Please return any forms as soon as possible and by Monday 16th May at the latest.

Do I have to take part?

No. It is your choice as to whether you take part and you do not have to do so.

Please do not hesitate to contact me using the details below if you have any questions before taking part.

What will happen with the information?

Audio recordings of the group will be transcribed by the researcher as quickly as possible following the group. The recording will then be deleted from the recording device. Transcripts and notes from the groups will be stored separately from consent forms. Returned consent forms, transcripts, and notes will be stored securely on university approved secure systems (i.e., OneDrive: University of Leeds) and password protected computers. All material used for analysis and discussion with commissioners will be fully anonymised. Data (e.g., consent forms; notes; transcripts) will be archived for a period of 3 years following completion of the group. All data will be stored in line with the University Research Participant Privacy Notice.

A summary of information gathered will be included in a written report and the findings from the project will be disseminated (e.g., conferences, poster presentations, and academic papers). Specific

quotes from the focus group may be included within these but no individual will be readily identifiable in any write up or dissemination of the findings.

What are the benefits of taking part?

We hope that the valuable findings of these focus groups will enhance the teaching on the DClinPsych programme and support trainees and staff in their learning regarding inter-cultural approaches and anti-discriminatory practice.

What risks are involved in taking part?

Discussions within focus groups may cover topics that trainees or course staff will find distressing, embarrassing, or uncomfortable. People can voice fears of getting things "wrong" when discussing racism. We hope to develop a safe space within the group, where we foster an open stance and take care of each other and ourselves (i.e., respecting the privacy of your peers by not disclosing any personal information from discussions).

Can I withdraw from the project?

You can withdraw from the project prior to or during the focus group. Although specific quotes may be removed on request, due to the nature of a focus group it will not be possible to withdraw lengthier contributions due to their influence on the development of themes. If you wish to withdraw a specific comment after the focus group, please email umcpt@leeds.ac.uk within two weeks.

Comments and concerns

If you have any comments or concerns about this project, you can contact the commissioners in the first instance using the details below.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Ciara Trant (201485070), Psychologist in Clinical Training, University of Leeds.

Commissioners: Dr Ciara Masterson (Academic Director, C.Masterson@leeds.ac.uk) and Dr Tansy Warrilow (Equality and Diversity Lead, T.Warrilow@leeds.ac.uk), The University of Leeds, Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, Level 10 Worsley Building, Clarendon Way, Leeds, LS2 9NL.

Appendix C: Consent form

• I have read and understood the information sheet provided for this SEP.

• I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the SEP and the answers have been satisfactory.

• I understand that my participation is voluntary.

• I understand that I may withdraw prior to or during the focus group without giving a reason. I understand it will not be possible to withdraw my entire contribution once the focus group begins.

• I know that the focus group will be digitally recorded and then transcribed. I understand that any personally identifiable information will be removed from the transcript of the interview and that I will not be identifiable in any future reports, publications, or presentations.

• I understand that the data collected will be securely stored on university approved secure systems and password protected. I am aware of what will happen to my data after the SEP is complete.

Participant's Name: _____ Date: _____

Participant Signature: _____

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study. Your contribution is very much appreciated

Appendix D: Reminder email to Doctorate of Clinical Psychology Programme

Dear colleagues,

I sent you an email a few weeks ago asking you to consider participating in my service evaluation project. We would like to capture what has already been achieved and what further steps should be taken in relation to decolonising the curriculum at Leeds. A focus group for course staff and a focus group for trainees will be facilitated exploring this topic. This is the first evaluation to be completed exploring this topic and we hope to recruit participants from across the programme.

If this sounds like something that you would like to be involved in, please read through the participant information sheet and complete the consent form attached. Please provide an electronic signature and return the consent form to umcpt@leeds.ac.uk as soon as possible, and by **DATE** at the latest.

Thank you for your time.

Ciara Trant

Psychologist in Clinical Training

Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and University of Leeds

Appendix E: Interview Schedule

Seek permission to video/audio record.

Discuss how data will be used.

You have all read the PIS and signed and returned the consent form. Does anyone have any questions about either of these forms?

Explain ethical issues (i.e., confidentiality).

It is important to hold confidentiality in mind as we are members of the same programme. We are asking participants to respect the privacy of their peers by not disclosing any personal information from discussions.

Outline group guidelines.

We are discussing a sensitive topic which may evoke different feelings. This work is likely at times to make us uncomfortable, and this is part of the process. People frequently voice concerns about getting things "wrong" or saying the wrong thing. We encourage people to adopt a compassionate stance as we are all at different stages of our learning journey. We hope people are respectful of differing views and opinions, and mindful of the language they use. It is important to take care of yourself during group discussions, and only share what you feel comfortable sharing. These conversations often generate a lot of discussion so there may be times when I move the conversation forward and not everyone has to respond to every question.

Explain the research and define terms

Curriculum encompasses lectures, assignments, and research. A colonial curriculum is characterised as being unrepresentative, inaccessible, and privileged. This results in Clinical Psychology being unrepresentative, exclusionary, and inaccessible to both aspiring clinicians and service users. There is a debate about whether it is possible to truly decolonise a curriculum but overall, it refers to reconsideration and review of who and what is taught.

1) **What led you to join the focus group?**
   - When did you first become aware of this topic?
   - How did you become interested in this topic?
   - How much do you feel you know about reviewing the curriculum?
   - How has your understanding changed over time?
2) **Do you (not) have opportunities to reflect on antiracist practice and related concepts?**
   - If so, how much/little?
   - Is this within personal or professional contexts?

3) How frequently is oppression and issues of diversity discussed in the curriculum?

- How much does it feature in lectures/assignments/research?
- Would you welcome more or less discussion? If more, what areas of teaching would that be in (e.g., speciality; therapy specific)?

4) Are there any examples of teaching sessions actively including exploration of oppression and issues of diversity in teaching?

- What areas of teaching have explored this?
- Do you have specific experiences in mind?
- How was this facilitated?
- Trainee focus group: Have you been able to use these ideas in your clinical work (i.e., placement)?

5) What do you think makes it easier to incorporate this within teaching? What makes it more difficult?

- What would help?

6) Where are the areas for development within the curriculum?

- What would you want to change or be different?
- Where could we start?
- What would you move to make that possible?

7) How confident and competent do you feel about working in an antiracist way?

- What has helped you feel more confident?
- What would help you feel more confident?
- What do you need additional support with?

8) Have you learnt anything from this group – and if so, what have you learnt?

Anything further anyone would like to add?

Thank participants.

Check in with participants regarding how they feel.

Appendix F: Specific Request Email to Doctorate of Clinical Psychology Programme

Dear colleagues,

I sent you an email a few weeks ago asking you to consider participating in my service evaluation project. We would like to capture what has already been achieved and what further steps should be taken in relation to decolonising the curriculum at Leeds. A focus group for course staff and a focus group for trainees will be facilitated exploring this topic on **DATE/TIME/LOCATION.**

If you are interested in participating, please read through the participant information sheet and complete the consent form attached. Please provide an electronic signature and return the consent form to umcpt@leeds.ac.uk as soon as possible, and by **DATE** at the latest.

Thank you for your time.

Ciara Trant

Psychologist in Clinical Training

Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and University of Leeds