

## Navigating Racial Trauma & Identity Part 1 - Transcripts

[00:00:00] **Sue:** Hey everybody. Welcome back to Therapist Uncensored. We are so excited about our episode today and discussing racial trauma with two incredible trauma therapists. So why don't we begin by letting us know kind of how you identify personally and professionally, so that people will understand who they're hearing and your perspective.

[00:00:24] **Gliceria:** My name is Gliceria Perez and I'm a bilingual trauma Therapist, and I'm located in New Jersey. My pronouns are she, her, and hers, and I'm a licensed clinical social worker.

[00:00:39] **Debra:** Hi, my name is Debra Chatman Finley, and my pronouns are she, her and hers. I am in private practice in New Jersey as well. I'm a trauma Therapist and I'm a licensed professional counselor and a national certified counselor.

[00:00:55] **Sue:** Wonderful. I so appreciate you all being generous enough to come on and to share your perspective. How about we begin by just telling us - some of you didn't know these things all along - here was a discovery process. People will be all along this journey. So could you just sort of walk us through kind of your discovery process, your unfolding?

[00:01:17] **Gliceria:** So I was born in Cuba, but raised in New York and New Jersey. So I came with a different language and a different culture coming into this country. And so when I went to work, as a professional, I was always asked "do you speak another language?". I'm like, "yes, I speak Spanish" And so, you know, I would get hired because they needed people who spoke Spanish. And at that time I didn't know that I was getting paid the exact same amount of money as my counterparts who all were monolingual, but at my caseload was super high.

[00:01:51] **Sue:** So you were expected to do more work.

[00:01:52] **Gliceria:** Exactly. Expected to do more work with the same pay as other people, and that never sat well with me because what I started to learn was that at that time I was working in child protective services, so there was a lot of stuff that went on. And I had to translate the documents, whatever documents they needed to sign into Spanish, I had to interpret for them with whatever systems we were up against or whatever it was that was going on. And so it became really burdensome. And so, you know, I would be behind in my paperwork and my bosses were like, "wait, what are you doing? You know, you're behind." Yeah. Because I'm doing all of these things before I'm able to deal with whatever the issues are. Whereas my counterparts don't have to do any of that. So carrying that identity of being a person of color and being bilingual, coming in and recognizing the difference.

[00:02:45] **Sue:** And did you recognize it at the time? Were you aware of this unevenness?

[00:02:50] **Gliceria:** No, not until I went to work. Not until I got my first job in Child Protective Services did I recognize that there was a situation and I was like, this is weird. You know that. Why do I have 10 cases and somebody only has three? What's going on with that piece? And so then when I spoke to my supervisor, she told me, "well, you know, we just have more people that speak Spanish and so, you know, we're gonna just give you more people." So then I never got to work with a lot of people of other cultures because the need for Spanish speaking individual was pretty high. So that's where I started off, before I met Debra at a domestic violence program, so I'll stop here so you could catch up, Debra.

[00:03:28] **Sue:** And by the way, shout out to Child Protective Services. I was an investigator

[00:03:32] **Gliceria:** Yeah, it's the hardest job I ever love/hated in my whole life. I completely get it. I wouldn't change it for the world, but man. The training was incredible.

[00:03:42] **Sue:** Yes, that's what I say it is. Boy, you learned everything very quickly.

[00:03:47] **Gliceria:** Yeah. I tell everyone, if you want to start in social work, in the field, you don't know what you want to do, I'd start with Child Protective Services because you get all of the different institutions, you are literally exposed to every single institution, and then you can figure out what you wanna do from there. But don't stay more than two years though.

[00:04:07] **Debra:** Well, I didn't start out in Child Protective Services. My journey's a little bit different. After getting my bachelor's, I went to work for a nonprofit in Newark, New Jersey. Very small and not very much money, and I needed money. So I left that job and I went into corporate. And that was quite the experience for me because I worked in international reinsurance being not only very few women, but definitely the only woman of color. And I was there for 17 years and I became a VP, but I hated it. And some people thought I was crazy when I walked away, but I went back to school because I knew where my love was, where my real passion was. And even in corporate, I found myself being everybody's Therapist anyway. So I went back to school to do work. And so after graduating and everything else, I did some work for a family mental health center. That was ignored. And then I volunteered first for a domestic violence agency, and then I started working there and that's where I met Gliceria, which just I hate to say it, Gliceria, it's over. It's gotta be 25 years.

[00:05:22] **Gliceria:** I know you said that to me the other day. I'm like, you're old.

[00:05:26] **Debra:** Well, yeah, I am.

[00:05:30] **Sue:** What drew you both to domestic violence?

[00:05:32] **Gliceria:** For me, it was kind of natural from Child Protective Service. Actually, I resigned from Child Protective Services and I wanted to do something different. And of course I enjoyed working with children and so I started working with children in a domestic violence program. And so that's how I got started with DV and eventually became director of residential services.

[00:05:53] **Debra:** I think I've always had and was never really encouraged to talk about it out loud. This passion that I have about women and the issues and the things that women face and violence against women was one of those things that you couldn't escape. It was everywhere, and it was one of the best things I ever did because you learn so much about power and control and that how violence against women doesn't care about race, doesn't care about your social status, doesn't care about your education, and it's like, wow, this is, this is one of the few things that's universal. So that's where it started for me.

[00:06:40] **Sue:** Therapists so often - certainly in my case - there were roots in my history that I didn't understand that I was doing in when I worked with Child Protective Services, and also I did the same, very similar path or that I wanted to do more. I wanted rather than catching it on the back end, catching it on the front end. It was all about protecting families and in all these different ways, but of course, I was unconsciously trying to save my own family, and again, that was a process of figuring that out.

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[00:07:10] **Debra:** Absolutely. We are still always asked the question: What brought you to the work? And I would say, and you can't say, oh, I wanna help people, because that's how really brought you to the work. That's one of the things possibly, but it's not the main thing. And so for me, it was like I grew up with Violet around me and not understanding a lot of it. And it was like, oh, that's why really want me to work. That's why I volunteered, that's why I did all of that. So

[00:07:43] **Gliceria:** yeah, it was there for me. And to me, the, the working with children was kicked off by a fellow student when I was in grammar school in New York City who came in with FARs and bruises and hickeys on her neck. And so, of course, you know, you're in a Catholic school and you know, the sisters were like, what? Wait, wait, we can't have this kid stay here. And then, you know, come to find out later on that what, what happened to her. But I always. You know, wondered in that moment, like, what happened to her and I, I, I wanted to help her and she would always sit in the corner, like really quiet and not really interact with other kids. You could see it on her that she was carrying, you know, a big load. And I always wanted, I just said, wow, you know, that, that's really interesting. And that always. Stayed with me. So when I went to school and I, I, I didn't study social workers as an undergrad. I studied more sociology just to kind of see what's going on in, in the community, in the world that kind of allows, allows these things to, to happen to children.

[00:08:38] **Debra:** I was just gonna add in terms of what brought me to the domestic violence, and when I say that I worked in corporate and wanted to get outta that because race wasn't talked about and I really thought, you know, I really wanna be in a field while I'm helping people. And I really had this naive idea that, you know, every, it's kind of like kumbaya, everybody gets long and there's no racial stuff and I learned something very different.

[00:09:04] **Gliceria:** Right. And child protective services. Kids of color were the ones that were being placed in white homes mostly. And so it was like a big, big to do. If we had a white kid who needed to go into a foster home that was a person of color, it was a big deal. It was a big deal. Maybe they would last 24 hours there and then immediately get moved out. So looking at those pieces and just kind of like sitting within, just having experiences and in Child Protective services, you also have. I had a horrible experience where somebody shoot me off their property with rightful basically, and said, get off my property and use a slur, you know, a slur to identify, uh, Latinos. And so, you know, when I went back to the office, and I'll never forget this, I went back to the office and told my supervisor, she said, are you sure? Are you sure that's what happened? I'm like, how do you confuse a gun to your head? Like, she's like, are you sure? And then she's like, well, I'm gonna send so-and-so. And I said, how are you gonna send so-and-so? She's black and this is what happened with me. So if you send anybody, it can't be a person of color. I mean, it was just a very difficult thing and, and it's when Ray started to really. Opened my eyes, but I didn't know what to do about it. I, you know, like it was, things were happening and I didn't know what was happening. Didn't have the vocabulary, you know, this

[00:10:26] **Sue:** dawning realization, it sounds like is part of it. So you're noticing these things and Deborah, you're saying that you're in corporate culture and things were happening, but. You were experiencing things but it wasn't yet formed in your mind. Is that right? Not at all.

[00:10:41] **Debra:** I didn't know what the it was, but I knew that there were things that were being said to me and experiences that I had that somehow were connected to to reefs. And one of the last things that happened, I'll just tell this story really quick, was about a promotion that I knew I deserved. And I finally went to a senior person in the company. We do the whole thing about the work I've done, and this person, white male, said to me, well, so-and-so was promoted. Well, you know, he's tall, he's good looking, you know, his wife is from, it was a different country, I won't even say. And you know, they had these two beautiful children. And I sat there and I listened, and then I repeated what he said to me. I said, so, until I can grow to about six feet tall, marry a woman, I just repeat it and I hit him. What he said to me that it had nothing to do with the work. I wasn't the face that they wanted for the company. So I knew back then that was like, okay, I'm out of here and going to pursue something that I really love. And thank God I knew Ceria at this time. This was after we worked at a domestic violence agency. What in private practice? And it was a family. Some people have, you know, when I presented, I've told this story cuz it was such a, Painful experience for me where I was working with a particular child and divorced parents, and they were white, I would say upper class. The father did not want his children to work with me, but this one little girl, his one daughter, she was only about seven, seven years old, and he had to bring her, but he didn't come into the office. He didn't even come in the building. He sent her in. And so when I say this little girl had on the largest. Confederate flag belt buckle. And she says, Ms. Depa, Ms. Depa, like God told me to show this to you. And I knew, I knew why Keith did it, but in that moment I just said, oh, and you tell him, Ms. De loved it. Thank you so much. Right. And she never wore that again. But after that session, I think I, I was really shaken up. You know, I knew that was about race and it bothered me that you would even use your child. To do something so racist, so no being in this field, racist, present. And there are other ways that I, we've

[00:13:16] **Gliceria:** experienced it too for the clients as well as for, uh, the clinicians, social workers, you know, because that's when we got together at the domestic violence place and, and we were working in two separate areas. Deborah was doing the clinical and I was doing the residential. So then someone decided that they, quote unquote, wanted to offer the same services to bilingual and I mean, to, uh, the Spanish speaking community. And so they wanted to provide these services but not provide any money to us. And so we were just gonna do it just to do it. And so, you know, we all kind of like rebelled all of the, the people who were bilingual and other people who supported us. And one of the people who was bilingual happened to be a white woman, and she said, no, I, I put money into this. I moved to a different country. This is a skill and you know, I need to get reimbursed for it. And so she stood up to the administration and so they suspended her. It was like, wow, they suspended her, so what are they going to do to us if this is what they did to her? Before that, I was seeing how the clients were being treated differently by the community where the domestic violence, uh, shelter program was located, because prior to having clients of color, The women would be able to go to the nearby library and sit down for the story time, and they had different activities at this particular library, and the library was walking distance to the facility when people of color started to come in, or at least a little more than the usual, they started saying that they could only provide services for the people who resided and owned a home in the community. So I thought, wow, this is unbelievable.

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This is the stuff that, that people are tell the kids are telling you. Then the kids would come home and they would say, oh, you know, glaze, you're not gonna believe what my teacher said. And I didn't know how to respond. And I said, well, what did your teachers say that I was the first black kid that he's ever taught? And he said it in front of the whole class. And I said, wow. Like that was just, you know, these things that were happening to them. You know, the women would go food shopping and if they went food shopping with the volunteer, that just dropped them off. They were. Questioned when they got to the store, but if the volunteer who was generally a white woman would go with them, they were not harassed. They were not at all questioned about anything.

[00:15:43] **Debra:** The last little thing about working at that agency, I think for a very long time, most of the clients were white. And then they started to see more women of color because a lot of times women of color would not go to these agencies. And so with that, they started to hire more people of color. And along with that, what happened was we began to see things. Now we still didn't have the all of the language board. And again, not knowing what the it is, but something's not right. Something is wrong in the way that this one is described versus. This person, you know, we would get calls like this code language from other agencies. So I guess word got out at this particular agency, Hey, they've got a number of people of color working there. And so we would get calls from other agencies and we would hear, um, you know, we had this person, I think they'd be more comfortable in an urban area. So the minute we heard urban, okay, here we go, this is a person of color and they wanna send them, you know, it's like, okay. Okay.

[00:16:48] **Gliceria:** The other piece was the language. They have an acc, like a heavy accent. We just wanna make sure that they get the services that they need. And we know that you have bilingual staff,

[00:16:57] **Sue:** so it's like a funneling collecting and a funneling over there. And do you think there's been already so many examples and I can see the subtlety, but also not the subtlety, you know, and maybe a range, I'm not sure. What is your perspective on the awareness of the per of the offender? Like the belt buckle example is very, very, Consciously clear cuz part of what we're wanting to do right is make it more conscious and aware, like the invisible discrimination and bias making the implicit explicit and how that impacts how it feels, or if it impacts it at all, it might not impact it at all. You know when you feel it, you just feel it.

[00:17:36] **Debra:** You feel it, and I understand a lot more of it now, but, but back then I think it hurt more because it was coming from someone that you really liked and you thought, I'm gonna date myself. Cool. They're okay. And it's like, wow, you just said that to me. Or you know, you see a couple of women of color talking and you think that there's something, you know, we're planning a revolution or something, or, oh, you're afraid of me, or, oh my God, you don't feel safe around me. It was so crazy at one point, and it's also the reason why for me, when I left, I said I would never work in another agency because it was this, I don't feel safe when, when being challenged. And it was something that I experienced a lot with white social workers. Just

[00:18:25] **Sue:** to clarify, you don't feel safe when you're challenged or that when you challenge someone, they

[00:18:28] **Debra:** don't feel safe when I challenge them. Okay. Yes. Mm-hmm. And that is always the dynamics. It's always the fallback. And again, it was this, I know this is because of my race, but it's a hard thing. To prove Glacier and I both had experienced where, well, we need a third person in here as if we were gonna turn into the Sharks and the jet from website story

[00:18:52] **Gliceria:** and yeah. And come begin with the recorder. I don't feel safe. I, I need to use the recording machine because I, I don't know what's gonna happen. I was

[00:19:01] **Sue:** floored. And you know, also, how do you argue when somebody says that they don't feel safe? Exactly,

[00:19:07] **Debra:** exactly. I can tell you probably the final straw for me was when, and you know, I hate people reporting to me, but this particular person didn't feel safe because when I was doing their review or when I had to call them in to talk about something, I would have a frown on my face and that was scary. And when I had to meet with the executive director, I knew then from my own sanity, from my own sense of self, I cannot be in this environment anymore. And that's when I said, I'm going into private practice.

[00:19:44] **Sue:** And can y'all translate what you know now? So when you were both hearing, I don't feel safe, and the Recorders and the third people, like what's the actual message that people are saying or what's that coming from? You know what I mean? Like what are the words with that communication?

[00:20:00] **Gliceria:** Well, I, I mean there was a certain extent of how dare you. Who are you? And it felt like we're not good enough. Like we weren't good enough. Our word wasn't good enough. You know, our style of supervision, what we were saying, like what was it that was going on, but it made me feel like. Oh my God, do I matter? Do I not? Am I good enough and I'm not good at like, and you start to question you know yourself about what you're doing. Like, you know, like did we say anything that was inappropriate? Like we were constantly checking, Deborah and I were constantly checking, uh, the vocabulary, how we were sitting, like the tone, like it was really difficult because, People weren't used to people of color in positions of power. I was just thinking that, that it's an authority. Exactly. And it was very threatening, you know, to them and to you.

[00:20:46] **Sue:** I mean, talking about not safety.

[00:20:48] **Gliceria:** Oh. They're not safe. Okay, so if you're not safe, I'm not safe. Like, wait, what? What's, what's getting what's been to happen after all of the, this meeting? And

[00:20:57] **Debra:** I think that's such an important point about they're not being used to having a person of color say that your work is not up the par. Or we had this experience teaching also where a student. Turned in the horrible paper, didn't bother to spell our names correctly, and she was a white student, very privileged. And that it was uncomfortable for her to have these two women of color judge

[00:21:26] **Sue:** her as the teacher. That's what you're being paid to do.

[00:21:30] **Gliceria:** Absolutely. We were Florida and, and when we were teaching some of the students said, That they've never seen to adjuncts of color. I mean, here we are in this institution, and, and that was the first time. And then one of the students, which I thought, wow, one of the students looked up the articles that we had provided and came back and said in class, oh, you know, I, I, I looked up the articles and they were all written by people of color.

[00:21:58] **Gliceria:** And what was the course? Oh, microaggressions in the clinic setting. So they're

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[00:22:02] **Sue:** signing up to learn about this? Yes.

[00:22:05] **Gliceria:** And she said, why didn't we get these, this material in other classes? Like, you know, so she was questioning, I mean that particular, she wrote phenomenal on paper, but she was questioning, you know, why wasn't she exposed to more of that? But it was interesting that she felt. Something to go and read these

[00:22:24] **Debra:** articles. But you know, even before getting to this point, there were so many different types of struggles that I had because I went to, uh, predominantly white universities for undergrad and graduate school and, you know, I learned so much about the theories. And then after graduating, I'd go to workshop seminar and I was still sort of struggling about. How to make it fit because I was still trying to be what I was taught and I didn't know that. That's very Eurocentric, and maybe that's why it didn't fit. And just trying to come to a place of, I'm a black woman, another black woman in that therapy session as well. I'm not suddenly somebody else. And I remember, and I'll go back again to something that Ken Hardy had said to us in a supervision group that your professional informs your personal and your personal informs your professional. And so the more that I was learning about race, racial microaggressions, what it does to your sense of self, it's been spilled over to my personally. But it was also, yeah, that's what it is. I can't be anything other than me. I'm black, I'm animated I'll, I had to colorize so much of what I learned. That's the way I think of it. Cuz Siria says season it, but I had to colorize it. And

[00:23:54] **Gliceria:** also Monica McGoldrick through the Multicultural Family Institute where we also went, he and she pretty much were telling us to be authentic, you know, and to look at our histories through Gina Grahams and to look at our histories so that we could figure out who we were, what happened to us, and where we are, you know? And it was all of that. And the years that we had Ken Hardy as as a supervisor, I mean, he was phenomenal in, you know, we would bring up a case. You know, and then I don't know how he did it, but it was like, I'm working right back to you. And I know that I only left one or two sessions without crying because it was so intense. But it was, it really made you kind of look at yourself and look at your experiences. And always reminds me of what Deborah said to me one time about what, what her professor said, which was, whatever is going on with you is going to come through that door in the form of a client. And to this day, I'm like, okay, really stop it with the mama drama. You know, like I, I had mama drama, so I'm like, can we stop it with the teenagers or their mama drama? Like, but that's what happens, you know? And, and so it's a, it's like the universe is trying to let you know something, trying to help you with stuff. But that's the thing. It's like learning a little bit as we went along,

[00:25:06] **Sue:** the colorization or the seasoning. It's like you first had to get unseasoned, so the training implicitly made you white or made

[00:25:17] **Gliceria:** you not, you. It confirmed our experiences with words and that made a big difference. And then once we started to see race, you can't unsee it like literally movies, plays. It was

[00:25:29] **Debra:** this experience that, the way that I think about it, I was expected, I. To be white because that's what the training is. And I will say the first experience I had where, oh, there's something different. The Multicultural Family Institute used to have these annual conferences and I went, and then I went through their two year training program. And one of the things that they would talk about in Monica and, and the staff, but in training was Self with Therapist. I had to understand and learn, okay, so yes, you're a black woman. But what have you internalized about that and looking at my family of origin, so much of it, that was the beginning. That was where, oh my gosh, this stuff, I'm beginning to learn what the is that's been there that I didn't have the words for, that I couldn't prove. I just know what I felt. I just know what I felt.

[00:26:28] **Gliceria:** And also that experience, the years there at the, uh, institute was also about unpacking our own stuff, our own trauma, our own experiences, and how does that inform our, our behaviors, you know, and our belief

[00:26:43] **Sue:** systems. Yeah. This deconstruction, and I love you talking about the tears because it's like you've ingested something and to get it out is such a bottom up. And sounds like you're saying it's in, in your cells, you have to get it out. Yeah.

[00:26:58] **Debra:** You have to get it

[00:26:59] **Gliceria:** out. Exactly. Exactly.

[00:27:01] **Sue:** Oh boy. And then you're reclaiming fi, you know, discovering your identity. Mm-hmm. Two women of color. But you're also, you have very similar experiences, but you also have really different experiences. You know, let's just pick up on wherever you all want to go, but I'm, I just kinda wanna highlight too of like what's similar and what's

[00:27:17] **Gliceria:** different. A lot of the stuff that happened to me when I was in a clinical place is like if I was meeting with a Latino client. And you know, one of the things is that, you know, you're not supposed to touch your client or whatever, but you know, when you're working with a Latino client, how it's about hugging and they give you a kiss and they may bring you a kitty, oh my God, I thought of you, blah, blah, blah. Bring this, this goodie, you know? And if we're talking, we're speaking in Spanish in the hallway. At times I was called into director's office to say, you're supposed to be speaking English. Unless you are in the, in the session or if a white person comes into the room, you need to switch language. I'm like, no, I was in the room first. I need to maintain my language with my colleague so I could be bilingual for your purposes, but then I'm not getting paid, you know? So of course after a while I'm like, oh, so what's the starting salary? Oh, what's the salary for someone who's bilingual bicultural? Because that's the other piece too, that people don't recognize that. I can't just start with the client like the way anybody else would, like, I literally have to be vetted by them. They have to tell, they wanna know where I'm from, how long I've been in this country, and I give them that information because if that's what you need to feel comfortable and whatever, I'm, I'm fine with that cuz I'm not disclosing anything major. And it makes a difference too, because then they connect like, oh, well I'm from this country. Oh, we say different words for different things. So they kind of let you know like, oh, there's gonna be some stuff. And then talking about what their experiences, you know, have been with mental health in their country. Because the other thing too is, you know, some people are here documenting, some people are here undocumented, and then how they came into this country also makes a difference. Did they pay a coyote to come over or did they come and, and their visas expired? You know, so, so there's all of these different ranges and different situations too.

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Because I worked a lot with teenagers when I did in-home where, you know, the mother left the child with the grandparents. I. And then came to this country to make money and to send money and everything else. And I start working with a teenager who's really angry, who's really angry at their biological mother because they just recently got together and he recently, this particular family, he recently found out that his mother had a second family. You know, when she like a 10 year old brother and he's 14 in his mind. For 10 years, she's had this kid I didn't know about for 10 years. She had this husband and I did. You know, so, so you're dealing with all this loss, you're dealing with pain, you're dealing with language issues, you're dealing with immigration stuff. So you're dealing with all of these different things before you can even get to the depressive symptoms. You know, and so it's like it takes a while, so yeah, uh, you need to give me more money because it takes a minute to be able to orientate them to therapy and for your, you as a Therapist to orientate to whatever their circumstances are. So it's a lot and it's heavy, you know, because immigrant stories are not easy because it's not just. You know, coming to the US it's kind of like, it's not just where you're going to, but what you're running from, you know? And so there's a lot of history with people when they leave. So when I see the us, you know, saying all sorts of stuff about immigrants, it really hurts because I know as an immigrant myself, but it's not an easy process to learn the language. It's not an easy process to learn the culture and to maintain or some semblance of. Okay. I like these things from this culture, like a balance, and I like these things from this culture. You know, because you're going up against your parents and what the cultural dictates for you, you know?

[00:30:53] **Debra:** Thinking about that question about us being two women of color and experiences being a little bit, they're similar, but there are some differences. And I think for me, as a black woman, I think, and especially how I grew up in the messages, to me there was the message that, remember, you're black. That things are gonna be different. But with that was the message. But get your education, carry yourself a certain way. And I remember thinking, oh, okay, so if I do all of that it says that, that would be this protective shield, you know? And I would be seeing, and this is so crazy cuz this is also something else to work through as one of the good ones. And I think Ken Hardy calls it a Jim, good enough minority, but you know, all the things I'm supposed to do. Well, I did that and I'm still followed in the store. You know, I still go through all of these things. So it was so much trying to figure out all of what they were and, and these experiences that I had, finding the words for them and understanding that, oh, it's not because I lack. It's not that there are all these systems, all these things that I'm up against, that the family I came from thought just get an education because that's what they saw as the way to make it in life. To better your circumstances. Yeah, somewhat. But it didn't protect me from being reminded of the fact that I'm black and considered less than. In a lot of ways, and even when I first started out in private practice, I'd had a number of white clients, especially where my office was, you know, you get vetted, let me produce. It was the craziest thing because either it was, let me make sure you're educated enough, you know what you're doing. Or I felt like I'm their Oprah, you know? So it was, it was, it was this weird thing that I would find to figure out as part of my journey, what is happening here. I started getting a few clients of color and they're not enough therapists of color. Let's face it. There isn't, and I just wanted to provide a space. And that's who I wanted to work with were my clients of color. So I do a lot of work with men and women of color unapologetically.

[00:33:25] **Sue:** Yeah, absolutely. Thank heavens. We will, in our show notes, fill it with resources for anyone listening to try to connect. Both for young therapists that are of color and getting this kind of good supervision and deconstruct, you know, you know, like finding themselves.

[00:33:43] **Gliceria:** Yeah. Yeah. That's what Deborah and I want to do is, is work with people who want to work with people of color and just. Having like a group consultation group with other therapists, you know, that are going through similar experiences and that way we can help out. You know,

[00:33:58] **Sue:** one of the things that's really striking me too is the invisibility of this. It's constant. People would deny it or really not see it. You might not even see it. This is a terrible probably analogy and tell me if so, but one thing that I was thinking about is like, you know, during covid, how people would pull away from you. And so I'm thinking from my perspective, it's like, It was so hard not to think, even though I knew they were scared of germs and things like that. But when, when I could physically feel people pulled back, it was impossible for that not to hurt, even though I knew what was happening. Mm-hmm. And then I think about that times a hundred thousand million little micro things like that. So it is something like, I think this is, this conversation's so important because the more we can be conscious of it and see it both to own it though, to even know we're doing it, but also as. You know, someone not in the majority culture to be able to. To name what it is and not internalize it as you. Yes,

[00:34:59] **Debra:** man. Yes. That is the difficult part and that is a constant struggle and I, I will not sit here as if I am, I am at this place where, oh, everything's great and all of that, because that's not where I am. It is still a struggle for me

[00:35:14] **Gliceria:** to do that. That's why it's so important that any Therapist and, and I feel very strongly about this, any Therapist that works with people of color should have done or continue to do their work on their own racial identity. We both went through also undoing racism, which was really powerful too, and, and really helped us kind of see some of the stuff that, that was going on. So again, you know, the ongoing training and exposure and, and just it's so critically important. It's so important and, and I don't see enough. Interest from folks to be able to want to do that. You know, I know for one, like I, I as said, endeavor. I'm gonna try this experiment, and I gave, um, an article that I feel very strongly that every Therapist should read because it's such a good article by Dr. Sue. Microaggressions in clinical settings, something like that by Dr. Sue. You could get it on Google, um, PDF and a three. So I gave it to 10 clinicians and I said, can you guys read this so we can have a conversation about it and blah, blah, tell me what your thoughts are, this and that. So they said, yeah, yeah, yeah. And a week later I went to them. We didn't read it. I went to them again three weeks after that, didn't read it. And I finally went like a month later and one of the women said, I don't see why I need this, because race never comes up in our sessions. Okay. Working in a clinical setting in a predominantly Latino community. It doesn't come up. I have yet to have a Latino or a black client where race is not discussed in our session, and I don't bring it up.

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I mean, I'm not saying I don't bring it up. I bring it up. I, I ask, but they bring it up. And especially after George Floyd. I mean, that was like, uh, uh, we were inundated with people because George Floyd could have been an uncle, a father, a husband, a brother, you know, and so we had a lot of, we were inundated. But I

[00:37:06] **Debra:** was inundated before then, and it's not trying to be political or anything like that, but if I'm honest, the calls that I received when Donald Trump was elected president, people who I hadn't seen in a long time were calling because of the things that they were experiencing at work. With different colleagues and trying to, to figure all of this stuff that it's kinda

[00:37:31] **Sue:** unleashing something. The, yes, the contempt colleagues that you thought were allies

[00:37:36] **Gliceria:** that you thought

[00:37:36] **Debra:** that they thought were allies that turned out not to be, and how painful. That was, and being really hard on themselves that they didn't see it. And you know, why didn't I recognize this? And then as ER said, with George Floyd, and then for me also during the shutdown, because I was seeing clients online and I had a number of black clients that lost multiple members of their family during that shutdown. I think that was between that period and George Floyd, those were probably the most difficult times for me, especially as a Therapist of color and what

[00:38:14] **Sue:** you all are gonna be providing. And um, I want y'all to say that out loud too, so that we can do that pitch. Is so important because, I mean, my heart is just like, I'm just feeling it as you're speaking and you know, from this much of a distance, even, even time, you know, all of those things and we can't do this by ourselves. And that you all are offering this incredible opportunity. So would you like to speak to that and then where we're, where we're going, uh, we can wrap up. You know, once you guys, uh, tell us about your group and then we're gonna record again and get into much more about the racial trauma and your work as trauma therapists and applying this into sessions, talking to white therapists about the mistakes we make and what you've learned from working with people of color. So that's what's coming. But for right now, for all of you that are. Interested in this and really doing your own work and working with more people of color, how do

[00:39:16] **Debra:** they reach you? We're doing groups, consultation groups, and I think it's so important because there are a lot more young therapists of color who are now in this field, and I don't want them to experience what I did those years, those years of trying to figure it out and questioning. Who you are and, and am I good enough in all of those things, right? So that's part of it. And I also, it's very important to me that they understand trauma, which we'll talk about because it changed everything for me. And beginning to see people through the Charmin and I also, we went to a group where white allies are invited. We wanted one with just people of color, but I, we both feel like, okay, Justin, sheer numbers. There's not gonna be enough fairness of color for all of the people of color. So we need white allies, but to be in the group, it's not gonna be where we're gonna be taking care of you and making sure that you feel like a good white person, because that doesn't help clients. And it's not about attacking people, but I think about. The consultation and the supervision that I've had, and it was always a challenge for me as a black person. Okay. Okay. I know you're black, but what does that mean? Who are you And something else? I'll just say really quick, and I got from Monica McGoldrick went, being at the Multicultural Family Institute was that she always said, your story is as much in the room as your client. So you need to, how about you gotta take a look at you, anchor deep and really know, okay, what do I really think about people who are of a social class? What is my truth? Because it's going to come through. It's gonna come through if no more than in your body language. You could be saying all the right words, but your eyes may be telling them something different. So that's why it I, I think this stuff is so, so important. So what is

[00:41:23] **Sue:** the email for people to reach you?

[00:41:25] **Gliceria:** It's bipo Therapist, B I P O C I N G Therapist

[00:41:31] **Sue:** gmail.com. So, bipo, Therapist, bipo, bipo. Okay. B I P O C I N G? Yes. Oh, wonderful. Therapist. And again, it will be linked in our show notes. You can find that if you go to Therapist Uncensored dot com. The episodes will all be right there, but you can also search. For any topic actually, and those show notes are gonna be really good. We do encourage you to go and check them out cuz we're gonna load them with resources. This is so big. And just one other quick thing. I love what you said, Deborah, about the safety for white people. What y'all both said earlier about people calling, you know, I don't feel safe as almost like a Trump card. Right. You know, so I, I like you calling that out. And also that like safety being, first of all, it's not even real, right. Is a feeling and that it's a privilege that we have walked around with this sense of safety and an inappropriate assumption of safety. For way too long so that we get a little discomfort and all of a sudden all flares are going off. So I just kind of wanna echo that again around like absolutely. This isn't about safety. There's gonna be no safety is what I'd say. It's more of like you guys are gonna expand people's tolerance for discomfort. And help people go there and stay in. So none of, none of this flagging safety thing. Yeah.

[00:42:51] **Debra:** Yeah. It's, it, it's kind like what we ask clients to do, right? We ask clients to just try to sit with it. Be with it, be in a moment. It's uncomfortable, but we don't want, it's uncomfortable.

[00:43:02] **Gliceria:** It was uncomfortable for us too. It was uncomfortable. Uncomfortable for us. And so, you know, if you're gonna get a little, little of un you know, of discomfort, it's okay. You're in a safe setting that this is if you're gonna make mistake, this is where to make this mistakes, you know, and, and, and be able to identify it. But being authentic, I think is the key piece to working with people of color, being authentic because of our intergenerational. Traumas and everything else that's happened in all of the racism we've had to learn how to detect whether we're gonna be safe or not, and the environment is really critical. Does the environment reflect me or does it reflect something else? Am I included in that? Even in decorations or just even in, you know, like having water or, I don't know, like Deborah, I remember in her office she used to have like the bowl of little bars, you know, little because sometimes, you know, people need to eat and I wanna get more into that, what the seasoning look looks like. So stick with us and uh, for the next episode, and thank you very much for listening all the way through. If this is an episode that you have found valuable, we really encourage you to share it with anybody that you think would be interested. Part of our goal certainly is to continue to get these voices. Out and to hand the mic over. It's such a privilege to be able to do that and learn. So you'll be helping

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us out by sharing this, and if the springs value, certainly you could leave a rating and review for us on wherever you get your podcasts. Thank you both so much for sharing your experience. It's a privilege and we'll see you around the bend.