

the george

GEORGE HULL CENTRE FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Just because you can't see it,



INSECURITY

doesn't mean it isn't there

This **BLACK MENTAL HEALTH WEEK**,
let's talk about Mental Health
and Racial Trauma in Black Communities.



Karen Mighty
Director, Diversity,
Equity & Inclusion



Karen Redwood
Community Clinic
Team Manager

Contributing Authors

As Director of DEI and Community Clinic Team Manager, respectively, Karen Mighty and Karen Redwood are responsible for spearheading Racial Trauma initiatives at the George Hull Centre; ensuring that our mandates at both the organizational and the clinical levels are culturally-informed.

A Commitment to Equity and Inclusion

The George Hull Centre reaffirms its dedication to fostering culturally responsive services for Black children, youth, and families. We honour Black communities' profound contributions, resilience, and leadership throughout history and today.

Central to our mission is dismantling systemic barriers, building trust, and creating spaces where Black individuals feel seen, valued, and understood. By prioritizing hiring diverse staff reflective of the communities we serve, we aim to ensure clients feel a sense of belonging and care that resonates deeply with their lived experiences.

“

By prioritizing diversity within our team, we ensure clients feel at ease, knowing their culture and identity are respected and celebrated.

Karen Mighty,
Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
at The George Hull Centre,

”

DONATE NOW to help us in our mission to increase accessibility to Racial Trauma-informed care.



R.I.T.E.S.: Centering Culture in Healing

The R.I.T.E.S. Collaborative, a partnership with Central Toronto Youth Services (CTYS), exemplifies our commitment to culturally responsive care. Designed for Black youth and families, this program integrates Africentric principles, grounding rituals, and community connections to provide comprehensive support.

At R.I.T.E.S., the environment itself is intentionally designed to foster connection and healing:

Spaces reflect Black identity.

From Afrocentric art to inclusive room names and culturally significant rituals, clients feel their culture is honoured.

Storytelling fosters connection.

As a cornerstone of Black cultural traditions, storytelling provides clients with a meaningful way to share their journey.



(*R.I.T.E.S. - Resilience, Identity, Transformation, Empowerment, and Self-Determination)

“

You walk through that door and see a space intentionally made about your culture. You feel like you belong.

Karen Mighty

”

This intentionality extends to the smallest details, such as a Christmas tree adorned with a Black angel, surrounded by Kwanzaa decorations and Caribbean treats. These elements send a powerful message: Your culture is celebrated, and your identity matters.

Dispelling Myths: Changing the Narrative Around Mental Health

Mental health stigma persists in Black communities, fueled by myths and cultural misconceptions that discourage open dialogue and access to care.

MYTH

1

"Black people don't struggle with mental health issues."

Truth: This myth perpetuates the harmful idea that Black individuals must always show strength. Mental health challenges affect everyone, and seeking help is an act of resilience.

MYTH

3

"Mental health issues are not real."

Truth: Mental health challenges are diagnosable and treatable. They are as legitimate as physical health concerns and require proper care.

MYTH

2

"Mental health struggles are a sign of weakness."

Truth: Seeking support for mental health is not a failure but a courageous step toward healing and growth.

MYTH

4

"Talking about mental health makes you vulnerable."

Truth: Open conversations about mental health create understanding, connection, and pathways to healing.

“

As Karen Redwood,
Community Clinic Team Manager, explains:

At The George Hull Centre, we aim to normalize conversations about mental health, breaking generational cycles of silence and fear. Recognizing racial trauma as a valid and significant factor in mental health is crucial to healing.

”



The Truth About Black Mental Health: What You Need to Know

Racial trauma, rooted in systemic racism and discrimination, disproportionately impacts Black communities. It is now classified under a PTSD diagnostic framework in the DSM-5, a widely used manual that helps professionals diagnose and understand mental health conditions. Racial trauma manifests through stress responses that affect emotional regulation, trust, and overall health.



“

Racial trauma is real. Addressing it isn't just an added feature of our work; it's central to our trauma-informed care.

emphasizes Karen Mighty.

”

At the George Hull Centre, we integrate trauma-informed and culturally responsive practices into every aspect of care to address these challenges:



We validate lived realities.

Every client's experience is acknowledged without judgment, fostering trust and openness.



We create culturally attuned environments.

Spaces reflect Black identity, allowing clients to feel celebrated and safe.



We incorporate storytelling.

This deeply rooted cultural tradition fosters connection, healing, and empowerment



“
Seeing my culture in a space makes me feel like this place was made for me, too.
”

Persons shown in photographs on this webpage are photography models (Models) and are not actual clients of, nor are they affiliated with, the George Hull Centre.

Key Learnings About Black Mental Health

The George Hull Centre has become a beacon of hope for those struggling with mental health challenges. Here's how your contributions have made a tangible impact:

Racial trauma requires specialized care.

Representation matters.

Education breaks stigma.

Social workers and clinicians must use trauma-informed approaches that integrate cultural humility and equity-focused practices

Seeing one's culture reflected in therapeutic spaces fosters trust, connection, and a sense of safety.

By addressing myths and misconceptions, we empower clients to embrace mental health care as a vital part of their well-being.

Closing Reflection

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

In February, we celebrated Black History Month as a time to honour the past, celebrate the present, and envision a future of inclusion and equity. Through programs like R.I.T.E.S. and our commitment to diversity, the George Hull Centre strives to create spaces where every client feels valued, respected, and empowered to thrive.



“
As one parent shared:
For the first time, we felt seen—not just as clients but as people with stories worth hearing.
”

Let us work together to make this a reality for every family we serve.

JOIN US in Advancing Equity

Your support enables the George Hull Centre to:

- Expand culturally responsive programs like R.I.T.E.S., reaching more families in need.
- Hire and train diverse clinicians, ensuring representation and cultural competence.
- Foster innovation in trauma-informed care tailored to the Black community.

Your contributions create a brighter future for Black children, youth, and families. Together, we can dismantle stigma, empower healing, and build a more equitable society.



GEORGE HULL CENTRE
FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Changing the trajectory of children's mental health.

[CLICK TO DONATE](#)

81 The East Mall, 3rd Floor
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M8Z 5W3