Narratives of Resilient Identity: Group Counselling for Racialized Women International Students in Higher Education

By

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Abstract

Practices from gender and racism discourses can recruit international racialized women students into a single story of surviving in Higher education, negatively impacting their mental health and academic performance. Therefore, this population narrative relies in a marginalized identity that leads to the imposter phenomenon and stereotype threat limiting their ability to thrive. The purpose of this capstone is to analyze if Narrative Group Therapy can be beneficial to reauthoring internalized oppression and relate to resilient identity stories instead. A review of the literature on existing evidence of Narrative Group Counselling is provided.

Key words: Racialized, women, international students, Narrative group therapy, racism, microaggressions, internalized oppression.

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Dedication

This capstone is dedicated to all those resilient women out there who are navigating the systems to the best of their capacities, dreaming and taking action while embracing resilient career and professional narratives. You are not alone!

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This capstone encapsulates an understanding of the social issue arising from the experiences of discrimination and its impact on the single narrative of internalized oppression among racialized international post-secondary women. Aiming to explore current literature that supports the proposal for developing Narrative Group Counselling to create counter-narratives on resilient racial identity. In this chapter, the discussion focuses on understanding the research problem's background, the study's purpose and significance and defining key terms.

Overview of Topic

Narrative Therapy was developed by Michael White and David Epston between 1970 and 1980. This framework underlines the single story that shape the individual sense of identity. There is a power of the language that mold the perceptions and influence certain behaviors. Through Narrative formulation, problems are conceived as political acts in which dominant discourses recruit people into practices that lead to develop a sense of self. Combs & Freedman (2012) explain that a discourse or dominant script could be a statement, a practice or an institutional structure holding specific values. In this case, dominant scripts, or discourses stem from white supremacy, a dominant group that holds privileges within the system due the assumption of superiority over other racial groups.

Besides discourses emerging from dominant groups, there are new discourses that are developing with the aim to foster more inclusive and equitable narratives within marginalized racial and ethnic groups. BIPOC it is an acronym originated in the USA around 2010 (IBPOC Artistic Practices, n.d.). It stands for Black, Indigenous, and people of color. IBPOC is a contemporary term implemented in Canada for Indigenous, Black and People of Colour, as the intention is to place "First People first." (IBPOC Artistic Practices, n.d.). The theory of critical

social justice points out that within the hierarchy of privileges and oppression, a way to foster social equity, it is by providing a specific designation to honor the legacies of Native and Black resistance to white supremacy (Lindsay, 2020). On this note, McGuire (2023) state that the intention behind the acronym is to tackle "the erasure of Black and Indigenous Peoples and centre their unique struggles while promoting solidarity" (p. 1). Indigenous and Black groups are in the higher category of oppression because they have dealt with historical layers of oppression within the system for centuries. Schultz et al. (2021) report that historical colonial actions engrained in race-based differential treatment negatively impacted indigenous people after establishing the residential schools and the Hospital system in Canada. They also state that indigenous have experienced cultural genocide and trauma through generations. Regrettably, colonial practices have persisted to the present within Canadian healthcare systems (Phillips-Beck et al., 2020). Additionally, U.S. and Canada's perceptions and treatment of Black people have been diverse throughout history. Unfortunately, racial segregation, stemming from the racist system in Canada, emerged in the 17th century and persisted in some provinces by the 20th (Backhouse, 1999; Cooper, 2006; Maynard, 2017; Winks, 1997, as cited in Cénat, 2022).

The other component of the acronym is POC, which stands for people of color. POC seem an inclusive language for those groups who don't identify as white (Lindsay, 2020). People of color can include African American, East Asian, Latino/a/x, South Asian, Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander. The acronyms BIPOC or IBPOC have been becoming popular in recent years. Under the umbrella of BIPOC/IBPOC, it is possible to identify international students as a marginalized group, too. Crosby et al., (2022) explain that BIPOC folks around the world experience several types of discrimination every day and during their different development stages. They continue explaining, for instant, they are easy targets for racism at school, and those

inequities lead to a snowball effect of being suspended, expulsed, and drop-outs that can end up with juvenile justice involvement.

The efforts from racialized groups are noticeable to mobilize and promote new discourses that foster inclusive and equitable language. However, McGuire (2023) states the complexities and harms of relying on the BIPOC acronym because it dismisses the experiences of racism from people with mixed ancestry and also, the perception of racial identity may change depending on the context, attire and overall look. Additionally, McGuire continues by saying that categorizing racialized people as BIPOC is a way to perpetrate white supremacy, and colonialism. Thus, she prefers the term racialized instead because it seems less harmful and considers people with mixed ancestry. The risk of adopting the term BIPOC is the tendency to homogenize the diverse communities into one category that fails to notice each group's distinctive historical, and cultural contexts.

This paper uses the term "racialized" to identify the demographic of female international students coming to Canada because the term of reference includes those individuals with distinct experiences and challenges coming from various racial and ethnic groups, such as Jews and more. Racialized women who are international students experience several layers of racism and microaggressions in detriment of their mental health and performance. Koo et al. (2023) explain that racial inequality, racial discrimination, and racism are prevalent in the Higher education of US, which lead international students to experience psychological disorders, learning issues, and shapes hostile and non-inclusive communities on institutions. Racialized students are in a vulnerable space due to limited access to resources such as language privilege, social support, and work opportunities; consequently, the responses for seeking support are reduced (Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007, as cited in Kim & Hogge, 2021).

The gender and racism discourses mold the single stories of internalized oppression on racialized post-secondary international women, limiting their identity and successful performance in academic, career, relationship, and personal development. International students choose Canada as a destination for higher education for several reasons, such as accessing high-quality education, the welcoming and inclusive society, quality of life, work opportunities, the possibility to improve the language, research prospects, immigration pathways, attaining a global perspective and as a way to explore beautiful landscapes. On this note, Canada is the world's third-leading destination to get a higher education degree (Eruderam, 2023). According to the BC'S Labour market Outlook: 2023 Edition (Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, 2023), besides young people entering the workforce, interprovincial migrants also international immigrants which includes international students will be key to fill the job openings over the next 10 years. To address the current labour shortage, IRCC implemented a new policy that provided an exemption to post-secondary students who are eligible to work in Canada off campus more than 20 hours per week from November 15, 2022, to December 31, 2023 (Government of Canada, 2024). Thus, immigrants and international students are supplies for improving the Canadian economy.

Despite the new policies to advance the employment opportunities for students abroad coming to Canada, it seems relevant to acknowledge how there are layers of institutional oppression and racialized environments that have delivered oppressive practices for international racialized women in advanced education. According to Addison, et al. (2022), the system of higher education perpetrates socio-economic inequalities within students and staff by oppressing some members and providing privileges to others. While racialized post-secondary international women navigate the nuances of their educational programs in Canada, they also are immersing in

a life transition with unique challenges and psychological issues to overcome. They may encounter culture shock, loneliness and homesickness, academic stress, language barriers, social isolation, financial stress, identity and cultural adjustment, discrimination and prejudice, career and future concerns, and time zones difference.

The recipients of privileges protect the system by following the conventional norms and practices that secure the perpetuation of the white supremacy (Bonilla-Silva, 2010, as cited in Michael & Schulz, 2019, p.153). A study by Cénat et al. (2022) shows that in everyday experiences of racial discrimination without social support, black individuals in Canada internalized the oppression with a negative impact on their self-esteem. They also identify how gender, in this case, being a woman, intensifies the harmful impact of racial discrimination on developing low self-esteem. They conducted the study with 860 participants between 15 to 40 years old, predominantly born in Canada. The preceding research exposes how Black folks who have historically experienced layers of oppression, even nowadays, are enduring adverse effects on their well-being through systemic norms and practices. However, the curiosity that unfolds from the nuances of racial and gender discrimination experienced by international students remains on the table.

The educational journey in Higher education requires vital adjustments, and having a solid identity is vital to maintain learning successes, wellness and connection (Perreira et al., 2010). Nevertheless, the factor of strong identity may not be available to racialized international post-secondary women due to the struggle with identity and cultural adjustment, which intensifies the barrier to attaining academic success. While this demographic navigates identity adjustments, oppressive practices of gender and racial inequality persist in institutional spaces

through colorblind attitudes from staff, professors, and peers. These attitudes play a crucial role in recruiting this demographic into the internalization of oppression.

Kent Katz defines internalized oppression as "the ways that oppression is observed, absorbed, and accepted into the minds and practices" of demographic targeted by oppression who are "assuming the role of the oppressor from the inside" (2020, para. 5). This process involves integrating negative beliefs, stereotypes and prejudices against their group into one's identity (Roberson & Pieterse, 2021). Holohan (2022) expresses that the previous term can be harmful because it pathologizes people from marginalized locations by pointing out that there is something wrong with them. After all, they are not aware of the oppression they face. Also, Holohan continues by saying that the problem stems from the system of oppression itself. A study reveals that being exposed to the internalization of oppression generates low self-esteem (Roberson & Pieterse, 2021). The risk of members of this demographic undergoing identity adjustment relies on the potential internalization of harmful practices emerging from a colonial institutional environment, which damages their self-confidence and performance.

Sherman et al. (2022) argue that racism has intensified in many ways due to the COVID-19 outbreak and the occurrent police violence against innocent Black men, women, transgender individuals, and children. Racialized folks' experiences are influenced by the several layers of inequality that cause high levels of traumatic stress, health issues, community challenges, limited access to better job opportunities, poverty, housing, food insecurity, violence and environmental racism. (Alegría et al., 2010; Lee & Matejkowski, 2012; Washington, 2019; Wildeman & Wang, 2017, as cited in Crosby et al., 2022, p. 281).

This lit review is relevant also because being a woman amplifies the risk of experiencing also gender inequality, which is prevalent among racialized women at school, work, research and

in other areas in society. Thus, racial and gender biases intersect each other. On this note, the term “gendered racism” was created by Essed to identify two forms of discrimination that appear together: gender and racism which affects Black women (Essed, 1991, as cited in Spates et al., 2020). Gender inequality can be observed in different areas. For instance, Eaton et al. (2020) prove that women are underrepresented in research among STEM university faculty in US compared with men due to gender and racial bias in the faculty members to select candidates for STEM programs. This finding illustrates how gender and race stereotypes limit the advancement of racialized women scholars in STEM fields.

Most studies of internalized oppression explore the experiences of African Americans or Asian Americans, so there is a gap in research for observing the impacts on racialized international women in post-secondary. Additionally, there are insufficient studies that support the effectiveness of Group Narrative therapy for addressing internalized oppression. This absence could highlight the impact of a system of privileges that has embedded power to define the direction for relevant research topics that discourages innovation and creativity for an individual. Lastly, this paper’s invitation is to inspire future research and open more possibilities to support racialized international women in Higher education for thriving through potential group therapy that not necessarily could be Narrative.

Purpose of the Paper

This capstone aims to make visible the relevance of conducting more research on racialized international women in higher education as a way to reauthor the science discourse. The group faces unique challenges in navigating the academic, cultural, and social aspects of their transitional journey in Canada. Also, the project seeks to understand the impact of oppressive practices on this population when achieving their educational and employment goals.

Additionally, this paper explores the effectiveness of group therapy treatment to create a counter-narrative of resilient identity to address stories of internalized racism (imposter phenomenon and stereotype threat) experienced by racialized post-secondary international women.

Contribution to the Field

A disrupting system maintain layers of privileges and inequalities within the groups of people. The enactment of colonial power is visible in daily life through practices stemming from institutions, implementation of policies, and more. We have been immersed in a colonial system for many years. Such traditional colonialism it is so embedded within institutions impacting also other areas in life.

Foucault (1983, as cited in Madigan, 2019, p. 29) states that dominant ideas shape the perception of the science discourse, for example, the same processes are at play in the classification of mental health issues through the Diagnosed Statistical Manual. He continues by saying that science elicits practices of power that separate individuals by placing them into categories, such as isolating people with leprosy from the rest of the society, situation that happened in the past.

The research field as a social system has evolved with new contributions that have provided benefits for some members of society. However, the science discourse has embedded whiteness that has focused on exploring in depth some therapeutic approaches that reflect traditional white values. Consequently, this dominant script has also marginalized some other psychotherapies that follow less individualistic perceptions of the problem, such as Narrative therapy.

Another layer of inequality within this discourse can be seen in the limited studies that has been done on racialized demographics. Hopefully, new voices and movements are

contributing to dismantling the science discourse through exploring other therapeutic approaches that could be more effective in supporting racialized folks. Such efforts invite an advocacy that dismantles structural power and systems through research.

This capstone names the gap or limitation within existing literature as a way to challenge and dismantle the systematic power and structures that maintain inequities. In this case, I pointed out how the demographic of racialized international students has yet to be fully explored through research. According to the plan for covering the shortage of work in Canada, the government has implemented recruiting more international students into Canada as a strategy (Wang-Dufil & Hari, 2023). On this note, Badwall (2014) states, "historically, racialized bodies have been constituted as Others, subjects to be regulated, controlled and 'saved' within the colonial project". So, recruiting more international students seems to be a colonial strategy to solve the issues with the labour market and maintain the Canadian economy. However, the question remains on where this population can access support to process intense emotions stemming from facing the layers of oppression to maintain a resilient identity as they transition into living in Canada. This paper aims to contribute to naming the need to explore effective treatments for racialized international women. This demographic, having experienced systemic racist layers and gender inequality, often find themselves relating to identities imposed by the dominant discourse that dismisses their values and hopes. The goal is also to explore if group narrative therapy can effectively honour the needs of this population in reauthoring resilient identities.

Reflectivity and Positionality Statement

My social identities include cisgender women, immigrant, naturalized Canadian citizen, and Mexican. I identified as a racialized women with lived experience as an international and local student in higher education, facing systemic barriers that have impacted my academic and

professional performance. I have encountered situations where I have observed the influence of the dominant discourses on my performance while interacting with classmates, co-workers and supervisors. For example, during a discussion group in class in my early years as a student, I remained silent, allowing individuals from the dominant group to speak first, and unconsciously waited until everyone shared their ideas before expressing mine. What initially seemed like a coping mechanism to adapt to the new environment evolved into an ingrained behavior of diminishing myself to conform to the expectations of the dominant group. In other words, I unconsciously learned to suppress my needs or personal opinions to emulate the behaviour of white people, as it appeared to be acceptable and respected by all.

When members of the dominant group brought up the attention to my accent in classes or at work, I felt excluded. Suddenly, their comments made me doubt whether they took my opinions weren't taken seriously. I also encountered racialized behaviours while volunteering on a Crisis Line. Callers in distress would sometimes request to speak to another volunteer without further explanation. Although the caller didn't express their reasons, I sensed rejection through subtle signs like their tone of voice when making the request. Speight (2007) notes that internalized racism is challenging to see, count, and measure because there is no clear perpetrator or victim, yet it inflicts psychological damage. I resonate with this perspective, as many of my past experiences with microaggressions and racism were so subtle that the perpetrators may not have been aware, or sometimes I struggled to recognize them myself. However, there were movements when I noticed physical signs within my body, such as a blocked throat, tension in my shoulder, or chest pain. Looking back, I realize that these physical manifestations reflected my feelings of disempowerment.

Engaging in the literature review has presented personal challenges. As I delved in the studies, I found myself confronting mixed emotions and uncomfortable thoughts stemming from my own social identities. The process of reviewing academic studies and confronting the realities of racialized individuals triggered responses rooted in past racial and gender trauma. As I implemented my tools for regulating my nervous system, I came back to the reflection on the relevance of this capstone for rising the voice of more folks like me that have been suffering in silence.

Equality, diversity and respect for all individuals regardless of their racial or ethnic background is crucial when supporting racialized international women in higher education. International students enter a space of several transitions when beginning their programs in post-secondary in Canada. They interact in an unfamiliar environment with different societal expectations, rules, values and preconceptions of reality and how it operates. Some of the discourses and practices can produce internal conflict because those foundational values may stem from the supremacy of whiteness, which invalidates non-white individuals' perceptions, experiences, values, identity. A few institutions have been introducing new policies that foster equality, diversity and respect in the educational environments. However, the system has embedded whiteness that has been part of it from years, so introducing new changes is an ongoing process.

The hope is the continuation of compassionate dialogues that could open more spaces for fostering community and the validation of the emotions and experiences of racialized international women who faced systemic barriers. So, they can process harmful practices safely and advocate for creating resilient identity stories that honour their values and hopes instead.

Definition of Terms

The following section contains the defined terms necessary for understanding this capstone.

Discourse: Perceiving discourse or dominant script as synonyms. It could be a statement, a practice or an institutional structure holding specific values (Combs & Freedman, 2012). According to Foucault (1982), discourses convey a dominant idea perpetuating controlling social norms. In Foucault's view, practices and structures from society recruit people into following certain beliefs about science, psychology, religion and ethics.

Gendered Racism: Introduced by Essed that identifies the intersectionality of gender and racism experienced by Black women (Spates et al., 2020). This term can also relate to racialized women who also experience struggles within the system stemming from the intersectionality of gender and racism.

Imposter Phenomenon: It presents as self-doubt and deception sometimes among students and staff members, regardless of the academic hierarchies in higher education (Addison, et al., 2022). This dominant script dictates a practice of self-doubt "contained within individuals" (Winslade 2009, as cited in Madigan, 2019, p. 59). In other words, the imposter phenomenon is an experience under the responsibility of individuals, which diminishes the role of the social system in recruiting people into this practice.

Internalized oppression: It describes "the ways that oppression is observed, absorbed, and accepted into the minds and practices" of demographic targeted by oppression who are "assuming the role of the oppressor from the inside" (Kent Katz, 2020, para. 5). Holohan (2022) explains that the previous term can be harmful because it pathologizes people with marginalized locations by pointing out that there's something wrong with them because they are not aware of

the oppression they face. Also, Holohan continues by saying that the problem stems from the system of oppression.

Microaggressions: It is a form of the implementation of racist practices in specific social environments (Willis et al., 2019). The University setting often perpetuates those practices, in which the cultural identity of individuals is diminished and unseen through bias stemming from ethnicity stereotypes (Houshmand et al., 2014, as cited in Caxaj et al., 2021).

Narrative Therapy: Originally developed by Michael White and David Epston (1990). Based on the idea that people live according to multiple stories, and the individual understand their problems through cultural context (Koganei et al., 2021). Narrative therapy explores how the experience and identity of an individual are moulded by meaning, culture, language and discourses (Combs & Freedman, 2012). This theoretical approach recognizes how the social and cultural context contributes to the problem, which takes social justice concerns seriously. Tomm states (2019) that a significant contribution of Narrative therapy is externalizing the problem, which involves "a linguistic separation of the problem itself from the personal identity of the individual" (p.43). He also says that externalization is an ongoing therapeutic process of "cutting it away from the patient's sense of self as a person" (p. 46). Thus, externalizing the problem is a therapeutic technique that "undo some of the negative effects of social labeling" (Tomm, 2019, p. 46).

Racialized: A broad term that "includes recognition of the socially constructed nature of race and allows room for further specificity" (McGuire, 2023, p. 2). Language guides people to communicate and comprehend each other (Bakhtin 1986, as cited in Madigan, 2019). On this note, being cautious about how language can exclude, and cause harm is relevant. Consequently, racialized is a term that identifies those folks who have encountered disadvantages and

marginalization within the layers of the system. Racialized people could also have mixed ancestry.

Racism: "The systemic way that lives are structured and racialized in racist systems" (Moran, 2023, p. 8). "It is a discourse and practice of inferiorizing ethnic groups" with the perception of "undesirability of groups, in the form in which they exist" (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992, p. 6).

Stereotype Threat: The fear of confirming negative stereotypes about their social group (Steele & Aronson, 1995). The practice of perceiving threats from negative group stereotypes impacts students by limiting their academic engagement (Bao et al., 2023). The cultural stereotype threat emerges from the racial discourse, which is rooted in colonial historical practices. For example, "the stereotype threat" that limits the judgments of police officers when treating Black people is a consequence of historical slavery (Najdowski, 2023, p. 696).

Systemic racism: A societal structure that holds "racially unequal opportunities" across generations (Banaji et al. 2021, p. 21).

Outline of Capstone Project Chapters

In the literature review in chapter 2, the discussion explores the effects of internalized oppression on identity. This includes research, contributions of Narrative Therapy on dealing with other mental health issue and an elaboration on how Group Narrative therapy can be effective with this demographic. A proposal for group narrative therapy for this demographic is presented on Chapter 3. There is also a detailed outline of each session of this 3-month program including ethical and cultural considerations.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter focuses on understanding the recruitment of racialized international women into oppressive practices that lead to internalizing oppression. We also explore the potential effectiveness of group therapy in tackling this demographic's needs. Additionally, we provide evidence that shows how narrative group therapy can be effective when facing specific mental health issues. Ultimately, the chapter elaborates on the gaps in research on the effectiveness of narrative group therapy in reauthoring resilient identity for racialized international women in post-graduate education.

Racialized Women International Students: The Subject's Position

Meehan and Guilfoyle report (2015) that, according to narrative therapy, the subjects of racialized female international students have a specific position within the stories they are telling. Hence, the identity of an individual is a "narrative construction" that provides a position within the story (Meehan and Guilfoyle, 2015, p. 28). On this note, Hewertson and Tissa (2022) describe that the "socio-political context" of power in relationships fuels the experience of this demographic of feeling "out of place" in higher education (p. 20). Within the external factors, variables such as gender, status, race and previous educational experiences shape the "feelings of imposterism" (p. 32). From this perspective, individual's social identities interconnect, creating several layers of oppression, and Crenshaw introduced this concept by using the term intersectionality (1991).

Breeze (2018) defines the imposter phenomenon as a social product occurring after exposure to external factors from the economic system embedded in the university. They continue by describing that the economic structure provides financial, social, and cultural capital layers of privileges and power within the relationships of a few groups. In other words, higher

education institutions “tend to reflect and favour middle class values” (Morgan, 2015, p. 21). Thus, the imposter phenomenon is an experience of first-generation students feeling “socially and culturally incompetent” when navigating an educational institution that maintains privileges for the dominant group through university practices (Mullen, 2016, as cited in Tissa and Hewertson,2022, p. 21).

Extensive research has been conducted on the imposter phenomenon among racialized people. A longitudinal study by Nadal et al. (2021) show that African American college students exposed to higher levels of racial discrimination led to intense feelings of imposter phenomenon. They also emphasize that from a young age, racialized groups are exposed to race and discrimination. Individuals within this groups learn to navigate such experiences by internalizing negative messages about their social group memberships (Nadal et al., 2021, p. 4). Evidence on the negative impact on mental health suggests that the imposter phenomenon experienced by international medical students reduced self-esteem levels considerably (Naser et al., 2022).

Tissa and Hewertson (2022) state that imposter phenomenon causes more harm to people with “multiple intersecting oppressions”, such as “Black women”. On this note, Chao et al. prove (2012) that Black women students in College reported higher levels of racial discrimination distress than men, which are correlated to issues of “self-esteem, perfectionism, worries about body image and maladaptive eating” (p. 204). Also, Brunner and Peyton-Claire (2000) explain that Black women continuously engage in behaviours that demonstrate their worthiness for inclusion in the University. Another study by Simon (2020) showed that imposter phenomenon levels in Black women students in the STEM field depend on how demanding the PhD program is and the level of academic support received. In other words, if there is a lack of academic

support tailored to this population's needs, the imposter phenomenon experience is more prevalent among PhD students.

Another "narrative construction" (Meehan & Guilfoyle, 2015, p. 28) that positions racialized student demographic within a single story is the stereotype threat. Steele and Aronson (1995) introduced the term stereotype threat to define "a self-evaluative threat" stemming from the fear of confirming a negative stereotype of a group in which the individual shares membership (p. 797). Najdowski (2023) contributes by acknowledging that stereotype threat takes a toll on the mental health of Black people and places them more in a position at risk of being discriminated against when facing police interactions. Regarding academic performance, Steele and Aronson (1995) show that stereotype threat sabotages educational success by forcing African American students "to try hard with impaired efficiency" in higher education (p. 809).

Based on previous studies on the imposter phenomenon and stereotype threat, as well as the negative impacts experienced by racialized demographics, it can be concluded that racialized international women students occupy a primary subject position of being seeing as an outsider, and an academic failure. This population is surrounded by a world of socially normal white people who appear to hold certain privileges that guarantee their academic and social success within an institution that perpetuates unequal academic experiences.

Dominant Discourses in Higher Education

Tissa and Hewertson state that education is "a form of cultural capital" (2022, p. 160). Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) explain that education provides a social advantage because it represents cultural knowledge, skills, and behaviors that are the dominant group values. On this note, the upper and upper-middle classes are the influential groups dictating the discourses (Skeggs, 2004). For example, the dominant discourse in higher education for academic career

success is guided by the expectations of being rational, self-assertive, and assured (Oliver & Morris, 2020).

Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) point out that education reproduces and perpetrates the values and practices of the powerful class, contributing to class inequality. In other words, the education system rewards the culture of the dominant class through practices. To illustrate this, Stone (2022) identifies how the institution censors' individuals with ideas that do not conform to the dominant script. Additionally, she clarifies that "the class divisions are not implicit"; however, the system implements practices that exclude and provide limitations to specific individuals with social identities (p. 132). As an illustration, Maclean (2022) highlights how his financial situation from his social location of being a working-class student limited him to the expected "form of assimilation to elite university" of affording a flat with peers. As a result, his subject position was of the "outsider" from his friend's student life (2022, p. 166).

Gender Discourse

There is a history behind the understanding of the gender discourse stemming from women's equal participation in Higher education in Canada. The ability for women to access the university education came as the result of several social movements. On this note, McDonald (2021) state that the movement brought up diverse discussions, such as "demand for equal standards" and "women's distinct needs could best be met by different models of university provision" (p.2,3). She also explains that compared with the U.S., the inclusion of women into Canadian undergraduate programs manifested as a radical act. She continues by describing that it began by offering a coeducation setting to teach women and men together between 1870 and 1930. Thus, the contributions from the movement challenged gender identity discourse in the

past and was foundational to open more opportunities for women to access higher education and have more job opportunities on leadership roles for rewarding employment.

Nevertheless, women were marginalized by placing them into feminized academic programs, such as household science, nursing. According to McDonald (2021), through moral supervision their potential aspirations to strive for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs were dismissed on the twentieth century. She also states that equal education has been an ongoing process.

Throughout history, the participation of women in higher education has been relatively recent, which explains the limited representation in leadership roles (Caudillo & Rincones, 2024). On this note, women represent a minority group in physical sciences, computer science, engineering, and mathematics programs (MacDonald, 2021). Also, visible minority representation in female leadership roles bolsters the experience of the imposter phenomenon in the new generations of female students in post-secondary education (Hoang, 2013).

Horner (1968) coined the term “fear of success” to describe the social stigma experienced by women due to failure to achieve higher level goals. He also revealed that the fear of success arises from thriving exclusively in a male-dominated field (Horner, 1968). For example, Stone (2022) states that as a Ph.D. student in higher education, she navigated with difficulty an environment moulded with institutional “middle-class man” practices (p. 133). This discourse was noticed back in 1968 when Horner explored the social stigma of women’s fear of success experienced by women, and it seems to be prevalent nowadays. Stone also describes her experiences of self-doubt, with her contributions resulting from her fear of disapproval, which was reinforced by the normative values of her program.

Racial Discourse

McCartney (2021) state that the first International Student Policy in Canada was introduced by the Canadian Society for the Study of Higher Education (CSSHE) by 1970. He also mentioned that it implemented new policy directions. Additionally, he confirms that the history of international students accessing higher education has 50 years. Under these policies, the assumption is that "the migration phenomenon exists to serve" Canada, "not the migrants" (Harney, 1988, p. 53). In McCartney's (2021) view, the international student policies have been focused on "serving Canada's perceived national interests" (p. 33). Put it succinctly, how international students can benefit Canada economically. Colonial scripts, such as the International Student Policy, have shaped the role of individuals within the system. In this case, international students are the subjects of control within the colonial project. Therefore, the subject position within the story seems defined by dominant layers of oppression and control.

Peer and McAuslan (2016) explain that higher education is a crucial time when students transition into adulthood. During this period, individuals experience mental susceptibility and self-doubt because of these new situations (Peer and McAuslan, 2016). Additionally, Arnett (2016) emphasize that students transition into identity exploration considerably in order to make sense of their own social identities. Further, Bernard (2024) makes it clear that post-graduate education elevates the risk of experiencing the impostor phenomenon, placing students who identify as African American and other racialized groups at greater risk. The racial discourse recruit's individuals to be the subjects of position within the system. For instance, the practices of racial discrimination and microaggressions place students of color in marginalized position (Bernard, 2024). A study conducted by Chakraverty (2022) shows that being a target of microaggressive comments among Hispanic/Latinx Ph.D. students in the Science, Technology,

Engineering and Mathematics field contributes to experiencing feelings of being an outsider and the emergence of the impostor phenomenon.

According to Bernard (2024), the dominant discourse of post-secondary education in the U.S. highlights the values of independence, individualism, and competitiveness through programs and policies. Nevertheless, Bernard argues that racialized students embrace opposite values, for example the Afrocentric culture values "communalism and harmony" (p. 190). Consequently, he describes that the "culturally invalidating academic institution" maintains racial inequality practices by limiting access to education and by consciously holding biased ideas about African American and other racialized groups abilities (p. 190). On this note, he states that the dominant script generates a campus community that "make students feel unwelcomed, alienated, and marginalized" (p. 189). Hence, Torres (2009) reports that the immersion of African American students in institutions with embedded white values elicits culture shock that leads to internalizing oppression.

Normalizing Judgments.

Foucault used the term "normalizing judgment" to identify the social process of holding specific cultural norms and discourses (1995, p. 177). He continues by saying that discourse is formed by norms and values that provide a position for everyone in the organized system. (Foucault, 1995). For instance, Bernard (2024) states that racial discourse can be found in policies, practices, and ideologies that contribute to negative perceptions of African American students. According to Meehan and Guilfoyle (2015), the discourse recruits individuals into holding specific positions. From this position, a person monitors himself and others. In other words, "as socially constructed subjects," individuals' police each other by assessing according to the discourse expectations and values (Meehan and Guilfoyle, 2015).

After being exposed to the dominant discourses within the institutions, racialized international women students in post-secondary institutions often situate themselves as intellectually inadequate and socially incompetent, which positions them into a specific role within the system (Cope-Watson and Betts, 2010). This is due to the imposter phenomenon "embedded in the institutional or systemic discourses that circulate in academic environments" (Cope-Watson and Betts, 2010, p. 1). According to Goffman (1959), the values of performativity and impression management embedded within institutions also contribute to the imposter phenomenon.

The implications of normalizing judgments are relevant because they can also be identified under the therapeutical approaches for group treatment. Geva and Wiener (2015) assert that theoretical approaches depict unique worldviews according to specific values, biases, and rules regarding people's behaviors. In other words, counselling approaches hold certain values or norms that may influence the understanding of the problem from individuals and what is the path for developing treatment. Thus, theoretical frameworks may have expectations for clients to comfort with certain dominant discourses that can influence the goal setting and the counselling process of the client.

Sue and Sue (2016) state that the foundation of counselling, treatments and mental health practices originated from "monocultural and ethnocentric norms" (p. 25). They continue by saying that the dominant norm holds Western worldviews assuming the universality of individuals, so everyone experiences the mental health problems in the same way. Sue and Sue (2016) point out how those worldviews dismiss the unique experiences of marginalized members, leading to cultural oppression. As an illustration, Western European contexts that

shaped some counselling approaches may not be effective for those racial/ethnic minority groups in the United States (Parham et al., 2011).

Disqualified knowledges.

The existing power/knowledge formation defines the limits and capacity of the discourse. Disqualified knowledges refers to knowledge dismissed or marginalized by the dominant discourses. For example, a person with the subject position of being a social failure doesn't meet the expected behavior of being extroverted. In this case, the discourse of extroversion and individualism disqualified or lost the knowledge of being introverted. Furthermore, the dominant discourse creates a social reality that continuously generates subjects of positions to follow by individuals. On this note, Meehan and Guilfoyle (2015) argue that "the discursive construction of self" stems from the power and the system that defines dominant discourses. Additionally, White and Epston explain that resistance to existing power or knowledge represents the "unique outcome" leading to the person's relocation beyond the position dictated by the discourse (1999, p. 15).

Group Counselling.

Bedard-Gilligan et al. (2022) affirm that individual therapy fails to address "the larger issues of community trauma exposure" stemming from systemic power dynamics encountered by racialized members (p. 2103). For instance, they continue saying that the trauma exposure experienced by indigenous communities through discrimination, intergenerational trauma, and cultural genocide is neither an individual nor an isolated issue; by the contrary, the treatment involving the community may be more effective (Bedard-Gilligan et al., 2022). If the development of internalized oppression among racialized international women originates from

dominant discourses within the institution, implementing group counselling for this demographic could be effective.

Group therapy comprises several factors that contribute to providing an efficient treatment. According to Padesky and Kennerley (2023), group therapy allows an engaging and active interaction between participants because it invites a compassionate exploration of individual perspectives. They also state that "belonging to a group can reduce the sense of alienation and shame" because the group acknowledges individual challenges (p. 408). On this note, Yalom and Leszcz (2020) suggest that the recognition of others' struggles, feelings, and experiences enhances universality that has been shown to elicit effective change in participants. Robinson et al. (2015) define universality as the experience of belonging to others and normalizing everyday struggles after witnessing others' challenges. They continue by saying that groups allow the opportunity to observe internal processes through listening to others, inviting self-reflection and new insights that lead to behavioral change.

Yalom and Leszcz (2020) state that another factor that fosters effective group therapy is cohesion. They define it as how much a group feels close to each other. On this note, Gallagher et al. (2014) state that a solid cohesiveness among the members within a group fosters a safe space for implementing new behaviours that can be tested inside the group and obtaining helpful feedback. Indeed, if group members experience safety and enjoyment in connecting with others, it is more plausible that they will share openly their feelings. Subsequently, they can feel motivated to implement new narratives inside the group.

Group therapy has been shown to be plausible in supporting people with various concerns. For instance, group cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) is efficient for decreasing social anxiety disorder symptoms (McEvoy, 2024), and in another study a CBT group therapy

was beneficial on increasing periods of abstinence on people experiencing substance use disorder (López et al., 2021). Additionally, CBT group treatment has been shown to reduce depression and anxiety considerably among participants dealing with mood disorder (Nabian, 2023).

It must be noted that science and narrative therapy operate from two "different language systems" (Epston et al., 2012, p. 78). Epston et al. assert that these systems are characterized by "different vocabulary, different rules, and at times different goals" (p. 78). They further elaborate that while science holds a power differential language that approaches individuals from an expert position, narrative therapy positions power within the individuals seeking counselling (Epston et al., 2012). Consequently, in this capstone, we perceived science and evidence-based articles as representations of the dominant discourse, characterized by specific rules and practices. We are curious regarding new narratives introduced in the science domain through evidence-based studies by implementing narrative therapy. Research has shown evidence supporting the effectiveness of narrative therapy. Those studies managed to uphold the power of clients while adhering to the foundational principles of this framework throughout the research process, contributing to the evolution of the dominant discourse of science.

Numerous studies have demonstrated the efficacy of narrative group counselling in addressing specific mental health concerns, particularly with racialized members. It is an effective treatment for enhancing self-esteem and insight while reducing the stress response among individuals with alcohol dependency (Park & Kim, 2021). A study by Clark (2014), found that narrative interventions are efficient for groups dealing with substance use. Weber and McPhie (2006) conducted a study that demonstrated how narrative group treatment contributes to lessening eating disorder symptoms. Lastly, a case study revealed a significant decrease in

depression experiences among a young Black adult by creating an empowering story of recovering from several losses (Taliaferro et al., 2013).

There are also studies on the effectiveness of narrative therapy conducted on specific demographics, such as women. A study by Koganei et al. (2021) found that women who identified with the ethnicity of Japanese experienced less distress and were more accepting of their identity and their past after participating in narrative group therapy. Ibrahim and Tchanturia (2018) conducted a study identifying the benefits of narrative group therapy informed by the "Tree of Life" concept. The study revealed how the group promoted a positive image, hope, and new behavioural changes among women participants diagnosed with anorexia nervosa (Ibrahim & Tchanturia, 2018). Another study reports a considerable reduction in substance use among urban African American female (Qureshi et al., 2015).

In terms of implementing narrative therapy to address internalized oppression, a case study involving a Black male youth coping with racial profiling by the police reveals that reauthoring narratives of self-development led to the client's empowerment (Aymer, 2016). Additionally, the internalized hypersexualized narrative is a form of internalized oppression due to negative stereotypes, beliefs, and attitudes toward gender. So, the results indicate that implementing narrative therapy improves resiliency among a person of color who is a survivor of sexual violence (Gómez et al., 2020).

Although there's evidence emphasizing the efficacy of narrative group therapy for specific demographic, the absence of targeted research on its effectiveness for racialized international women in post-secondary education highlights the marginalized status of this underserved population within the research landscape. It also emphasizes how narrative therapy can be marginalized by the dominant discourse of science, which encourages the research of a

few classic therapeutic treatments. However, several pointers show the strong fit of this approach to target the needs of this demographic when creating an effective treatment plan to overcome internalized oppression.

Narrative therapy appears to be a suitable approach for supporting racialized international women in postsecondary education due to its foundation in principles of social justice. Furthermore, White and Epston (1990) elucidate that narrative approach supports people by creating alternative definitions of the problem that are tailored to their unique experiences and concerns (White & Epston, 1990). Therefore, Michael White's work and the narrative therapy that he and others created seems particularly respectful and humane (Tomm, 2019). Crumb and Haskins (2017) argue that traditional counselling approaches like Cognitive Behavioral therapy, Gestalt therapy, and Adlerian therapy, may perhaps be limited in addressing the impact of emotional constraints associated with the imposter phenomenon, particularly for Black American women. Narrative therapy is rooted in social justice because it conceives the problem as a political act through externalization. The problem is outside the individual and emerges from the system that establishes dominant discourses. Thus, the previous perspective makes visible the specific struggles faced by racialized international women navigating post-secondary institutions with embedded whiteness.

Also, narrative therapy recognizes the specific needs of racialized individuals because it's been implemented as treatment effectively for supporting the spiritual and religious needs of unique groups, such as Buddhism (Eppler, 2021) and indigenous communities (Bedard-Gilligan et al., 2022). On this note, Aponte (2002) asserts that acknowledging the client's faith and spirituality can help them identify coping strategies to enhance the therapeutic process.

White and Epston (1990) state that narrative therapy dismantles dominant discourses when the client challenges those perspectives. Further, the therapeutic process of narrative group therapy relies on recognizing "how societal standards and expectations are internalized by people," which can limit people's capacity to live life to its fullest potential (Corey et al., 2017, p.140). As Corey et al. (2017) argue, group narrative therapy explores the impact of a problem on people's lives and relationships. Narrative group therapy seems to tackle the needs of the racialized international women in higher education by allowing participants to share their narratives that foster the possibility to acknowledge that others also experience problem-saturated narratives of oppression. Subsequently, the therapist, through a collaborative process, supports the "co-constructing alternative stories" (Corey et al., 2017, p.140). Through the process of identifying a new narrative, people can reclaim their "own authority in life" (Clark, 2014, p. 43).

Narrative group therapy encourages a safe space to explore stories emerging from experiences of oppression among participants within a group. According to Epston et al. (2011), narrative therapy "is about privileging the voice of those who consult" with the counsellor "instead of imposing an outside truth" (p. 77). Holding conversations about racism and gender discourses generates active dialogues about oppressions experienced by the members. White and Epston (1990) highlight that this approach moves away from process of pathologizing the problem. Their approach proposes more hopeful perspective and build a new possibility for action where individuals come together and create new possibilities to remove from the problem (White & Epston, 1990).White & Epston (1990) point out that this approach removes "the sense of failure" (p.143) from participants that happens after repeating occasions of problem-solving without any positive results. Thus, White and Epston externalizing the problem approach

provides a safe space to talk about those racial and gender trauma stories of disempowerment. As Holohan states (2020), the problem comes from the system of oppression.

Group Narrative therapy supports the development of agency for racialized women and international students in post-secondary education. Zarra-Nezhad et al. (2023) emphasizes that this approach fosters "coping skills and resilience", provides a comprehension of self-identity and enhances confidence on the abilities of the individual (p. 845). Once the problem is externalized, Tomm (2019) discusses that therapists invite clients to identify moments to act in opposition to the externalized problem. In this context, White (1987, as cited in Tomm, 2019) affirms that this encouragement provides the opportunity to move from "the oppression of the labelling," and enhanment of personal agency through choosing of the preferred direction of life (p. 46). Consequently, this preferred life story can be one of resilient identity, which confirms the suggestion of Nadal et al. (2021) that a strong sense of positivity about one's racial identity reduces symptoms or feelings of impostor phenomenon.

Conclusions

We have analyzed the therapeutical factors from group therapy that could potentially address the unique needs of racialized female international students in post-secondary education, aiming to foster a resilient identity when challenging racial and gender discourses. Further, we have explored several studies that show the potential benefits of group therapy from cognitive behavioural therapy, and narrative approach for specific issues. We conclude that group narrative therapy could increase awareness of one's narratives, process emotions stemming from racism against them, develop a sense of connection with other members, and, through the communal process, may create a resilient identity to remove oneself from the narrative of internalized oppression. Thus, we have identified a gap in the science discourse by showing the

relevance of conducting more research that could benefit this demographic in reauthoring a resilient identity.

Chapter Three: Discussion and Application

The previous chapter presented theoretical and empirical evidence to build the case for the potential effectiveness of group narrative therapy to overcome internalized oppression, aiming to reauthor a resilient identity. This chapter explains in detail the proposal for developing a narrative counselling group for international women students in post-secondary education, including the ethical implications.

We are proposing group therapy instead of individual therapy to ensure faster assistance for this racialized group. Ribeiro et al. (2017) explain that the origins of the group counselling emanate from the demand of innumerable patients during the time of war and the limited access to doctors. Padesky and Kennerley (2023) state that due to escalating medical expenses, "a group format makes therapeutic services more affordable and accessible". Thus, group-based treatment can ensure support for more people at the same time as opposed to individual therapy that only targets one person at a time. Providing cost-effective quality care, it is relevant for this demographic because the universities usually offer a brief model of individual therapy. Another supporting reason is that racialized female students usually experience more limited access to mental health care due to financial and insurance constrictions.

Overview of the Group

(Refer to Appendix A for a more detailed outline).

A. Main Purpose of the Group

According to Jacobs et al. (2015), the purpose of group therapy points out the intended goals and objectives for gathering. A clear purpose ensures the members' focused participation and provides direction to achieve the goal (Jacobs et al., 2015). They also explain that if the purpose is unclear, it can confuse the participants during session who may discuss topics outside

the boundaries of the purpose. The aim of the proposed group narrative therapy is to create counter-narratives about resiliency identity for international women students in post-graduate institutions.

B. Type of Group

This group therapy will be a process-oriented group that emphasizes personal exploration and self-discovery, encouraging members to share their thoughts and feelings openly. According to Gladding (1999), participants can develop a deep connection with people as they can relate to similar struggles. The influence of singular narratives through which students may be recruited can potentially lead them to internalize impostor syndrome, negatively impacting their academic performance and quality of life. Therefore, having diverse perspectives from participants can create a therapeutic space for mutual encouragement, self-exploration, and enhancing academic performance.

The group also would include opportunities for psychoeducation during the sessions. On this note, psychoeducation is defined by Spitz and Spitz (1999) as the didactic component of the group for educating participants regarding a relevant topic or theme. A pivotal piece to externalizing the internalized oppression is the psychoeducation regarding the system, dominant discourses, unconscious biases, and the impacts of experiencing racism and microaggressive behaviours. Spitz and Spitz (1999) assert that it's helpful having informed participants because it expedites the process to attain the goal of the group therapy.

We envision a closed group instead of an open one because it enhances self-commitment to attend the sessions. On this note, Gladding (1999) explains that enrolling new participants at any time is defined as open ended; conversely, the limitation to certain members after the first session is known as closed-ended. As a closed group, we anticipate facilitating high levels of

cohesion among members, which is a crucial factor for effective group counselling. Also, a closed group will most likely do more to honour the unheard voices of the participants, thereby, helping to create a new resilient story of academic thriving for the students. They will be empowered through collective strength.

C. Group Leaders

Another significant element of this proposal is to have two group leaders with lived experience and similar social locations. On this note, Sue and Sue (2016) acknowledge how racialized counsellors have faced racism, sexism and heterosexism due to the system. According to Ribeiro et al. (2017), having therapists with lived experience provides a safe environment that validates participants' emotions and experiences, thereby reducing feelings of isolation. As a result, co-leaders with lived experience can enhance empathy, increase relatability, reduce stigma and shame, and be more sensitive to cultural nuances, thereby providing a safer space where members feel welcome as they are.

D. Main Goals and Topics to be Addressed

The primary aim of this proposal is to cultivate narratives of resilient identity among international women students enrolled in a postgraduate program who struggle with internalized oppression. Specific therapeutic goals include facilitating the externalization of the internalized oppression, creating counter-stories to expose racism, challenging the dominant discourses, fostering resilient identity formation, and nurturing cultural and personal connections among participants. Topics will include social locations and intersectionality, colonialism, racism, microaggressions, bias, externalizing oppressive experiences and reauthoring the story of identity into one that fits the participants' values, beliefs, and aspirations.

E. Number, Length, and Frequency of the sessions

This is a 8-session pilot group for international students in Higher education who identify as women from undergraduate to PhD programs. Each session will be an hour and half in length and will run once a week.

F. Name of the Group

Narratives of Resilient Identity: Connecting Racialized Women International Students in Group Counselling.

G. Group size

The proposal is to have around 6 to 8 group members. It could potentially accommodate a bigger size, such as 8 to 10 participants. As this proposal is a pilot, it would be interesting to explore further if the group size can increase according to the needs of the campus.

H. Group Format

The sessions can be conducted in-person or online. Group therapy can be offered online to provide a service that is more accessible for those racialized female students who may navigate several limitations. Some students may have limitations in joining the group session because they live far away from the institution (Padesky & Kennerley, 2023). Another barrier to accessing the service in person for postgraduate students' is the heavy workload, so their time is limited. Therefore, offering a virtual group can help students save time and increase their chances of joining the group.

Ethical Considerations

A best practice for promoting ethical standards is to openly inform clients about the purpose of the group and the potential risks they may encounter, such as being exposed to unpleasant content material (Gladding, 1999). The priority of the co-leaders is to provide a safe space for the members, in accordance with the BC Association of Clinical Counsellors Code of

Ethical Conduct (2014). On this regard, the co-leaders facilitate challenging and uncomfortable conversations about oppression that members experience with compassion and care. Therefore, it is crucial for members to be fully informed about the group's gaols before consenting to enroll, as the environment may be uncomfortable.

According to the BC Association of Clinical Counsellors Code of Ethical Conduct (2014), the leaders are committed to provide professional integrity care and provide competent caring. On this note, the leader preparation and qualifications are part of the ethical standards required by the leaders' facilitating in our proposed group. Jacobs et al (2015) argue that the implementation of certain counselling requires proper preparation stemming from training or supervision. It's essential for the two co-leaders to be prepare by understanding "the group dynamics, group process, group leadership skills and group development" (Jacobs et al., 2015, p. 389). Gladding (1999) affirms that group leaders must be self-aware because without this skill, it is difficult to implement effective interpersonal relationships with the participants.

An important component to foster safety among the groups is to have co-leaders who have developed certain level of self-awareness. Sue and Sue (2015) express that group counselling represents "a microcosm of race relations, gender relations, and other unequal relations in our larger society" (p. xviii). During group therapy, a power relationship unfolds with the co-leaders, who may seem like experts because they studied in a graduate program and have specific knowledge. However, when co-leaders have self-awareness and resilient racial identity, it fosters a balanced power dynamic within the group, emphasizing safety and the participants' self-agency.

It is also relevant for the group leaders to develop self-awareness by identifying own social locations that may entail privileges or oppression. Further, Ribeiro et al. (2017) explain

that the identification of own privileges is possible through deconstructing assumptions, biases, and stereotypes. They also emphasize that self-awareness is "foundational in creating a healthy group climate" (p. 21). Sue and Sue (2016) articulate that white people and racialized individuals are recruited into the dominant values and beliefs. Therefore, the co-leaders need to resolve their issues around racial identity first. They also express the harms of unconscious bias because if dominant discourses are prevalent among the co-leaders, they can show up through perceptions about other racial/ethnic minority groups joining to the sessions (2016).

Another ethical consideration is the co-leaders knowledge. Jacobs et al. (2015) assert that leading a group without a thorough understanding of the content material is unethical. Insufficient preparation may result in harm if the two co-leaders have not had the opportunity to review the topics and prompts in advance to address any inquiries before the session. The group explorations often revolve around challenging topics, and if the co-leaders are not well-informed, it can damage the therapeutic relationship and could potentially trigger participants. For example, the preparation implies recognizing content material that can be triggering, so they can set a triggering warning before beforehand and provide self-care resources or offer individual check-ins if needed.

Gladding (1999) elaborates on two ethical issues regarding confidentiality. Firstly, he asserts that leaders are mandated to ensure material confidentiality without disclosing private information from the members to anyone outside the group. The BC Association of Clinical Counsellors Code of Ethical Conduct (2014) protects the client's private information under the principle of respect for the dignity of all persons. Nevertheless, Gladding (1999) affirms the breaching of confidentiality due to imminent danger to self-harm, others or any information regarding abuse to a child or elder. Secondly, leaders cannot guarantee total confidentiality as

they cannot police each participant (Gladding, 1999). A potential solution could be to invite and emphasize the relevance of keeping confidential what is shared during the sessions among the members (Corey et al., 2017).

Limitations

There are limitations when applying Narrative group therapy to racialized clients dealing with unique situations. On this note, White and Epston (1990) emphasize that is not appropriate for those clients experiencing immediate crises in their lives. For example, it may not be beneficial for Latinas who have sex with women and hold a status precarious because this position threatens the person's ability to remain in a country (Galarza, 2013). Díaz-Lázaro et al. (2012) explain that Latinas can also experience socioeconomic challenges including financial constrictions and housing barriers in the U.S. Racialized women international students may also undergo transitions into precarious statuses or encounter socioeconomic challenges. As a result, this demographic may not be able to join the group due to acute crisis.

Farrell and Gibbons (2019) describe another limitation as "the timing of immigration" on clients (p. 93). This is because their discomfort level with engaging in a non-native language during therapy may vary depending on how long they have been living in the new country (Farrell & Gibbons, 2019). For example, it may be challenging for students undergoing their first year to join as they are navigating the stressors relate it to the transition and may experience homesickness. For specific racialized students, such as Latino immigrant students, it may be also challenging to feel safe and join to the group. Farrell et al. (2019) assert, "College campuses are not always safe for Latino immigrant students" due to experiences of marginalization from the institutional environment (p. 93).

Regarding having potential participants who would like to discuss their spirituality as a part of the treatment during group sessions, it is vital to be mindful of the experiences, values, and beliefs of the member's. For example, Eppler et al. (2021) clarify that when working with racialized Buddhist clients, it becomes relevant to include narrative prompts with Buddhist terminology that could lead to co-creating their preferred spiritual story.

According to Galarza (2013), another limitation is the issue of cognitive and verbal ability on the participants. She also states that Narrative therapy encourages the expression of the individual story, and some individuals may have some limitations on the capacity for verbal articulation or the cognitive ability.

Conclusions

Racialized international women are considered emerging adults who are undergoing the process of building their identities at the University. As previously express in chapters one and two, this demographic navigates complex layers of oppression stemming from the environment of Higher Education. This institution has embedded whiteness values through policies, program development, syllabus of courses and the services offer for students. Tuckwell (2002) acknowledges that identity is a "complex phenomenon which embraces various aspects of human existence and meaning" (p. 71). In this regard, racialized women encounter distinct structural inequalities, resulting in internalized oppression. Traditional counselling approaches often overlook the sociocultural context and its impact on the intersections of racialized members.

In this chapter, we provided critical components for running a pilot of 10-sessions narrative group therapy aiming to explore the effectiveness further. As we acknowledge the dominant discourse of science and its rule, this capstone can provide more insights into how new discourses can be create it such as the proposal of the narrative group therapy. Narrative therapy

is a respectful approach that brings the power back to the clients. Racialized members can create resilient identity stories through the non-blaming orientation to increase their academic and professional performance.

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Appendix A

Group Weekly Topics, Objectives and Main Pointers

Session # & Theme	Objectives	Agenda
1. Getting to know each other/Group norms	• Students will learn roles and expectations of group members. • Students will get familiar to each other. • Students will create ground rules. • Students will learn the purpose of the group. • Students will learn about confidentiality and consent.	• Welcome/ Check-in • Icebreaker: What is your favorite time of the day? • Group purpose/confidentiality: Review the nature and purpose of the group, clarify what to expect from the group process, rights, and responsibilities among members. • Discussion/Ground rules: Collaboratively create ground & safety rules. • Closing
2. Multi-storied beings/ Social locations	• Students will learn about the system. • Students will identify dominant scripts. • Students will identify the racial and gender discourses. • Students will recognize the normalizing judgments.	• Ice Breaker: Mindfulness Practice – Visualization of safe place. • -Check-in: Describe your safe/happy place. • Trigger Warning Content. • Topics: Whiteness, institutional colonialism & dominant Discourses • Activity: Read poem – From the Ashes she became/ Nikita Gill (Otto, 2024) • Discussion from poem: -What stood out to you about the poem? -What are the messages you've received about what being a woman means? -What is your experience of receiving outside messages of the meaning of being a woman?

		-Have you ever stopped to consider the messages you receive from professors, staff, and peers about what it means to be an international student? What are the messages you receive from them about what being an international student means? -What is your experience of receiving outside messages of the meaning of being an international student? -What is your experience of navigating the transition as an international student that no one sees? Has this experience challenged your own identity? In which ways? • Grounding exercise • Check-out
3. Social locations/ Single story	• Students will identify dominant single story. • Students will position themselves as the subject within the system.	• Check-in • Recap: Previous topics. • Topic: Social locations and single story. • Discussion: Members will share about their social locations. • Activity: 'My Life Story' (Ackerman, 2019). An adaptation that aims to position the subjects into their single story by writing down the tittle of the book that describes their life in relation with the impact of the system. They also would write down two tittles of two chapters of life. One before coming to Canada, and the second one represents their current story or situation as international students in Canada. • Discussion:

		-They'll explain the reason behind their choices if they feel comfortable. -What are the experiences that no one sees or recognizes and are shaping your tittle of your chapter in Canada? - What is your experience of being in the room with more women and having these discussions? • Grounding exercise • Check-out – Something that you want to leave behind and what it's something you want to take from the session.
4. Externalizing Conversations	• Students will identify the specific practices of institutional racism & sexism that recruits them into their subject positions. • Students will learn how to externalize the problem of "internalized oppression on identity".	• Check-in: If you were a weather system, which weather would you be today? • Topics: Recap Colonialism, dominant scripts. • Activity: Play-Doh Character of the Week (Schwarz & Luckenbill, 2012). An adaptation that facilitates the externalization of the problem by moulding a character that represents the impact of the dominant scripts on their week as international students. • Discussion: -What is it that our society promotes that leaves most racialized women with a distorted sense of self? -Are they messages from the academic environment that promote a distorted sense of self as international student?

		-What messages have you received in the academic environment that recruit you into racism/sexism? -In which ways racism/sexism has affected your relationship with yourself? -How was racism/sexism able to make its claim on your life? How did racism/sexism trick you into believing that you lack courage and competence? - How did racism/sexism limit you in recognizing your skills and abilities in your identity? - How did racism/sexism affect your ability to accomplish life goals as international student? -Why haven't racism/sexism stolen your version of yourself? • Grounding exercise • Closing
5. Re-authoring Conversations and Unique Outcomes	• Students will reauthor the single story by identifying an alternative narrative based on principles, hopes, values, qualities, learnings.	• Check-in • Recap: Voice of the oppression and it's rules. • Discussion: -Could you tell me about a time when you resist racist/sexism from recruiting you before coming to Canada? How you were able to do this? What was the value that guided you when it happened? How was your experience after the resistance? -Could you tell me about a time when you were able to resist racism/sexism from recruiting you as international student? How were you able to do this? What was the

		value that guided you when it happened? How was your experience after the resistance? • Activity: Create a piece of art that represents your values, hopes, principles as international student. • Discussion: Explain the meaning behind with the group. • Grounding exercise • Closing
6. Remembering Conversations	• Students will identify the unique outcomes of the prefer story that it's been part of them before, but it wasn't seen due to the single story.	• Check-in • Icebreaker • Activity: Read the poem Still I Rise by Maya Angelou (Angelou, 1978). • Discussion: - What stood out to you about the poem? -How was your experience of witnessing Maya rising? -What was the story that the system imposed in Maya? -What are her values and hopes that honor her alternative story? -Someone that knows you, what story would they share with us when they experienced you standing up for yourself? -What do you think this person that knows you see in you? -Who do you think notices these acts of courage? • Grounding exercise • Closing
7. Scaffolding Conversations	• Students will move from the known and familiar single story of internalized	• Check-in • Ice breaker: Mindfulness exercise.

	oppression into what it's possible to know through experiencing a resilient identity.	• Activity: Read poem Don't cheapen yourself by Jana (Harris Moore, 2009). - What stood out to you about the poem? -How was your experience of witnessing Jana rejecting the characters that society expects from her? • Discussion: -Can you tell me about a time when you got through something difficult? -What personal resources did you rely on to get you through that experience? Grounding exercise • Homework: Write a letter/poem to the oppressive system and also another one to the resilient identity. • Closing
8. Closure	• Students will discuss feelings and their experiences of externalizing internalized oppression and relating to a resilient identity.	• Check-in: How are you feeling on the last session? • Activity: Letter writing (White and Epston, 1990). An intervention from Narrative therapy that helps on relating to the alternative story. Members will share their letters or poems. • Discussion: -Members will share their reflections after hearing other writings. -Insights from the group and new stories. • Closing: -What things are you leaving there and what stories are you bringing with you to embrace your resilient

		identity as international student?