

Healing in Community Practicing Ubuntu and H.A.R.M.O.N.Y. in Youth Work

An Africentric Sankofa-Grounded and Ubuntu-Rooted Approach


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Rooted in Story – Who I Am and Why I'm Here

- Sanibonani nonke, warm greetings everyone.
- My name is Shayla S. Dube (she/her/We/Us)—I am a psychiatric social worker, Social Work educator, clinical supervisor, and community-rooted therapist. But more deeply, I am a grandchild of the village, a daughter of the soil, and a practitioner devoted to Ubuntu and communal healing.
- Mama of Three daughters, born and raised in Zimbabwe by my grandparents—both teachers and farmers—I learned early that healing is relational. My work is rooted in Africentric, trauma-informed, and culturally affirming approaches that challenge Western, individualistic models. I walk with youth, families, and communities in their healing journeys, co-creating spaces of care that center dignity and ancestral wisdom.
- Who are you beyond what you do?

Welcome & Grounding




- Welcome and thank you for being here.
- Today, we return to a way of being rooted in ancestral wisdom, collective care, and justice.
- Grounding Prompt:
-  Recall a time you felt deeply seen—not for what you do, but for who you are.

- What is culture?
- “Culture is to people as water is to fish”- Dr Wade
- The way in which people get their needs met.
- Cultural competency (Dr Terry Cross)
- Continuum Stages (Destructiveness, Incapacity, Blame, Pre-competence, Cultural Competence, Cultural Proficiency)
- 5 steps of becoming culturally competent.


Cultural Competency Roots

- What is culture?
- “Culture is to people as water is to fish”- Dr Wade Nobles
- The way in which people get their needs met.
- Cultural competency (Dr Terry Cross)
- Continuum Stages (Destructiveness, Incapacity, Blindness, Pr-competence, Cultural Competence, Cultural Proficiency)
- 5 steps of becoming culturally competent.

Ubuntu – A Way of Being



- Ubuntu – Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu
- “A person is a person through other people.”
- Ubuntu is more than 'I am because you are.' It is:
-  Cosmic – Rooted in spirit and creation
-  Ancestral – Guided by those who came before
-  Communal – Healing happens in relationship, not in isolation
- We hold space—we don't just help. We are siblings and cousins, not just allies.

When the Village Harms

- “If it takes a village to raise a child, it can also harm one.”
-  Forms of harm include:
 - • Racial profiling
 - • Adultification
 - • Over-surveillance
 - • Silencing of youth voices



Bridging Western Models & Ubuntu



-  ACES asks: 'What happened to you before age 18?' (Individual focus)
-  HIPP asks: 'What happened to your people—and what's still happening around you?'
- HIPP Theory by RESMAA MENAKEM
 - • Historical
 - • Intergenerational
 - • Persistent Institutional
 - • Personal trauma
- HIPP+ Ubuntu + H.A.R.M.O.N.Y. = a tapestry of relational, community-rooted, and culturally affirming healing.

The H.A.R.M.O.N.Y. Framework


Coined by Shayla S. Dube.

- H – Honoring Our Ancestors & Elders
- A – Ancestral & Natural Healing
- R – Relational Accountability
- M – Mind-Body-Spirit Integration
- O – Openness to Learning & Unlearning
- N – Nurturing Communal Solidarity
- Y – Yielding to Ubuntu




Reflection & Dialogue

-  Take a moment to reflect:
 - Which H.A.R.M.O.N.Y. principle do you practice most naturally?
 - Which principle are you being called to deepen?
-  Optional: Pair or small group sharing

Optional Activity – Ubuntu Tree of Life

- Create your Ubuntu Tree (virtually):
 - • Roots: What grounds you?
 - • Trunk: Your values
 - • Branches: Youth you support
 - • Leaves: Cultural/ancestral knowledge
 - • Fruits: Your gifts to the community
-  Tools: Canva Whiteboard, Miro, Jamboard






Closing & Call to Action

- Ubuntu is medicine.
- Let us become villages that nurture—not harm.
- Let's transform systems from cages of competition to communities of care.
-  We heal together.
-  We rise together.
-  We see each other.

References & Resources

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- Menakem, R. (2017). *My grandmother's hands: racialized trauma and the pathway to mending our hearts and bodies*. CRP
- Window of tolerance PDF:
<https://www.nicabm.com/trauma-how-to-help-your-clients-understand-their-window-of-tolerance/>
- Sensorimotor PDF:
<https://sensorimotorpsychotherapy.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/SP-PEACE-PROTOCOL-for-Clients.pdf>
- Ubuntu by Nelson Mandela: <https://youtu.be/HED4h00xPPA?si=MMJtR72H-bYyMEk>
Ubuntu: The Spirit of Togetherness (YouTube, Desmond Tutu)

Connect & Stay Rooted

- Thank you for journeying with me.
- Let's continue building communities of care, courage, and connection.
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-  LinkedIn: Shayla S. Dube, MSW, RCSW-S
-  Rooted in Sankofa. Guided by Ubuntu. Committed to collective healing.