**Applied Critical Trauma Theory (ACTT)-Guided Assessment Tool (Nelson, 2021)**

Critical Trauma Theory (CTT) is an anti-oppressive, socially-just microtheory that critically analyses behavioral health contexts, organizational and institutional policies and practices through Cultural Humility, and Critical Race, Intersectionality and Cultural, Ethnoracial, Cumulative and Collective Trauma theories (Nelson, 2019). The intent of CTT is to ameliorate and prevent oppression-based trauma from occurring in behavioral health contexts. The term “oppression-based trauma” attends to the intersectional identities each of us possess. Oppression-based trauma is exposure to and lived experiences of personally mediated, institutional and structural forms of oppression (Jones, 2000) through symbolic, emotional, verbal, physical, sexual, economic and environmental manifestations, across one’s lifespan. Oppression-based trauma exposure includes but is not limited to linguicism, racism, colorism, nationalism, sexism, classism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, islamophobia, colonization, political, historical and intergenerational trauma, and acts of oppression because of one’s documentation, immigration-, refugee-, or former incarceration status (Nelson, 2019).

CTT has five key tenets: 1) Oppression-centered structural and institutional barriers to wellbeing exist in the United States; 2) Oppression-based trauma is ever-present and correlated with risk for behavioral health issues; 3) Oppression-based trauma is cumulative and collective, thereby requiring its own critical micro-theoretical perspective that delineates it from individual trauma; 4) Centrality of experiential knowledge evidences the presence of posttraumatic growth, healing, resilience and resistance despite oppression; and, 5) Because of the prevalence of oppression-based trauma and its impact on wellbeing for Black, Indigenous and People/Communities of Color, LGBT+ People/Communities, and people experiencing oppression and marginalization, CTT is a necessary and vital socially-just micro-theoretical addition to critical race, and behavioral theories.

Applied Critical Trauma Theory (ACTT) relies on principles of CTT to encourage behavioral health providers and leaders to adopt anti-racist/oppressive practices at the personal, professional and institutional levels. These practices are: 1) Engaging in and supporting cultural and other identity-based resilience, resistance and radical healing; 2) Improving sense of mattering, and emotional, cultural, spiritual, cognitive and physical safety for behavioral health providers and leaders; 3) Increasing trustworthiness and transparency; 4) Building and fostering circles of support; 5) Promoting collectivism, collaboration and mutuality; and, 6) Leverage privilege to create pathways to power, voice and choice for those impacted by oppression.

The Applied Critical Trauma Theory-Guided Assessment (ACTTA) tool is designed to support behavioral health providers and leaders in applying CTT in their daily lived and professional experiences. This ACTTA tool is intended to align with providers and leaders’ work and should be conducted at least annually. This is a self-reported assessment and should not be used as a tool for employee evaluation. Instead, it should act as an opportunity for critical reflectivity, personal growth and healing.

**Steps to Complete the ACTTA Tool**

1. Find a space where you can comfortably reflect for 30 minutes.

2. Review the tool once before beginning so you feel comfortable its three domains, personal, professional and institutional.

3. Begin the assessment. If you notice any question causes you significant anxiety or triggers a trauma you’ve previously experienced, please stop and reach out to a member of your Circle of Support. If feelings persist, don’t feel uncomfortable in reaching out to access employee assistance or a community provider. If you notice slight feelings of anxiety, this may be a normal part of critical self-reflectivity, reflexivity, growth and healing. If these feelings are tolerable, you are encouraged to continue.

4. Once the assessment is complete, highlight no more than three areas on which to focus in the duration between assessments. This helps to encourage a sense that implementing these strategies is doable.

5. You may feel you want to share the results from your assessment. You can celebrate your accomplishments, receive feedback, and brainstorm innovative approaches with your Circle of Support if you feel culturally and emotionally safe to do so.

**Applied Critical Trauma Theory (ACTT)-Guided Assessment Tool**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Personal** | | | | | | |
| **Practices** | | | **Actions Taken**  **(What have I done to apply CTT?)** | **Rating Scale**  1-Never; 2-Rarely, 3-Sometimes; 4-Often; 5-Always | **Improvement Strategies (What specific, measurable action can I take to level up?)** | **Timeline**  **(By when do I plan to do this?)** |
| **Critical Self-Reflection**  Questions that promote critical self-reflectivity are:  -What have you learned this week from your interactions with your colleagues and people we serve?  -How did you interpret the behavior of your colleagues and people we serve?  -How aligned are your intentions with your impact on your colleagues and people we serve?  -What do you know about your conscious intentions when you interacted with your colleagues and people who have identities different from your own?  -What can you do to increase the alignment of your intentions with their impact on others?  -What steps can you take that will promote social justice and equity for your peers and students we serve? | | | \_\_\_ 15 minutes minimum of journaling using antiracist/oppressive writing prompters  \_\_\_ 3 days a week minimum  \_\_\_ Notice post-traumatic growth, renewed healing and hope, and greater work satisfaction  \_\_\_ Other: | 1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5 |  |  |
| **Anti-Racist/Oppressive Self-Exploration** | | | \_\_\_ Develop understanding of your cultural identity and positionality (Cage of Oppression)  \_\_\_ Identify and acknowledge points of privilege  \_\_\_ Identify and dismantle implicit biases  ­\_\_\_ Other: | 1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5 |  |  |
| **Ethical/Anti-Racist/Oppressive Communication** | | | \_\_\_ Take steps to earn trust  \_\_\_ Be consistent  \_\_\_ Interrupt and confront microaggressions and other oppression using Intent vs. Impact, RAVEN, and SPEAK UP! communication tools  \_\_\_ Make amends  \_\_\_ Other: | 1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5 |  |  |
| **Radical Self-/Collective Care**  Radical self-/collective care is deep personal commitment to draw from cultural and other identity-based resilience and circles of support to heal from oppression-based and other traumas through critical self-reflection, mindfulness, and other healing practices to remain healthy and thriving for our collective well-being. | | | ­­­­\_\_\_ Develop or find at least one Circle of Support in which to participate and contribute  ­\_\_\_ Apply cultural/traditional knowledge on methods for healing  ­­\_\_\_ Embrace post-traumatic growth and healing  \_\_\_ Mindfulness  \_\_\_ Radical Acceptance/Acknowledgement  \_\_\_ Other: | 1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5 |  |  |
| **Lifelong Learning** | | | \_\_\_ Willingness to learn from others  \_\_\_ Connect with elders  \_\_\_ Engage in humble exploration of and learning about others’ cultures and lived experiences while preventing cooptation.  \_\_\_ Receive and give mentorship  \_\_\_ Other: | 1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5 |  |  |
| **Professional** | | | | | | |
| **Practices** | | **Actions Taken**  **(What have I done to apply CTT?)** | | **Rating Scale**  1-Never; 2-Rarely, 3-Sometimes; 4-Often; 5-Always | **Improvement Strategies (What specific, measurable action can I take to level up?)** | **Timeline**  **(By when do I plan to do this?)** |
| **Critical Reflexivity**  Critical reflexivity is the practice of building insights about oneself through active, in the moment reflection and action. | | ­­­­­­\_\_\_\_ Don’t take things personally  \_\_\_ Know when to step up and when to step back  \_\_\_ Act authentically and transparently  \_\_\_ Recognize your own positionality, experiences with oppression, and points of privilege  \_\_\_Identify, challenge and rectify power imbalances  \_\_\_Act as a good trauma steward by noticing racism and other oppression-based trauma triggers for you and the people around you  \_\_\_Seek to restore emotional, cultural, physical and cognitive safety  \_\_\_Take note of new knowledge and insights | | 1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5 |  |  |
| **Anti-Racist/Oppressive Communication** | | \_\_\_ Take steps to earn trust  \_\_\_ Be consistent  \_\_\_ Interrupt and confront microaggressions and other oppression using Intent vs. Impact, RAVEN, and SPEAK UP! communication tools  \_\_\_ Make amends  \_\_\_ Other: | | 1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5 |  |  |
| **Anti-Racist/Oppressive Action** | | \_\_\_ Acknowledge personally mediated and structural racism/oppression, the historic and current sociopolitical climate in which we exist  ­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_Create a norm of authentic caring for students’ lived experiences in and outside the classroom by going beyond strict professional parameters, checking in with students, advocating on their behalf and providing academic and personal advisement  \_\_\_ Call out systemic and institutional forms of racism and other oppression  \_\_\_Be a Critical Ally for colleagues impacted by oppression by power sharing, creating pathways for voice and choice  \_\_\_ Other: | | 1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5 |  |  |
| **Honor and Respect People Being Served and Colleagues** | | ­­\_\_\_ Avoid rewarding competition and prioritize collectivism and sense of community  \_\_\_ Openly celebrate accomplishments  \_\_\_ Identify and uplift cultural capital and community cultural wealth (Aspirational, Familial, Linguistic, Navigational, Spiritual, Social and Resistant Capital, Native Capital, Nation-Building, and Native Resilience, Perseverant and Ethnic Consciousness Wealth)  \_\_\_ Recognize cultural funds of knowledge and ways of knowing as valid and valuable.  \_\_\_ Support *Ganas*, or the desire to succeed for the collective good, honor parents’ struggles and sacrifices, center family and family history as sources of strength, desire to pay it forward and act as a gateway for community, and fighting the battle of generations.  \_\_\_ Demonstrate authentic care for students and colleagues  \_\_\_ Other: | | 1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5 |  |  |
| **Analysis of Behavioral Health Practices for Social Justice and Equity** | | ­\_\_ Analyze behavioral health practices for cultural relevance and sustainability  \_\_\_ Accommodate client needs when possible  \_\_\_ Provide Land Acknowledgement during intakes  \_\_\_ Develop authentic relationships with clients and colleagues  \_\_\_ Reflect clients’ cultures and other identities at every level of service provision  \_\_\_ Engage in treatment planning that is promotive of voice and choice  \_\_\_ Provide opportunities for community connections  \_\_\_ Notice, acknowledge and uplift clients’ expressions of cultural capital  \_\_\_ Interrupt implicit bias and microaggressions  \_\_\_ Notice when resistance may be an opportunity to try innovative practices  \_\_\_ Take accountability for errors and seek to make amends  \_\_\_ Other: | | 1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5 |  |  |
| **Institutional** | | | | | | |
| **Practices** | **Actions Taken**  **(What have I done to apply CTT?)** | | | **Rating Scale**  1-Never; 2-Rarely, 3-Sometimes; 4-Often; 5-Always | **Improvement Strategies**  **(What specific, measurable action can I take to level up?)** | **Timeline**  **(By when do I plan to do this?)** |
| **Organizational Equity Walk**  Organizational Equity Walks create welcoming campus environments that celebrate, embrace and engage diversity | \_\_\_ Complete a pre-action and post-action equity walk each year  \_\_\_ Organize partners, **including clients,** to participate  \_\_\_ Identify leadership to support findings  \_\_\_ Identify areas or zones each partner will assess  \_\_\_ Take 30 minutes to an hour collecting data using video or Photovoice, observing and taking notes on the following in your chosen area or zone:  1. Accurate imagery, art and language reflecting the cultural and other identities of clients prominently displayed  2. Environmental macroaggressions (inaccurate art, imagery, or language, statues of colonizers, racist/oppressive logos, mascots, etc., gender-specific versus universal spaces and restrooms) present  3. Faculty are diverse and reflective of the student body being served  4. Cultural events are planned where providers and leaders come together  5. Safe inviting public space is designated for people to convene and connect  6. Opportunities for clients to openly express their cultural and other identities through art, music, language, poetry, music and other ways  7. Other Observations:  Once the Equity Walk is completed, convene a committee, **including clients**, to:  1) Review and interpret video, Photovoice, and observations  2) Develop recommendations  3) Compile a report or presentation  4) Share findings with administrators and key stakeholders | | | **­­­Campus Equity Walk**  \_\_\_Not Complete  \_\_\_Partially Complete  \_\_\_Fully Complete  **Observation Rating Scale**  1- Not at all present  2- Partially present  3- Present  4- Very Present  1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4  **Campus Equity Walk Report**  \_\_\_Not Complete  \_\_\_Partially Complete  \_\_\_Fully Complete |  |  |
|  |  | | | **Rating Scale**  1-Never; 2-Rarely, 3-Sometimes; 4-Often; 5-Always |  |  |
| **Mattering and Belonging** | \_\_\_ Foster immersive environments that feel like family and promote racial uplift, empowerment, cultural nourishment and academic success”  \_\_\_Provide meaningful engagement  \_\_\_ Encourage opportunities to develop new communities and safe and culturally meaningful spaces  \_\_\_ Provide assistance with creating new and maintaining existing networks of support which include colleagues and leadership  \_\_\_Institutionalize access to mentorship  \_\_\_Demonstrate a long-term commitment to the advancement of Communities of Color | | | 1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5 |  |  |
| **Critical Allyship in Leadership** | \_\_\_Ask permission to act as an Ally  \_\_\_Establish authentic relationships with community members  \_\_\_Acknowledge privilege and examine personal biases  \_\_\_Heal relationships between Communities of Color and Behavioral Health Organizations  \_\_\_Support issues that marginalized communities name as critical/important  \_\_\_Acknowledge and respect natural community leaders  \_\_\_Support people to gain power in their communities  \_\_Be humble and willing to be confronted about own behaviors and attitudes  \_\_\_Take a stand against racism/oppression  \_\_\_Promote leadership of people in groups that may not have opportunities to take leadership positions  \_\_\_Cultivate support from other allies  \_\_\_Work to change the systemic/institutional policies and practices that are the root causes of inequality and oppression | | | 1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5 |  |  |
| **ACTT- Guided (Nelson, 2021) and Applied Critical Leadership (**Santamaría & Santamaría 2015) | \_\_\_ Practice Cultural Humility  \_\_\_ Allocate funding deliberatively and equitably  \_\_\_ Realize and foster leadership among direct reports  \_\_\_Foster network-building  \_\_\_ Share resources and opportunities with direct reports equitably  \_\_\_\_Practice leading by doing, and through transformative and/or servant leadership  \_\_\_\_Create space for innovation and visionary thinking  \_\_\_\_Initiate and engage in critical, anti-racist/oppressive conversations  \_\_\_Use consensus-driven decision making  \_\_\_Act transparently and inform direct reports and stakeholders when decisions cannot be made through consensus  \_\_\_Commit to building trust and long-term relationships with communities where students live  \_\_\_\_Include clients, families and communities in design, implementation and evaluation of initiatives or programs  \_\_\_\_Use practice and community-based evidence in combination with research when developing policies or designing, implementing and evaluating initiatives or programs | | | 1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5    1 2 3 4 5 |  |  |