

Black Dances as Afro-Referenced Care in Occupational Therapy

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Introduction



Largest Black population outside the African continent (56%)

Brazil

Since the 20th century narrative of absence of racial discrimination in the country

Racism is a trauma re-enacted

Black people in Brazil:

Lower levels of education and wages

Higher rates of deaths due to police violence

More likely to experience psychological suffering

In this context, proposing care strategies for this population becomes an ethical-political commitment within Occupational Therapy



Doctoral research project

Explores the practice of Black dances as an Afro-referenced activity to construct afro-referenced care for Black bodies in occupational therapy



Methodology

- **Qualitative approach** based in an **original afro-referenced care methodology**

experimentation of Black dances titled “**Dancing Healings**”

This afro-referenced care methodology is structured in three moments:

- ① **Everyday Life** ② **Healing** ③ **Collective**

Guided by the elements: earth, water, air, and fire.



Preliminary results:

Re-creation of self-narratives grounded in the greatness of their ancestry



Expression of wounds from racism cultivated daily

Experience of their bodies as alive, celebratory, and vibrant in their fullest potential



Power of community in fostering affective relationships

Conclusions



- Highlight the need for Occupational Therapy practices and epistemologies that are specifically contextualized for the Black population;
- This approach are effective in promoting Afro-referenced embodied care practices through Black dances as a strategy to confront everyday racism.
- Inviting the exploration of a body immersed in vitality, self-esteem, and new self-narratives.

“I remember when I went to therapy and I told my psychologist, who is a white man, that I didn’t know how to be a body, for me body and thought were separated things [...] and a very powerful thing in your practice [...] is the invitation for us to recognize ourselves as bodies [...] it’s really Afrocentric [...] we will start to recognize our potentialities and ourselves as bodies [...]” (Maria de Lourdes)

Thank you!

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