



Holding Love in Hostile Systems: Therapy with Marginalized Couples

PRESENTED BY:

Akilah Riley-Richardson, MSW, CCTP



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2026

10:00AM – 1:00PM CT | VIA ZOOM

COST: \$90 | 3 CEs - Fulfills Cultural Competence CE requirement

This will be a live Zoom event that will be recorded.

Course Description: Many couples from marginalized communities seek therapy while simultaneously navigating the ongoing impacts of systemic trauma, discrimination, and social marginalization. Traditional couple therapy models often focus primarily on interpersonal dynamics and may not fully address how broader sociocultural forces shape intimacy, conflict, and safety within relationships. This training introduces clinicians to a liberatory, trauma-informed framework for working with marginalized couples that integrates systemic awareness with relational practice.

Participants will be introduced to the BIOME therapeutic stance and the PRIDE (Pivot, Rumble, Imagine, Develop, Evolve) process, which are models designed by the presenter to help therapists recognize relational privilege, understand how systemic stressors influence couple dynamics, and support couples in building resilience and deeper connection. Through clinical discussion and conceptual exploration, attendees will develop greater capacity to assess systemic influences in therapy, create more responsive therapeutic environments, and implement practical strategies for supporting marginalized couples. This training is designed for therapists, counselors, and other mental health professionals seeking to deepen their culturally responsive and trauma-informed work with couples.

Learning Objectives:

- **Describe** how systemic trauma and social marginalization can influence intimacy, conflict, and emotional safety within couple relationships.
- **Identify** key components of the BIOME therapeutic stance and explain how this framework can support work with marginalized couples.
- **Assess** how relational privilege and sociocultural context may shape couple dynamics in therapy.
- **Apply** principles from the PRIDE process to support couples navigating the relational impacts of systemic stressors.
- **Demonstrate** clinical strategies that foster culturally responsive and trauma-informed therapeutic environments for marginalized couples.

CEs are available for Illinois MFT/LMFTs, LPC/LCPCs, LSW/LCSWs, and psychologists. CEs for MFT/LMFTs are sponsored by [Counseling Solutions](#).

Presenter Bio: Akilah Riley-Richardson, MSW, CCTP is a dedicated couples therapist, educator, and researcher with several years of experience. As a Certified Clinical Trauma Professional and STAIR Method Certified clinician, Akilah specializes in relational healing, focusing on the needs of couples and individuals, both in the Caribbean and internationally. Her expertise extends to supporting sexual and racial minorities, ensuring that her practice is inclusive and culturally sensitive. Akilah's commitment to education and advocacy has led her to consult for esteemed organizations, including NASTAD, I-TECH, CARPHA, and CVC, where she has made significant contributions to healthcare training and community support.

She has presented her work at various prestigious forums, such as the Psychotherapy Networker Symposium, Academy of Therapy Wisdom, Harvard Medical School, Chicago School of Psychology and the Black Mental Health Symposium. From 2012 to 2025, she served as a Social Work Educator at the University of the Southern Caribbean, mentoring future leaders in the field. Currently, she serves as a Research Supervisor and Examiner at the University of the West Indies Global Campus. As the founder of the Relational Healing Institute and the creator of the P.R.I.D.E. model, Akilah is passionate about advancing relational therapies. Her book, "Marginalized Couples in Therapy" reflects this passion.