

Rehman Abdulrehman

Advances in Psychotherapy –  
Evidence-Based Practice

# Developing Anti- Racist Cultural Competence



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# Developing Anti-Racist Cultural Competence

## About the Author

**Rehman Abdulrehman**, PhD, is a Canadian Muslim of Zanzibari descent who works as a clinical and consulting psychologist. His work has spanned continents and cultures, with a focus on the intersection of mental health; diversity, equity, and inclusion; and leadership. Among the clients that Dr. Abdulrehman has supported to address diversity, equity, and inclusion are Google/YouTube, Mastercard Foundation, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and the Government of Canada. He has developed and hosted a podcast, *Different People*, addressing difficult conversations on racism, and developed the *Bias Outside the Box* tool, which went viral, to help people begin a conversation with themselves about the biases they hold. Dr. Abdulrehman was also a TEDx speaker with his talk “Resolving Unconscious Bias,” and his work has been recognized by the Society of Consulting Psychology for Excellence in Diversity & Inclusion Consulting. He is also an assistant professor with the Department of Clinical Health Psychology at the University of Manitoba and has held three visiting professor positions at Zanzibar University, the State University of Zanzibar, and Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences, due to his development work in Tanzania. He was also the Chair of the Committee on International Relations in Psychology for the American Psychological Association (2015–2016). Dr. Abdulrehman’s work has been recognized by the Society of Consulting Psychology for Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Consulting (2022).

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# Developing Anti-Racist Cultural Competence

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# Dedication

Despite feeling like I was in touch with my cultural identity, I did not realize just how much of my cultural self I had locked up in the back of my mind until my son came into my life. When I observed the impact of a White-centered world on him, I saw a conflict in identity early in his life, and in realizing that, I also came to be aware of how much of my own cultural self I had imprisoned, simply to ensure a greater sense of safety for myself, and a comfort for those from the majority culture. In the realization of the experience of my son, my approach to cross-cultural competency shifted, requiring that my academic training and experience begin to line up with my personal lived experience, as it too had critical importance in the understanding of what it meant to be cross-culturally competent. Lived experience, as I was learning from my son, was so critical to our understanding of how to work better with people we perceive to be different. This book is dedicated to you, Yousuf, for opening my eyes. And to my parents, who endured the onslaught of systemic racism against their cultural identities, to ensure their children gained the privilege of finding a sense of safety they did not and do not have in a supposed “multicultural” society. To my brothers too, with whom I learned alongside, with whom I survived cultural erasure through humor and wit, and with whom I consistently debate and discuss what our cultural identity actually is. To my family, all of you, I dedicate this book, a symbol of our survival in a world where racism and discrimination of all forms tried to erase who we were as a people.



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