

## **Narratives supporting: 'Exploring the contextual aspects of Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP) interventions.'**

**Kim S Golding**

### **Ugandan Perspective (from a meeting with Ugandan CEO's)**

I think emotional connection is directly connected to expressing love. In the Ugandan context, in most families, when a parent expresses love, most people feel they're spoiling their children. The narrative in Uganda is that children have to fear their parents. They phrase it as fear rather than respect, which is very problematic because then the fear comes and that playfulness and closeness disappears. If we could revert to these, that would be really awesome.

I was just thinking about how PACE already actually plays out in our community. But I was thinking it is more between grandparents and children. They have more time and are more patient. They do not have to instil discipline in the children, and it becomes easier for them to relate emotionally with the children than the primary parent because for the primary parent, you're more conscious about the child behaving well and being well disciplined than fitting in, and also about you being judged correctly as a good parent.

So now when it comes to PACE, I think there are many things that we could reignite that are in our setting, but they've been forgotten since I was growing up as a small child. There was still this whole practice of parents doing the storytelling with their children. You would sit with your dad and mum and they'd tell you all these folk stories and then you are playing about it. Then you also take turns telling the stories. That was a very warm and playful moment between parents and the children. And then when our grandparents would come in, that would go to the next level. Now that has been forgotten unfortunately. It's not being practiced in many ways, but if we could reinvent that, getting back to the basics.

And then again, the fear of being misunderstood as a parent who is raising bad children, because unfortunately, some people think that when a parent is kind and expressing love and compassion to their children, they're spoiling them. If we could just reinvent the words around the parent-child relationship, what it means to have an alternative narrative about parenting. If we could change that narrative among parents, for them to really see that when you are close with your child and you are compassionate with them, you are actually playing your parental role. It's not that you're spoiling your child. I think if we rethink how to tailor and adopt this, PACE could be really a useful model.

## **From a conversation with Chinese DDP practitioners**

It is helpful knowing how intersubjectivity works. I provide PACE and match affect and I am more attuned. Very quickly I notice that the parents and children feel safe. They are more connected as their affect is regulated. I notice this at work and also in my personal life. One example, I work with a family where their child was refusing to go to school. This really bugs Chinese parents and mum was really frustrated. This mum, because of her own attachment history, did not experience a lot of connection. I helped her to play, interact and connect with her child. The connection is so much better.

(In Hughes & Golding, 2024, Healing Relational Trauma Workbook)

## Reflections from S.

On a personal level, my known heritage is Caribbean, African and Indian. I think it is important to add the word known. Due to black history and our experiences, our identities, culture and heritage has been taken and replaced. Perhaps “stripped away” is more accurate. Many of us don’t exactly know who we are, our background histories, experiences etc. To some extent it is who the world says we are, and this continues to be our lived experience. We have had to adopt the British culture. Our trauma experiences are ongoing, whether we are conscious or not. Visibly we have colour to our skin, we are visibly different.

Some of us are able to piece pieces together, but the reality is that much of us has been lost and is unknown. With that, we are living in worlds where perhaps we do not quite fit, and we have and continue to have to navigate our way. We have had to continuously adapt and change ourselves and who we are to try and fit.

So, perhaps when we engage in relationships with professionals, or with people who say they wish to help us, we will struggle, particularly if our experiences aren’t always positive, reliable or equal to others. Both our historical and current experiences quite often mean that we do not fit or belong. There is a lot of mistrust and we have had to adapt to survive?

Intentions need to be clear and upfront, but also perhaps reiterated throughout the relationship.

We live in a world where our culture and traditions have not been accepted and we have had to adapt or replace these. So much so, we often don’t know what they were to begin with.

Family and community were central and important. They still are, but this has lessened and been harder in Western Culture. Families have been divided, split and our experiences in the Western world have meant that we have continued to be divided. Trauma continually reoccurs. Again, we have to continually adapt to survive.

It is a challenge to navigate your way in a world where even when you are good, your good is not good enough to be treated well or fairly.

We are in constant survival mode.

- Playfulness in parenting is not so much? We have to survive.
- Acceptance in parenting, yes at home but not in the wider community, society or world. We have to survive.
- Curiosity in parenting, perhaps 50/50, but again not in the wider community, society or world. We have to survive.
- Empathy in parenting, yes. Not in the wider community. We have to survive.

A lot has been lost, some due to not being accepted, a lack of understanding and care.

Adapt and survive.

Overall, it is hard for black families to raise their children in a world where their values and themselves are not accepted or treated the same as others and it is an everyday experience for children and parents.

## **From a conversation with Sherell. A Black British DDP practitioner**

There's the constant feeling of being different. There's the constant awareness of not feeling like you fit professionally. There's constant looking out for how people perceive or understand you, and there's the constant effort to put on this professional persona. If I'm not talking about these issues when they arise, because I'm not feeling that there are adequate spaces to share or to feel understood, I won't get what I need from supervision. I think all of this can be very draining.'

'I came to DDP and the supervisory relationship with my own expectations. I anticipated that race might be touched upon but didn't expect to really go there. Maybe I've built up some defences; not opening up so much about my experiences and my differences. It feels like a really vulnerable place.'

'The armour describes it quite well. I put on what I think is a professional self, based on observing other psychologists, who have generally been white and middle-class. I feel that when I step out of that I'm not being professional. Within DDP I am encouraged to be my genuine self, to truly connect with people. This means opening up to feelings. It can be difficult to feel safe enough to talk about these things in supervision.'

'It's been the experience of supervision that has had the most impact on me. Being supported by someone who is really curious about me and empathizes with my experiences of racial discrimination and racial trauma and how this impacts on my work with families. In other supervisory experiences, with other models, we might have touched on this, but not to the depth that I experienced within DDP supervision. I think there is something inherent in the DDP model because we're trying to connect with people's experiences and to understand them on that deeper level, that means that this is brought into supervision.'

(Extracts from Hughes & Golding, 2024, The Healing Relational Trauma Workbook.)

## **From a conversation with Lorraine.**

Lorraine lives in New Zealand. She told me: 'I whakapapa (trace her genes) to Māori and Dutch bloodlines.' She attended a DDP-informed parenting group (Foundations for Attachment).

**Lorraine:** 'I did think about the risk of recolonization by taking the ideas of the programme on board. If it doesn't come from our history, if it doesn't come from our knowledge, is it recolonizing myself or even the children in my care? The course felt right for me, like in an intuitive way. It felt like personal growth which then impacts my family which then spreads out to my community.'

**Kim:** 'I'm interested in the idea of recolonization. I'm thinking about choice and freedom. Cultures will grow and develop and you as a Maori carer might embrace some parenting ideas that are non-Māori, but you have a choice about that. It has to fit. I guess, colonization is about them being inflicted on you and taking away your own heritage.'

**Lorraine:** 'That's true, but if I liken cultural identity and the break in the life of someone who has had that taken from them to a limb, if that is amputated and then put back on, even if it works the same on the outside through systematically reprogramming it, it will never be the same. Its journey has taken a turn. There is no going back but moving forward. I am mindful of what my parents and my grandparents went through and so I question, and I seek the best of both worlds, often finding common ground. Sir Mason Durie and his model of wellbeing, Te Whare Tapa Wha likens us to the four posts of a house. All four posts; spiritual, emotional, physical and family, must be cared for. If all of these posts aren't solid and looked after the whole house is going to fall down. I also saw these teachings in the PACE course.'

(Extract from Hughes & Golding, 2024, The Healing Relational Trauma Workbook.)

## **Reflections from D. a Black British practitioner**

### **What positive values do you think your culture and heritage gives to parenting?**

For Caribbean culture and heritage, the positive values that parenting gives mainly revolve around helping children to understand the correct application of the many different social cues that may exist region to region or island to island. Parents tend to place a strong emphasis on community, with particular focus on respect for elders, with obedience being linked to social mobility and instilling fundamental values that guide daily interactions. Parents can also integrate values-based education by regularly discussing and demonstrating principles such as respect, gratitude, and cooperation in their daily lives by using layered approaches.

### **Are there any negative values, perhaps impacted by historic trauma?**

One of the significant challenges with the Caribbean parenting style is the high propensity to transmit unresolved generational trauma that a parent may have stored emotionally or that may have evolved into cultural patterns of behaviour that have become accepted or normalized. The authoritarian parenting style is widely prevalent within the African diaspora, largely due to historical external factors such as colonisation, the transatlantic slave trade, and conservative Christianity. With many generations of parents raised in this style, it can result in apathy towards the emotional developmental needs of a child, as they believe they have been parented in this manner without experiencing adverse effects. In some cases, however, they are carrying unresolved trauma.

### **How do you think that parenting needs to take into account current trauma that children face outside of the family because of their culture and heritage?**

Parenting in the context of Black British culture requires an incredibly nuanced approach, particularly when addressing the potential traumas children face outside the family environment due to systemic issues, racism, or misrepresentation of their heritage. Racial trauma is often misinterpreted and challenging to treat. It demands not only love and guidance but also active empowerment and the creation of safe spaces where children feel seen, understood, and valued. As a parent, there is a constant balancing act of trying to prepare your child for any encounters they may experience outside of the home, where people's biases, conscious or unconscious, and at times overt discrimination, will impact your child. These conversations are tricky to navigate as there is a large risk of traumatising your child further or causing any triggered behaviours when they engage with statutory services like the education system.

### **In light of this, are there ways that PACE could be adapted or tailored to take these into account?**

Helping the parent process their own experiences with racism, discrimination, or cultural identity struggles is an important starting point. If they have any unresolved trauma, this may unintentionally affect their parenting. Facilitating joint sessions where the parent and child can communicate openly about their experiences and emotions nurtures trust and mutual understanding. A useful tool would be to encourage collaborative activities that celebrate Black British culture. This is a positive way to address racial trauma while helping both parent and child embrace their identity together.

## **Reflections from L. A first nation's perspective**

I have worked with many families, there is no 'one size fits all', as Aboriginal people have many different experiences. PACE works well because it is easy to YARN it, and it lands so much easier because it's not too wordy. It's also not shameful. So, it's easy to begin to master and feel a sense of achievement. I have had parents tell me, "I did the P, I did the A, I did the C and I did the E", and they were so proud they got all of them in. It becomes a bit of a running playful banter even between the parent or grandparent and me as the Practitioner. The thing is though; we SHARE this storying together. There is something truly important about being humble and as part of the community, opening up and being vulnerable, that reciprocity is very important in the trusting relationship that forms. It can't be the expert in the room with the parent or grandparent, but rather, mob in the room working it out together. That's where the realness is.

## A Jewish tale. A personal reflection by Kim

This story begins with Alexander and Sarah, my great grandparents. Alexander (known as Alec) was born in 1866 and Sarah two years later. They lived in a Jewish community in Volpa, Grodna, then part of the Russian Empire. They were two children amongst many growing up during the pogroms and witnessing the anti-Jewish persecution. They married in 1884 under a chupah, the marriage canopy. The matchmaker chose well, Alec and Sarah needed to be a strong couple to face what was ahead of them.



Two years later, the couple faced a difficult decision. The persecution and massacre of Jews was making life increasingly unsafe for them. To stay and see friends and neighbours massacred or to go and establish yourself in a foreign country, hoping that here would be some measure of safety. These were challenging choices. Alec and Sarah chose to leave the community, as many others were doing. They journeyed to London, England with their small son, Simon. They left behind everything they knew, including their parents, Udal Woolf and Annie, my great, great grandparents.

Udal and Annie are just shadows in this story as I know little about them. I imagine it was hard for them to watch their children go. They would be unable to support Alec and Sarah in bringing up a large family in a foreign country. For a culture that loves family and tradition it must have been especially hard to only know their grandchildren from afar.

And so, this story takes us to a family separated by discrimination and persecution. The threat of being driven from home and country was ever present. Alec and Sarah needed to learn a new language, establish a tailoring business, as well as raise seven children, including my grandfather, Jacob. They lived in a Jewish community in the East End of London. It was a relief in 1906 when Alec received his naturalization certificate, supported by Spitalfields Naturalization Society. They had some measure of security at last.

Alec and Sarah brought with them their Jewish heritage. They had absorbed the culture of the Shtetl they were raised in, influenced by their parents and more distant ancestors. Having left family behind, they will have valued the home they established and the family they raised. Alec was well respected in the community and became a master tailor. He had strong values around education and achievement, which were passed down to his children, many of them followed him into the tailoring business, including my grandfather, Jacob.

Jacob was born in London around 1901 and married Deborah in 1925, the same year that Alec died at 59 years of age. Sarah lived on supported by her surviving children until 1940.

Jacob and Deborah had four boys, including my father, who grew up with a strong bond between them and an interest in achieving and accumulating wealth. The terror of having to flee from a country was never far away, and wealth provided some measure of security.

Wealth was certainly in my father, Peter's mind when he chose careers for me and my sister. I was to go to university to study dentistry like my uncle who was respected in the family for his education and the money he earned. You will notice that I rebelled!

Jewish families have strong patriarchs. The men are the spiritual heads of the family and have a role in choosing their children's future as I mention above. Women are important. I wonder if Alec ever began a Sabbath meal by singing the Eshet Chayil to Sarah (translated as woman of valor, it extols the virtues of women). I witnessed a strong matriarchy in Deborah, my grandmother who was formidable! My father also told us tales of Sarah his bubbe (grandmother).

Jewish children were told what they should think or feel and who they should marry. Deborah dearly wanted her boys to marry 'nice Jewish girls'. It strikes me how much a need for control runs through these ways of being. I'm sure being in control was important when so much control had been taken away.



Times were changing, however, and my father and two of his brothers married outside the faith. The Jewish community was beginning to break down as the Goldings increasingly assimilated into English society and raised dual heritage children.

And so, I enter the story. A third-generation child with Jewish and Yorkshire heritage being raised in England. I wonder what has been passed down to me through the generations. What ancestral trauma rests within me? What cultural values have I absorbed? Understanding how this has impacted is important for me as a parent and a DDP practitioner?

Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy will all be impacted by our ancestral inheritance.

Reflecting on my Jewish roots, I can see how curiosity can be diminished when parents have a strong need to guide their children, safeguarding them by telling them what to do and think. The priority is a good education and learning a trade.

There is room for playfulness though, when children are precious, and family ties are important.

But what room is there for the apparent softness of acceptance and empathy when children need to be strong to survive?

And within a culture so impacted by loss and relocation stories are important. They store the memories and keep traditions alive. The Goldings are skilled storytellers and stories were always there in my childhood, although curiously few stories of the impact of trauma or life in Russia were passed down. Maybe some things are too painful to be remembered.

As I reflect on this, I can see the values that helped me to embed PACE into my parenting and my DDP practice.

I value an upbringing that developed my playful and storytelling side. I think this also helped me to stretch into deeper curiosity.

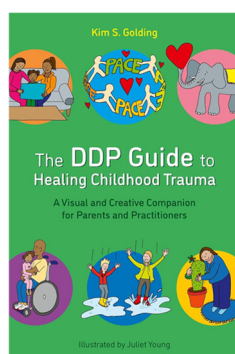
I want to hold onto the importance of guiding children whilst also developing my acceptance and empathy.

I want to give children strength whilst recognising that this can be combined with compassion.

I recognise I have a controlling side, possibly one of the scars of the transgenerational trauma I have inherited. I work at letting some of this control go to find room for increased acceptance and empathy.

I think about Alec and Sarah making that journey to find a safer world. I reflect on the thread that connects me to them via two further generations who lived through hardship, war and the horror of the holocaust.

I am the sum of all of this. PACE allows me to take the best from my heritage as well as to discover new, different ways of being that were not possible for my ancestors.



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