



## CHAT RESOURCES

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### COLORISM CHAT RESOURCES

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#### Colorism II

*Dr. Janai told us...When you are able to see your own beauty, you will see the beauty in others.*(Colorism II chat 10/17/21 – not a direct quote)

She asked us to ponder:

What was the first time you recall your skin, hair, body being celebrated?

What is your commitment to self-love? How are you claiming or reclaiming your power?

How are you empowering younger generations?

Unpacking Colorism means unlearning a conditioned mindset.

#### Undoing Conditioning

1. Reject your old self.
2. Reject default attitudes.
3. Favor expanded consciousness.

#### Five Ways to Avoid Picking Beliefs that do not Serve

1. Always question your beliefs.
2. Do not follow traditions blindly.
3. Do not develop beliefs out of anger, fear, and pain.
4. Do not do things just to please others.
5. Learn to see things with clarity and non-judgment.

**From Ms. Claudette:** Here are the books I referenced and links to information that will help with unpacking Colorism.

#### Links to videos:

**Is Colorism Still A Problem** - <https://www.oprah.com/own-blackwomenowntheconversation/beauty-is-colorism-still-a-problem>

**Difference Between Colorism and Racism?** - <https://youtu.be/asZzc4Ufh4?t=138450>

**Colorism Conversations-** [https://www.facebook.com/watch/?extid=NS-UNK-UNK-UNK-AN\\_GK0T-GK1C&v=1551434985060249](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?extid=NS-UNK-UNK-UNK-AN_GK0T-GK1C&v=1551434985060249)

**Shades of Black:** My Experiences with Colorism | Amaya Allen | TEDxVanderbiltUniversity - <https://youtu.be/dNNOrM41WyE>

**3 Things You Should Know About Global Colorism** - <https://wappp.hks.harvard.edu/3-things-you-should-know-about-global-colorism>



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The solution to Colorism - <https://youtu.be/WKWsmYZFv9k?t=703>

### Links to articles:

#### Colorism vs. Racism: What's the Difference?

<http://colorismhealing.org/colorism-and-racism/>

#### 100+ Colorism Questions: Take Discussion to the Next- Level

<https://colorismhealing.com/colorism-questions/>

### Books:

1. **To Kill a Mockingbird**-Harper Lee
2. *The Bluest Eye*, Toni Morrison.
3. **Their Eyes Were Watching God** - Zora Neale Hurston
4. **The Diary of Nellie Lee Love** by Patricia McKissack
5. **Martha Maud** by Gwendolyn Brooks
6. **SKIN: An Interactive Journal For Women Who Want to Heal The Color Complex & Don't Play In the Sun** - by Marita Golden

### Books for Children:

1. Sulwe by Lupita Nyong'o, illustrated by Vashti Harrison
2. M Is for Melanin by Tiffany Rose
3. Beautiful Black Bird, Ashely Brown
4. I'm A Pretty Little Black Girl, Betty K. Bynum
5. Skin Again, Happy to Be Nappy, bell Hooks
6. Big Hair Dont Care, Crystal Swain-Bates

A website with a list of books on Colorism: <http://colorismhealing.org/colorism-books/>

### How To Teach Children (or others)About Colorism:

- 1) Sort out your own attitude/feelings about colorism.
- 2) Talk candidly about colorism with your children.
- 3) Give them positive exposure to all skin tones.

### Healing:

Colorism leads to comparison, comparison leads to jealousy then self-hatred. Everyone is born with a purpose and it shouldn't be based on their skin. No one should have a better privilege than the other but unfortunately, that's just how America was built upon. In order to change, *we first must make changes within ourselves and accept how we are*. There's no physical way to change skin color naturally. Once self-acceptance is achieved, accepting others around us will become better and skin color will become invisible. It will be a hard change to be made locally, nationally, and even globally but it's something that needs to be done. Everyone is created uniquely and all should be praised accordingly. People should be viewed at by the content of their character and not the color of their skin. More Information on accepting oneself: Bennett, Rhonda- Momma, I Wanna be Light-skinned: My Journey to Acceptance, 2015



1. **Practice Affirmations:** Positive affirmations have a powerful impact on our brains. Studies show that positive self-affirmations activate networks in the brain that are associated with reward and positive valuation. Positive affirmations may also promote the production of endorphins, natural mood-boosting hormones produced by the brain.
2. **Externalize It:** Externalization is a cognitive defusion technique that comes from Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. Cognitive Defusion helps separate from unhelpful thoughts. Externalization is a great way to separate ourselves from colorist ideology. (Colorism is not our shame to own. Racist colonizers created colorism to promote white supremacy. The more we understand this and name colorism as a racist-made phenomenon, the easier it will be to separate ourselves from these false standards of beauty and blackness. Instead of thinking this skin tone is good or bad, think colorism says that this skin tone is good or bad. Shifting your thinking will help train your brain to think of colorism as racist myths instead of absolute truths that can harm your self-esteem or your sister's self-esteem.)
3. **Seek Professional Help:** If you believe that you are experiencing depression, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress disorder, consider consulting the Therapy for Black Girls Therapist Directory to locate a therapist. Therapy is also helpful if you are experiencing substance use concerns, self-injury, low self-esteem, or would like to reduce risky sexual behaviors.

Celebrate the Shades of Sisterhood

4. **Extend Affirmations:** Speak to your fellow sister with love. We all exist in a world that seeks to tear us down with racist ideologies, stereotypes, systems, and structures. When we speak about each other's skin tones, let's use language that affirms and celebrates our complexion. Consider positive adjectives that evoke the richness of our skin tones like honey, chocolate, and mocha when describing skin tones instead of dark, light, or black.

5. **Acknowledge Privilege:** Acknowledging privilege is an important and sometimes uncomfortable step in healing Colorism. Has your skin complexion afforded your special treatment or spared you from harmful jokes or stereotypes? It is important to acknowledge these privileges and to be mindful of how these privileges impact your relationships. Are you perhaps being treated better than a friend or loved one with a different complexion? If so, talk to your loved one about how this may be impacting your relationship or how that person sees themselves. Are you promoting this privilege by accepting preferential treatment while your loved one is treated as lesser than? Are you silent about this type of injustice? These are all important questions to ask if we truly want to celebrate all skin tones.

6. **Apologize:** Have you participated in colorist jokes or made insensitive comments about someone's skin tone? If so, do not hesitate to apologize to those that you may have hurt. Be receptive to hearing out the perspective of others who feel hurt by words or jokes from you or your peers. Consider holding others accountable with grace for the way that they speak about black skin tones.



7. **Avoid Assumptions:** Assumptions based on skin complexion are often based on colorist stereotypes. Have you ever assumed something about a person based on their skin tone? It is possible that your assumption was incorrect and may have caused you to interact with that person in a way that promotes colorism.

8. **Embrace Community:** Surround yourself with like-minded people that celebrate you for who you are and are willing to do the self-work necessary to help our community heal from colorism. Erica Talbert, LMFT | Amber Flanigan LISW-CP, MPH, CHES--

### **Three Things You Can Do To Overcome Colorism**

1. Recognize it within Yourself
2. Become A Role Model For Younger Generations
3. Become An Advocate and Raise Awareness

### **Other ways to combat Colorism:**

#### **1. Don't support music artists that are colorist/misogynistic:**

Do not support those that praise one skin tone and not the other. Also, do not support those that generally speak badly against women or those that see women as objects and not actual human beings. Yes, the beat might be bangin' but listen to the message within the song. Be mindful of the songs you listen to because the message within the song, subconsciously affects you!

#### **2. Become an Advocate:**

Generalizing all light skinned women as arrogant is ignorant. Generalizing all dark skin women as ghetto is ignorant. Be confident enough to break down the stereotypes thrown at your race by your own race. Break down colorist stereotypes by speaking up. If you see an ignorant person make a colorist joke, notify them that their opinion is wrong and is degrading to the black community as a whole!

#### **3. ACCEPTANCE**

Are you colorist? Meaning do you hold negative opinions against your sister of color? If so, then you need to change for the better. Eliminate all negative stereotypes you have for your sister of color and overcome them by befriending all skin tones of women within your race. If you are light skinned and feel you aren't accepted by the darker skinned women because of your lighter complexion, you're wrong. Not all dark skinned women will reject you. Befriend as many darker skinned sisters and learn to understand their outlook on life. (This scenario is vice versa)!

#### **4. Don't follow societal trends:**

If you are big in the social media community, you are aware that light skin vs dark skin is a trend that is displayed through memes, bio's, etc. Don't allow colorism to get into your psyche and affect the way you view yourself. If you are a dark skinned girl and notice the lack of women similar to your color in a "baddies of the month" picture on Instagram. Don't beat yourself down because you don't fit the standard for a beauty. (This scenario is vice versa). Understand that you are still as beautiful as the next sister of color. Understand that you won't be everyone's cup of



tea. Just because one person doesn't find you endearing, doesn't mean the next person won't! Which goes to the next step.!

### **5. Live for yourself**

Love the skin that you're in. Meaning love yourself and every bit of yourself. Be confident, know your worth, and don't let any person tell you that you're not the cats meow. Don't live for men or women, live for yourself. Don't live to impress others because people will never be 100% satisfied, live to impress yourself.!

### **6. SUPPORT Other Black Women**

Why is it that we as black women don't support each other? Is it because there can only be one token black girl? Guess what, there can be two! Ladies, support your sister of color! !

### **7. Educate Yourself**

Be up to date on as many social issues regarding women of color. Be aware of cases of colorism, gender inequality, and racial inequality and overall forms of injustice so that you can better understand why society is the way it is. Within that, you can speak on those topics and possibly help change those forms of injustice. Which leads to my next step...!

### **8. Join anti-colorist groups**

Join a group or groups within the black community that are aimed at uplifting all people of color. groups that will improve not only your outlook on colorism but also society at large. Joining the group will potentially open up new doors and new opportunities for you. !

### **9. Seek experiences outside of your racial community**

#### **What is the solution? Tools to address the issue:**

1. undo conditioning, self-doubt, low self-esteem, insecurity, and learn to love self without conditions.
  2. Recognize "skin-tone trauma"
  3. Know your self-worth
  4. Education
  5. Self-Love
  6. Confidence
  7. Once self-acceptance is achieved, accepting others around us will become better and skin color will become invisible. It will be a hard change to be made locally, nationally, and even globally but it's something that needs to be done.
  8. Everyone is created uniquely and all should be praised accordingly. People should be viewed by the content of their character and not the color of their skin. **More Information on accepting oneself: Bennett, Rhonda- *Momma, I Wanna be Light-skinned: My Journey to Acceptance, 2015***
1. **How to move forward** - you can get to a place where you can trust again. Daily devotions, counseling, and positive word affirmations can give you a newfound love for who you are and a level of confidence you didn't have before.
  2. **Focus on healing** - This action is essential. Just seek to be whole again.



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3. **Consider what you've already learned** - instead, take the lessons and experiences from past issues to move forward.
4. **Be open to the present** - "Take the fullness" of who you are to the next opportunity to be fully who you are.
5. **Allow yourself to be vulnerable** - Vulnerability leads to connection.

Every melanin has a story. Be open to getting to know someone and not judging ourselves by color (as others do to us). We must also embrace every part of us - we cannot hate a race that is a part of us, even when that part of us was created through slavery/rape.

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