

WHAT IS CULTURAL COMPETENCE? (Adapted from Sue & Sue)

“A culturally competent professional is one who is actively in the process of becoming aware of his or her own assumptions about human behavior, values, biases, preconceived notions, personal limitations, and so forth.

Second, a culturally competent professional is one who actively attempts to understand the worldview of culturally diverse populations. In other words, what are the values, assumptions, practices, communication styles, group norms, biases, experiences, perspectives and so on, of culturally diverse students, families, communities and colleagues you interact with?

Third, a culturally competent professional is one who is in the process of actively developing and practicing appropriate, relevant, and sensitive strategies and skills in working with culturally diverse students, families, communities and colleagues.

Fourth, a culturally competent professional is one who advocates on behalf of the needs of students, families, community, colleagues etc. They take action in their work place, community and society to create a culture of respect and equity.

Thus, cultural competence is active, developmental, an ongoing process and is aspirational rather than achieved.”

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CULTURAL COMPETENCE: AWARENESS

Reflection and Awareness	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check the box that most closely identifies you
<p>The culturally competent professional is...</p> <p><i>...one who has moved from being culturally unaware to being aware and sensitive to his or her own cultural heritage and to valuing and respecting differences.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explores ones values, standards and assumptions about human behavior. • Is not ethnocentric, believing in the superiority of one's group. 	<p>I _____ work towards becoming aware and sensitive to my own cultural heritage and valuing and respecting differences</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Constantly <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely <input type="checkbox"/> Never</p>
<p><i>...willing to challenge his/her assumptions, values and biases and how they might affect culturally diverse people.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid prejudices, unwarranted labeling, and stereotyping. 	<p>I _____ work towards becoming aware of my own values and biases and how they might affect culturally diverse people</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Constantly <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely <input type="checkbox"/> Never</p>
<p><i>...comfortable with differences that exist between themselves and their students in terms of race, gender, sexual orientation, and other socio-demographic variables. Differences are not seen as being deviant.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not profess color blindness. • Does not negate the existence of differences in attitudes, behavior, beliefs and cultural norms, among different groups. 	<p>I _____ feel comfortable with differences that exist between me and my students, families, and colleagues in terms of race, gender, sexual orientation, and other sociodemographic variables.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Always <input type="checkbox"/> Mostly <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely <input type="checkbox"/> Never</p>
<p><i>... sensitive to circumstances (personal biases; stage of racial, gender, and sexual orientation identity; sociopolitical influences, etc) that may dictate a referral of a student to someone else.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aware of one's limitations and at the same time not threatened by seeking help from other professionals. <i>HOWEVER...</i> • Willing to work with people from ethnically and culturally diverse populations 	<p>I am _____ sensitive to circumstances that may dictate referral of a student to someone else and at the same time am committed to working effectively with culturally diverse students and families.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Always <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely <input type="checkbox"/> Never</p>
<p><i>...aware of and accepts responsibility for one's own racist, sexist, heterosexist, or other detrimental attitudes, beliefs, and feelings.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not deny that s/he has directly or indirectly benefited from individual, institutional, and cultural biases. • Makes attempts to deal with their own racism, sexism, heterosexism etc., in a non-defensive, guilt-free manner. • Has begun the process of defining a new non-oppressive and non-exploitive attitude. 	<p>I _____ work towards becoming aware of and accepting responsibility for my own racist, sexist, heterosexist, or other detrimental attitudes, beliefs and feelings.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Constantly <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely <input type="checkbox"/> Never</p>

CULTURAL COMPETENCE: KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge and Critical Thinking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check the box that most closely identifies you
<p>The culturally competent professional...</p> <p><i>...must possess specific information about the particular group with which one is working and make meaning from differences rather than negating or pathologizing.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> History, experiences, cultural values, lifestyles, issues 	<p>I possess specific cultural knowledge and information about the students, families and colleagues I work with.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Always <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely <input type="checkbox"/> Never</p>
<p><i>...will have a good understanding of the socio-political system's operating in the U.S. with respect to treatment of marginalized groups in our society.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact and operation of oppression, effect on institutions, i.e. education Roll of ethnocentric monoculturalism on the development of identity and worldviews among minority groups. 	<p>I have _____ understanding of the sociopolitical systems operating in the U.S. with respect to treatment of marginalized groups in our society.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Some <input type="checkbox"/> Little <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p><i>...must have a clear and explicit knowledge and understanding of the generic characteristics of individuals from diverse ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language factors, culture-bound values, and class-bound values. Being able to determine theories and models that may be useful to culturally and ethnically diverse individuals is important but also being careful not to limit the potential of a person from a different group. 	<p>I _____ have clear and explicit knowledge and understanding of the generic characteristics of students, families and colleagues from diverse ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds that I work with</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Always <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely <input type="checkbox"/> Never</p>
<p><i>...has knowledge of institutional barriers that prevent diverse groups from using services.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location of services, transportation Formality or informality of décor Languages used to advertise services Where services are publicized Availability of under represented groups at different levels in the organization Organizational climate Hours and days of operation How services may be viewed 	<p>I am _____ knowledgeable of institutional barriers that prevent diverse groups from using services.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Always <input type="checkbox"/> Often <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely <input type="checkbox"/> Never</p>

CULTURAL COMPETENCE: SKILLS

SKILLS, COURAGE AND RISK TAKING	Professional and/or Personal Examples in Your Life
<p>The culturally competent professional...</p> <p><i>...must be able to generate a wide variety of verbal and nonverbal responses.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different groups may learn to problem solve and respond differently (e.g., to teaching styles) than their majority counterparts. • The wider the repertoire of responses and pedagogy the educator possesses the more effective he or she will be. • Must become comfortable with a multitude of teaching styles and modalities. 	<p>I _____ practice generating a wide variety of verbal and nonverbal responses with my diverse students, families and colleagues.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Always <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely <input type="checkbox"/> Never</p>
<p><i>...must be able to send and receive both verbal and nonverbal messages accurately and appropriately.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be able to communicate thoughts and feeling as well as read messages received • Considers the cultural cues that are operating within a setting. • Is knowledgeable and skillful with different styles of communication e.g., subtlety and indirectness vs. directness and confrontation. 	<p>I _____ practice sending and receiving both verbal and nonverbal messages accurately and appropriately.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Always <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely <input type="checkbox"/> Never</p>
<p><i>...is able to exercise a variety of relationship building skills.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending special events • Outreach • Ombudsman roles • Home/community visits • Acting as change agent 	<p>I _____ practice a variety of relationship building skills.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Always <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely <input type="checkbox"/> Never</p>
<p><i>...is aware one's helping style, recognizes the limitations that one possesses, and can anticipate the impact on culturally diverse populations.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with others • Participate in Culturally Relevant Professional Development • Be able to communicate one's desire to help 	<p>I am _____ aware of my helping style and recognize my limitations anticipating the impact on my culturally diverse students, families and colleagues.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Always <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely <input type="checkbox"/> Never</p>
<p><i>...takes risks and makes mistakes, knowing that new learning occurs on the edge of one's competence.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sees "failure" as an opportunity to grow. • Encourages students and colleagues to take chances and learn from mistakes. 	<p>I _____ take risks and am willing to make mistakes.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Always <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely <input type="checkbox"/> Never</p>

CULTURAL COMPETENCE: ADVOCACY AND ACTION

ADVOCACY & ACTION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check the box that most closely identifies you			
The culturally competent professional...				
Educates co-workers and close friends about racism.	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Raises issues in the workplace with people in power, co-workers and staff.	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Changes what normally appears on bulletin boards, walls, handouts, newsletters, and other materials to be inclusive.	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Is a referral resource—directs people to those who might be of assistance.	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Acts as a model, taking risks and questioning the dominant power structure.	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Establishes discussion groups and other activities around racism e.g., readings, films, exercises in school or workplace	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Makes sure that resources are allocated for enhancing the learning experience of students of color.	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Assesses the environment of their workplace to ensure that it reflects the diversity of staff and students (e.g., assemblies, activities, décor, staff of color).	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Contributes time and/or money to agencies, organizations or programs that actively confront the problem of racism.	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Looks at own racist attitudes and behaviors and the impact they have on families.	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Openly disagrees with racist comments, jokes or actions of those around them.	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Takes the time to complain to those in charge when they notice racism in businesses e.g., greeting cards, toys, foods	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Demonstrates a willingness to change self vs. others as it relates to cultural norms, values, behaviors, and attitudes	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Seeks out and actively participate in professional development aimed to enhance their awareness, knowledge and skills in effectively working cross culturally.	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Envisions a world free of bias and works to restructure ideas and create alternatives.	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Never

ADVOCACY & ACTION CONT'D

Advocacy & Action	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check the box that most closely identifies you			
The culturally competent professional...	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Examines policies within their organization to see if they meet the needs of diverse students, staff, and clients.	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Questions the norms of meetings to ensure equity.	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Reviews hiring policy and practices to include diversity.	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Reviews the mission and vision of their organization to include diversity.	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Ensures the organization's evaluation and assessment tools take into consideration issues of racism, power, privilege, & oppression.	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Investigates curricula in their school/classroom for cultural relevance and anti-bias qualities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Aligns curriculum within their grade level and the school vs. independent teaching.	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Includes diverse ethnic and socio-economic representation in decision making.	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Engages in conversations around race and social justice issues with your students, families and colleagues.	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
Infuses cultural relevance in all professional development.	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
<i>Add your own</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Never

Adapted from Sue, D.W., & Sue, D (2003). Counseling the culturally diverse: Theory and practice, 4th Ed. New York: John Wiley. (Caprice D. Hollins)

Action/Advocacy Section Adapted from Katz, J.H. (1978) White awareness: Handbook for anti-racism training. Okalahoma Press. (Caprice D. Hollins)

Our Learnings and Strategies for Effective Cultural Competency Trainings

WRMC 2012, Robin Chiles & Jenni Conrad

- Know and articulate often where your organization is at with cultural competency in mission, vision, and values. Ensure that from the beginning (pre-hire), staff know the work is highly valued, part of the culture, and not optional or take-what-you-like.
- Model as organizational leaders! Your welcoming rapport, accountability, risk-taking, openness, transparency, self-reflection, proactive cultural self-education, active listening, making mistakes and asking for support all have powerful impact on the organizational culture. Participate in break-out sessions with those you supervise, “own up,” be proactive with your growing edges.
- Create common inclusive language early, using it intentionally with your cultural competency goals with staff. (You all instead of you guys, people of color instead of “minorities,” etc.)
- Advocacy & Action: What partnerships can support you locally in this work? How can you authentically collaborate and share a vision for community change?
- Recognize that as a facilitator there are lessons that we individually and collectively can’t or shouldn’t teach. We may not (ever) see the full picture. Know when to ask for help in educating on a topic that is outside your identity and skills.
- Increase collective and personal facilitation skills to improve ability to respond to and use teachable moments/discussions, instead of dropping/avoiding them.
- Increase organizational and staff culture of the “growth” mindset, not fixed mindset, around competence in all things as a journey (seek to actively avoid and contradict the perfectionism and fear of mistakes/conflict/failure often pervasive in white professional culture).
- Instead of *aiming* for catharsis or highly emotionally-charged conversation, set up to teach the same skills we want students to practice: collaboration, asking for help, reflection, listening to others who disagree, creativity, affirming shared values and diverse experiences.
- Consider a mentoring or buddy system for all new staff, a program that can be responsive to individual needs.
- Team-based, multicultural facilitation and leadership of your trainings is essential. The impact and weight of our speech changes depending on our audience and perspective, thus who leads the room should reflect your mission and goals. It speaks highly of an organization when this is done not depending on outside facilitators, but with own staff’s multicultural leadership.
- Encourage discussions of oppressions connecting to field work (ie. climbing as male-dominated field) in ways that are inclusive of people without the prior knowledge.
- Beware assumptions. Ensure that your communications and informal policies (scholarships, etc.) do not correlate socio-economic status with ethnicity, and vice versa.
- Higher expectations require higher support. If under-experienced staff take on new roles (especially in training), look for ways to support, prep, and scaffold their work. Instead of just expecting them to do it, set people up for success!
- Remember that growing your staff’s cultural competency does not start with “recruiting diversity.” It begins with commitments by you, your current staff, and the organizational culture. This is the inescapable, process-based groundwork that will enable you to support and retain the long term, sustainable, multicultural community you want.

Organizational Cultural Competency Assessment

created for the Wilderness Risk Management Conference of 2012

Throughout this assessment, please consider cultural competency as working to eliminate institutional racism—and also creating organizations that are diverse in race, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status. Fundamentally, organizations that are culturally competent see themselves as allies in the struggles for justice of people of color, low-income people, LGBTQ people, and others who traditionally face barriers in outdoor education.

Your Organization's Race/Ethnicity/Sex/Sexuality Distribution

Feel free to use percentage estimates if that is a better way to get a clear picture quickly.

	African American	Native American	Asian/Pacific Islander	Latino/a	European American	Women	Openly LGBTQ	Total
Board								
Management Staff								
Full-Time Paid Staff								
Part-Time Paid Staff								
Interns/Work-Study/Ameri-Corps/VISTA Volunteers								
Volunteer Staff								
Clients								
Totals								

SECTION 1 – MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

- The mission, vision and values of our organization speak to its commitment to being a culturally competent organization. yes no don't know
- Our organization has a clearly written anti-racism, cultural competency or diversity policy. yes no don't know
- Our organization has a goal to dismantle racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, and all other forms of oppression. yes no don't know
- Some of the ways these goals are reflected in our organization are:

- Our organization has a process for developing and updating our mission statement and strategic plan to reflect a commitment to cultural competency and dismantling forms of oppression.

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yes no don't know

SECTION 2 – ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

1. Our organization understands and draws upon the assets of diverse perspectives.

never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know

2. Our organization understands and encourages different cultural styles and approaches to leadership.

never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know

3. When someone thinks an institutional policy or practice is biased, our organization is a comfortable environment in which to address it.

never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know

4. In a way they feel free to talk, people of color, LGBTQ people, women and others are regularly asked if the policies and procedures of our organization lead to equity for all.

never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know

5. Our decision-making structures share power with all cultures and ethnic groups.

never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know

6. Our organization uses processes to make decisions or resolve conflicts that are perceived as fair by all parties involved.

never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know

7. Our organization ensures that people without prior experience in decision-making positions have opportunities to develop skills necessary to navigate these new situations.

never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know

8. Clients are involved in decision-making at our organization.

never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know

9. Cultural sharing occurs in the workplace.

never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know

Give examples:

- _____
- _____

10. Employees and volunteers of color, or openly LGBTQ, or women, etc. are able to meet together in the workplace without fear of repercussion in order to seek information around issues of oppression and ways for self-empowerment from within or outside our organization.

never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know

11. Do you meet together? never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know

12. White, male, heterosexual, dominant culture employees/volunteers are able to come together and are supported in seeking information around issues of internalized racial/gender superiority, privilege and power within or outside our organization.

never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know

13. Do you come together? never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know

14. Our organization has discussions about how institutional oppressions affect our ability to meet our mission.

Yes No Don't Know *If yes, how often?* never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know

15. Discussions about racism, white privilege, homophobia, classism, sexism, power and accountability are encouraged at all levels of our organization.

never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know

SECTION 3- TOP LEADERSHIP

1. Our Board of Directors and our Executive Director discuss what equality and cultural competency mean to us in our organization. never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know

2. Our organization's managers and supervisors discuss what equality and cultural competency mean to us in our organization. never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know

3. Our Board of Directors is well informed on equality and cultural competency issues.

Yes No Don't Know

4. Experience in addressing institutional oppressions is considered requisite experience and knowledge when our Board of Directors seeks Executive Director candidates.

never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know

5. Our risk management team looks at incident reports with a focus on cultural competency and issues of oppression. never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know

6. Our Board of Directors is representative of the cultures and ethnicities served by our organization. (see organizational grid) not at all somewhat mostly completely don't know

7. Our Executive Director is evaluated on specific concrete work he/she has done to ensure cultural competency within our organization. never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know

9. Our Executive Director and Board of Directors seek input and guidance from organizations and leaders from people of color, LGBTQ, low-income and women's communities in its strategic planning and decision-making. never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know
If so, how is this done?

10. Our organization shares its cultural competency work with others in our sphere of influence, such as members, funders and peer organizations.

not relevant never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know

SECTION 4– ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

1. How does your organization determine the current needs in underserved groups, such as low-income, LGBTQ and people of color communities? Please provide examples.

2. Our organization consults with organizations led by people of color, LGBTQ, low-income people and women, and/or outside experts that give feedback on our programs and policies before we finalize them. never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know

3. Planning and implementation of our services, resources and supports build upon the strengths and assets of our program participants.

never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know

Please provide examples.

4. Our program participants actively engage in shaping the delivery methods for our services, resources and supports. never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know

Please provide examples. _____

5. Our organization has a clear process for evaluating the long-term impact of its programs and policies on its program participants and/or communities.

never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know

6. Our program participants /constituents can impact the reallocation of resources if our services are ineffective, harming the well being of residents.

never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know

Please provide examples.

7. Our Board of Directors and staff members include specific goals with regards to cultural competency practice as part of evaluating program outcomes.

never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know

8. Our organization reviews its performance in regard to non-discrimination.

never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know

9. Our Board of Directors monitors and evaluates our organization's process for confronting institutional oppressions. never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know

10. Our Board of Directors evaluates the Executive Director's leadership in helping the organization achieve its goals for dismantling institutional oppressions.

never/rarely seldom often consistently don't know

11. Our Executive Director reports to the community and funders on progress made in dismantling institutional oppressions in our organization.

_ never/rarely _ seldom _ often _ consistently _ don't know

Next Steps

“A piece of paper is not enough” –Norma Timbang, community leader

Once an organization has identified ways that institutional oppressions is manifest in their structure, the next task is to work to eliminate it. The questions below are a starting point for the development of an organizational strategy.

1. The most important (and realistic) area for my organization to improve in is:

2. Some ways I can (personally or interpersonally) contribute in this effort are:

3. Timetable. When would you like to see this happen?

4. The barriers to taking action within our organization on institutional oppressions are:

5. Possible steps my organization can take are:

6. Ways we can measure our progress are:

7. Assistance, support, or tools that I would like/need to take action on institutional oppressions within our organization are: (can include Board members, staff, consultants, colleagues, supervisors, etc.)

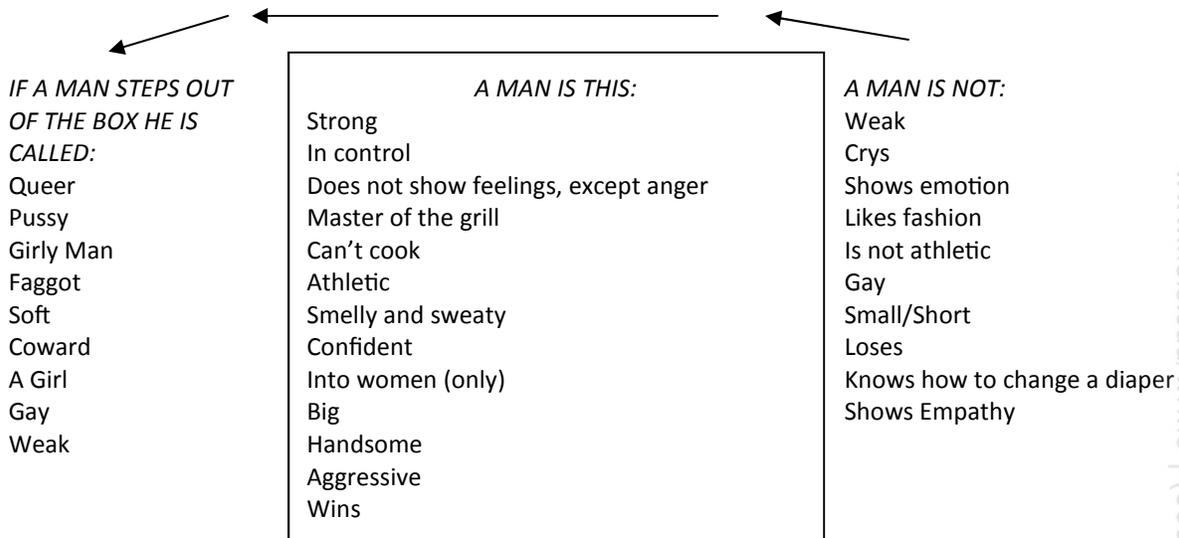
Sources: *Identifying Institutional Racism Folio*. Seattle Human Services Coalition. 2005. Available at http://shscoalition.org/pdf_files/idir-folio-complete-2-28-06.pdf

Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist, Multicultural Institution

MONOCULTURAL		MULTICULTURAL		ANTI-RACIST		ANTI-RACIST MULTICULTURAL	
Racial and Cultural Differences Seen as Defects		Tolerant of Racial and Cultural Differences				Racial and Cultural Differences Seen as Assets	
<p>1. Exclusive A Segregated Institution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intentionally and publicly excludes or segregates African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos and Asian Americans • Intentionally and publicly enforces the racist status quo throughout institution • Institutionalization of racism includes formal policies and practices, teachings and decision-making on all levels • Usually has similar intentional policies and practices toward other socially oppressed groups, such as women, disabled, elderly and children, lesbians and gays, Third World citizens, etc. 	<p>2. Passive A “Club” Institution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tolerant of a limited number of People of Color with “proper” perspective and credentials • May still secretly limit or exclude People of Color in contradiction to public policies • Continues to intentionally maintain white power and privilege through its formal policies and practices, teachings and decision-making on all levels of institutional life • Often declares, “We don’t have a problem.” 	<p>3. Symbolic Change A Multicultural Institution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes official policy pronouncements regarding multicultural diversity • Sees itself as “non-racist” institution with open doors to People of Color • Carries out intentional inclusiveness efforts, recruiting “someone of color” on committees or office staff • Expanding view of diversity includes other socially oppressed groups, such as women, disabled, elderly and children, lesbians and gays, Third World citizens, etc. <p>But . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Not those who make waves” • Little or no contextual change in culture, policies and decision-making • Is still relatively unaware of continuing patterns of privilege, paternalism and control 	<p>4. Identity Change An Anti-Racist Institution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing understanding of racism as barrier to effective diversity • Develops analysis of systemic racism • Sponsors programs of anti-racism training • New consciousness of institutionalized white power and privilege • Develops intentional identity as an “anti-racist” institution • Begins to develop accountability to racially oppressed communities • Increasing commitment to dismantle racism and eliminate inherent white advantage <p>But . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional structures and culture that maintain white power and privilege still intact and relatively untouched 	<p>5. Structural Change A Transforming Institution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commits to process of intentional institutional restructuring, based on anti-racist analysis and identity • Audits and restructures all aspects of institutional life to ensure full participation of People of Color, including their worldview, culture and lifestyles • Implements structures, policies and practices with inclusive decision-making and other forms of power sharing on all levels of the institution’s life and work • Commits to struggle to dismantle racism in the wider community, and builds clear lines of accountability to racially oppressed communities • Anti-racist multicultural diversity becomes an institutionalized asset • Redefines and rebuilds all relationships and activities in society, based on anti-racist commitments 	<p>6. Fully Inclusive A Transformed Institution in a Transformed Society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future vision of an institution and wider community that has overcome systemic racism • Institution’s life reflects full participation and shared power with diverse racial, cultural and economic groups in determining its mission, structure, constituency, policies and practices • Full participation in decisions that shape the institution, and inclusion of diverse cultures, lifestyles and interests • A sense of restored community and mutual caring • Allies with others in combating all forms of social oppression <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">© By Crossroads Ministry: Adapted from original concept by Baily Jackson and Rita Hardiman, and further developed by Andrea Avazian and Ronice Branding.</p>		

Gender Activities

The Woman/Man Box



- Step 1) Choose a specific gender for the lesson. Draw the box, say that everything inside this box represents what a man or woman is. Give examples. Then have the group shout out words that describe what a man/woman is.
- Step 2) Have the group then shout out words or descriptions of what a man or woman is not or doesn't do. List those items outside the box on the right. Review the list upon completion.
- Step 3) Ask the group what happens when someone goes outside the box, what words are they called. List those words on the left.
- Step 4) Debrief—

- What or who determines what goes in the box?
- If you are outside of the box does that make you less of a man or less of a woman?
- Can you do things outside of the box and still be a woman/man?
- Why do people stay in the box?
- What are we doing when we make fun of folks for not staying in the box?
- Is there any common themes to the words you are called if you step out of the box? What does this theme say about the relationship men have with women/men or with other gay/lesbian men/women?
- How does the woman/man box help or hinder our relationship with ourselves and others?

8 Simple Rules for Being a Man or Woman

Example for a Man

1. Don't be like a girl.
2. Keep your feelings to yourself.
3. Work = #1 priority.
4. Be self-reliant.
5. Solve problems with aggression.
6. Be dominant and in control.
7. Women are to be used
8. Don't be gay.

- Step 1) Brainstorm with students what the top eight rules for being a woman or man are or use the above list.
- Step 2) Ask folks to look at the list and think to themselves: "how do I see these rules in my life?"
- Step 3) Break into pairs and have each pair talk about how these rules play out in their lives and what the effects are.
- Step 4) Come back into the group and have each pair share. Could use a talking stick or totem.
- Step 5) Debrief –

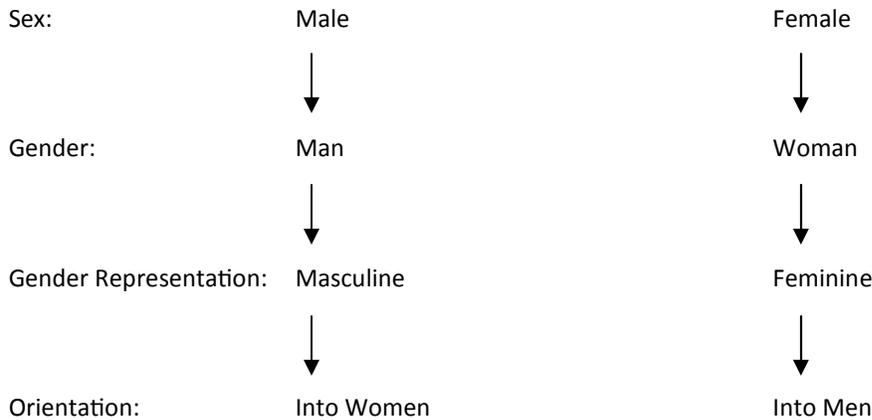
- Where do you learn these rules?
- How are these rules enforced?
- What happens if you break the rules?
- Is it OK to not follow the rules?
- What happens if someone follows the rules 100% of the time? Is this healthy?
- What would be rules you would want to see? Do rules serve us?
- What are we doing when we make fun of folks that don't follow the rules?

Gender Activities

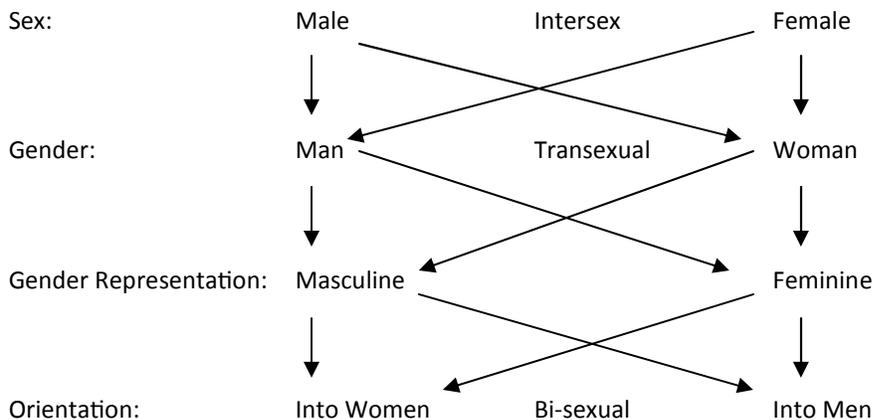
The Man/Woman Binary

A great lesson for older or more mature groups. A great theoretical framework for identifying how our society constructs gender and sexual orientation and how complex it really is.

How we are taught:



In Reality it is much more complex:



Step 1) Draw out the man/woman binary. Explain how we are taught that it is a very simple and logical progression. That you are given a sex (male) and as a result your gender will be man which in turn will mean you will represent that gender by being masculine (gender representation) and by sleeping with women (orientation).

Step 2) Discuss -

- Does this progression make sense?
- Are there any exceptions? Encourage students to give examples?

Step 3) Using the examples students have given you of cases that don't fit into the binary illustrate the complexity and how complicated it truly is in reality.

Step 4) Debrief -

- Is it ok to not fit in the binary we are taught?
- What happens when someone doesn't fit into the binary?
- If the binary is so complex why do we create such a simple one?
- What are we doing when we make fun of individuals that don't fit into the binary? (feminine men, masculine women, queer men and women, etc.)

Inter-Cultural Fluency Activities

Who Are You?... Who Are You?... Who Are You?...

A great activity for exploring self-awareness and identity.

- 1) Break the group into pairs. One person asks “who are you?” over and over for **one** minute. Then switch roles.
- 2) Everyone rotates to a new partner. One person asks again “who are you?” for **two** minutes but answers cannot have any roles: teacher, husband, climber, dirt bag, etc. Switch roles.
- 3) Everyone rotates to a new partner. One person asks again “who are you?” for **three** minutes but answers cannot have roles or any relationship pieces with a human being other than yourself.
- 4) Small group debrief: (6-8 people or 1/2 the group)
 - How did it feel to be asked?
 - How did it feel to ask others and listen?
 - What was the most challenging part?
 - How did your answers change when roles were removed?
 - When relationships were removed? What was left?
 - What were the most useful descriptors?
 - Did anyone use metaphors or similes?
- 5) Big group debrief

Stained Glass Window: The Filters Through Which You See The World

A great self awareness activity that explores the specific lenses/filters/biases you use to see the world.

- 1) Each person writes down on a piece of paper how they identify in the following categories: religion, physical ability, gender, ethnicity, race, sex and economic class they grew up in.
- 2) Break into pairs and each person must answer this question from the perspective of each category: “tell me about overnight camping from the perspective of _____” For example: “from the perspective of my gender (man) I find camping an adventurous, primal and challenging place ripe for exploration...” Each person will answer the question seven times/from the seven different perspectives.
- 3) Debrief in small groups of 6-8 (optional for very large groups)
- 4) Find someone you don’t know very well/haven’t met and pair up with them. Each person exchanges their piece of paper and each answer the following question from their partner’s perspective that they are now holding. “Tell me about mountaineering from the perspective of _____.”
- 5) Debrief in small groups of 6-8 (optional for very large groups)
- 6) Debrief in big group.

20 (Self-)Critical Things I Will Do to Be a Better Multicultural Educator

Compiled by [Paul Gorski](#) for EdChange and the [Multicultural Pavilion](#)

1. I will learn to pronounce every student's full given name correctly. No student should need to shorten or change their names to make it easier to pronounce for me or their classmates. I will practice and learn every name, regardless of how difficult it feels or how time-consuming it becomes. That is the first step in being inclusive.
2. I will sacrifice the safety of my comfort zone by building a process for continually assessing, understanding, and challenging my biases and prejudices and how they impact my expectations for, and relationships with, all students, parents, and colleagues.
3. I will center student voices, interests, and experiences in and out of my classroom. Even while I talk passionately about being inclusive and student-centered in the classroom, I rarely include or center students in conversations about school reform. I must face this contradiction and rededicate to sharing power with my students.
4. I will engage in a self-reflective process to explore the ways in which my identity development impacts the way I see and experience different people.
5. I will invite critique from colleagues and accept it openly. I accept feedback very well until someone decides to offer me feedback. Though it's easy to become defensive in the face of critique, I will thank the person for their time and courage (because it's not easy to critique a colleague). The worst possible scenario is for people to stop providing me feedback, positive and negative.
6. I will never stop being a student. If I do not grow, learn, and change at the same rate the world around me is changing, then I necessarily lose touch with the lives and contexts of my students. I must continue to educate myself—to learn from the experiences of my students and their parents, to study current events and their relationship to what I am teaching, and to be challenged by a diversity of perspectives.
7. I will understand the relationship between INTENT and IMPACT. Often, and particularly when I'm in a situation in which I experience some level of privilege, I have the luxury of referring and responding only to what I intend, no matter what impact I have on somebody. I must take responsibility for and learn from my impact because most individual-level oppression is unintentional. But unintentional oppression hurts just as much as intentional oppression.
8. I will reject the myth of color-blindness. As painful as it may be to admit, I know that I react differently when I'm in a room full of people who share many dimensions of my identity than when I'm in a room full of people who are very different from me. I have to be open and honest about that, because those shifts inevitably inform the experiences of people in my classes or workshops. In addition, color-blindness denies people validation of their whole person.
9. I will recognize my own social identity group memberships and how they may affect my students' experiences and learning processes. People do not always experience me the way I intend them to, even if I am an active advocate for all my students. A student's initial reaction to me may be based on a lifetime of experiences, so I must try not to take such reactions personally.
10. I will build coalitions with teachers who are different from me (in terms of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, religion, first language, disability, and other identities). These can be valuable relationships of trust and honest critique. At the same time, I must not rely on other people to identify my weaknesses. In particular, in the areas of my identity around

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which I experience privilege, I must not rely on people from historically underprivileged groups to teach me how to improve myself (which is, in and of itself, a practice of privilege).

11. I will improve my skills as a facilitator, so when issues of diversity and equity do arise in the classroom, I can take advantage of the resulting educational opportunities. Too often, I allow these moments to slip away, either because I am uncomfortable with the topic or because I feel unprepared to effectively facilitate my students through it. (I often try to make myself feel better by suggesting that the students “aren't ready” to talk about racism or sexism, or whatever the topic might be, when it's more honest to say that I am not ready.) I will hone these skills so that I do not cheat my students out of important conversations and learning opportunities.
12. I will invite critique from my students, and when I do, I will dedicate to listening actively and modeling a willingness to be changed by their presence to the same extent they are necessarily changed by mine.
13. I will think critically about how my preferred learning styles impact my teaching style. I am usually thoughtful about diversifying my teaching style to address the needs of students with a variety of learning styles. Still, I tend to fall back on my most comfortable teaching style most often. I will fight this temptation and work harder to engage all of my students.
14. I will affirm and model appreciation for all forms of intelligence and the wide variety of ways students illustrate understanding and mastery of skills and knowledge.
15. I will reflect on my own experiences as a student and how they inform my teaching. Research indicates that my teaching is most closely informed by my own experiences as a student (even more so than my pre-service training). The practice of drawing on these experiences, positive and negative, provides important insights regarding my teaching practice.
16. I will encourage my students to think critically and ask critical questions about all information they receive including that which they receive from me.
17. I will challenge myself to take personal responsibility before looking for fault elsewhere. For example, if I have one student who is falling behind or being disruptive, I will consider what I am doing or not doing that may be contributing to their disengagement before problematizing their behavior or effort.
18. I will acknowledge my role as a social activist. My work changes lives, conferring upon me both tremendous power and tremendous responsibility. Even though I may not identify myself as a social activist, I know that the depth of my impact on society is profound, if only by the sheer number of lives I touch. I must acknowledge and draw on that power and responsibility as a frame for guiding my efforts toward equity and social justice in my work.
19. I will fight for equity for all underrepresented or disenfranchised students. Equity is not a game of choice—if I am to advocate education equity, I do not have the luxury of choosing who does or does not have access to it. For example, I cannot effectively fight for racial equity while I fail to confront gender inequity. And I can never be a real advocate for gender equity if I choose to duck the responsibility for ensuring equity for lesbian, gay, and bisexual students. When I find myself justifying my inattention to any group of disenfranchised students due to the worldview or value system into which I was socialized, I know that it is time to reevaluate that worldview or value system.
20. I will celebrate myself as an educator and total person. I can, and should, also celebrate every moment I spend in self-critique, however difficult and painful, because it will make me a better educator. And that is something to celebrate!

Trans Respect/Etiquette/Support

101

by Micah Bazant (updated from from *TimTum: A Trans Jew Zine*)

*Please use widely ● Add and subtract from this document as needed ● Please acknowledge this source
Please send suggestions, feedback, etc to: info@timtum.org.*

I am using the word 'trans' in the broadest sense, to include labels like genderqueer, transgender and transsexual. This was originally written from my own experience as a white transperson/ftm who is perceived as both female and male. Of course, every trans person is different, and would write this list differently. Also, some things, which are totally inappropriate with strangers or acquaintances, may be fine or welcomed in the context of a trusting relationship. I'm sad to say that I've done most of the things on this list at some point in my life, and had most of them done to me even by other trans people. As with other forms of oppression, they are socialized into us from birth. We are all taught to be transphobic, and unlearning it is a process and a responsibility.

Pronouns & Self-Identification

Respect everyone's self-identification. Call everyone by their preferred name/s and pronoun/s. Use language and behavior that is appropriate to their gender self-identification. Do this for everyone, all the time, no matter how much you think they deviate from what a "real man" or "real woman" should be.

What we truly know ourselves to be should be the only determinant of our gender in society. Set aside your doubts, start educating yourself and respect that we are who we say we are. By doing this you are saying: "I see you, I support you, I respect you." By not doing this, you let trans people know: "I don't understand you and I'm not trying to. What you tell me about yourself is not important, all that's important is how I think of you. I am not your ally. You are not safe with me." Being referred to or treated as the wrong gender feels painful and disrespectful to us.

It's hard and dangerous to change your name and pronoun. Know that it has taken a lot of courage for this person to let you know who they really are; they are sharing something very precious. It may seem hard or silly to you at first, but it can be a matter of life and death for us.

If you don't know what pronouns or gender-labels someone prefers (and there's no mutual friend around to clue you in), just ask them. Politely. And respectfully. For example: "What pronoun do you prefer?" or "How do you like to be referred to, in terms of gender?"

Usually when people can't immediately determine someone's gender, they become afraid and hostile. If you misrecognize someone's gender, it's okay, don't freak out. Apologize once and get it right the next time. Misidentifying or being unable to classify someone's gender does not have to be an awkward or shameful experience. By asking someone in the right way, you can indirectly communicate: 'I want to be respectful of you and I don't want to make any assumptions. I see your gender ambiguity and/or fluid gender expression as a positive, fabulous, creative and honest (need I go on?) thing.'

Some transpeople are bravely making more space for gender diversity by using language creatively. Respect these efforts and don't dismiss them as silly, funny, weird or too difficult. (Remember Mahatma Gandhi's words: "First they ignored us, then they laughed at us, then they tried to fight us, then we won.")

For example, some people prefer to be referred to as 'they', or as both 'he' and 'she' interchangeably. Some people prefer to be referred to only by their name. Some people use non-binary pronouns like 'ze' and 'hir'.

Invasive Questions

Medical Information

You do NOT have the right to know any medical or anatomical information about anyone else's body, unless they decide to share it with you. This means: don't ask about their genitals, their surgeries, the effects of their hormones, etc. This is private! The first question usually asked to transpeople is, "Do you have a penis?" or "Do you have a vagina?" Would you ask a non-trans person about their genitals? To do so is incredibly invasive and disrespectful. It reduces us to one body part, as if all the rest of our minds, hearts, bodies, contributions and personalities are not important. Our bodies are not a community forum, or a tool to educate you!

Also, don't ask us about our surgeries, medications, etc. If we want you to know about something, we'll bring it up. For example, just because your friend-of-a friend-of-a transperson told you that someone is having surgery, doesn't mean you have a right to come up and ask them about it (especially in front of other people).

Don't ask us if we've had a "sex change operation." Gender transition doesn't happen through one magic operation. And the operation you're thinking of probably involves transforming our genitals, which, again, is reductive and disrespectful. Some of us never want to have any surgeries. Some of us desperately want surgery and can't afford it or don't have access to it. For a lot of female-to-male transpeople the surgeries they would want don't exist.

Even if you're curious, don't interrogate us. It's not our job to educate you and we may not feel like answering your incredibly personal questions right now. Unless we bring it up, don't ask us how our gender is affecting our personal relationships. For example, if you just met me, **don't ask me how my family is taking it.**

If you want to find out more about trans bodies or our families, educate yourself through books, websites, films, etc.

'Out'ing

Trans people have a huge range of ways that we navigate the world, based on preference and necessity. Transphobia functions very differently than homophobia; being 'out' is not necessarily desirable or possible for us. Being a trans ally means supporting people in being more safe and healthy – which may mean anything between letting everyone they meet know they are trans, to keeping their gender history entirely confidential. It's crucial to support people in being as 'out', or *not*, as they need to be.

There are many situations in which being 'out' could have serious negative repercussions; transpeople are killed every year just because other people find out they are trans. Revealing someone's trans status could cost them a job, a relationship, or their physical safety.

Many transpeople are perceived 100% of the time as their preferred gender, and no one would ever suspect they had been through a gender transition at some point. Some of these folks prefer never to be 'out' as trans and, in fact, may not even consider themselves 'trans.' This is a completely valid choice

among the huge spectrum of gender diversity. If you know someone who's trans experience is completely private, respect them by honoring that privacy.

Some of us are most comfortable being 'out' as trans all the time, some of us may never reveal our trans status to anyone.

Do not assume that just because you know us in one way, that we are able to, or choose to, live that way in every other part of our lives. Some of us express our gender in different ways in different parts of our lives. For example, we may not be able to find work as the gender we truly are. Or we may only find peace by living some of the time in a more masculine gender and some of the time as more feminine.

For myself, even though I hate being called "she," if someone refers to me that way, I might or might not correct them depending on many variables: whether I'm going to have to see them again, how confident I feel, who I'm with, how much backup I have, etc.

Think about when and why you 'out' someone as trans. Are you talking about your 'trans friend' just to prove how open and hip you are? Is it necessary to out this person, or are you doing it for your own personal reasons?

Names

Names are very powerful things. For a lot of trans people, the names given to us by our parents represent a gender identity which was wrong, humiliating and forced. Changing our names carries a lot more weight than it does for non-trans people. Don't ask someone what their old name was. And don't ask if our current names are our 'given names', or worse yet, 'real names.' If someone wants you to know, they will tell you. If you know someone's old name, don't share it with other people.

Some transpeople go by multiple names, because they are in transition, or because they prefer it that way. Again, don't trip about it. Just ask them what they prefer to be called and then call them that, every time. It may seem strange to you, but it's completely normal for us.

Also, don't make comments about the gender associations of trans people's names. This is especially annoying in a cross-cultural context. A name that means (or sounds like) 'Badass warrior king' in one language, might mean (or sound like) 'Nellie flower picker' in another. Don't assume that you know what meanings or gender implications our names have.

Transition

Don't assume that our gender transitions are linear, one-way, or start or end at a fixed point. For example, some intersex people¹ (who aren't "born male" or "born female") have trans experiences, and may also identify as trans. Some transpeople, for example, may express themselves as masculine, feminine and then back to masculine. In an ideal world this would be no different than having long hair, then short hair, then long again.

There are infinite ways to transition. Things like binding, packing, tucking, electrolysis, hormones, surgery, or changing our name, legal 'sex' and pronoun, are some of the possible steps of a gender transition. **Trans people have the right to make all, some or none of these changes, and in any order.**

¹ For more information about intersex issues, visit www.isna.org, the website of The Intersex Society of North America.

Do not ask us if we are sure, or remind us that our transition is irreversible and that we may regret our changes. Do not tell us we are coming out as trans just to be 'trendy'. We have usually been thinking about and dealing with our gender issues for a long time, although we may not have shared our years of internal torment with you. We are aware of, and probably very excited about, the consequences of our decisions.

Do not tell us how you liked us (or certain things about us) better before we transitioned. There is a normal and healthy grieving process that people go through around *any* major change, including gender changes by people in our lives. It's important to acknowledge and deal with your feelings, but not with us. We are going through enough stress, and we really just need your support.

Do not tell us how hard this is for you or how uncomfortable we make you. However challenging it may feel to you, it's much harder to live as a transperson. Many many people become amazing trans allies and effortlessly call all their trans friends by the right names and pronouns. You can too, its really not that hard - its just a different way of thinking about gender. If you are uncomfortable with someone's gender, find ways to work on it yourself or with other, knowledgeable non-trans friends.

Passing² and being passed

Don't judge our ability to be seen as male or female. For example, don't say: "Maybe if you did _____, or didn't do _____, you'd pass better, and we would be able to accept your gender better." Also, it is not always appropriate to compliment people on how well they pass. Whether or not we are passed as the gender we prefer is often a matter of money and genetics, not desire or determination. We are not all seeking to pass in the same ways, for the same reasons, or at all! These comments are divisive to trans communities. They reinforce straight, binary gender standards by labeling certain traits (and people) as 'good' and 'real'.

Fetishization/Tokenization

Yes, it's true, trans people are all incredibly sexy in our own unique individual ways, but don't fetishize and tokenize us. Don't tell us how you love FtMs because we were socialized female and therefore we aren't like 'real men.' While this may be true for some individuals, FtMs are just as diverse as any other group. Many transmen identify as 'real men' who are just as (or more) masculine than people assigned 'male' at birth. Don't tell us how MtFs are the ideal sex partners because they are 'chicks with dicks.'

Don't expect any one of us to speak for all trans people. Don't assume that you know about trans issues because you once knew a trans person. If we are offended by something you do, listen, apologize and reflect – don't excuse your bad behavior by saying that your other trans friend didn't mind. Don't

² In this context, 'passing' refers to trans people being perceived as non-trans members of their correct gender category. While this is a goal for most trans people, I think its important to stay aware of the systemic power imbalance that is implicit in this term. I prefer the term 'being passed,' because it emphasizes the fact that trans people do not have total control over how we are perceived, and that the power in the equation of passing lies completely with the non-trans person who 'passes' us. It is something done to us, not something we are able to control.

showcase us as tokens of diversity in your social circle or annual report, without being a real friend or truly integrating transpeople into your organization.

Transphobia + sexism + racism + classism = a big slimy mess

It is a stereotype that all trans people are sexist: that all MtFs are still “really men” and still have male privilege, and that all FtMs are becoming men because of their internalized sexism. Trans people can be sexist towards ourselves and others, but we are not any more or less sexist than non-trans people. It is not inherently sexist to be trans.

Similarly and unfortunately, trans communities are just as racist, classist, etc. as the rest of the world, but not more so. And these dynamics play out in particular ways among transpeople. Just like some people will tell you all gay people are white, some people believe that all trans people are white, and that being trans is just a privilege of white people. Of course it is easier to be trans (or anything actually) if you are white and have money, but most gender-variant and trans people are working-class and poor people of color, because most people in the world are poor and working-class people of color. Being trans is not inherently racist or classist.

Age

Don't be surprised if you or others radically misread a trans person's age. It may be amazing to you, but we are used to it, and probably over it.

A lot of trans people on the FtM spectrum look much younger than they are, especially if they are not on hormones, are on a low dose of hormones, or are just starting hormones. Because of this, we may experience some of the lovely effects of adulthood, such as not being taken seriously, getting carded all the time, and being condescended to. A lot of people on the MtF spectrum look older than they are, and experience the delightful effects of sexism, like being treated as less important because they aren't seen as young and pretty.

Fascinating trans films/ politics/TV shows/etc etc...

It is really important for people to educate themselves about different experiences of oppression, however, someone who has had to deal with that oppression all the time may not want to hear about it, or process how hard it was for you, as someone not directly affected by it. For example, when the movie “Boys Don't Cry” came out, many many people every day took it upon themselves to try and discuss it with me, ask me if I've seen it, explain how tragic it was and how hard it was for them to watch as a non-trans person. We have to deal with transphobia **all the time** and so we don't always want to talk about it. Check yourself before you bring up the ten latest, most horrifying transphobic things you heard yesterday - your trans friend may actually not want to re-experience them with you. If you want to discuss a movie, book, current event or experience that relates to trans issues, bring it up with another non-trans person. If a trans person wants to discuss it with you, they'll bring it up.

“Extra letter” Syndrome

Gay and lesbian organizations all over the country have added a token 'T' to their names, without doing anything to include trans people or issues in their organizations. Although queer issues and trans struggles are interlinked (don't forget who rioted at Stonewall), they are very different. For example, access to transition-related medical care (such as hormones and surgery), and issues of legal

identification (such as changing our names and 'sex') are huge struggles faced by transpeople, but are non-issues for gay and lesbian people. As mentioned above, being 'out.' which is desirable in many GLQ spaces (especially white, middle-class ones), is not a goal of many transpeople. The world of issues around sexual orientation is fundamentally different than the world of gender, so don't assume you are serving us at all by just adding a "T" on the end of your acronym.

Recognize your own gender uniqueness and how transphobia affects you, but don't speak for trans people. Also recognize that within trans communities, not only is each individual's experience different, but each group of individuals' experience is different from other groups. Just as you probably wouldn't (or shouldn't) ask a gay man to explain lesbian issues, you shouldn't lump all trans people together, because we all have unique experiences and perspectives. For example, African-American transsexual issues are different from disabled genderqueer issues, which are different from drag king issues, and so on. Also, most indigenous cultures have non-binary gender systems, and many of us identify with our ethnically-specific gender identities (such as two-spirit, hijra, timtum, fa'afafine, etc.) that may overlap with, but are distinct from being 'trans.'

GOOD THINGS!

There are so many positive things you can do to be ally to trans people, even if you do not have that much experience with trans communities.

Start with being honest about how much you know, or don't know. It is refreshingly wonderful to hear someone say: "Actually, I don't know anything about trans people. I want to support you and respect you, so please forgive my ignorance. I'm going to start educating myself." Almost all of us started out ignorant of trans issues – even trans people! The important thing is to pro-actively learn more once you become aware.

Educate yourself and take action!

- Look at books, websites, films.
- Talk to other non-trans people who know more than you do.
- Start an unlearning transphobia group with other non-trans friends.
- Help write a non-discrimination policy for your school or workplace that protects gender identity and expression.
- Pay some trans folks to do an educational presentation for your group or organization.
- Especially if you work in a school, faith-based organization, governmental agency, or a social justice, social services or healthcare organization, try to integrate trans-inclusive policies and services.
- Work to create bathrooms that are accessible for all genders (for example, single-stall gender-neutral bathrooms)
- Think critically about your own gender and your participation in the binary gender system.
- Reflect on how you can be a better ally to trans people.

Once you have educated yourself, educate other non-trans people about gender issues. This is so needed and appreciated!! There have been so many times when people said offensive things to me when I wished I had a non-trans ally to refer them to. Trans people shouldn't have to do all the work. Besides, even though there are way more of us than you think, there aren't enough of us to educate all the hordes and hordes of non-trans people in the world. Also, it's a lot harder for us to do this work, because we are more vulnerable. Helping someone unlearn transphobia usually involves hearing and sorting through a lot of hurtful crud while people sort out their feelings about gender.

Interrupt transphobic behavior. This is also usually easier for a non-trans person to do, because they are not making themselves as personally vulnerable or a target for retaliation.

For example, correcting other people when they refer to someone by the wrong pronoun is very important. When introducing people, it is good etiquette to clue them in beforehand about the language preferred by any trans people who are present. By this I don't mean outing any trans people who would prefer not to be out, but letting people know how to refer to anyone who might not 'pass.' Simply saying things like, "I'm a lady, he's a guy," or "that's none of your business," or "actually, his voice/body/manner is just great the way it is, and I don't want to hear another comment about it," can save the day.

Above all, talk to your trans friends, listen and educate yourself. If you are not sure how to best support someone, ask them. If you are not ready to support someone in the way that they need, don't pretend that you are, just figure out what you need to do to get there. Starting to be an ally doesn't require you to be an expert, just be honest with yourself and take some risks.

**Remember:
gender is a universe and we are all stars.**

Transphobia limits and oppresses all of us.

By becoming an ally, you'll not only have the satisfaction of doing the right thing, you'll get to experience your true starry brilliance.

Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life

Implications for Clinical Practice

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Racial microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color. Perpetrators of microaggressions are often unaware that they engage in such communications when they interact with racial/ethnic minorities. A taxonomy of racial microaggressions in everyday life was created through a review of the social psychological literature on aversive racism, from formulations regarding the manifestation and impact of everyday racism, and from reading numerous personal narratives of counselors (both White and those of color) on their racial/cultural awakening. Microaggressions seem to appear in three forms: microassault, microinsult, and microinvalidation. Almost all interracial encounters are prone to microaggressions; this article uses the White counselor – client of color counseling dyad to illustrate how they impair the development of a therapeutic alliance. Suggestions regarding education and training and research in the helping professions are discussed.

Keywords: microaggression, microassault, microinsult, microinvalidation, attributional ambiguity

Although the civil rights movement had a significant effect on changing racial interactions in this society, racism continues to plague the United States (Thompson & Neville, 1999). President Clinton's Race Advisory Board concluded that (a) racism is one of the most divisive forces in our society, (b) racial legacies of the past continue to haunt current policies and practices that create unfair disparities between minority and majority groups, (c) racial inequities are so deeply ingrained in American society that they are nearly invisible, and (d) most White Americans are unaware of the advantages they enjoy in this society and of how their attitudes and actions unintentionally discriminate against persons of color (Advisory Board to the President's Initiative on Race, 1998). This last conclusion is especially problematic in the mental health professions because most graduates continue to be White and trained primarily in Western European models of service delivery (D. W. Sue & Sue, 2003). For that reason, this article focuses primarily on White therapist – client of color interactions.

Because White therapists are members of the larger society and not immune from inheriting the racial biases of their forebears (Burkard & Knox, 2004; D. W. Sue, 2005), they may become victims of a cultural conditioning process that imbues within them biases and prejudices (Abelson, Dasgupta, Park, & Banaji, 1998; Banaji, Hardin, & Rothman, 1993) that discriminate against clients of color. Over the past 20 years, calls for cultural competence in the helping professions (American Psychological Association, 2003; D. W. Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992) have stressed the importance of two therapist characteristics associated with effective service delivery to racial/ethnic minority clients: (a) awareness of oneself as a racial/cultural being and of the biases, stereotypes, and assumptions that influence worldviews and (b) awareness of the worldviews of culturally diverse clients. Achieving these two goals is blocked, however, when White clinicians fail to understand how issues of race influence the therapy process and how racism potentially infects the delivery of services to clients of color (Richardson & Molinaro, 1996). Therapists who are unaware of their biases and prejudices may unintentionally create impasses for clients of color, which may partially explain well-documented patterns of therapy underutilization and premature termination of therapy among such clients (Burkard & Knox, 2004; Kearney, Draper, & Baron, 2005). In this article, we describe and analyze how racism in the form of racial microaggressions is particularly problematic for therapists to identify; propose a taxonomy of racial microaggressions with potential implications for practice, education and training, and research; and use the counseling/therapy process to illustrate how racial microaggressions can impair the therapeutic alliance. To date, no conceptual or theoretical model of

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racial microaggressions has been proposed to explain their impact on the therapeutic process.

The Changing Face of Racism

In recent history, racism in North America has undergone a transformation, especially after the post-civil rights era when the conscious democratic belief in equality for groups of color directly clashed with the long history of racism in the society (Jones, 1997; Thompson & Neville, 1999). The more subtle forms of racism have been labeled *modern racism* (McConahay, 1986), *symbolic racism* (Sears, 1988), and *aversive racism* (Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, & Hodson, 2002). All three explanations of contemporary racism share commonalities. They emphasize that racism (a) is more likely than ever to be disguised and covert and (b) has evolved from the “old fashioned” form, in which overt racial hatred and bigotry is consciously and publicly displayed, to a more ambiguous and nebulous form that is more difficult to identify and acknowledge.

It appears that modern and symbolic racism are most closely associated with political conservatives, who disclaim personal bigotry by strong and rigid adherence to traditional American values (individualism, self-reliance, hard work, etc.), whereas aversive racism is more characteristic of White liberals (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1996, 2000). Aversive racists, according to these researchers, are strongly motivated by egalitarian values as well as antiminority feelings. Their egalitarian values operate on a conscious level, while their antiminority feelings are less conscious and generally covert (DeVos & Banaji, 2005). In some respects, these three forms of racism can be ordered along a continuum; aversive racists are the least consciously negative, followed by modern and symbolic rac-

ists, who are somewhat more prejudiced, and finally by old-fashioned biological racists (Nelson, 2006).

Although much has been written about contemporary forms of racism, many studies in health care (Smedley & Smedley, 2005), education (Gordon & Johnson, 2003), employment (Hinton, 2004), mental health (Burkard & Knox, 2004), and other social settings (Sellers & Shelton, 2003) indicate the difficulty of describing and defining racial discrimination that occurs via “aversive racism” or “implicit bias”; these types of racism are difficult to identify, quantify, and rectify because of their subtle, nebulous, and unnamed nature. Without an adequate classification or understanding of the dynamics of subtle racism, it will remain invisible and potentially harmful to the well-being, self-esteem, and standard of living of people of color (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). Ironically, it has been proposed that the daily common experiences of racial aggression that characterize aversive racism may have significantly more influence on racial anger, frustration, and self-esteem than traditional overt forms of racism (Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). Furthermore, the invisible nature of acts of aversive racism prevents perpetrators from realizing and confronting (a) their own complicity in creating psychological dilemmas for minorities and (b) their role in creating disparities in employment, health care, and education.

The Manifestation of Racial Microaggressions

In reviewing the literature on subtle and contemporary forms of racism, we have found the term “*racial microaggressions*” to best describe the phenomenon in its everyday occurrence. First coined by Pierce in 1970, the term refers to “subtle, stunning, often automatic, and non-verbal ex-



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changes which are ‘put downs’” (Pierce, Carew, Pierce-Gonzalez, & Willis, 1978, p. 66). Racial microaggressions have also been described as “subtle insults (verbal, non-verbal, and/or visual) directed toward people of color, often automatically or unconsciously” (Solórzano et al., 2000). Simply stated, microaggressions are brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to people of color because they belong to a racial minority group. In the world of business, the term “*microinequities*” is used to describe the pattern of being overlooked, underrespected, and devalued because of one’s race or gender. Microaggressions are often unconsciously delivered in the form of subtle snubs or dismissive looks, gestures, and tones. These exchanges are so pervasive and automatic in daily conversations and interactions that they are often dismissed and glossed over as being innocent and innocuous. Yet, as indicated previously, microaggressions are detrimental to persons of color because they impair performance in a multitude of settings by sapping the psychic and spiritual energy of recipients and by creating inequities (Franklin, 2004; D. W. Sue, 2004).

There is an urgent need to bring greater awareness and understanding of how microaggressions operate, their numerous manifestations in society, the type of impact they have on people of color, the dynamic interaction between perpetrator and target, and the educational strategies needed to eliminate them. Our attempt to define and propose a taxonomy of microaggressions is grounded in several lines of empirical and experiential evidence in the professional literature and in personal narratives.

First, the work by psychologists on aversive racism (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1996; Dovidio et al., 2002), studies suggesting the widespread existence of dissociation between implicit and explicit social stereotyping (Abelson et

al., 1998; Banaji et al., 1993; DeVos & Banaji, 2005), the attributional ambiguity of everyday racial discrimination (Crocker & Major, 1989), the daily manifestations of racism in many arenas of life (Plant & Peruche, 2005; Sellers & Shelton, 2003; Vanman, Saltz, Nathan, & Warren, 2004), and multiple similarities between microaggressive incidents and items that comprise measures of race-related stress/perceived discrimination toward Black Americans (Brondolo et al., 2005; Klonoff & Landrine, 1999; Utsey & Ponterotto, 1996) and Asian Americans (Liang, Li, & Kim, 2004) all seem to lend empirical support to the concept of racial microaggressions. Second, numerous personal narratives and brief life stories on race written by White psychologists and psychologists of color provide experiential evidence for the existence of racial microaggressions in everyday life (American Counseling Association, 1999; Conyne & Bemak, 2005; Ponterotto, Casas, Suzuki, & Alexander, 2001). Our analysis of the life experiences of these individuals and the research literature in social and counseling psychology led us to several conclusions: (a) The personal narratives were rich with examples and incidents of racial microaggressions, (b) the formulation of microaggressions was consistent with the research literature, and (c) racial microaggressions seemed to manifest themselves in three distinct forms.

Forms of Racial Microaggressions

Racial microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group. They are not limited to human encounters alone but may also be environmental in nature, as when a person of color is exposed to an office setting that unin-



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tionally assails his or her racial identity (Gordon & Johnson, 2003; D. W. Sue, 2003). For example, one's racial identity can be minimized or made insignificant through the sheer exclusion of decorations or literature that represents various racial groups. Three forms of microaggressions can be identified: microassault, microinsult, and microinvalidation.

Microassault

A microassault is an explicit racial derogation characterized primarily by a verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions. Referring to someone as "colored" or "Oriental," using racial epithets, discouraging interracial interactions, deliberately serving a White patron before someone of color, and displaying a swastika are examples. Microassaults are most similar to what has been called "old fashioned" racism conducted on an individual level. They are most likely to be conscious and deliberate, although they are generally expressed in limited "private" situations (micro) that allow the perpetrator some degree of anonymity. In other words, people are likely to hold notions of minority inferiority privately and will only display them publicly when they (a) lose control or (b) feel relatively safe to engage in a microassault. Because we have chosen to analyze the unintentional and unconscious manifestations of microaggressions, microassaults are not the focus of our article. It is important to note, however, that individuals can also vary in the degree of conscious awareness they show in the use of the following two forms of microaggressions.

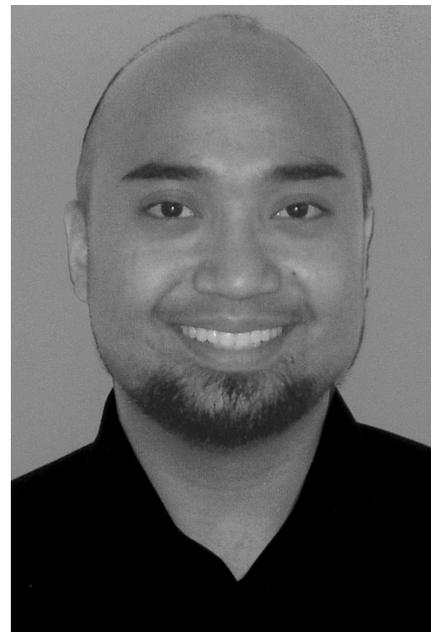
Microinsult

A microinsult is characterized by communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person's

racial heritage or identity. Microinsults represent subtle snubs, frequently unknown to the perpetrator, but clearly convey a hidden insulting message to the recipient of color. When a White employer tells a prospective candidate of color "I believe the most qualified person should get the job, regardless of race" or when an employee of color is asked "How did you get your job?", the underlying message from the perspective of the recipient may be twofold: (a) People of color are not qualified, and (b) as a minority group member, you must have obtained the position through some affirmative action or quota program and not because of ability. Such statements are not necessarily aggressions, but context is important. Hearing these statements frequently when used against affirmative action makes the recipient likely to experience them as aggressions. Microinsults can also occur nonverbally, as when a White teacher fails to acknowledge students of color in the classroom or when a White supervisor seems distracted during a conversation with a Black employee by avoiding eye contact or turning away (Hinton, 2004). In this case, the message conveyed to persons of color is that their contributions are unimportant.

Microinvalidation

Microinvalidations are characterized by communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of color. When Asian Americans (born and raised in the United States) are complimented for speaking good English or are repeatedly asked where they were born, the effect is to negate their U.S. American heritage and to convey that they are perpetual foreigners. When Blacks are told that "I don't see color" or "We are all human beings," the effect is to negate their experiences as racial/cultural beings (Helms, 1992).



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When a Latino couple is given poor service at a restaurant and shares their experience with White friends, only to be told “Don’t be so oversensitive” or “Don’t be so petty,” the racial experience of the couple is being nullified and its importance is being diminished.

We have been able to identify nine categories of microaggressions with distinct themes: alien in one’s own land, ascription of intelligence, color blindness, criminality/assumption of criminal status, denial of individual racism, myth of meritocracy, pathologizing cultural values/communication styles, second-class status, and environmental invalidation. Table 1 provides samples of comments or situations that may potentially be classified as racial microaggressions and their accompanying hidden assumptions and messages. Figure 1 visually presents the three large classes of microaggressions, the classification of the themes under each category, and their relationship to one another.

The experience of a racial microaggression has major implications for both the perpetrator and the target person. It creates psychological dilemmas that unless adequately resolved lead to increased levels of racial anger, mistrust, and loss of self-esteem for persons of color; prevent White people from perceiving a different racial reality; and create impediments to harmonious race-relations (Spanierman & Heppner, 2004; Thompson & Neville, 1999).

The Invisibility and Dynamics of Racial Microaggressions

The following real-life incident illustrates the issues of invisibility and the disguised problematic dynamics of racial microaggressions.

I [Derald Wing Sue, the senior author, an Asian American] recently traveled with an African American colleague on a plane flying from New York to Boston. The plane was a small “hopper”

with a single row of seats on one side and double seats on the other. As the plane was only sparsely populated, we were told by the flight attendant (White) that we could sit anywhere, so we sat at the front, across the aisle from one another. This made it easy for us to converse and provided a larger comfortable space on a small plane for both of us. As the attendant was about to close the hatch, three White men in suits entered the plane, were informed they could sit anywhere, and promptly seated themselves in front of us. Just before take-off, the attendant proceeded to close all overhead compartments and seemed to scan the plane with her eyes. At that point she approached us, leaned over, interrupted our conversation, and asked if we would mind moving to the back of the plane. She indicated that she needed to distribute weight on the plane evenly.

Both of us (passengers of color) had similar negative reactions. First, balancing the weight on the plane seemed reasonable, but why were we being singled out? After all, we had boarded first and the three White men were the last passengers to arrive. Why were they not being asked to move? Were we being singled out because of our race? Was this just a random event with no racial overtones? Were we being oversensitive and petty?

Although we complied by moving to the back of the plane, both of us felt resentment, irritation, and anger. In light of our everyday racial experiences, we both came to the same conclusion: The flight attendant had treated us like second-class citizens because of our race. But this incident did not end there. While I kept telling myself to drop the matter, I could feel my blood pressure rising, heart beating faster, and face flush with anger. When the attendant walked back to make sure our seat belts were fastened, I could not contain my anger any longer. Struggling to control myself, I said to her in a forced calm voice: “Did you know that you asked two passengers of color to step to the rear of the ‘bus’?” For a few seconds she said nothing but looked at me with a horrified expression. Then she said in a righteously indignant tone, “Well, I have never been accused of that! How dare you? I don’t see color! I only asked you to move to balance the plane. Anyway, I was only trying to give you more space and greater privacy.”

Attempts to explain my perceptions and feelings only generated greater defensiveness from her. For every allegation I made, she seemed to have a rational reason for her actions. Finally, she broke off the conversation and refused to talk about the incident any longer. Were it not for my colleague who validated my experiential reality, I would have left that encounter wondering whether I was correct or incorrect in my perceptions. Nevertheless, for the rest of the flight, I stewed over the incident and it left a sour taste in my mouth.

The power of racial microaggressions lies in their invisibility to the perpetrator and, oftentimes, the recipient (D. W. Sue, 2005). Most White Americans experience themselves as good, moral, and decent human beings who believe in equality and democracy. Thus, they find it difficult to believe that they possess biased racial attitudes and may engage in behaviors that are discriminatory (D. W. Sue, 2004). Microaggressive acts can usually be explained away by seemingly nonbiased and valid reasons. For the recipient of a microaggression, however, there is always the nagging question of whether it really happened (Crocker & Major, 1989). It is difficult to identify a microaggression, especially when other explanations seem plausible. Many people of color describe a vague feeling

Table 1
Examples of Racial Microaggressions

Theme	Microaggression	Message
Alien in own land When Asian Americans and Latino Americans are assumed to be foreign-born	"Where are you from?" "Where were you born?" "You speak good English." A person asking an Asian American to teach them words in their native language	You are not American. You are a foreigner.
Ascription of intelligence Assigning intelligence to a person of color on the basis of their race	"You are a credit to your race." "You are so articulate." Asking an Asian person to help with a math or science problem	People of color are generally not as intelligent as Whites. It is unusual for someone of your race to be intelligent. All Asians are intelligent and good in math/sciences.
Color blindness Statements that indicate that a White person does not want to acknowledge race	"When I look at you, I don't see color." "America is a melting pot." "There is only one race, the human race."	Denying a person of color's racial/ethnic experiences. Assimilate/acculturate to the dominant culture. Denying the individual as a racial/cultural being.
Criminality/assumption of criminal status A person of color is presumed to be dangerous, criminal, or deviant on the basis of their race	A White man or woman clutching their purse or checking their wallet as a Black or Latino approaches or passes A store owner following a customer of color around the store A White person waits to ride the next elevator when a person of color is on it	You are a criminal. You are going to steal/ You are poor/ You do not belong. You are dangerous.
Denial of individual racism A statement made when Whites deny their racial biases	"I'm not racist. I have several Black friends." "As a woman, I know what you go through as a racial minority."	I am immune to racism because I have friends of color. Your racial oppression is no different than my gender oppression. I can't be a racist. I'm like you.
Myth of meritocracy Statements which assert that race does not play a role in life successes	"I believe the most qualified person should get the job." "Everyone can succeed in this society, if they work hard enough."	People of color are given extra unfair benefits because of their race. People of color are lazy and/or incompetent and need to work harder.
Pathologizing cultural values/communication styles The notion that the values and communication styles of the dominant/White culture are ideal	Asking a Black person: "Why do you have to be so loud/animated? Just calm down." To an Asian or Latino person: "Why are you so quiet? We want to know what you think. Be more verbal." "Speak up more." Dismissing an individual who brings up race/culture in work/school setting	Assimilate to dominant culture. Leave your cultural baggage outside.
Second-class citizen Occurs when a White person is given preferential treatment as a consumer over a person of color	Person of color mistaken for a service worker Having a taxi cab pass a person of color and pick up a White passenger	People of color are servants to Whites. They couldn't possibly occupy high-status positions. You are likely to cause trouble and/or travel to a dangerous neighborhood.

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Table 1 (continued)

Theme	Microaggression	Message
Second-class citizen (<i>continued</i>) Occurs when a White person is given preferential treatment as a consumer over a person of color (<i>continued</i>)	Being ignored at a store counter as attention is given to the White customer behind you "You people . . ."	Whites are more valued customers than people of color. You don't belong. You are a lesser being.
Environmental microaggressions Macro-level microaggressions, which are more apparent on systemic and environmental levels	A college or university with buildings that are all named after White heterosexual upper class males Television shows and movies that feature predominantly White people, without representation of people of color Overcrowding of public schools in communities of color Overabundance of liquor stores in communities of color	You don't belong/You won't succeed here. There is only so far you can go. You are an outsider/You don't exist. People of color don't/shouldn't value education. People of color are deviant.

that they have been attacked, that they have been disrespected, or that something is not right (Franklin, 2004; Reid & Radhakrishnan, 2003). In some respects, people of color may find an overt and obvious racist act easier to handle than microaggressions that seem vague or disguised (Solórzano et al., 2000). The above incident reveals how microaggressions operate to create psychological dilemmas for both the White perpetrator and the person of color. Four such dilemmas are particularly noteworthy for everyone to understand.

Dilemma 1: Clash of Racial Realities

The question we pose is this: Did the flight attendant engage in a microaggression or did the senior author and his colleague simply misinterpret the action? Studies indicate that the racial perceptions of people of color differ markedly from those of Whites (Jones, 1997; Harris Poll commissioned by the National Conference of Christians and Jews, 1992). In most cases, White Americans tend to believe that minorities are doing better in life, that discrimination is on the decline, that racism is no longer a significant factor in the lives of people of color, and that equality has been achieved. More important, the majority of Whites do not view themselves as racist or capable of racist behavior.

Minorities, on the other hand, perceive Whites as (a) racially insensitive, (b) unwilling to share their position and wealth, (c) believing they are superior, (d) needing to control everything, and (e) treating them poorly because of their race. People of color believe these attributes are reenacted everyday in their interpersonal interactions with Whites, oftentimes in the form of microaggressions (Solórzano et al., 2000). For example, it was found that 96% of African Americans reported experiencing racial discrimination in a one-year period (Klonoff & Landrine, 1999), and many incidents involved being mistaken for a service

worker, being ignored, given poor service, treated rudely, or experiencing strangers acting fearful or intimidated when around them (Sellers & Shelton, 2003).

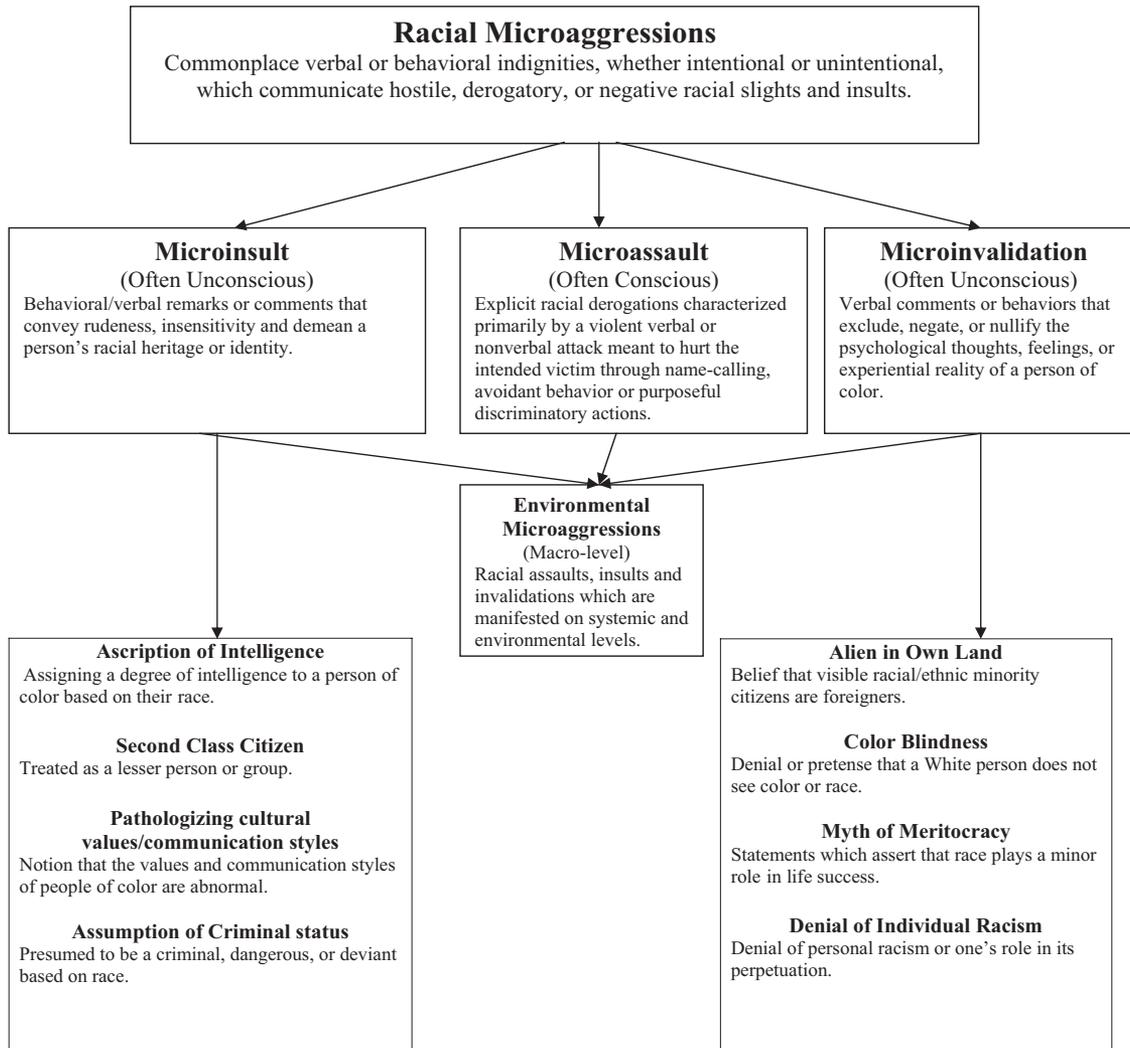
Dilemma 2: The Invisibility of Unintentional Expressions of Bias

The interaction between the senior author and the flight attendant convinced him that she was sincere in her belief that she had acted in good faith without racial bias. Her actions and their meaning were invisible to her. It was clear that she was stunned that anyone would accuse her of such despicable actions. After all, in her mind, she acted with only the best of intentions: to distribute the weight evenly on the plane for safety reasons and to give two passengers greater privacy and space. She felt betrayed that her good intentions were being questioned. Yet considerable empirical evidence exists showing that racial microaggressions become automatic because of cultural conditioning and that they may become connected neurologically with the processing of emotions that surround prejudice (Abelson et al., 1998). Several investigators have found, for example, that law enforcement officers in laboratory experiments will fire their guns more often at Black criminal suspects than White ones (Plant & Peruche, 2005), and Afrocentric features tend to result in longer prison terms (Blair, Judd, & Chapleau, 2004). In all cases, these law enforcement officials had no conscious awareness that they responded differently on the basis of race.

Herein lies a major dilemma. How does one prove that a microaggression has occurred? What makes our belief that the flight attendant acted in a biased manner any more plausible than her conscious belief that it was generated for another reason? If she did act out of hidden and unconscious bias, how do we make her aware of it? Social psychological research tends to confirm the existence of unconscious racial biases in well-intentioned Whites, that

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Figure 1
Categories of and Relationships Among Racial Microaggressions



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nearly everyone born and raised in the United States inherits the racial biases of the society, and that the most accurate assessment about whether racist acts have occurred in a particular situation is most likely to be made by those most disempowered rather than by those who enjoy the privileges of power (Jones, 1997; Keltner & Robinson, 1996). According to these findings, microaggressions (a) tend to be subtle, indirect, and unintentional, (b) are most likely to emerge not when a behavior would look prejudicial, but when other rationales can be offered for prejudicial behavior, and (c) occur when Whites pretend not to notice differences, thereby justifying that “color” was not involved in the actions taken. Color blindness is a major form of microinvalidation because it denies the racial and experiential reality of people of color and provides an excuse to White people to claim that they are not preju-

diced (Helms, 1992; Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Browne, 2000). The flight attendant, for example, did not realize that her “not seeing color” invalidated both passengers’ racial identity and experiential reality.

Dilemma 3: Perceived Minimal Harm of Racial Microaggressions

In most cases, when individuals are confronted with their microaggressive acts (as in the case of the flight attendant), the perpetrator usually believes that the victim has overreacted and is being overly sensitive and/or petty. After all, even if it was an innocent racial blunder, microaggressions are believed to have minimal negative impact. People of color are told not to overreact and to simply “let it go.” Usually, Whites consider microaggressive incidents to be

minor, and people of color are encouraged (oftentimes by people of color as well) to not waste time or effort on them.

It is clear that old-fashioned racism unfairly disadvantages people of color and that it contributes to stress, depression, shame, and anger in its victims (Jones, 1997). But evidence also supports the detrimental impact of more subtle forms of racism (Chakraborty & McKenzie, 2002; Clark, Anderson, Clark, & Williams, 1999). For example, in a survey of studies examining racism and mental health, researchers found a positive association between happiness and life satisfaction, self-esteem, mastery of control, hypertension, and discrimination (Williams, Neighbors, & Jackson, 2003). Many of the types of everyday racism identified by Williams and colleagues (Williams & Collins, 1995; Williams, Lavizzo-Mourey, & Warren, 1994) provide strong support for the idea that racial microaggressions are not minimally harmful. One study specifically examined microaggressions in the experiences of African Americans and found that the cumulative effects can be quite devastating (Solórzano et al., 2000). The researchers reported that experience with microaggressions resulted in a negative racial climate and emotions of self-doubt, frustration, and isolation on the part of victims. As indicated in the incident above, the senior author experienced considerable emotional turmoil that lasted for the entire flight. When one considers that people of color are exposed continually to microaggressions and that their effects are cumulative, it becomes easier to understand the psychological toll they may take on recipients' well-being.

We submit that covert racism in the form of microaggressions also has a dramatic and detrimental impact on people of color. Although microaggressions may be seemingly innocuous and insignificant, their effects can be quite dramatic (Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002). D. W. Sue believes that "this contemporary form of racism is many times over more problematic, damaging, and injurious to persons of color than overt racist acts" (D. W. Sue, 2003, p. 48). It has been noted that the cumulative effects of racial microaggressions may theoretically result in "diminished mortality, augmented morbidity and flattened confidence" (Pierce, 1995, p. 281). It is important to study and acknowledge this form of racism in society because without documentation and analysis to better understand microaggressions, the threats that they pose and the assaults that they justify can be easily ignored or downplayed (Solórzano et al., 2000). D. W. Sue (2005) has referred to this phenomenon as "a conspiracy of silence."

Dilemma 4: The Catch-22 of Responding to Microaggressions

When a microaggression occurs, the victim is usually placed in a catch-22. The immediate reaction might be a series of questions: Did what I think happened, really happen? Was this a deliberate act or an unintentional slight? How should I respond? Sit and stew on it or confront the person? If I bring the topic up, how do I prove it? Is it really worth the effort? Should I just drop the matter? These questions in one form or another have been a common, if not a universal, reaction of persons of color who

experience an attributional ambiguity (Crocker & Major, 1989).

First, the person must determine whether a microaggression has occurred. In that respect, people of color rely heavily on experiential reality that is contextual in nature and involves life experiences from a variety of situations. When the flight attendant asked the senior author and his colleague to move, it was not the first time that similar requests and situations had occurred for both. In their experience, these incidents were nonrandom events (Ridley, 2005), and their perception was that the only similarity "connecting the dots" to each and every one of these incidents was the color of their skin. In other words, the situation on the plane was only one of many similar incidents with identical outcomes. Yet the flight attendant and most White Americans do not share these multiple experiences, and they evaluate their own behaviors in the moment through a singular event (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000). Thus, they fail to see a pattern of bias, are defended by a belief in their own morality, and can in good conscience deny that they discriminated (D. W. Sue, 2005).

Second, how one reacts to a microaggression may have differential effects, not only on the perpetrator but on the person of color as well. Deciding to do nothing by sitting on one's anger is one response that occurs frequently in people of color. This response occurs because persons of color may be (a) unable to determine whether a microaggression has occurred, (b) at a loss for how to respond, (c) fearful of the consequences, (d) rationalizing that "it won't do any good anyway," or (e) engaging in self-deception through denial ("It didn't happen."). Although these explanations for nonresponse may hold some validity for the person of color, we submit that not doing anything has the potential to result in psychological harm. It may mean a denial of one's experiential reality, dealing with a loss of integrity, or experiencing pent-up anger and frustration likely to take psychological and physical tolls.

Third, responding with anger and striking back (perhaps a normal and healthy reaction) is likely to engender negative consequences for persons of color as well. They are likely to be accused of being racially oversensitive or paranoid or told that their emotional outbursts confirm stereotypes about minorities. In the case of Black males, for example, protesting may lend credence to the belief that they are hostile, angry, impulsive, and prone to violence (Jones, 1997). In this case, the person of color might feel better after venting, but the outcome results in greater hostility by Whites toward minorities. Further, while the person of color may feel better in the immediate moment by relieving pent-up emotions, the reality is that the general situation has not been changed. In essence, the catch-22 means you are "damned if you do, and damned if you don't." What is lacking is research that points to adaptive ways of handling microaggressions by people of color and suggestions of how to increase the awareness and sensitivity of Whites to microaggressions so that they accept responsibility for their behaviors and for changing them (Solórzano et al., 2000).

Racial Microaggressions as a Barrier to Clinical Practice

In a broad sense, counseling and psychotherapy can be characterized as the formation of a deeply personal relationship between a helping professional and a client that involves appropriate and accurate interpersonal interactions and communications. For effective therapy to occur, some form of positive coalition must develop between the parties involved (D. W. Sue & Sue, 2003). Many have referred to this as the “working relationship,” the “therapeutic alliance,” or the “establishment of rapport” (D. W. Sue & Sue, 2003). A strong therapeutic relationship is often enhanced when clients perceive therapists as credible (trustworthy and expert) and themselves as understood and positively regarded by their therapists (Strong & Schmidt, 1970). Helping professionals are trained to listen, to show empathic concern, to be objective, to value the client’s integrity, to communicate understanding, and to use their professional knowledge and skills to aid clients to solve problems (Grencavage & Norcross, 1990).

As a therapeutic team, therapist and client are better prepared to venture into problematic areas that the client might hesitate to face alone. Research suggests that the therapeutic alliance is one of the major common factors of any helping relationship and is correlated with successful outcome (Lui & Pope-Davis, 2005; Martin, Garske, & Davis, 2000). More important, however, are findings that a client’s perception of an accepting and positive relationship is a better predictor of successful outcome than is a similar perception by the counselor (Horvath & Symonds, 1991). Thus, when clients do not perceive their therapists as trustworthy and when they feel misunderstood and undervalued, therapeutic success is less likely to occur. Oftentimes, the telltale signs of a failed therapeutic relationship may result in clients being less likely to self-disclose, terminating prematurely, or failing to return for scheduled visits (Burkard & Knox, 2004; Kearney, Draper, & Baron, 2005).

Although the task of establishing an effective therapeutic relationship applies to the entire helping spectrum, working with clients who differ from the therapist in race, ethnicity, culture, and sexual orientation poses special challenges. White therapists who are products of their cultural conditioning may be prone to engage in racial microaggressions (Locke & Kiselica, 1999). Thus, the therapeutic alliance is likely to be weakened or terminated when clients of color perceive White therapists as biased, prejudiced, or unlikely to understand them as racial/cultural beings. That racism can potentially infect the therapeutic process when working with clients of color has been a common concern voiced by the President’s Commission on Mental Health (1978) and the Surgeon General’s Report on *Mental Health: Culture, Race and Ethnicity* (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). It has been postulated that therapist bias might partially account for the low utilization of mental health services and premature termination of therapy sessions by African American, Native American, Asian American, and Latino/Hispanic American

clients (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001).

Yet research also reveals that most people in our nation believe in democracy, fairness, and strong humanistic values that condemn racism and the inequities that engenders (Dovidio et al., 2002). Such a statement is arguably truer for mental health professionals, whose goals are to help rather than hinder or hurt clients of color. Both the American Psychological Association and the American Counseling Association have attempted to confront the biases of the profession by passing multicultural guidelines or standards that denounce prejudice and discrimination in the delivery of mental health services to clients of color (American Psychological Association, 2003; D. W. Sue et al., 1992). Like most people in society, counselors and therapists experience themselves as fair and decent individuals who would never consciously and deliberately engage in racist acts toward clients of color. Sadly, it is often pointed out that when clinician and client differ from one another along racial lines, however, the relationship may serve as a microcosm for the troubled race relations in the United States. While many would like to believe that racism is no longer a major problem and that the good intentions of the helping profession have built safeguards against prejudice and discrimination, the reality is that they continue to be manifested through the therapeutic process (Utsey, Gernat, & Hammar, 2005). This is not to suggest, however, that positive changes in race relations have not occurred. Yet, as in many other interactions, microaggressions are equally likely to occur in therapeutic transactions (Ridley, 2005).

The Manifestation of Racial Microaggressions in Counseling/Therapy

Microaggressions become meaningful in the context of clinical practice, as relational dynamics and the human condition are central aspects of this field. The often unintentional and unconscious nature of microaggressions (Dilemma 2: Invisibility) poses the biggest challenge to the majority of White mental health professionals, who believe that they are just, unbiased, and nonracist. Further, mental health professionals are in a position of power, which renders them less likely to accurately assess (Dilemma 1: Conflict of Racial Realities) whether racist acts have occurred in their sessions. Thus, the harm they perpetrate against their clients of color is either unknown or minimized (Dilemma 3: Minimal Harm). Microaggressions not only oppress and harm, but they place clients of color in the unenviable position of a catch-22 (Dilemma 4).

In clinical practice, microaggressions are likely to go unrecognized by White clinicians who are unintentionally and unconsciously expressing bias. As a result, therapists must make a concerted effort to identify and monitor microaggressions within the therapeutic context. This process is reminiscent of the importance of becoming aware of potential transference and countertransference issues between therapist and client and how they may unintentionally

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ally interfere with effective therapy (Woodhouse, Schlosser, Crook, Ligiero, & Gelso, 2003). The inherent power dynamic in the therapeutic relationship further complicates this issue, as therapists are in a position of power to make diagnoses and influence the course of treatment. The power dynamic between therapist and client also effects the catch-22 of responding to microaggressions because clients may be less likely to confront their therapists and more likely to question their own perceptions in the event of a microaggression.

Table 2 provides a few examples of microaggressions in counseling practice under each of the nine categories identified earlier. Under Color Blindness, for example, a client of color stresses the importance of racial experiences only to have the therapist reply, "We are all unique. We are all individuals." or "We are all human beings or the same under the skin." These colorblind statements, which were intended to be supportive, to be sympathetic, and to convey an ability to understand, may leave the client feeling misunderstood, negated, invalidated, and unimportant (especially if racial identity is important to the client). Moreover these statements presume that the therapist is *capable* of not seeing race and impose a definition of racial reality on the client (Neville et al., 2000).

Under Denial of Individual Racism, a common response by Whites to people of color is that they can understand and relate to experiences of racism. In Table 2, under this category, we provide the following anecdote: A client of color expresses hesitancy in discussing racial issues with his White female therapist. She replies, "I understand. As a woman, I face discrimination too." The message is that the therapist believes her gender oppression is no different from the client's experiences of racial/ethnic oppression. This response is problematic because such attempts by the therapist to explain how he or she can understand a person of color's experience with racism may be perceived by the client as an attempt to minimize the importance of his or her racial identity, to avoid acknowledging the therapist's racial biases, or to communicate a discomfort with discussing racial issues. Furthermore, the therapist excuses himself or herself from any blame or fault in perpetuating racism and the power of racism. This failure to acknowledge the significance of racism within and outside of the therapy session contributes to the breakdown of the alliance between therapist and client. A therapist's willingness to discuss racial matters is of central importance in creating a therapeutic alliance with clients of color (Cardemil & Battle, 2003).

Under the category "Alien in Own Land," many Asian Americans and Latino/Hispanic Americans report that they are commonly seen as perpetual foreigners. For example, a female Asian American client arrives for her first therapy session. Her therapist asks her where she is from, and when told "Philadelphia," the therapist further probes by asking where she was born. In this case, the therapist has assumed that the Asian American client is not from the United States and has imposed through the use of the second question the idea that she must be a foreigner. Immediately, a barrier is created in the helping relationship because the client feels

invalidated by the therapist (she is perceived as a foreigner, not a U.S. citizen). Unfortunately, the Asian American client is unlikely to question her therapist or point out the bias because of the power dynamic, which causes her to harbor resentment and ill feelings toward the therapist.

We contend that clients of color are at increased risk of not continuing in the counseling/therapy session when such microaggressions occur. Worse yet, they will not receive the help they need and may leave the session feeling worse than when they first sought counseling. Because it is unlikely that clinicians intentionally create hostile and unwelcoming environments for their ethnic minority clients, it can be assumed that these biases are being expressed through microaggressions. Therapists can convey their bias to their ethnic minority clients in myriad ways, such as by minimizing symptoms for Asian Americans on the basis of a false belief in the "model" minority (D. W. Sue & Sue, 2003) or by placing greater emphasis on symptoms such as paranoid delusions and substance abuse in Native Americans and Africans Americans, who are believed to suffer from these afflictions (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001).

Last, White counselors and therapists can impose and value their own cultural worldview while devaluing and pathologizing the cultural values of their ethnic minority clients. Previous research has shown that pathologizing clients' cultural values has been a major determinant of clients of color discontinuing psychotherapy (S. Sue, Fujino, Hu, & Takeuchi, 1991). Many clients of color may feel misunderstood by their therapists because of a lack of cultural understanding. Asian American or Latino American clients who enter therapy to discuss family issues such as feeling obligated, stressed, or overwhelmed with excess family responsibilities may be encouraged by therapists to speak out against their families or to make decisions regardless of family support or expectations. Therapists may be unaware that they may be directly invalidating cultural respect for authority and imposing an individualistic view over a collectivist one.

Future Directions in the Understanding of Racial Microaggressions

With respect to racism, D. W. Sue (2004, p. 762) has stated that the greatest challenge society and the mental health professions face is "making the 'invisible' visible." That can only be accomplished when people are willing to openly and honestly engage in a dialogue about race and racism. In that respect, the education and training of mental health professionals must incorporate issues of race and culture. One would ordinarily expect that mental health professionals would be more willing than most to dialogue on this topic, but studies suggest that White clinicians receive minimal or no practicum or supervision experiences that address race and are uncomfortable broaching the topic (Knox, Burkard, Johnson, Suzuki, & Ponterotto, 2003). Many White trainees in therapy dyads experience anxiety in the form of poor articulation, faltering and/or

Table 2
Examples of Racial Microaggressions in Therapeutic Practice

Theme	Microaggression	Message
<p>Alien in own land When Asian Americans and Latino Americans are assumed to be foreign-born</p>	<p>A White client does not want to work with an Asian American therapist because "she will not understand my problem." A White therapist tells an American-born Latino client that he/she should seek a Spanish-speaking therapist.</p>	<p>You are not American.</p>
<p>Ascription of intelligence Assigning a degree of intelligence to a person of color on the basis of their race</p>	<p>A school counselor reacts with surprise when an Asian American student had trouble on the math portion of a standardized test. A career counselor asking a Black or Latino student, "Do you think you're ready for college?"</p>	<p>All Asians are smart and good at math. It is unusual for people of color to succeed.</p>
<p>Color blindness Statements which indicate that a White person does not want to acknowledge race</p>	<p>A therapist says "I think you are being too paranoid. We should emphasize similarities, not people's differences" when a client of color attempts to discuss her feelings about being the only person of color at her job and feeling alienated and dismissed by her co-workers. A client of color expresses concern in discussing racial issues with her therapist. Her therapist replies with, "When I see you, I don't see color."</p>	<p>Race and culture are not important variables that affect people's lives. Your racial experiences are not valid.</p>
<p>Criminality/assumption of criminal status A person of color is presumed to be dangerous, criminal, or deviant on the basis of their race</p>	<p>When a Black client shares that she was accused of stealing from work, the therapist encourages the client to explore how she might have contributed to her employer's mistrust of her. A therapist takes great care to ask all substance abuse questions in an intake with a Native American client, and is suspicious of the client's nonexistent history with substances.</p>	<p>You are a criminal. You are deviant.</p>
<p>Denial of individual racism A statement made when Whites renounce their racial biases</p>	<p>A client of color asks his or her therapist about how race affects their working relationship. The therapist replies, "Race does not affect the way I treat you." A client of color expresses hesitancy in discussing racial issues with his White female therapist. She replies "I understand. As a woman, I face discrimination also."</p>	<p>Your racial/ethnic experience is not important. Your racial oppression is no different than my gender oppression.</p>
<p>Myth of meritocracy Statements which assert that race does not play a role in succeeding in career advancement or education.</p>	<p>A school counselor tells a Black student that "if you work hard, you can succeed like everyone else." A career counselor is working with a client of color who is concerned about not being promoted at work despite being qualified. The counselor suggests, "Maybe if you work harder you can succeed like your peers."</p>	<p>People of color are lazy and/or incompetent and need to work harder. If you don't succeed, you have only yourself to blame (blaming the victim).</p>
<p>Pathologizing cultural values/communication styles The notion that the values and communication styles of the dominant/White culture are ideal</p>	<p>A Black client is loud, emotional, and confrontational in a counseling session. The therapist diagnoses her with borderline personality disorder. A client of Asian or Native American descent has trouble maintaining eye contact with his therapist. The therapist diagnoses him with a social anxiety disorder. Advising a client, "Do you really think your problem stems from racism?"</p>	<p>Assimilate to dominant culture. Leave your cultural baggage outside.</p>

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Table 2 (continued)

Theme	Microaggression	Message
Second-class citizen Occurs when a White person is given preferential treatment as a consumer over a person of color	A counselor limits the amount of long-term therapy to provide at a college counseling center; she chooses all White clients over clients of color. Clients of color are not welcomed or acknowledged by receptionists.	Whites are more valued than people of color. White clients are more valued than clients of color.
Environmental microaggressions Macro-level microaggressions, which are more apparent on a systemic level	A waiting room office has pictures of American presidents. Every counselor at a mental health clinic is White.	You don't belong/Only white people can succeed. You are an outsider/You don't exist.

trembling voices, and mispronunciation of words when directly engaged in discussions about race (Utsey et al., 2005). It is interesting that such nonverbal behaviors also serve as a form of racial microaggression. When helping professionals have difficulty addressing race issues, they cut off an avenue for clients of color to explore matters of bias, discrimination, and prejudice.

Education and Training and Racial Microaggressions

It is clear that mental health training programs must support trainees in overcoming their fears and their resistance to talking about race by fostering safe and productive learning environments (Sanchez-Hucles & Jones, 2005). It is important that training programs be structured and facilitated in a manner that promotes inquiry and allows trainees to experience discomfort and vulnerability (Young & Davis-Russell, 2002). Trainees need to be challenged to explore their own racial identities and their feelings about other racial groups. The prerequisite for cultural competence has always been racial self-awareness. This is equally true for understanding how microaggressions, especially those of the therapist, influence the therapeutic process. This level of self-awareness brings to the surface possible prejudices and biases that inform racial microaggressions. A first step for therapists who want to integrate an understanding of racism's mental health effects into the conceptualization of psychological functioning is to undergo a process of learning and critical self-examination of racism and its impact on one's life and the lives of others (Thompson & Neville, 1999). For White clinicians, it means addressing the question "What does it mean to be White?" and being fully cognizant of their own White racial identity development and how it may intrude on people of color (Helms, 1992, 1995). In addition, it has been suggested that articulating a personal theory of reality and of therapeutic change in the context of an environment of racism is one way to begin integrating knowledge of racism with the practice of psychotherapy (Thompson & Neville, 1999). Education and training must aid White clinicians to achieve the following: (a) increase their ability to identify racial microaggressions

in general and in themselves in particular; (b) understand how racial microaggressions, including their own, detrimentally impact clients of color; and (c) accept responsibility for taking corrective actions to overcome racial biases.

Research on Racial Microaggressions

A major obstacle to understanding racial microaggressions is that research is in a nascent state. Researchers continue to omit subtle racism and microaggressions from their research agendas, and this absence conveys the notion that covert forms of racism are not as valid or as important as racist events that can be quantified and "proven." In fact, omitting microaggressions from studies on racism on the basis of a belief that they are less harmful encourages the profession to "look the other way." Moreover, the fact that psychological research has continued to inadequately address race and ethnicity (Delgado-Romero, Rowland, & Galvin, 2005) is in itself a microaggression. Pursuing a line of research examining how cross-racial dyadic compositions impact the process and outcome of counselor/client interactions would be a tremendous contribution to the field of counseling and clinical psychology. Helms and Cook (1999) noted that racial consciousness is a critical consideration in determining White therapists' ability to operate effectively in cross-racial dyads.

For mental health purposes, it would be useful to explore the coping mechanisms used by people of color to stave off the negative effects of microaggressions. The fact that people of color have had to face daily microaggressions and have continued to maintain their dignity in the face of such hostility is a testament to their resiliency (D. W. Sue, 2003). What coping strategies have been found to serve them well? A greater understanding of responses to microaggressions, both in the long term and the short term, and of the coping strategies employed would be beneficial in arming children of color for the life they will face. Such research is necessary because without documentation and analysis to help better understand microaggressions, the threats that they pose and the assaults that they justify can be easily ignored or downplayed (Solórzano et al., 2000).

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Studying the long-term impact that microaggressions have on mental health functioning, self-esteem, self-concept, and racial identity development appears crucial to documenting the harm microaggressions inflict on people of color. The taxonomy of microaggressions proposed here may make it easier to explore other social psychological questions as well.

First, it is highly probable that microaggressions vary in their severity and impact. As indicated, a microassault does not evoke a guessing game because the intent of the perpetrator is clear. However, the racist intent of microinsults and microinvalidations is less clear and presents different dilemmas for people of color. Some questions to ponder include the following: (a) Are the three forms of racial microaggressions equal in impact? Are some themes and their hidden messages more problematic than others? Although all expressions may take a psychological toll, some are obviously experienced as more harmful and severe than others. (b) Is there a relationship between forms of racial microaggressions and racial identity development? Recent research and formulations on White racial identity development and the psychosocial costs of racism to Whites (Helms, 1995; Spanierman, Armstrong, Poteat, & Beer, 2006) imply that forms of racial microaggressions may be associated with certain statuses or trait clusters. (c) Finally, is it possible that different racial/ethnic groups are more likely to encounter certain forms of racial microaggressions than others? A preliminary study suggests that Asian Americans are prone to be victims of microinvalidations with themes that revolve around "alien in one's own land" (D. W. Sue, Bucceri, Lin, Nadal, & Torino, 2007) rather than microinsults with themes of "criminality." Is it possible that Blacks are more likely to be subjected to the latter than to the former? What about Latinos and American Indians?

Second, the challenge in conducting research aimed at understanding microaggressions involves measurement. Adequate assessment tools need to be created to effectively explore the new and burgeoning field of microaggression research. Although there are several promising race-related stress and discrimination measures, such as the Perceived Ethnic Discrimination Questionnaire (PEDQ; Brondolo et al., 2005), the Color-Blind Racial Attitude Scale (COBRAS; Neville et al., 2000), the Index of Race Related Stress (IRRS; Utsey & Ponterotto, 1996), and the Schedule of Racist Events (SRE; Klonoff & Landrine, 1999), none of them is directly aimed at distinguishing between categories of racial microaggressions or their intentional or unintentional nature. The PEDQ uses four subscales that broadly measure stigmatization, harassment, workplace discrimination, and social exclusion; the COBRAS is specific to a person's minimization of race and racism; the IRRS uses Jones's (1997) framework to measure individual, institutional, and societal racism; and the SRE is aimed at measuring frequency of racist incidents. All contain examples of racial microaggressions that support our taxonomy, but none makes conceptual distinctions that allow for categorical measurements of this phenomenon. It seems imperative that specific instruments be developed to aid in under-

standing the causes, consequences, manifestations, and elimination of racial microaggressions.

Conclusion

Nearly all interracial encounters are prone to the manifestation of racial microaggressions. We have chosen mainly to address the therapeutic relationship, but racial microaggressions are potentially present whenever human interactions involve participants who differ in race and culture (teaching, supervising, training, administering, evaluating, etc.). We have purposely chosen to concentrate on racial microaggressions, but it is important to acknowledge other types of microaggressions as well. Gender, sexual orientation, and disability microaggressions may have equally powerful and potentially detrimental effects on women, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals, and disability groups. Further, racial microaggressions are not limited to White-Black, White-Latino, or White-Person of Color interactions. Interethnic racial microaggressions occur between people of color as well. In the area of counseling and therapy, for example, research may also prove beneficial in understanding cross-racial dyads in which the therapist is a person of color and the client is White or in which both therapist and client are persons of color. Investigating these combinations of cross-racial dyads would be useful, because it is clear that no racial/ethnic group is immune from inheriting the racial biases of the society (D. W. Sue, 2003). We encourage future research in these two areas because all forms of microaggressions have detrimental consequences.

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Websites

Identifying Institutional Racism Folio (IDIR Folio), 2005, from the Seattle Human Services Coalition

http://shscoalition.org/pdf_files/idir-folio-complete-2-28-06.pdf

Tools to assist human service organizations identify and eliminate institutional racism in their organization.

Dismantling Racism: A Resource Book for Social Change Groups, from the Western States Center

<http://www.westernstatescenter.org/tools-and-resources/Tools/Dismantling%20Racism>

A free, very comprehensive guide and resources, focused on organizational steps to eliminate institutional racism.

2011 WRMC Cultural Competency Presentation on Do You Know What You Don't Know? by Robin Chiles and Lisa Chaiet: <http://prezi.com/pca2ewrcnudp/2/>

Five Steps of Culturally Competent Incident Analysis from Passages NW

- Learn about all the people involved: demographics, motives, biases
- Get the full story
- Do the analysis with all the info: the Five Whys again
- What's the root cause for the incident?
- What can we explore from here? Lots related to cultural competency

Engaging clip: How to Tell People They Sound Racist

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0Ti-gkJiXc&feature=player_embedded

Useful tool to use with staff to discuss accountability and courageous conversations

Multicultural Pavilion, from Paul Gorski and EdChange

<http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/>

Kids Can Make A Difference <http://www.kidscanmakeadifference.org/>

The Center for Multicultural Education <http://depts.washington.edu/centerme/home.htm>

Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network(GLSEN) <http://www.glsen.org/>

Disability Social History Project <http://www.disabilityhistory.org/>

Electronic Magazine of Multicultural Education (EMME)

<http://www.eastern.edu/publications/emme/>

Kids Philosophy Sam <http://www.philosophyslams.org/>

Articles

[20 \(Self-\) Critical Things I will Do to be a Better Multicultural Educator](#)

Compiled by Paul Gorski for **EdChange** and the [Multicultural Pavilion](#)

Books

White Awareness: Handbook for Anti-Racism Training by Judith H. Katz

Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice by Paul Kivel

Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?: A Psychologist Explains the Development of Racial Identity by Beverly Daniel Tatum
An excellent book-club option for your staff to read and discuss together.

White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son by Tim Wise

Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice by Maurianne Adams

Class Matters by bell hooks

Multicultural Youth Leadership: A Curriculum Module for Youth Professionals. (Free Resource from SOAR) by Marina Espinoza www.childrenandyouth.org

White Awareness: Handbook for Anti-Racism Training by Judith Katz

The Skin We Are In: Teaching our Teens to be Emotionally Strong, Socially Smart, and Spiritually Connected by Ward, Janie Victoria.

Speak Up! Responding to Everyday Bigotry by Brian Willoughby

Organizations

Minority Executive Directors Coalition of King County – www.medcofkc.org

Western States Center - <http://www.westernstatescenter.org/tools-and-resources>

People's Institute for Survival and Beyond--www.pisb.org

Teaching Tolerance and the Southern Poverty Law Center -- www.tolerance.org
Excellent teaching bank of social justice and anti-bias activities for all ages, lots of staff perception tools to use in awareness-building trainings.

Safe Schools Coalition – www.safeschoolscoalition.org
Excellent and comprehensive resources on LGBTQ issues. Lots of activities, readings and links for educators in any role.

Non Profit Anti-Racism Coalition (Seattle)- for more info contact: irenew@solid-ground.org

Films

Race: Power of an Illusion

Training Activities

Language & Stereotypes discussion: *a good lead-in to ground rules or common language*

In a simple chart, ask staff individually to privately record a list of their identity categories (female, white, sexuality, class, language, religion, etc) and on opposite each category, list any words and phrases that they never want to hear or are triggers connected with that identity. For example, female--weak, bitch, chick, female issues, PMS, etc. It's important to have facilitators who represent a diversity of identities lead this and model some courageous examples after everyone has had a chance to think & write. Then go category by category, having the group share (being careful to hear from a wide range of voices) and create a master list as a big group on large chart paper.

From the IDIR Folio Section 6: Staff and Volunteers

- How do we recruit and retain staff and volunteers who reflect those served by our organization?
- How do we mentor people of color to assume leadership roles in our organization and the community at large?
- How do we make our personnel policies anti-racist?
-

Human Resources Practices: Affirmative Action

<http://www.work911.com/cgi-bin/links/jump.cgi?ID=2548>

Joint Center of Political and Economic Studies:

<http://jointcenter.org/publications1/economicsbusiness.php>

Leadership for Policy Change: Strengthening Communities of Color through Leadership Development <http://www.putnamcic.com/pdf/LeadershipforPolicyChange-PolicyLink.pdf>

Minorities Job Bank: <http://www.imdiversity.com>

Stronger Together: Working with Ethnocultural Volunteers, Central Volunteer Bureau of Ottawa-Carleton

<http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/pc-cp/pubs/e/Strongr1.htm>

1996 Staff Recommendations Regarding Implementation of the 1996 Report on Involving People of Color in the Council

<http://www.ncte.org/about/gov/elec/policies/107390.htm>

Anti-Racist Institutional Change Kit (UK): <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/cers/toolkit/toolkit.htm>- This toolkit aims to assist institutions in the process of anti-racist and race equality planning and action by providing conceptual and methodological 'tools'.

Specifically in employment practices/policies:
<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/cers/toolkit/Section%20Three.htm#three12>

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Exit Ticket

We hope you leave the “Do You Know What Your Staff Doesn’t Know” workshop with some ideas to apply to your organization’s cultural competency and risk management. This is a reminder of next steps, and that you have ready collaborators in the journey!

One important thing I learned today:

One thing I will do differently as a result of what I learned today:

One fear or question I have in this work:

One resource/support that I want to remember and use:

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