

THE ROLE THAT WHITE PEOPLE CAN PLAY IN DISRUPTING SYSTEMIC RACISM

A Brief Overview of the Findings From Dr. Victoria Farris' Dissertation Research

Workplace racism was largely experienced through **microaggressions** rooted in cultural whiteness of many offices and a **lack of multicultural competence** among colleagues and supervisors.

100%

of Participants experienced racism/bias in student affairs workspaces.

95%

experienced it in multiple positions.

Workplace racism is upheld through **unproductive power dynamics**, a culture that lacks trust, and by **white fragility** that leads to inaction in response to concerns.

Some of the expectations participants have of a supervisor are:

- 1) A high level of multicultural competence, demonstrated through actions, decisions, priorities and advocacy
- 2) Get to know me, individually; Appreciate and understand my perspective, skills, motivators, and challenges
- 3) Foster an authentic, open, and honest relationship where trust is built and open conversations about race and identity occur

Framework for Aspiring Allies & Change Agents

The following framework outlines the role that white professionals can play in disrupting systemic racism, from the perspective of professionals of color and a critical race theory lens.

Learn

Learn independently about: race & racism as constructs

Structural or institutional racism & how it's manifested

Cycles of oppression

Different racial & ethnic identities

Understand

Personal experiences and impacts of racism

Racism is a system, how it's upheld, and systemic impacts

Your position in the system, how you contribute to it, how you benefit, and how you uphold it.

Reflect

Recognize one's own values, biases, racist beliefs, and internalized dominance

Understand white privilege and the way it manifests

Ask critical questions to disrupt and unlearn biases and racist habits or stereotypes

Actions

Individual Level

Work alongside communities of color - listening and standing together, not speaking over

Engage with other white folks to encourage allyship

Get comfortable having dialogues about race and identity with vulnerability

Unlearn bias and racist actions, disrupting stereotypes

Group Level

Recognize whiteness and white supremacy in group or organization cultures

Shift culture through disruption of stereotypes and microaggressions

Name racism and racist behaviors and norms

Engage other whites in critical understanding

System Level

Encourage critical organization reflection of policies and practices

Include diverse and varied perspectives in both reflection and decision making

Make decisions through a critical inclusive lens

Align values, resources and policies

Engagement with other white folks

The goal of this study was to better understand, from the perspective of people of color, how systemic racism and bias in the supervision of people of color in Student Affairs could be disrupted, and what role, if any, white people can play. This was a qualitative research study using a Critical Race Theory framework. Participants were interviewed about their experiences with workplace racism, what inclusive workplaces would look like, and how white folks can play a role in partnering to create an inclusive, socially just environment.

For more information, please contact Dr. Victoria Farris at: victoria@victoriafarris.com.