



Faculty Workshop on Anti-Racism and Microaggressions

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences



Ad Hoc Workshop Planning Committee

- **Dean Anita Gustafson - Convener**
- Ansley Booker
- Natalie Bourdon
- Craig Byron
- Chester Fontenot
- Janell Johnson
- Mary Alice Morgan
- Chinekwu Obidoa
- Katie Roseau
- Margaret Symington

Members of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee: Shehnaz Haqqani, Matt Harper, Kedrick Hartfield, Laura Simon, Natalie Bourdon, Ansley Booker (Ex Officio) & Chinekwu Obidoa



Objectives and Goals

1

Provide in depth overview of racial microaggressions

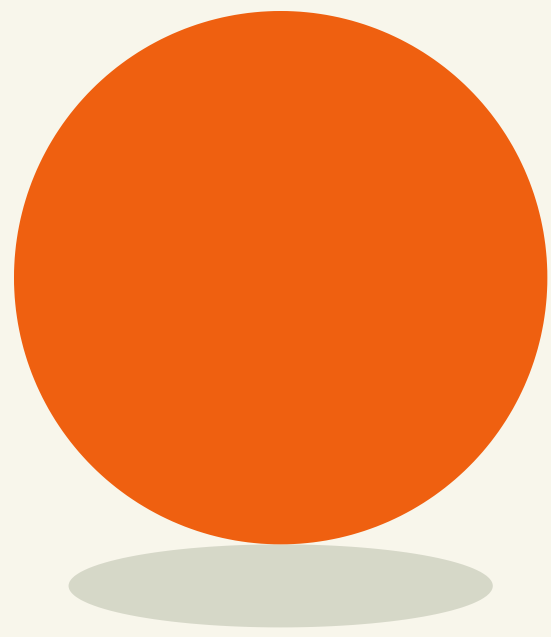
2

Provide relevant anti-racism, and inclusive teaching resources for faculty

3

Provide hands-on skill building on recognizing and responding to microaggressions





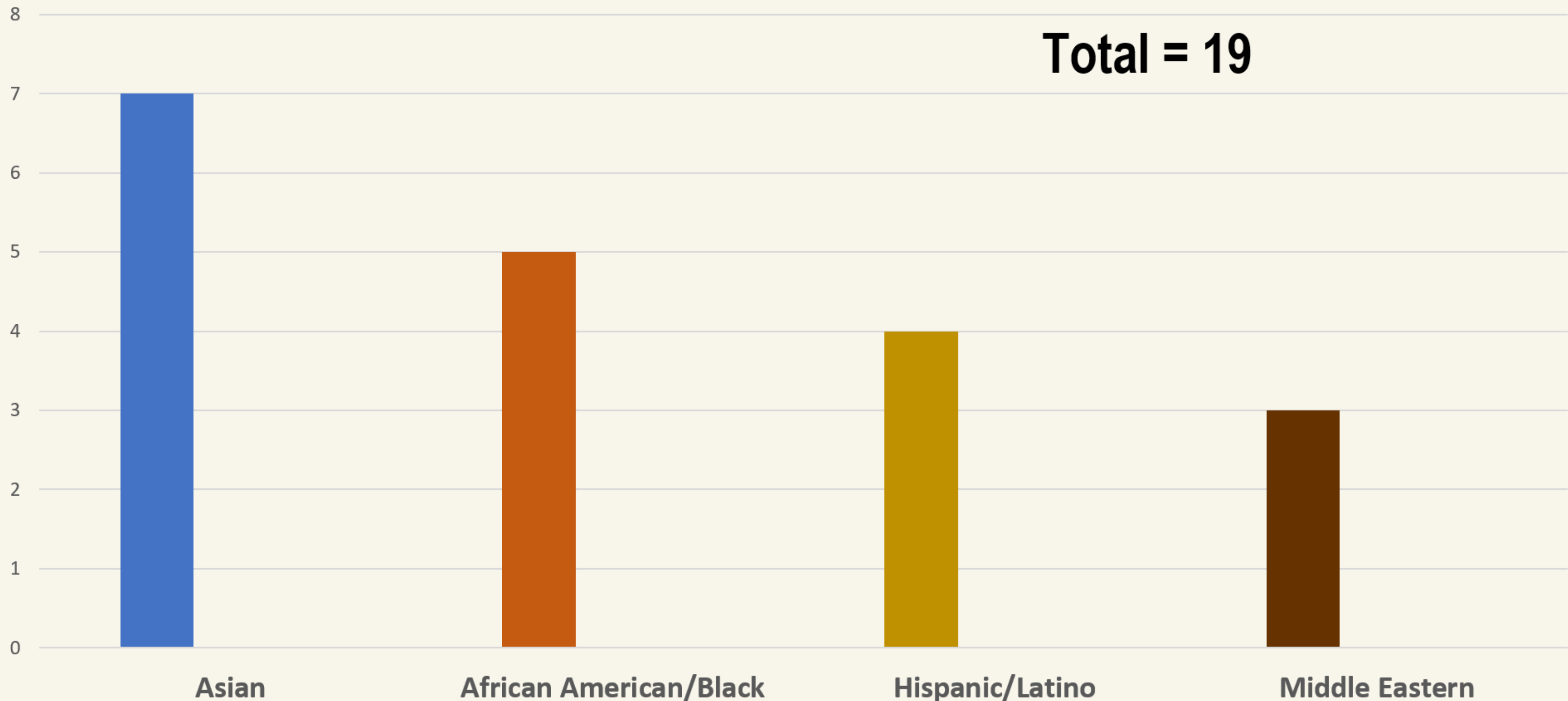
Why is this Workshop Important?

- It is the right thing to do
- CLAS Faculty /Student Racial Ratios
- Student & Faculty Retention
- Strategic Planning



CLAS: Tenure-Track Faculty of Color

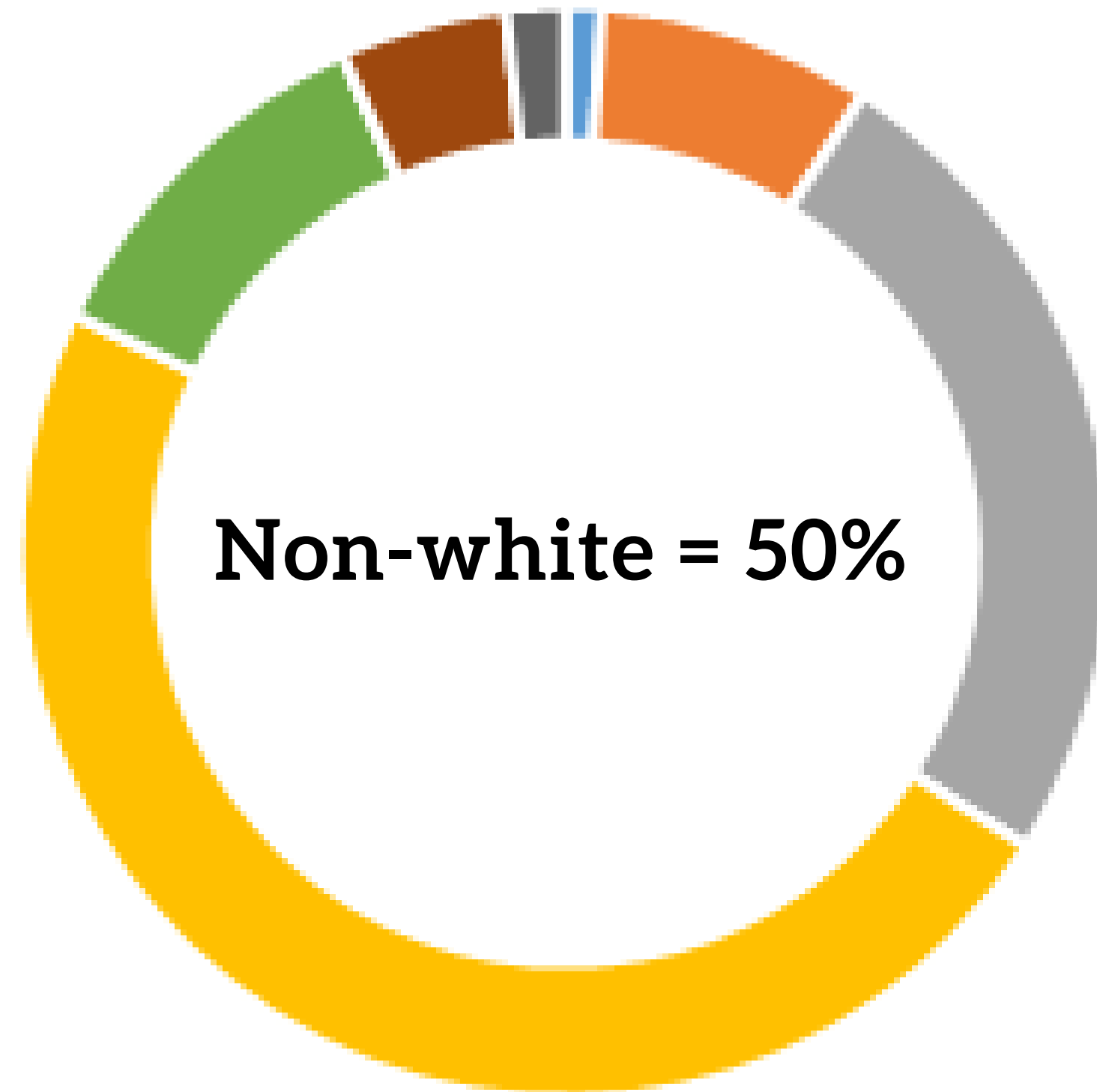
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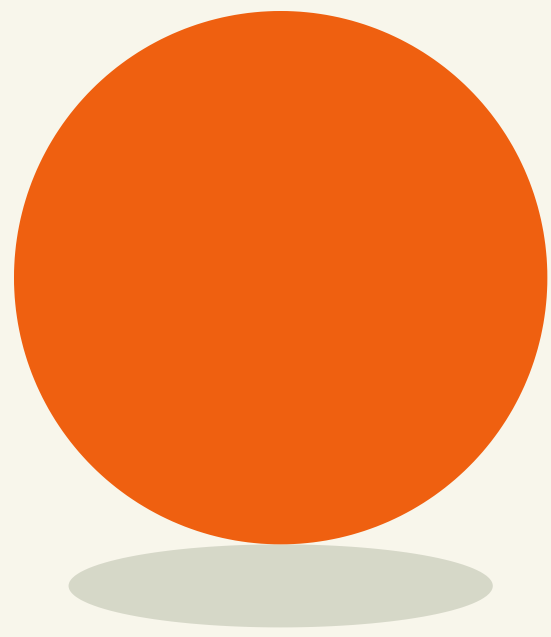


College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

2020 Incoming First Year Students*

- Non-resident aliens
- Hispanic/Latino
- Black or African American
- White, non-Hispanic/Latino
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian, Non-Hispanic
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- Two or more races
- Race and/or ethnicity unknown





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Microaggressions

Derald Wing Sue

"Brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities,

whether intentional or unintentional,

which communicate hostile, derogatory or negative slights, invalidations and insults to an individual or group because of their status in the society."



Dimensions of Microaggressions

RACE/
ETHNICITY

GENDER

SEXUALITY

RELIGION

SOCIO-ECONOMIC
STATUS

NATIONALITY

DISABILITY



Categories of Racial Microaggressions

Racial Microaggressions in Everyday
Life, Implications for Clinical Practice
by Derald Wing Sue et. al. 2007

Microinsults

Refers to unconscious behavioral/verbal remarks or comments that convey rudeness, insensitivity and demeans a person's racial heritage or identity.

Micro-assaults

Explicit racial derogations characterized primarily by a violent verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended victim through name calling, Avoidant behavior or purposeful.

Microinvalidations

Often unconscious verbal comments or behaviors that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings or experiential reality of person of color.

Environmental Microaggressions

Racial assaults, insults and invalidations which are manifested on systemic and environmental levels.

Ascription of intelligence -degree of intelligence to a person of color based on their race

Second class Citizen- treated as lesser person

Pathologizing cultural values/communication- values and communication styles are abnormal

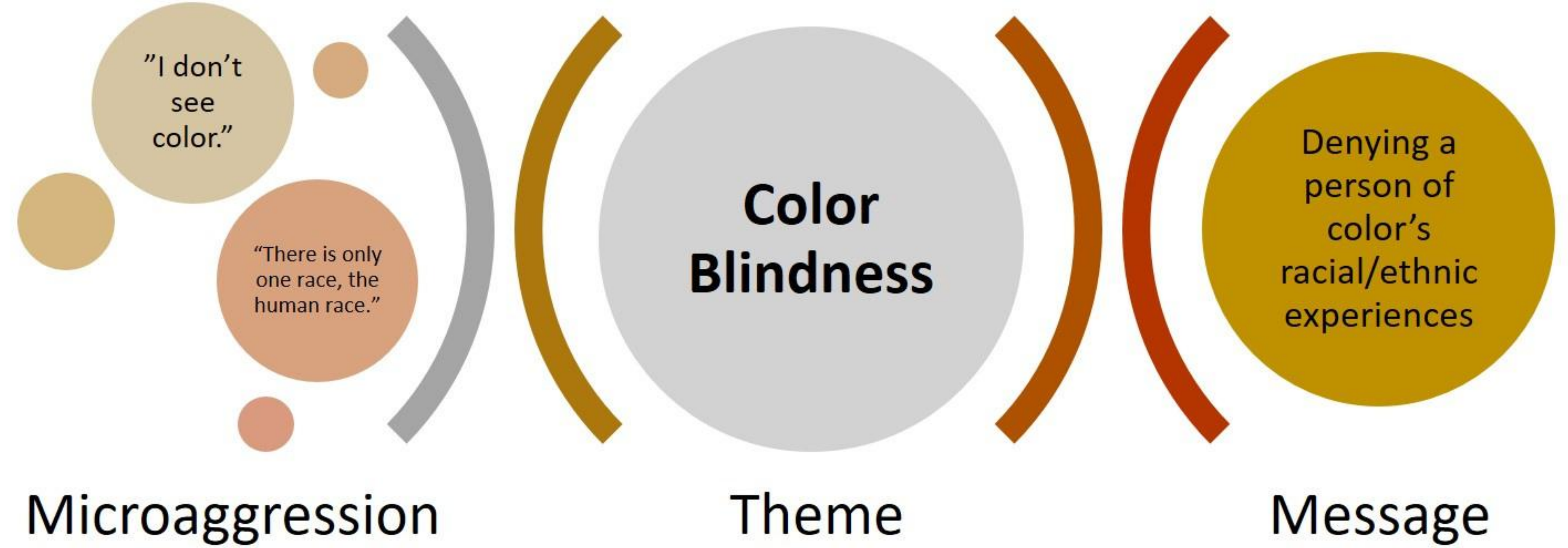
Assumption of criminal status - assumed to be a criminal, dangerous, or deviant based on race.

Alien in Own country-assume you are a foreigner

Color Blindness-does not see color or race

Myth of Meritocracy -race places a minor role in life success

Denial of Individual racism- denial of personal racism or one's role in its perpetuation

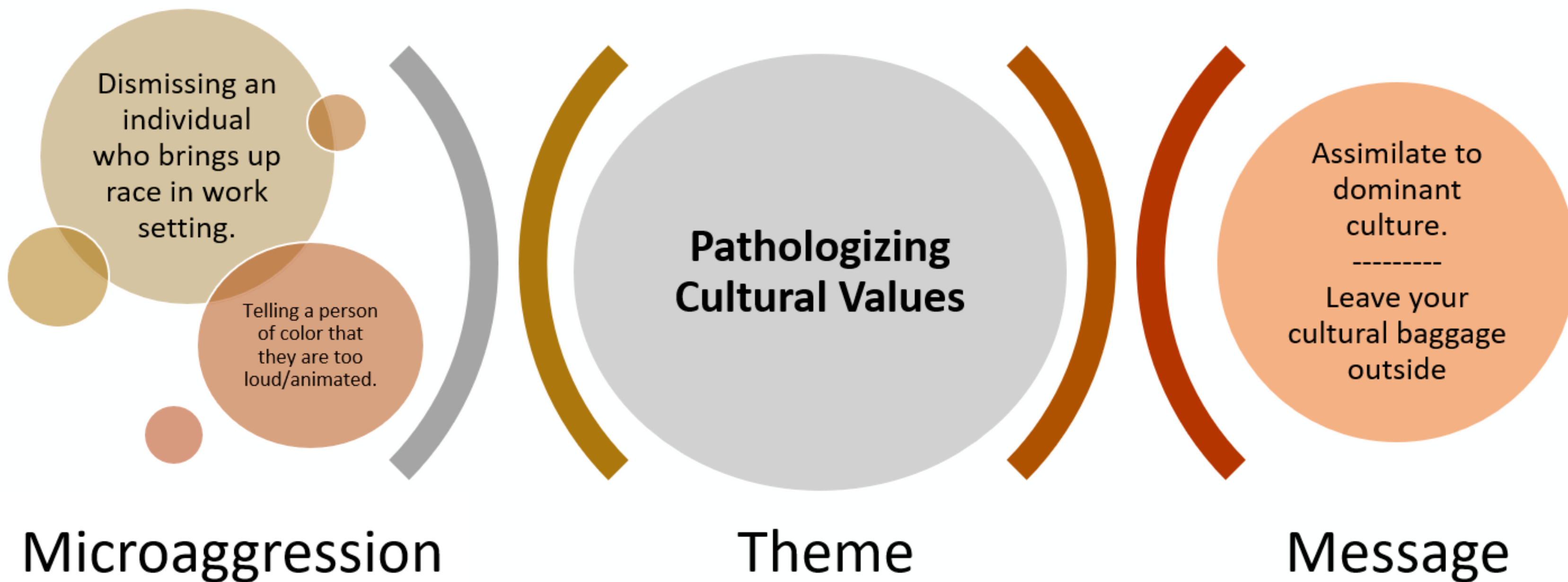




Microaggression

Theme

Message



Examples of Microaggressions

Real Experiences of Mercer Students



How Common are Microaggressions?

"This bias is so automatic that it kicks in before a person is ever aware it exists." This behavior is activated more quickly and effortlessly than saying, I've decided to discriminate against this person.

This is the frightening point: Because it's an automatic and unconscious process, people who engage in this unthinking discrimination are not aware of the fact that they do it.

Anti-Black messages are so pervasive in American society that a third of Black Americans hold anti-Black bias as well."

Dr. David R. Williams, Professor of Sociology and Public Health at Harvard University, Cambridge -Published in Essence Magazine, September 2013

Pyramid of Hate



Implicit (Unconscious) Bias

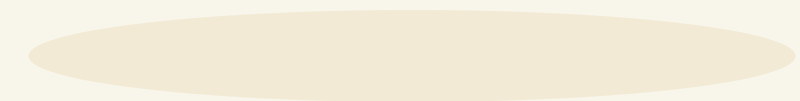
Bias: Is an unfair act or policy stemming from prejudice.

Implicit Bias: refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.

Explicit Bias: refers to the attitudes and beliefs we have about a person or group on a conscious level. Much of the time, these biases and their expression arise as the direct result of a perceived threat.



Implicit Bias leads to Microaggression



Microaggression Blindness

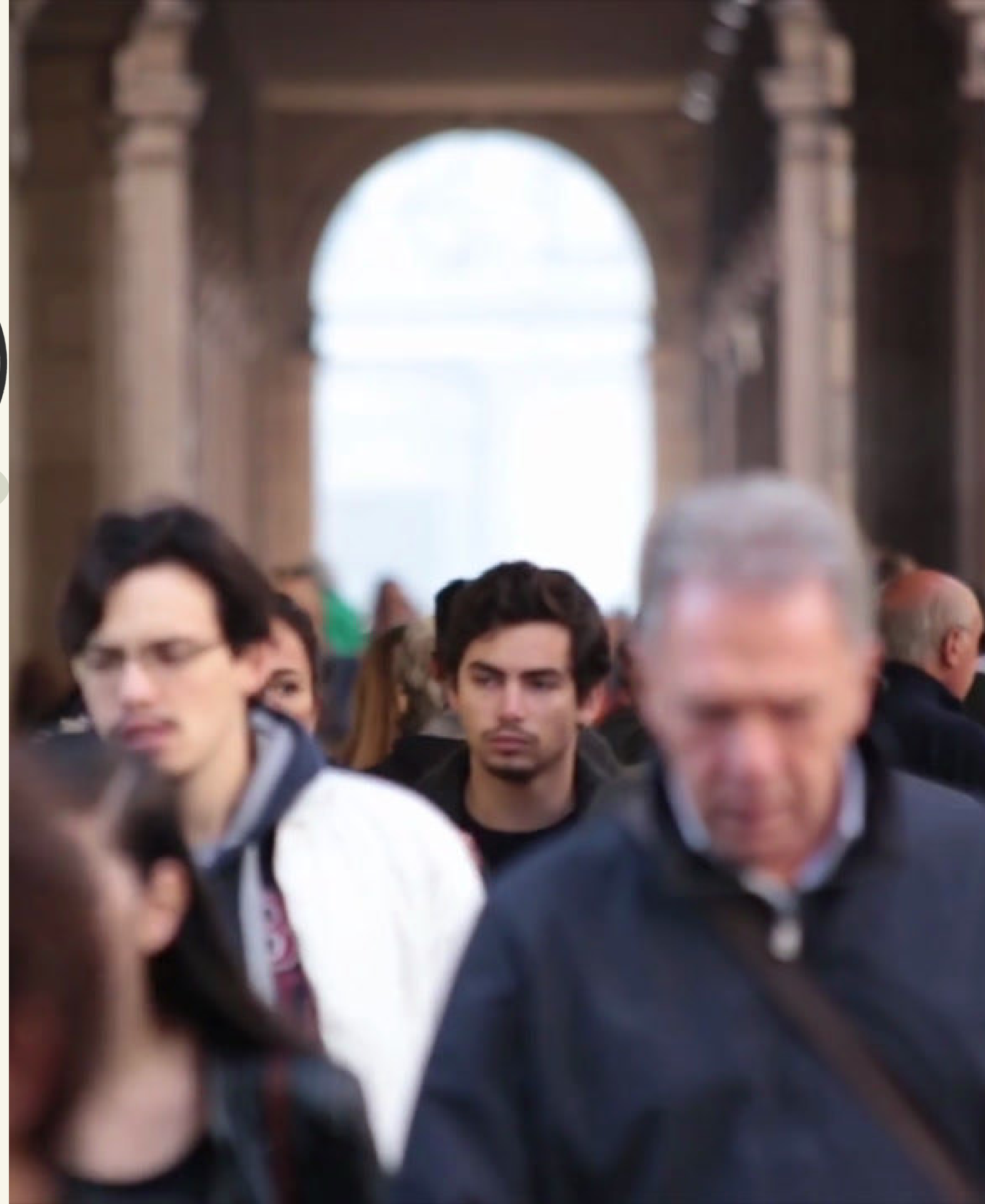


The problem with microaggressions is that, very often, those that commit them don't realize that what they said was offensive or think that it's okay to say because it wasn't overtly racist. Most of the time, they don't know the impact of their words and behavior on people.

Impact of Microaggressions



“Racial microaggressions create a hostile and invalidating climate for people of color, saps their spiritual and psychic energies, and their cumulative nature can result in depression, frustration, anger, rage, loss of self esteem, anxiety, etc.” -Derald Wing Sue



Impact of Microaggressions

Mental/Emotional



- Anger & Rage
- Frustration
- Anxiety
- Fear
- Resentment
- Depression
- Loss of Self Esteem
- Feelings of Anomie- Hopelessness

Physical



- Psychosomatic symptoms
- Sleep disturbances
- Compromised immune system
- Increased incidence of infectious and chronic diseases

Social

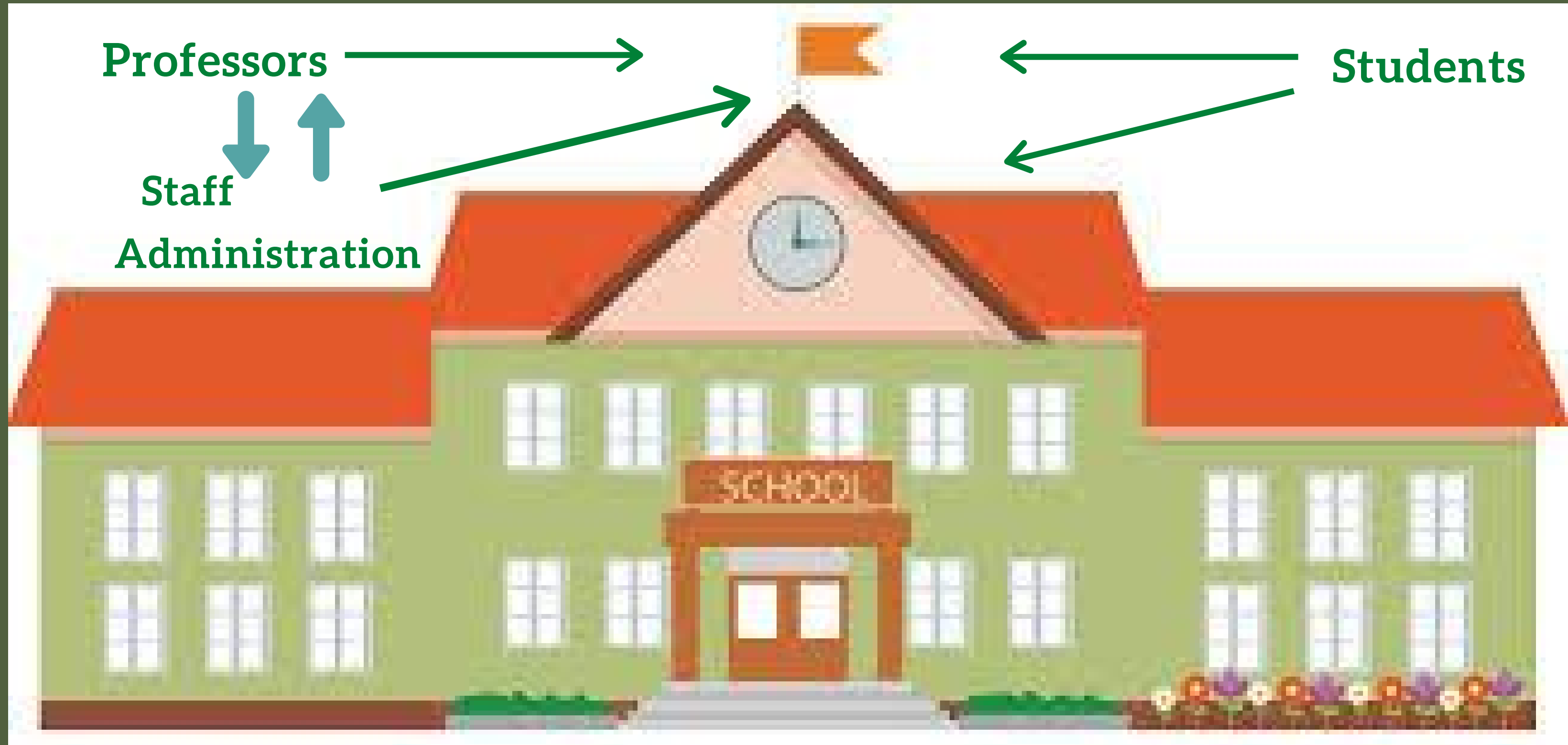


Trauma

- Awkward avoidance behavior
- Deviant behavior
- Self-diminishing behavior
- Hyper-vigilance/skepticism
- Physical and social segregation

Bio-psycho-social pathway

Microaggressions in Academic Institutions



Types of Microaggressions in the Classroom

- Setting **low expectations** for students from particular groups, neighborhoods, or race.
- Expecting students of any particular group to ‘**represent**’ the **perspectives** of others of their race, gender, etc. in class discussions or debates.
- Having students engage in required reading where the **protagonists are always white**.

Impact of Microaggressions on Students

- Decreased focus and productivity
- Diminished cognitive performance
- Poor academic performance
- Race-based stressors contribute to widening achievement gap
- Reactions: Silence, defensiveness, apathy, avoidance

Racial Microaggressions, Racial Battle Fatigue, and Racism-Related Stress
in Higher Education by Jeremy Franklin

What Do You Think?

Cefari Langford

"Do you wash your hair?"

Calm down

I know you are offended

But remember where you are

"You know, you're kind of intimidating?"

That hurt more than it should have

I had no idea cartoons were scary

I don't care but I do yet I don't

"Gets in trouble for something I didn't do"

Just explain the truth

He isn't even paying attention

He obviously doesn't give a damn

"Being followed by campus police"

Breathe, one-two, breathe

You are going to be fine

Just mind your business and keep walking

"Oh, I didn't know y'all went to counseling."

This place is raising my cortisol levels

My mental stability is laughable right now

But you don't ask me why. Too surprised?

"Oh, I didn't think that would hurt."

Excuse you?

A needle went in my arm incorrectly and was adjusted inside

Yes, that freaking hurt

"You have to have insurance...come back then."

I do have insurance

So, this is what we do

No apologies, okay, no second visits either

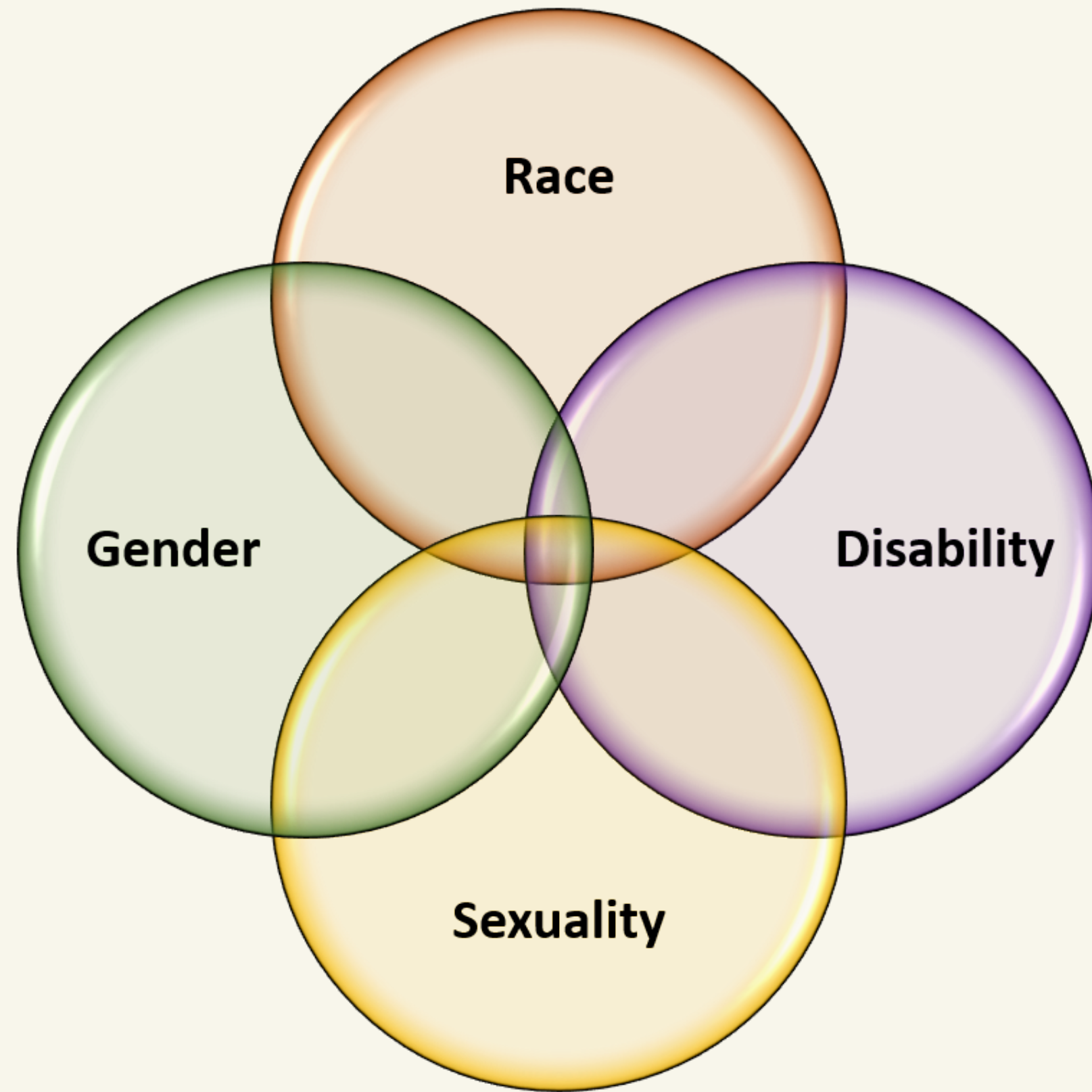
"Waits six hours to be seen"

I should just leave

But I have been waiting already

So, might as well stay

Inter-sectionality



Multiple Marginalities

"A mehapor for understanding the ways that multiple forms of inequality or disadvantage compound themselves and create obstacles that often are not understood within the conventional ways of thinking about anti-racist advocacy structures we have."

Kimberle Crenshaw
Black Feminist Theory

Racial Microaggressions in Academic Institutions

Professors

- **Unrealistic Expectations**
 - Exceptionalism
 - Clueless/ignorant
- Making **assumptions** about the knowledge and life experiences of faculty of color
- **Questioning** qualifications and credentials of faculty
- **Checking** facts provided by faculty of color
- Non-verbal **oppressive** behavior
 - Starring @ faculty of color
 - Impatient behavior (rolling eyes) when communicating with faculty of color

Staff

- Mistrust
- Comments and preferences regarding clothing and hairstyle
- Being overlooked
- Not acknowledged

Student to Faculty Microaggressions

I was teaching Calculus II (MAT 192) the spring semester of 2012, when I was showing the class how to construct a proof to show that a sequence is increasing or decreasing, *A male Asian student told me in front of the entire class what I was doing was wrong and I should construct the proof using his logic.*

Dr Hartfield

Just during this past spring semester (2020), I had *a white male student in Calculus III try to tell me I was wrong* in the procedure I use to decompose a diagonal vector back into its horizontal and vertical components. He was so adamant, that he wanted me and him to visit his favorite physics professor and let him be the arbiter between me and a student. Needless to say, I denied his request and told him to review the material from earlier in the course.

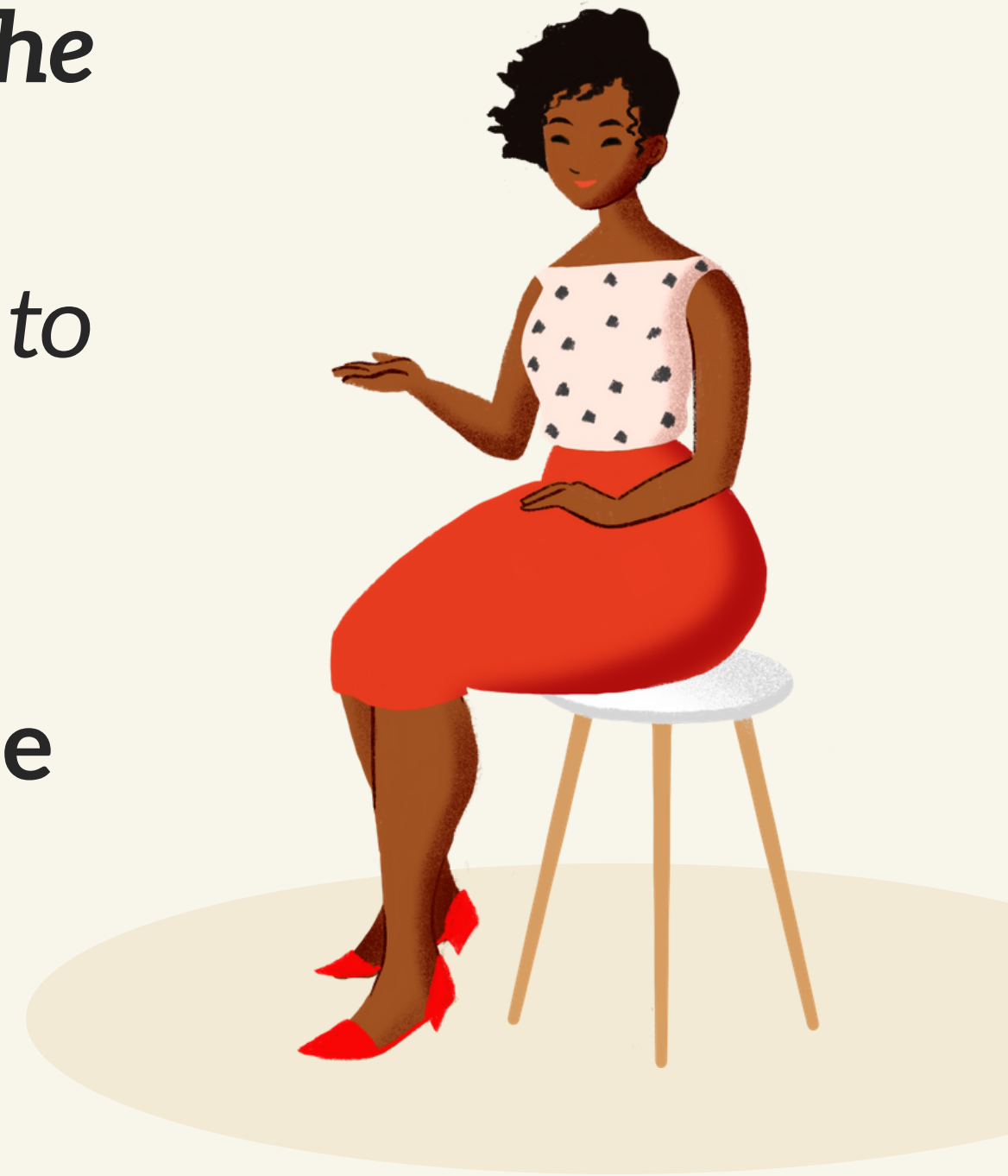
- Dr. Hartfield

Student to Faculty Microaggressions

“Dr. Obidoa was not an outstanding professor, ***but she was not as terrible as I expected.*** Some of her instructions were unclear and vague.”- *Introduction to Global Health, Spring 2015*

"He gave me a low grade **because he does not like white people.....**"

Student Comment for Dr. Fontenot



Impact of Microaggressions on Faculty

- "Political Labor of Diverse Bodies" - Sara Ahmed
- Racial-Battle Fatigue
 - Psychological, physiological, and behavioral stress responses due to the cumulative impact of racial microaggressions-
Impacts collegiality negatively
- Insecurity and Inferiority Complex
 - You question your identity/existence; changes how you relate to our own identity
- Modification of the "Diverse Body"
 - Changing your "body" to make others comfortable with your diversity -*Institutional Passing-Proximity to whiteness*
- Extreme Anxiety and Loneliness



What You can do about Microaggressions

Adapted from Clay, 2017 - American Psychological Association

You are the Target

- **Consider the context.**
What is your relationship with the microaggressor? Decide how you want to respond. **Respond**
- **Take care of yourself.** Talk things over with peers and practice healthy sleeping habits and self-care strategies, such as mindfulness and forgiveness.

You are a Bystander

- **Be an ally**
Sometimes your voice can be heard even more powerfully than those of the people directly affected by microaggressions.
- **Speak for yourself**
Don't try to speak on behalf of the person who has experienced the microaggression, doing so can itself be a form of microaggression,

You are the Aggressor

- **Try not to be defensive**
Acknowledge the other person's hurt, and apologize.
- **Reflect**
Reflect on where the microaggression came from and how you can avoid similar mistakes in the future.

Mitigate your Implicit Bias

Introspection: Explore and identify your own prejudices by taking implicit association tests or through other means of self-analysis.

Harvard Implicit Bias Test: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

Mindfulness: Since you're more likely to give in to your biases when you're under pressure, practice ways to reduce stress and increase mindfulness, such as focused breathing.

Perspective-taking: Consider experiences from the point of view of the person being stereotyped.

Learn to slow down: Before interacting with people from certain groups, pause and reflect to reduce reflexive actions.



Dos and Don'ts in the Classroom

1. **Do inform yourself** . . . but recognize that you don't have the lived experience of another group. Model cultural humility.
2. **Don't ask** representatives of a group in the class to speak for that entire group.
3. **Do recognize** that misinformation, structural biases, dominant worldviews are normalized and often unquestioned. Therefore, scaffold readings/activities to address students' likely misconceptions, expect resistance, and have patience in allowing students to question content.
4. **Don't** forget that this learning is as much emotional as intellectual. Make space in the class for students to acknowledge or reflect on their reactions—guilt, anxiety, anger, shock, triggering.
5. **Do** Include opportunities for students to examine their own positionality.
6. **Do** acknowledge and celebrate progress.

More on these topics: "Teaching Race, Racism, and Racial Justice: Pedagogical Principles and Classroom Strategies for Course Instructors," by M. Brielle Harbin, Amie Thurber, and Joe Bandy. *Race and Pedagogy Journal* (2019).

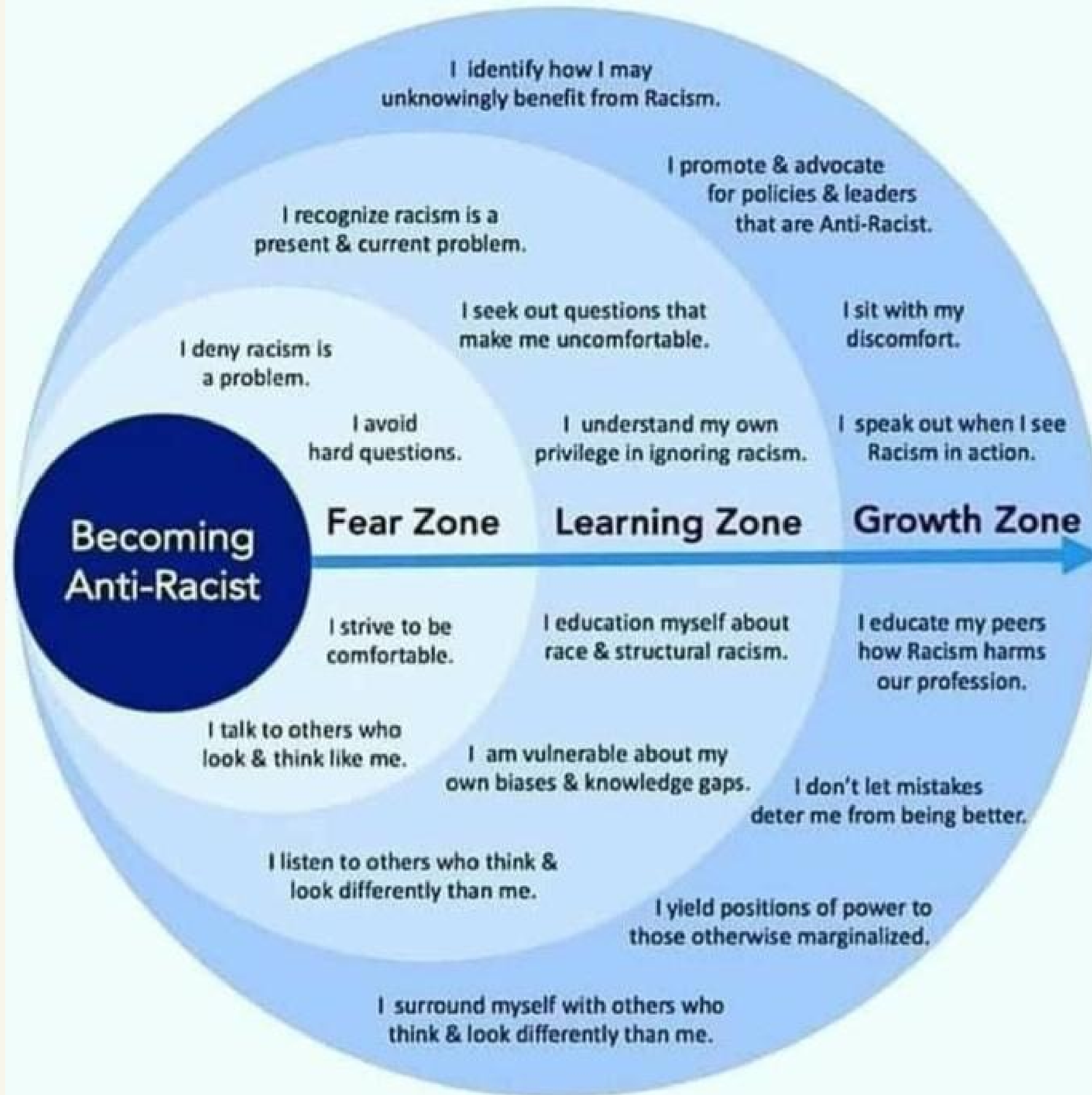



Chart was adapted by Andrew M. Ibrahim MD, MSc from "Who Do I Want to Be During COVID-19" chart (original author unknown) with some ideas pulled from Ibram X. Kendi's work.

Possible Topics for Learn & Grow Series – CLAS D & I Committee

1. "Decolonize" your syllabus/curriculum workshop
 2. Book review and discussion
 - a. White fragility
 - b. How to be an anti-racist
 3. Dismantling systemic racism in the academe
 4. How to have courageous conversations
 5. Inclusive and disruptive pedagogy
- 



Thank you for Participating
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