Creating Responsive Systems through Intentional Recruitment and Retention of Diverse Mental Health Providers

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What is Culture? *(APA, 2002)*

“the belief systems and value orientations that influence customs, norms, practices, and social institutions, including psychological processes (language, caretaking practices, media, educational systems) and organizations (media, educational systems).”
Demographics of School Psychology in Context (Goforth et al., 2021; U.S. Census Bureau, 2021)

School Psychology

- 11% Racially minoritized
- 8% Multilingual
- 12.3% With a disability

U.S. K-12 Student Population

- 54.2% Racially minoritized
- 10.2% English learners
- 14% With a disability (IDEA)
Identity, Intersectionality, and Experiences

Intersectionality refers to the simultaneous experience of social categories such as race, gender, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation and the ways in which these categories interact to create systems of oppression, domination, and discrimination.
Microaggressions and the Potential for Cultural Harm

Microaggressions are “brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to people of color because they belong to a racial minority group…often unconsciously delivered in the form of subtle snubs, dismissive looks, gestures, and tones.”

Sue et al., 2007, p. 273
#itooam harvard

"You don't sound black...You sound smart."

"ACCESSIBLE" PLACES

Did he really just say that?!
I think you're wrong, here's why.
You're being overdramatic, Jessica. Calm down!

"Dude, I totally forgot you were gay when we played ball earlier."
Psychological Consequences

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Sleep difficulties
- Diminished confidence
- Helplessness
- Loss of drive
- Intrusive cognitions (e.g., internal dilemma)
- Diminished cognition
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Microaggression</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>Minimization of cultural issues</td>
<td>Minimizing or dismissing the importance of cultural issues to a minoritized client</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accused hypersensitivity regarding cultural issues</td>
<td>Assuming that a minoritized client is hypersensitive during discussions of cultural issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Culturally insensitive treatment considerations or</td>
<td>Displaying cultural insensitivity in the context of understanding or treating clients’ concerns</td>
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<tr>
<td>recommendations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Acceptance of less than optimal behavior based on</td>
<td>Accepting or normalizing potentially dysfunctional behaviors based on a person’s sociocultural group</td>
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<tr>
<td>cultural group membership</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Idealization</td>
<td>Overestimating the desirable qualities and underestimating the limitations of a person based on sociocultural group membership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dysfunctional helping / Patronization</td>
<td>Offering help that is unneeded or inappropriate based on sociocultural group membership</td>
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Impact of Microaggressions in Therapeutic Settings

(Constantine, 2007; Hook et al., 2016; Owen et al., 2014; Shelton & Delgado-Romero, 2011)

- Higher degrees of perceived racial microaggressions associated with more negative perceptions of the working alliance and less satisfaction with counseling.
- 53% of Black clients reported experiencing microaggressions in therapy.
- 81.7% of REM clients reported experiencing at least one racial microaggression in therapy.
- Sexual orientation microaggressions negatively affected attitudes towards therapy and therapists, and diminished help-seeking behaviors.
Barriers to Mental Health Treatment

• Lack of insurance, underinsurance
• Mental illness stigma, often greater among minoritized populations
• Lack of diversity among mental health care providers
• Lack of culturally competent providers
• Language barriers
• Distrust in the health care system
• Inadequate support for mental health service in safety net settings (uninsured, Medicaid, Health Insurance Coverage other vulnerable patients)
Benefits of a Diverse Mental Health Workforce

(Blake et al., 2016)

Educational benefits to mental health professionals in training

- Exposure to diverse perspectives enhances discourse around diversity issues and helps develop cultural humility

Societal benefits by improving the quality of culturally responsive mental health services

- Increased research on cultural diversity and social justice issues
- Development of culturally responsive treatments
Challenges for Racial/Ethnic Minoritized (REM) Graduate Students

- **Lack of role models**
  - Lack of visibility of REM school psychologists in practice and in academia

- **Stereotyping**
  - Feel like their racial/ethnic group is represented stereotypically or not at all (Maton et al., 2011)
  - Experiences of microaggressions from peers, faculty, and supervisors (Clark et al., 2012)

- **Exclusion from support networks**
  - Less likely to perceive social support in the academic environment (Clark et al., 2012)
  - Less likely to receive the same quality of advising and mentoring as their White counterparts (Lott & Rogers, 2011; Proctor & Truscott, 2012)
Attrition of REM School Psychologists? (Zins & Halsell, 1986; Gadke et al., 2022; Goforth et al., 2021; Walcott & Hyson, 2018)

Despite reports of higher REM graduate student enrollment, comparable percentages are not seen in the field.

Raises question if REM school psychologists leave the profession at a higher rate.

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<tr>
<th>School Psychology Graduate Students</th>
<th>School Psychologists</th>
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<tr>
<td>11.5% (1983-84)</td>
<td>4% (1980)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34% (2019-20)</td>
<td>12% (2020)</td>
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Efforts to Diversify Mental Health Professions

**Recruitment**
- Getting minoritized individuals into the profession

**Retention**
- Keeping minoritized individuals in the profession

**Diversity**

**Inclusion**
Diversity ≠ Inclusion

<table>
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<th>Diversity</th>
<th>Inclusion</th>
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<td>• Recognizing, respecting, and valuing differences in people</td>
<td>• Experiences in an organization and feeling like your perspectives matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Primary question: “Who is here?”</td>
<td>• Primary question: “Who is welcome and whose ideas are valued here?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Policies and practices that prohibit anyone from being excluded or unjustly treated because of their social identity or status</td>
<td>• Policies and practices to ensure that all feel fully included and have meaningful opportunities for participation</td>
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Moving Toward Culturally Responsive Practices
Characteristics of Culturally Responsive Clinicians (Sue et al., 1982)

**Awareness**
- Aware of and sensitive to their own cultural heritage and are comfortable with the differences that may exist between them and their clients.

**Knowledge**
- Hold specific knowledge about minoritized groups and understand the generic characteristics of counseling and therapy.

**Skills**
- Possess the skills and abilities to generate a wide variety of verbal and nonverbal responses within the counseling relationship.
Culturally Responsive Mental Health MTSS
(Malone et al., 2021)

- **Tier 1**
  - Creating school climates conducive to ALL students’ well-being and success

- **Tiers 2 and 3**
  - Integrating culturally responsive practices into interventions to improve mental health outcomes
Culturally Adapted Interventions
(Brown et al., 2017; Peterson et al., 2017)

**Cultural Adaptations to Existing Interventions**
- For minoritized students who report mental health concerns or few protective / well-being factors
- Engage stakeholders who reflect the values and cultures of those receiving the intervention
- Increased likelihood that skills will generalize across settings

**Content Adaptations**
- Ensuring language, metaphors, and concepts are culturally appropriate

**Procedural Adaptations**
- Consideration of local context and changes to program delivery to be more culturally congruent
Culturally Affirming Interventions
(Jones et al., 2020; Woods-Jaeger et al., 2021)

- Racial Socialization
- Racial Identity
- Culturally Relevant Coping
  - Communalism
  - Spirituality / Faith

**Cultural Affinity Groups**

- For minoritized students who report more negative perceptions of school climate
- Purpose is to mitigate the negative psychological outcomes of discrimination
- Spaces to promote positive identity development and educational/peer support in navigating microaggressions
Becoming a Culturally Responsive Clinician

- Be aware of your culture and worldview
- Examine your beliefs, values, biases and privilege
- Approach others’ cultural experience with genuine interest and curiosity
- Gain knowledge about beliefs and practices in other cultures
- Acknowledge cultural differences
- Develop communication skills to interact with sensitivity
- Modify treatment to meet cultural needs
Moving Towards Diversity and Inclusion in Mental Health Professions

Professional Associations
- Develop resources to support culturally responsive and social justice practice
- Provide minimum expectations for multicultural and social justice competencies in education and practice standards

Academic Journals
- Diversify editorial boards
- Call for research focused on diversity, social justice, and equity

Graduate Education Programs
- Engage in intentional efforts to recruit and retain of program faculty and graduate students from minoritized groups
- Center social justice in program curricula and practices (e.g., #CiteBlackWomen)

Practitioners and Supervisors
- Participate in ongoing professional development for culturally responsive and social justice practice
- Engage in professional, legislative, and systems advocacy
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