



Investing in the Mental Health & Academic Success of Students of Color

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“Achieving Equity in Mental Health”

About The Steve Fund

Established in 2014, The Steve Fund was founded by a Black family who lost their loved one, Steve, to mental illness after he graduated from Harvard and City University.

The Steve Fund was created to bring awareness and build support for the mental health and emotional well-being of college students of color.

Equity in Mental Health Framework

Recommendations for Colleges and Universities to Support the Emotional Well-Being and Mental Health of Students of Color

EQUITY IN MENTAL HEALTH ON CAMPUS



A Joint Project of



Mindfulness Moment



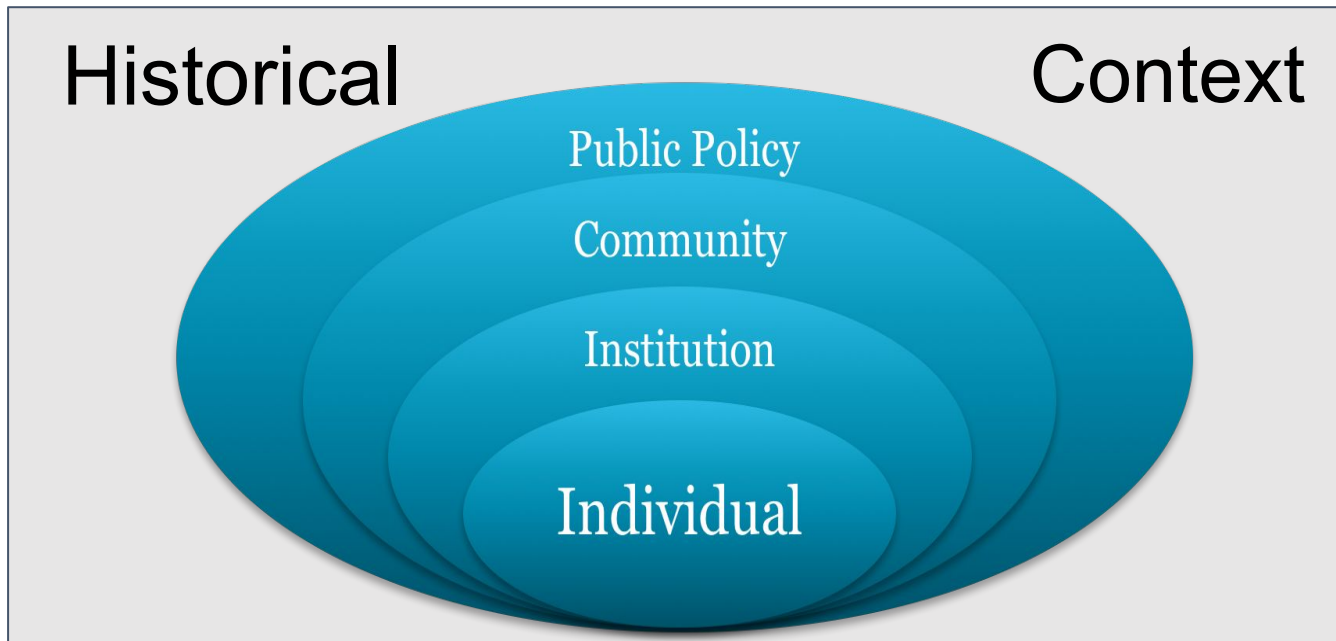
Neural Integration



Consciousness Raising: A Racial Trauma Focus

Ecological Perspective

- Individual ↔ Environment
- Focus is on this transactional relationship
- Environment & Historical Context influence student experiences

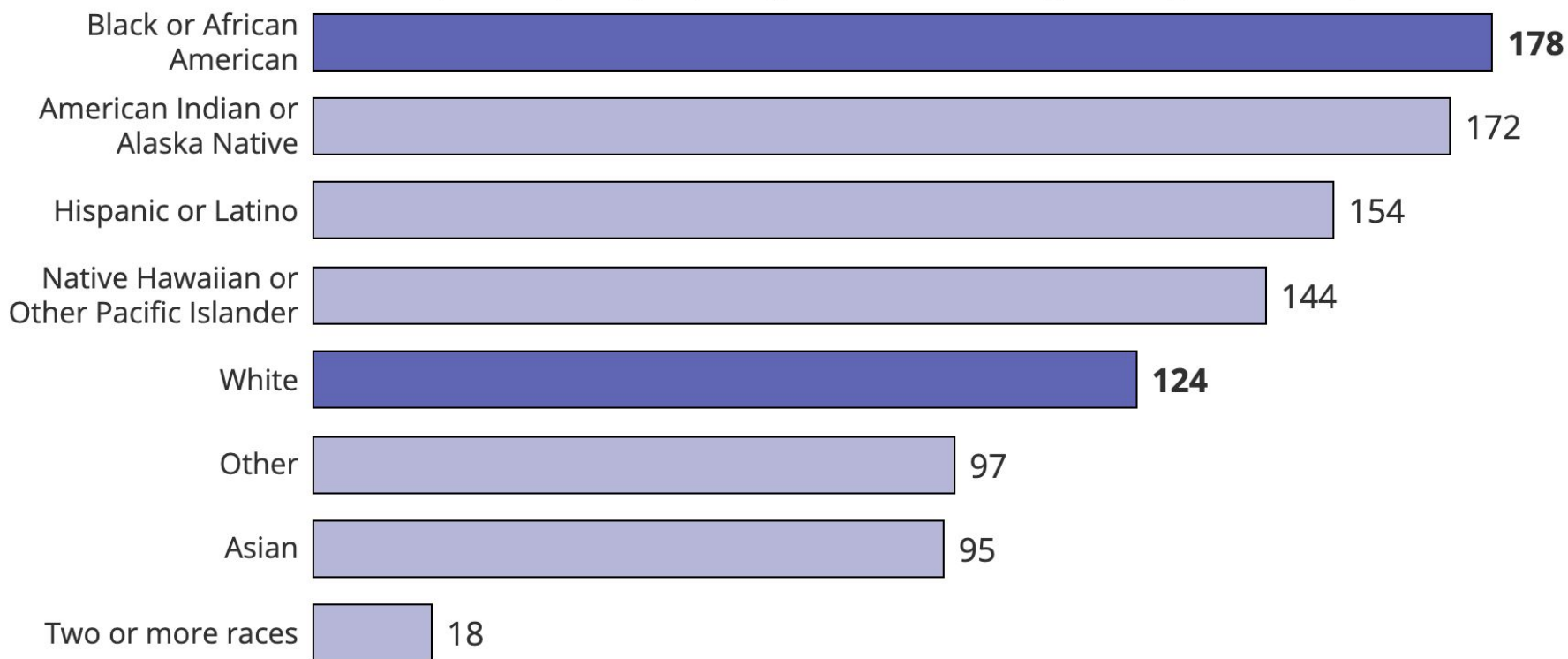


The Double Pandemic: How COVID-19 Is Bringing to Light Health Inequities That Have Long Been a Problem in America



COVID-19 Racial Disparities

Deaths per 100,000 people by race or ethnicity through March 7, 2021



Source: The COVID Tracking Project, <https://covidtracking.com/race>

What is racial trauma?

*Refers to the mental and emotional harm caused by experiences with racism, racial discrimination, bias, etc.

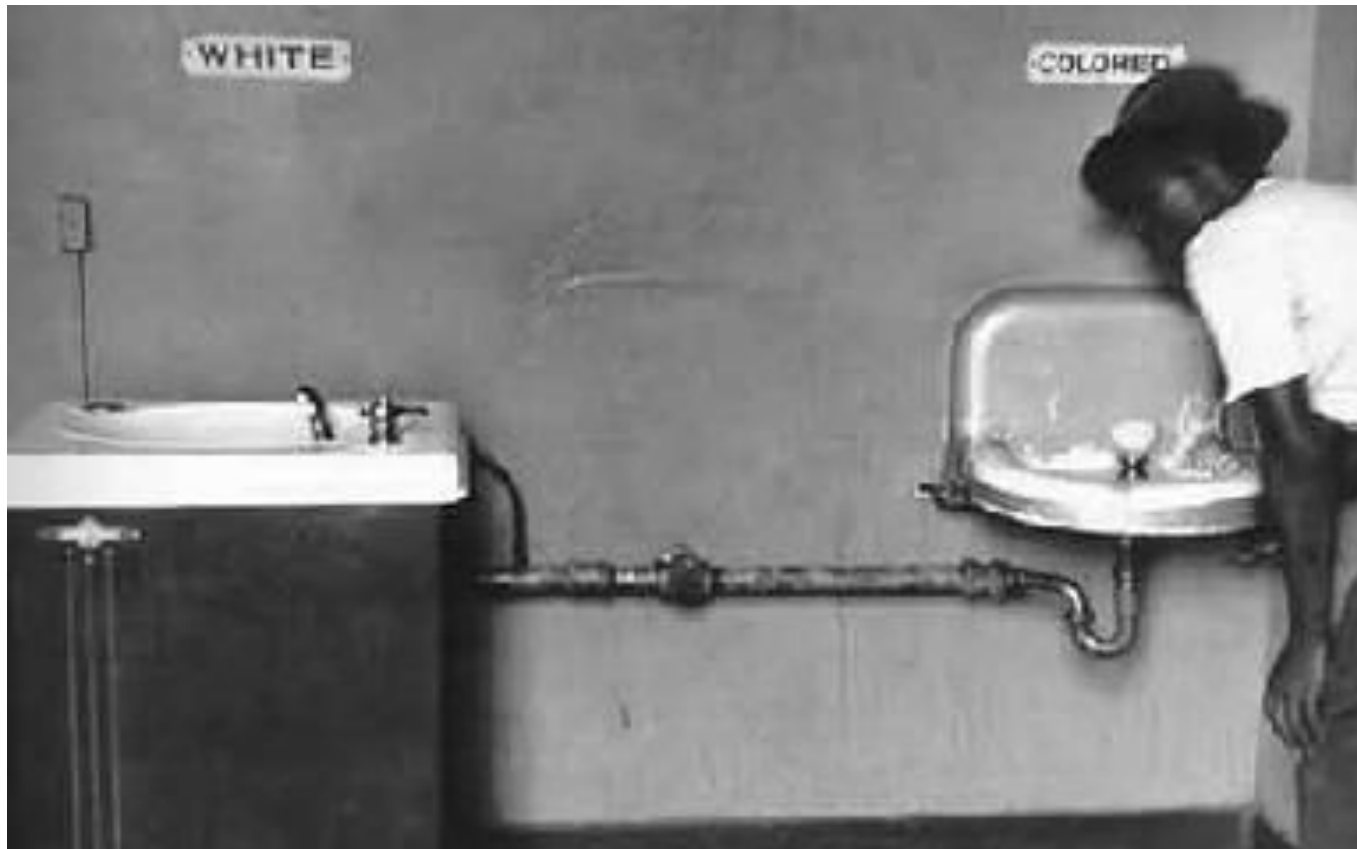
- Hostile Campus Climate
- Lack of access
- Microaggressions
- Internalized Oppression
 - Stereotype Threat
 - Imposter Phenomenon
- Dignitary Harm
- Stigma associated with help-seeking
- Sense of Isolation



Structural Racism

- “...the silent opportunity killer. It is the blind interaction between institutions, policies, and practices that inevitably perpetuates barriers to opportunities and racial disparities. Conscious and unconscious racism continue to exist in our society. But structural racism feeds on the unconscious.”
- Source: Grantmakers in the Arts

Structural Racism



Structural Racism

- Genocide of Indigenous People's of North America
 - Upwards of 90% of the population were annihilated
- Colonialism
- Currently 6.9 million Indigenous People in present day US
 - Representing 574 tribes
 - 326 distinct federally recognized reservations
- Most of us occupy stolen lands
 - The importance of land acknowledgements

Source:

<https://www.census.gov/newsroom/facts-for-features/2019/aian-month.html>

Intersectionality

“Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where **power** comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects.”

Professor Kimberlé
Crenshaw



Structural Racism

2018	Students-all	Faculty
American Indian/Alaska Native	.7%	.4%
Asian	7%	10.2%
Black	13.4%	5.5%
Hispanic/Latinx	19.5%	5%
Pacific Islander	.3%	.001%
White	55.2%	68.8%
'2 or more races	3.9%	1%
Unknown race/ethnicity		3%

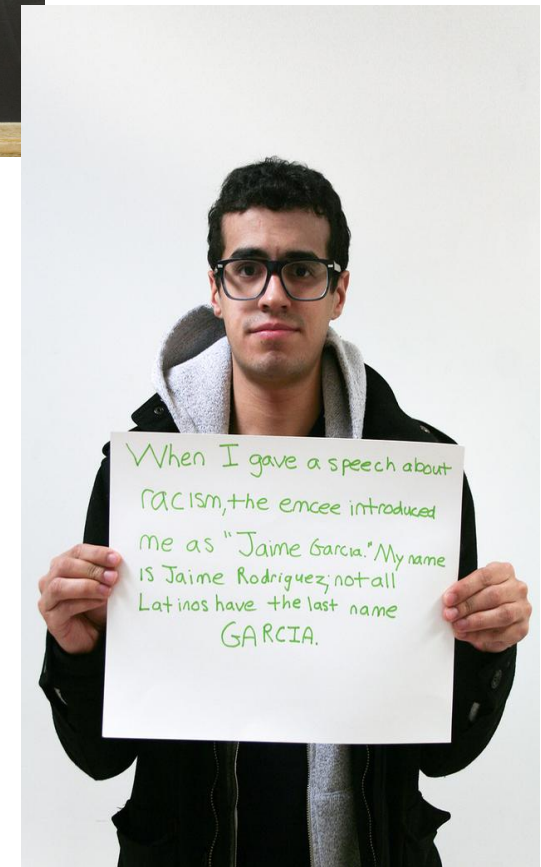
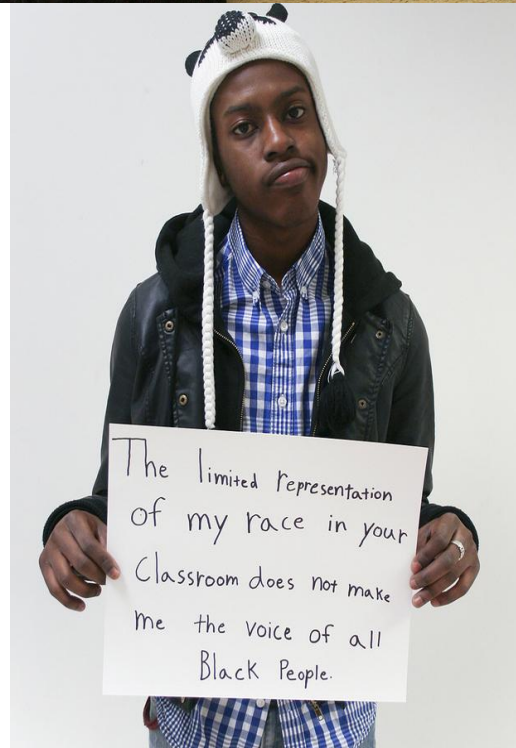
National Center for Education Statistics: Fast Facts: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d19/tables/dt19_306.30.asp?current=yes;
https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d19/tables/dt19_315.20.asp?current=yes

Microaggression Theory

Microaggressions are **brief and commonplace** verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, that communicate **hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults toward marginalized people**, such as people of color, women, LGBTQ individuals, the poor, and people with disabilities. These events can be intentional or unintentional. Perpetrators of microaggressions are **often unaware** that they engage in such communications when they interact with marginalized people.

Microaggressions on Campus

- Environmental Microaggressions
 - Demographics of the campus community
 - “No one here looks like me.”
 - Content of the curriculum
 - “Am I not a part of American History?”
 - Cultural student programming
 - “Why do my people only get a month?”
 - Multicultural Affairs and Diversity Offices
 - A place to call home
 - My only space on campus?



Internalized Oppression

Experiencing Racism Stress doesn't require another person being racist to us.

We may find **ourselves** believing or endorsing Negative Stereotypes associated with our race (+ gender, sexual orientation, ability status, social class, etc.)

Internalized Racism: believing the stereotypes associated with your own marginalized identities

Internalized Racism

= A Result of Sustaining Systemic Racism: a Survival Mechanism, an Adaptation, a Trauma Reaction

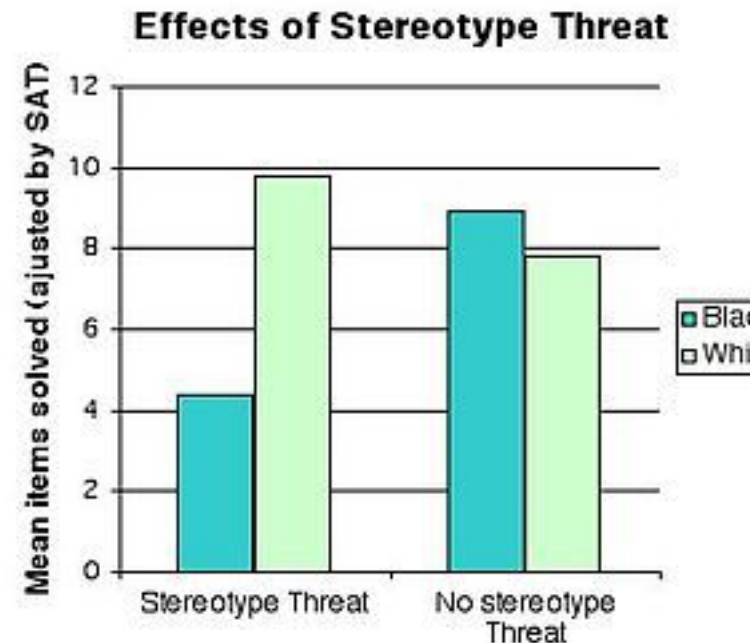
Can include discriminating against people who look like you, believing negative stereotypes, hating yourself.



Internalized Oppression Comes in Different Forms

Stereotype Threat = Nervousness about Confirming a Negative Stereotype about your Group → Leads to Poor Performance on a task

- ▶ Causes...
 - ▶ Distractedness
 - ▶ Poor Performance on Tasks
 - ▶ Avoidance of Participation in areas of You Assume You're Weak in
 - ▶ Perpetuates Racial and Gender Gaps in Performance



Internalized Oppression Comes in Different Forms

Imposter Phenomenon: Feeling like a fraud, undeserving of your accolades/status, Fear of Others Finding Out



HEALTHY MINDS and STEVE FUND STUDY RESULTS

The Steve Fund partnered with the Healthy Minds Network to examine educational experiences and mental well-being of students of color in the months after the COVID-19 pandemic began in the U.S.

RACIAL DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTION OF CAMPUS SUPPORT

- **American Indian, Middle Eastern, and Pacific Islander students reported less support from their college/university administration than Asian, Black, Latinx, Multiracial, and White students.**
- **Multiracial students were less likely to view their college/university administrations as sources of support during the pandemic.**
- **Black and Latinx students were less likely to view their professors as sources of support during the pandemic**

**RACIAL
DIFFERENCES IN
EXPERIENCING &
WITNESSING
RACISM**

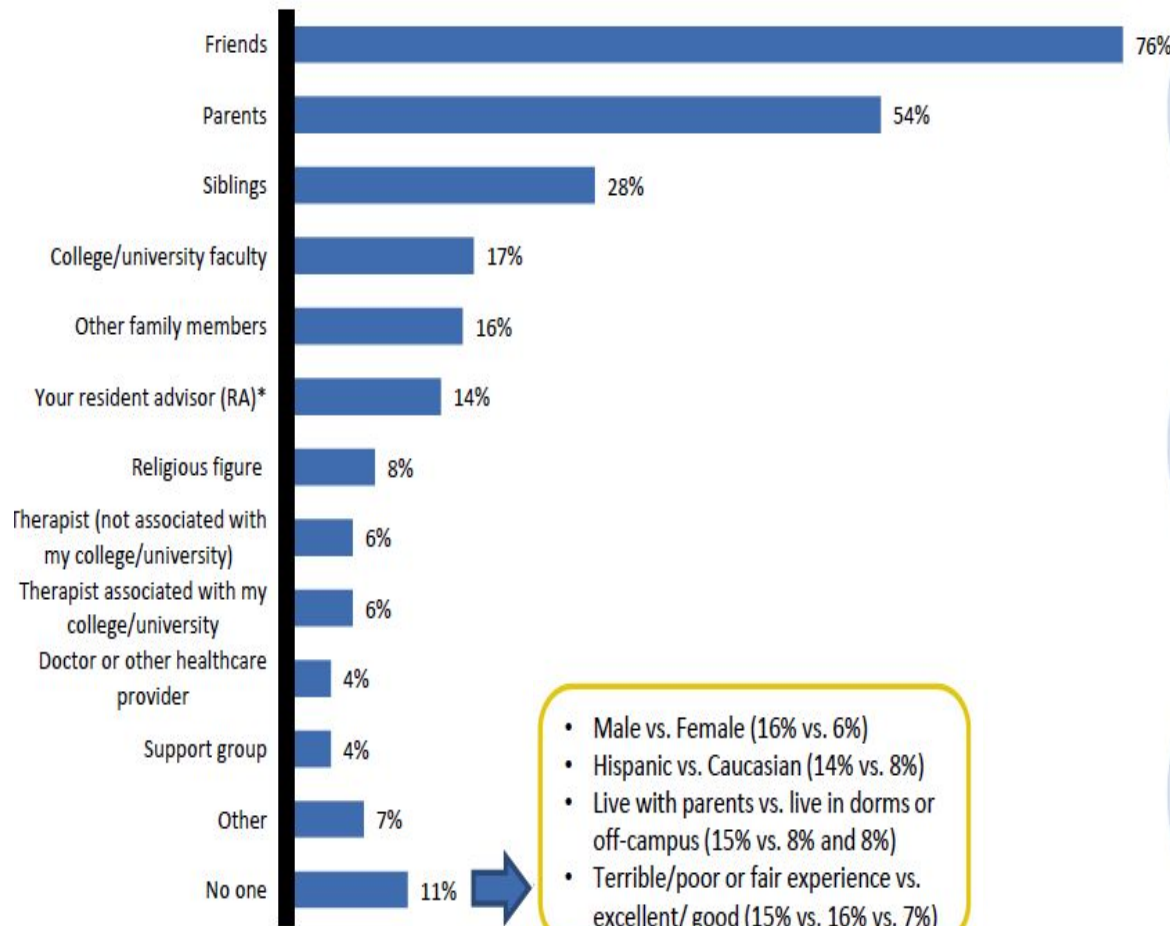
- **Asian students more likely to experience racial discrimination during the pandemic than any other race of students.**
- **Black, Latinx, Multiracial, American Indian, Middle Eastern, and Pacific Islander students were more likely to experience racial discrimination during the pandemic than white students.**
- **Asian students reported a high rate of witnessing discrimination during the pandemic than any other race of students.**
- **Black, Latinx, Multiracial, American Indian, Middle Eastern, and Pacific Islander students reported higher rates of witnessing discrimination than white students.**
- **White students more likely to agree with the statement that Asians are respected in the broader society than Asian and Latinx students**

**COVID-19
IMPACT ON
STUDENT OF
COLOR
MENTAL
HEALTH**

- **Since the arrival of the pandemic:**
 - Undergraduate students of color are experiencing higher rates of depression and anxiety than white students.
 - Graduate and professional students of color are more likely to experience depression and anxiety than white students.

UC Berkeley, 2020

Where are students seeking help?



- Male vs. Female (16% vs. 6%)
- Hispanic vs. Caucasian (14% vs. 8%)
- Live with parents vs. live in dorms or off-campus (15% vs. 8% and 8%)
- Terrible/poor or fair experience vs. excellent/ good (15% vs. 16% vs. 7%)

64%
Turned to family

24%
Turned to school staff

12%
Turned to a therapist



2015 online survey of college students in their second term conducted by Harris Poll on behalf of The Jed Foundation, The Jordan Matthew Porco Foundation, and The Partnership for Drug Free Kids

Shame + Stigma = Silence

Barriers to seeking mental health treatment common across several racial and ethnic groups are shame (or self-concealment) and stigma.

- People of color prefer not to be labelled as having diagnoses of mental illness because of the stigma and shame attached
- Many who are in need of mental health services are reluctant to seek out these services for fear of being stigmatized within their communities



#RacialTraumalsReal: PTSD

:After Stressful Racial Experiences, BIPOC have physical and emotional trauma symptoms.

:Different than typical PTSD Recovery: Racial Trauma occurs and reoccurs and reoccurs.

:Vicarious Trauma: Hearing about a racial trauma event occurring to someone else of your racial group (including a stranger) can cause you to exp trauma symptoms

:Racial Trauma Reactions: Stress is Cumulative; Accumulates Over Time creating Chronic Stress in the Body

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)



Avoid Thinking of the Trauma



Avoid Talking of the Trauma



Easily Frightened



Negative Mood



Negative Thinking



Always on Guard



Avoiding Places



Avoiding Activities



Flashbacks



Cannot Concentrate



Aggressive Behavior



Loss of Interest



Feeling Guilt or Shame



Substance Abuse



Sleeping Difficulty



Bad Dreams

What can we do to support student of color wellness?

Remediation → Prevention

- Campus-based efforts addressing wellness and diversity often focus on remediation.
 - Remediation does not address the source of the issue
- **How can we incorporate a prevention focus to addressing student wellness?**

EMHF Recommendations

1. Identify and promote the mental health and well-being of students of color as a campus-wide priority
2. Engage students to provide guidance and feedback on matters of student mental health and emotional well-being
3. Actively recruit, train, and retain a diverse and culturally competent faculty and professional staff
4. Create opportunities to engage around national and international issues and events
5. Create dedicated roles to support well-being and success of students of color
6. Support and promote accessible, safe communication with campus administration and an effective response system
7. Offer a range of supportive programs and services in varied formats
8. Help students learn about programs and services by advertising and promoting through multiple channels
9. Identify and utilize culturally relevant and promising programs and collect data on effectiveness
10. Participate in resource and information sharing within and between schools

www.EquityinMentalHealth.org

Campus Climate Video Toolkit: Steve Fund & University of Michigan's National Center for Institutional Diversity



Source:

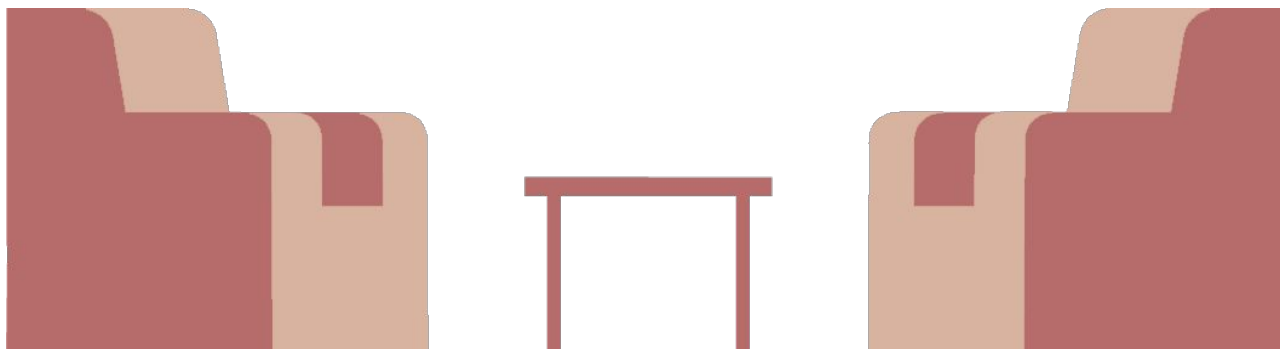
<https://medium.com/national-center-for-institutional-diversity/young-gifted-risk-and-resilient-4bc84efca3c6>

Engaging with Culture

- Must occur throughout the entire working relationship.
- Be aware of your power.
- Check your assumptions about the process.
 - Take a culturally humble stance
- Be intentional about your language.
- Set precedence for talking about race & culture.
- Be prepared for cultural ruptures and work to repair them with the client.
- Know your limits.
- Seek out more knowledge and experience.

Cultural Humility

- Defined:
 - “the ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented (or open to the other) in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the client .” (Hook, Davis, Owen, & DeBlaere, 2017)



Racial Trauma: How Do We Recover?

Healing through...

- **Acknowledgement:** Be Able to Recognize Racial Stressors
- **Consciousness Raising:** Contextualize your Self within a Historical Timeline
- **Mindfulness, Self-Care:** Reconnect with your Body and Mind
- **Seek Support:** Know Who to Go To: Find People who Validate your Struggle/Process, Build Pride and Connection
- **Connect to Your Cultural Roots:** Affirm Where You Come From
- **Activism:** Get Involved in Organizing in your Community, Critically Assess where BIPOC Needs are Not Being Met, Fight for Justice

<https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/lynch-school/sites/isprc/isprc-advisory-board.html>

The Racial Recovery Plan

After a racist event, BIPOC often struggle to cope, orient themselves to what has happened, and recover.



Creating a recovery plan in advance helps establish your racial identity well-being as a practice, an ongoing part of your health to help you not just cope, but heal and thrive.

Adapted from: Jernigan, M. M., Green, C. E., Perez-Gualdrón, Liu, M. M., Henze, K. T., Chen, C...Helms, J. E. (2015). *#racialtraumaisreal*. Institute for the Study and Promotion of Race and Culture, Chestnut Hill, MA. <https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/lynch-school/sites/isprc/isprc-advisory-board.html>

Racial Recovery Plan

Part 1/2



1- REFLECT

Describe how you feel when responding to racism in a healthy way.

2- DAILY UPKEEP, STAY CENTERED

What strategies help you cope generally, and in the wake of a racist event (e.g. mindfulness, discussing with friends, self-care, reading about racial identity and race-related stress, prayer, exercise, journaling)?

3- IDENTIFY STRESSFUL SITUATIONS

What racial events are upsetting for you? Assign a Daily Upkeep Exercise to use when these events occur.

4- ANTICIPATE EARLY WARNING SIGNS

What emotional/physical signs hint to you that you're experiencing racial trauma?

<https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/lynch-school/sites/isprc/isprc-advisory-board.html>

Racial Recovery Plan

Part 2/2



5 - ACUTE RESPONSE PLAN

How do you feel when you're experiencing acute racial stress (a crisis)? Identify Strategies for Coping (e.g. meeting with a counselor or spiritual advisor, going to a protest/activist meeting, sharing with trusted friends and/or family)

6 - CRISIS PLANNING

How Would you Know You're Going through a racial trauma crisis (e.g. thoughts of self-harm)? Who will you contact if this happens?

7 - POST CRISIS RECOVERY

How will you reconnect with yourself after a racist event? What strategies will you use?

<https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/lynch-school/sites/isprc/isprc-advisory-board.html>

What can staff and faculty do?

Faculty and staff play a vital role in supporting the overall wellbeing of students.

- Normalize conversations about mental health.
- Include wellness issues throughout the program.
- Encourage a culture of care within the program.
- Investigate the school's support resources:
 - Counseling Center/Wellness Center
 - Dean of Students' Office
- Check-in with students on a regular basis.
 - Where and who are their campus connections?

Encourage students to:

Develop coping strategies early on.

- Develop a balanced schedule
 - Fixed time for sleep, meals, physical & leisure activities
 - Promote schedule consistency
- Incorporate “Wellbeing Checks” into your daily life
- Learn mindfulness strategies
 - Go to mindfulnessforteens.com
- Continually emphasize your strengths

The Basic V-A-R Method

When you notice someone is struggling, here is what you can do:

- Validate their feelings.
- Appreciate their courage.
- Refer them to skills and support.

Source: <https://www.activeminds.org/about-mental-health/basic-var/>

The Steve Fund Knowledge Center

SteveFund.org



The Steve Fund Knowledge Center is a resource for expert information about the mental health and emotional well-being of students of color.



White papers



Expert presentations



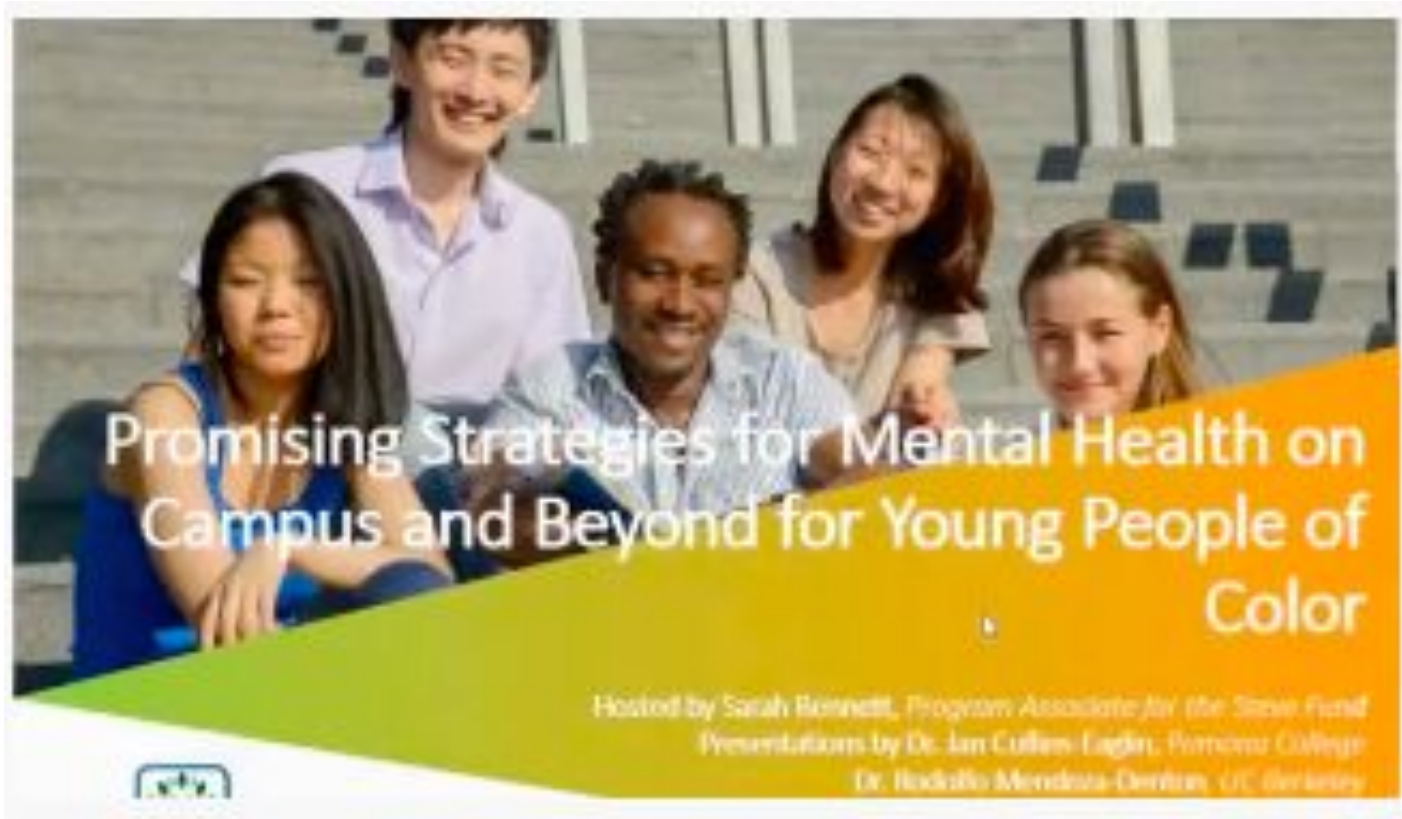
Webinars



Interviews

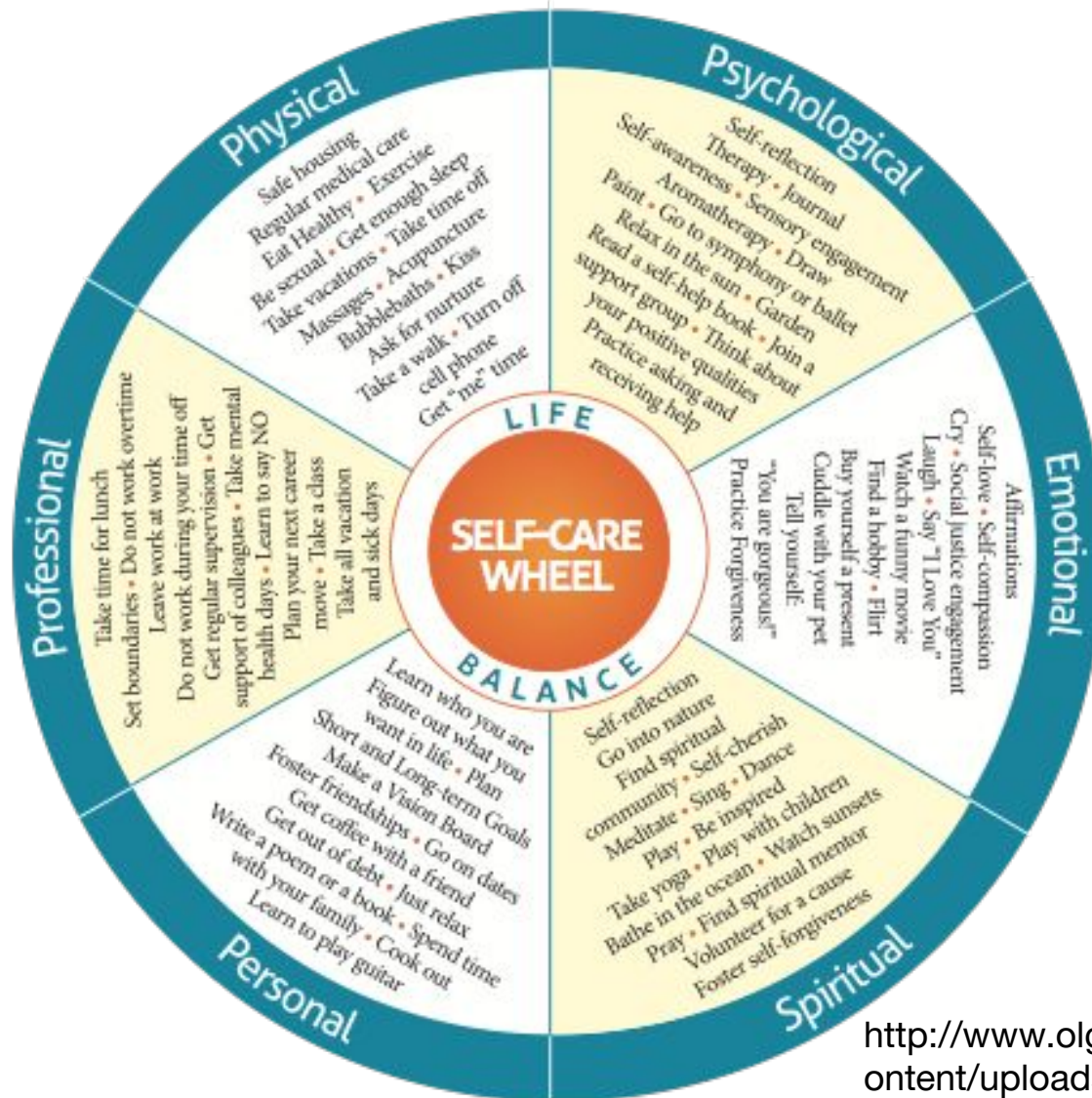


Support for Parents and Families Webinars and presentations: This webinar series for parents focuses on challenges faced by students of color during college and emerging adulthood and ways in which parents and family members can support their children, and help them to thrive throughout this experience.



Webinar series for students on mental health, wellness strategies, and campus life issues.

SELF-CARE WHEEL



<http://www.olgaphoenix.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Self-Care-Wheel-template-English.pdf>

Mindful Breathing

SOBER Breathing:

- Stop
- Observe
- Breathe
- Expand
- Respond



***Mindfulness promotes neural integration.**

Source: Mindfulnessforteens.com

Are you a young person of color?
Feeling down, stressed or overwhelmed?
Text STEVE to 741741

In crisis? Text STEVE to 741741.

Are you a young person of color? Feeling down, stressed or overwhelmed? Text STEVE to 741741 and a live, trained Crisis Counselor will receive the text and respond to you quickly to provide support. The volunteer Crisis Counselor will help you move from a hot moment to a cool moment.

With support from the Knight Foundation, the Steve Fund has partnered with Crisis Text Line to provide this text messaging service as a means to improve the critically needed access for young people of color to crisis counseling. The Fund views text messaging as a key component of its strategy towards

- **Crisis Text Messaging Service:** The Steve Fund has partnered with Crisis Text Line and offers free, on-demand crisis counseling using text messaging as a means to improve the critically needed access to crisis counseling for young people of color. Trained Crisis Counselors are available 24/7 to receive texts and respond quickly to provide support.

My Takeaways

- I like...
- I will...
- I wish...





Please visit www.stevelfund.org to:

- Learn more and sign up for the Knowledge Center (webinars, presentations, articles)
- Inquire about Steve Fund programs and offerings
- Obtain updates on the Steve Fund
- Volunteer or contribute ideas for the Steve Fund
- Encourage your students to engage in Steve Fund opportunities for youth leaders



For information and questions:

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