

A Roundtable Discussion on Race and Ethnicity among College Mental Health Professional Staff

University and College Counseling Centers of New York (CCNY) Conference

Skidmore College, Saratoga Spring, NY

June 6, 2019 Thursday at 1:45pm – 3:00pm in Palamountain 201

Facilitated by Sade Cardin, Odessa Despot, Juanita Green, Jen-Mai Wong, and Elena Yee

Facilitators

- Sade Cardin, MSW graduate student, Utica College, Utica NY
- Odessa D. Despot, PsyD, Staff Psychologist, Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY
- Juanita Green, MS, Mental Health Counselor, D'Youville College, Buffalo, NY
- Jen Mai-Wong, PsyD, Counseling Psychologist, Fashion Institute of Technology, New York, NY
- Elena Yee, MS, Counselor, Alfred University Wellness Center, Alfred, NY

Description

- An opportunity for counselors of color and majority White counselors to discuss experiences, share ideas, and consider future possibilities to increase and retain racial and ethnic diversity in their counseling centers and in college mental health.

Objectives

- To increase understanding of the struggles, needs, and misconceptions that exist for and between counselors of color and majority White counselors through the sharing and hearing of narratives of colleagues across New York state in college mental health
- To explore norms, processes and policies to improve the experiences of counselors of color
- To explore strategies to increase recruitment and retention of counselors of color

“In fact, when asked, many people of color will readily acknowledge that they prefer to access care in more racially diverse settings with individuals who they believe can more easily empathize with the sociocultural aspects of their concerns...Generally speaking, the best available research evidence points to patient preferences in the mental health arena for diverse providers, diverse approaches to treatment and well-trained, culturally competent staff.”



Alfiee Breland-Noble, senior scientific adviser for the Steve Fund and an associate professor of psychiatry at Georgetown University Medical Center

“Yes, we need more staff members of color in student support services. Yes, we need more services customized for particular groups of students. But we also need existing units like counseling centers to help counselors become more highly skilled at counseling students of color...”



Shaun Harper, founder and executive director of the University of Pennsylvania's Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education

“It’s important that colleges and universities strive to have staff members who represent the demographics of their students, but it can be difficult for colleges to carry out some of the students’ demands, especially those on a timetable. There’s not only a shortage of people of color in student services, but also in the pipeline of candidates for those jobs. Only 1.5 percent of the American Psychological Association’s members, for example, are black..”

Kevin Kruger, president of NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education



Why Is This Important?

- Student demographics are changing
- Increased need to support/counsel underrepresented and underserved students
- Important for all students to experience the breadth and depth of diversity in counselors
- Overall US demographics are changing
- Diversity, inclusion and social justice are central to the mission of most colleges and universities
- Diversity, inclusion and social justice are in the code of ethics for all counseling professions

Student Demographics

- The percentage of American college students who are Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Black has been increasing.
- From fall 1976 to fall 2015, the percentage of Hispanic students rose from 4 to 17 percent.
- The percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander students rose from 2 percent to 7 percent.
- The percentage of Black students increased from 10 percent in 1976 to 14 percent in 2015, but the 2015 percentage reflects a decrease since 2011, when Black students made up 15 percent of all enrolled U.S. residents.
- The percentage of American Indian/Alaska Native students was higher in 2015 (0.8 percent) than in 1976 (0.7 percent).
- During the same period, the percentage of White students fell from 84 percent to 58 percent.
- Race/ethnicity is not reported for nonresident aliens, who made up 5 percent of total enrollment in 2015.

Demographics for CC Directors

Racial/Ethnic

Director Racial/Ethnic Background

Director Racial/Ethnic Background (check all that apply)	# of Centers	Percent
American Indian / Native American	5	0.8%
Arab / Middle Eastern	3	0.5%
Asian / Asian American	23	3.8%
Black / African American	50	8.2%
Latino/a	27	4.4%
Multiracial	11	1.8%
White / Caucasian	504	82.6%
N/A (I am an international director)	6	1.0%
Other	1	0.2%
TOTAL	610	

Country of Citizenship

Director Country of Citizenship

Director Country of Citizenship	# of Centers	Percent
Australia	1	0.2%
Austria	1	0.2%
Bahamas	1	0.2%
Canada	11	1.8%
Germany	1	0.2%
Japan	2	0.3%
Mauritius	1	0.2%
Peru	1	0.2%
Trinidad & Tobago	1	0.2%
Turkey	1	0.2%
United States of America	591	96.4%
Other	1	1.3%
TOTAL	613	100.0%

Staff Demographics

- Current clinical staff were 30.4% persons of color, 72.6% female, and 13.8% LGBTQ+
- New clinical staff hires were 47.2% persons of color, 71.6% female, and 20.8% LGBTQ+

Clinical Staff Demographics	% Centers That Have NO Staff in the Category	All Clinical Staff Mean	% of All Clinical Staff	New Hires Mean	% of New Hires
American Indian/Native American	96.7%	.04	0.5%	.00	0.0%
Asian / Asian American	65.3%	.66	8.3%	.16	13.0%
Black / African-American	54.3%	.89	11.2%	.21	17.1%
Latino / Latina	71.0%	.55	6.9%	.13	10.6%
White / Caucasian	5.1%	5.51	69.6%	.65	52.8%
Multiracial	86.3%	.18	2.3%	.04	3.3%
Other race / ethnicity	93.1%	.09	1.1%	.04	3.3%
SUBTOTAL		7.92	100.0%	1.23	100.0%

Female	2.5%	5.79	72.6%	.78	71.6%
Male	20.5%	2.16	27.1%	.30	27.5%
Transgender	97.8%	.02	0.3%	.01	0.9%
SUBTOTAL		7.97	100.0%	1.09	100.0%
Gay	74.8%	.39	5.1%	.07	7.3%
Lesbian	69.3%	.46	6.0%	.07	7.3%
Bisexual	83.9%	.21	2.7%	.06	6.3%
Heterosexual	5.6%	6.64	86.2%	.76	79.2%
SUBTOTAL		7.70	100.0%	0.96	100.0%
Diagnosed disability	66.7%	.94	NA	.09	NA

“There is a need to survey the hiring practices, the working conditions and the pay that may be repelling forces for those who might consider the profession [of counseling]”



Dr. Thelma Daley, first African-American president of the American Counseling Association and the American School Counselor Association

“Only 25.6% of faculty reporting in CACREP in 2015 were ethnic minorities. With only 1/4 of our faculty members reflecting the demographics of almost 1/2 of our master’s and doctoral students., it might be that students of color don’t feel a sense of belonging or acceptance.”



Dr. Selma de Leon-Yznaga, past president of Counselors for Social Justice, founder of Texas Counselor for Social Justice, associated professor of counselor education at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

“To understand the lack of diversity in the counseling profession, one must examine the root of the problem. Higher education, and counselor education by extension, had been largely been a predominately White institution. As such, institutions and programs continue to use admission criteria that advantage applicants from privileged groups...over marginalized groups”



Dr. Manivong Ratts, past president of the Counselors for Social Justice, associate professor of counseling at Seattle University

Consider...

- Challenges

- Opportunities

Challenges & Realities

- Limited research on the experience of counselors of color
- The pipeline for counselors of color is narrow
- Cultural and familial expectations about profession/vocation
- Lack of support among colleagues and on campus
- Racial battle fatigue
- Beyond the office expectations for representation, programming and outreach
- What else?

Opportunities & Recommendations

- As a group, identify, examine and challenge harmful practices and narratives that may exist in your center or institution
- Build in diversity-related content and processes rather than having them acknowledged or unfold in times of crisis
- Consider hiring diverse staff in pairs (or pairing with a pluralism partner)
- What else?

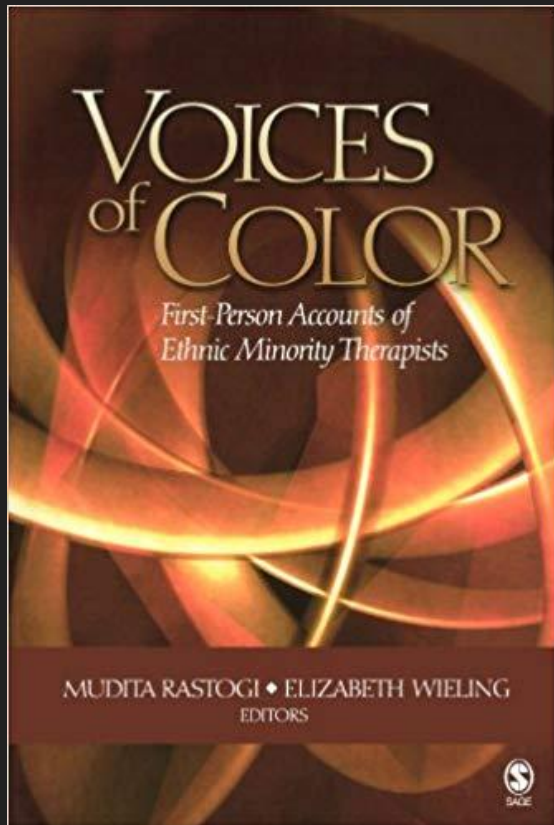
Discussion Questions

- What should counselors of color be doing to advocate for themselves in a predominantly White environment?
- How can White colleagues, staff and leaders be better allies to counselors of color?
- How do we support counselors of color?
- What else?

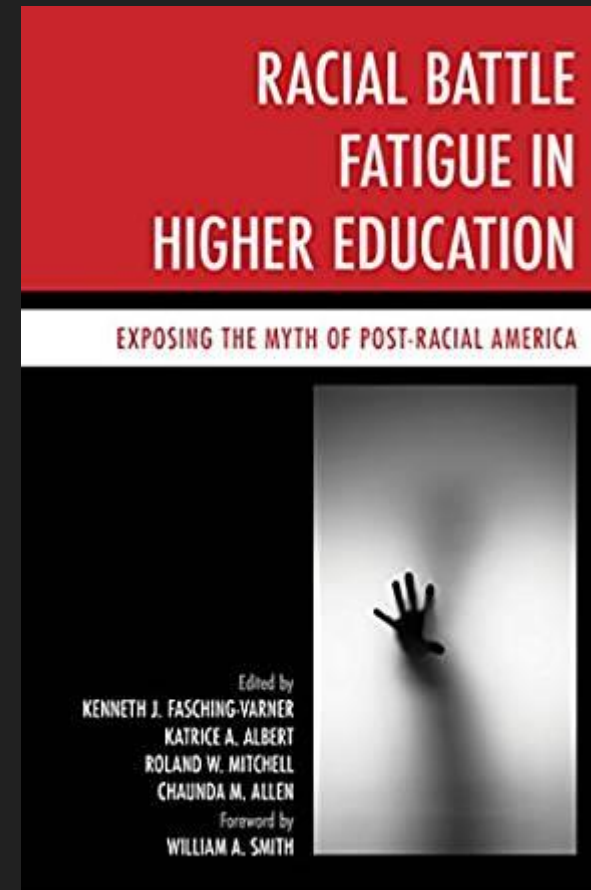
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Contact Information

- Sade Cardin smcardin@utica.edu
- Odessa Despot oddycc@rit.edu
- Juanita Green greenj@dyc.edu
- Jen-Mai Wong jenmai_wong@fitnyc.edu
- Elena Yee yee@alfred.edu

Facilitators Bios

- Sadé Cardin has recently graduated from Keuka College earning a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree. After completing a year-long internship at Utica College, she has returned as a permanent counselor at their Counseling Center. Relatively new to the field as a Black counselor, Sadé is interested in contributing to discussion surrounding the importance of racial and ethnic diversity in college counseling centers, in addition to the positive impact that it can have on diverse student populations. She hopes to gain insight from other counselors regarding the navigation of a predominately White field as a counselor of color.
- Odessa Devi Despot, PsyD is a staff psychologist and clinical supervisor at Rochester Institute of Technology. Her research interests focus on identity development, multicultural and feminist issues, and relational psychotherapy. She is a writer and activist and was previously Board Secretary for the Indo-Caribbean Alliance (ICA). Odessa is the 2019 Jay Zimmerman Diversity Scholar.
- Juanita L. Green-Johnson LMHC, CASAC-T, has been working as a mental Health Counselor for the Personal Counseling Center at D'Youville College for about 2 years. Prior to working with the college population, she was a Senior Counselor I at Horizon Health Services. In her three years at Horizons, Juanita worked with dually-diagnosed clients providing several services including: individual counseling, family counseling and group counseling. Juanita has facilitated groups focused on various topics such as but not limited to: Early Recovery, Relapse Prevention, Relationships, Women, Wellness and REBT (Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy).
- Jen-Mai is a counseling psychologist currently working at the Fashion Institute of Technology Counseling Center in NYC. She has worked predominantly in urban and more traditionally under-served collegiate areas (Rutgers-Newark Counseling Center, St. Joseph's College Counseling Center - Brooklyn), which impacts and contributes to her interest in serving and representing a diversity of students in college settings. She is also a cisgender clinician of mixed racial background, who has immigrated to the US... and draws on all of these personal experiences in her work as well.
- Elena Yee is a mental health counselor in the Wellness Center at Alfred University in upstate New York. She received her MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling at Rhode Island College in Providence, Rhode Island. She is interested in the healing of trauma through EMDR and IFS, effectively assessing for suicidality, increasing diverse representation in college counseling centers, and advocating for the needs of those most vulnerable in our society. You can learn more about Elena at www.linkedin.com/in/elenatyee



Thank you to CCNY, Dr. Andrew Demaree and the review committee, Skidmore College, and the participants and facilitators in this roundtable discussion!

We hope this will lead to more discussion and concerted effort and action so counseling centers may reflect the diversity of college students on our campuses.