LONGING FOR WAKANDA:
INTERSECTIONALITY AMONG INTERNATIONAL AND
DOMESTIC TRAINEES OF COLOR

Tanya Brown, PhD
Counseling and Psychological Services
University of California Los Angeles
Flight: □309
Wakanda
Departs
10:57am
Arrives
7:04pm
10:57am
6:52pm
Estimated
Estimated
SMALL, BUT QUICKLY GROWING...

- While non-white ethnicities occupy a small minority within the field, they are joining the field at rapid rates.

- Generational differences in the field likely impact acculturation to the field.

- Importance for increased focus on professional development and study of diversity from an intersectional perspective.
Figure 1. Layered Ecological Model of the Multicultural Guidelines

Level 5. Outcomes

Level 4. Domestic and International Climate
Larger Societal Context

Level 3. Institutional Impact on Engagement

Level 2. Community, School, and Family Context:
Family-Community-School-Neighborhood-Workplace-Place of Worship-Physical Space

Level 1. Bidirectional Model of Self-Definition and Relationships
- Client
- Student
- Research Participant
- Consultee

Individual's Self-Definition

Power/Privilege

Human Rights

Fluidity

Resilience

Tensions

Trauma
GOAL:
Support professional development of international and domestic trainees of color
▪ Define microinvalidation and understand its impact on self-esteem and relational dynamics in training settings

▪ Identify unique challenges faced by immigrant and domestic trainees of color and its impact on how they conceptualize clinical work in the US and abroad.

▪ Describe factors impacting training group member engagement and avoidance in addressing differences

▪ List creative ways to facilitate dialogue and promote self-reflection and repair in a range of training settings
MICROINVALIDATION

Communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of color.
MICROINVALIDATION IN TRAINING

- Absence of acknowledgement of multiplicity of identities, intersectionality, and the role of power in clinical relationships

- International trainees:
  - Must navigate immigration, employment visas independently
  - Multilingual trainees need for competent supervision in own language
  - Culture specific definitions and images of “professional”

- Domestic Trainees of Color:
  - Invalidating racial/cultural issues
  - Blaming clients/trainees for challenges stemming from racism
  - Presumption of research and clinical interests
IMPACT

Searching for Community/Sense of Belonging

Imposter Syndrome
SEARCHING FOR COMMUNITY

Black Panther and membership in the African-American Community:

- [YouTube Video](https://youtu.be/hzMzFGgmQOc?t=3m16s)
“Dear Non-American Black, when you make the choice to come to America, you become black. Stop arguing. Stop saying I’m Jamaican or I’m Ghanian. America doesn’t care. So what if you weren’t “black” in your country? You’re in America now. We all have our moments of initiation into the Society of Former Negroes. Mine was in a class in undergrad when I was asked to give the black perspective, only I had no idea what that was. So I made something up.”

- “Americanah” Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, 2013
IMPOSTER SYNDROME

- Collection of feelings of inadequacy that persist even in the face of information that indicates the opposite is true

- Chronic self-doubt and feelings of intellectual fraudulence

- Belief that one is not really a successful, competent and smart trainee – just imposing as such
ADDRESSING SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES AMONG UNDER-REPRESENTED DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL TRAINEES

▪ Explore inter & intra-ethnic dynamics between trainees and supervisors

▪ Honor narratives, language, and affect to support professional identity development
## Intraethnic dynamics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trainee - Trainee/Trainee - Supervisor</th>
<th>Supervisor - Trainee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Omniscient-Omnipotent peer/supervisor</td>
<td>Us vs. Them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Traitor</td>
<td>Survivor’s Guilt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autoracist</td>
<td>Hope &amp; Despair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambivalence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-Comas-Diaz, Frederick Jacobsen, 1991
## Interethnic dynamics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trainee - Trainee/ Trainee - Supervisor</th>
<th>Supervisor - Trainee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overcompliance and Friendliness</td>
<td>Clinical anthropologist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mistrust, suspicion, and hostility</td>
<td>Guilt and Pity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambivalence</td>
<td>Ambivalence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-Comas-Diaz, Frederick Jacobsen, 1991
## SUPPORTING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR UNDERREPRESENTED TRAINEES

| Provide | Provide resources and information to demonstrate inclusion and combat imposter syndrome  
| Integrate | Integrate ecological and intersectional understandings of identity, cultural humility, power/privilege, in supervision and training discussions  
| Bolster | Bolster staff and supervisor capacity to build trust via increased awareness of own interracial anxieties and impact on how they engage with trainees  
|         | Encourage development of peer alliance and mentorship within and beyond training program to support development of sense of community |
DIALOGUE AND REFLECTION

▪ Establish context for articulating differences and how to address interpersonal challenges
▪ Assess trainees comfort in providing and receiving feedback
▪ Provide awareness-driven exercises/trainings on intersecting identities
▪ Explore power differences among various identity positions
▪ Introduce didactic content proactively and responsively
In Summary...

- History of microinvalidations have a significant impact on trainees’ professional identity development

- Build trainee trust and engagement by:
  - Investing in inclusive practices in infrastructure of training program
  - Creating opportunities to explore and address differences
REFERENCES