CSUDH It Takes a Village: By our Village, For our Village and Of our Village

Presenters: Monique Turner, Positive Psychology Lab, Academic Senate, and other affinity groups

The United States has a diverse population, largely composed of waves of immigrant groups over the centuries and a native American population. Unfortunately, the United States is not as united as its name suggests. The racial and social injustices that have historically characterized this nation of people from many cultural backgrounds persist and continue to marginalize and oppress historically marginalized peoples. Based on the premise that our public university was one of the most compositionally diverse student bodies nationwide is the natural place to make systemic change, “It Takes a Village” (ITAV) was created in Summer 2020. This poster will review the perceptions of CSUDH affiliates and share the resources available to help address the racial and societal discrimination experienced by individuals within the Black/African American & African diaspora descended community on the CSUDH campus. It describes the inception, creation and progress of “It Takes a Village” (ITAV) during the 2020-2021 academic year. A direct-action response to the heightened racial violence and murders of Black Americans, ITAV’s goal is to provide “brave spaces” within academia for these courageous conversations. This program also served as a high impact co-curricular experiential educational opportunity for undergraduate student leaders and MA level health and clinical psychology students completing their practicum in Clinical-Community Psychology.

Co-created and sponsored by students, faculty, staff, and administration, the Executive Academic Senate Executive including President Thomas A. Parham, and academic affinity groups--Associated Students, Inc., Toro Dreamer Success Center, Rose Black Resource Center, Veterans Resource Center, and the Positive Psychology Lab-- the discussion series was created to activate awareness of racial injustices on campus, and to offer tools, theories, and processes for redressing and proactively preventing harm, especially within the classroom and curriculum. This presentation will share the ITAV experiences and growth in and from its participation in these discussion and action forums on systemic racism. The presentation will also review the Anti-Racism Toolkit curated by Toro Joshua-Zion Hunter with reading recommendations from staff & faculty.


February 2021 “It Takes A Village: Opening Your Hearts to Courageous Conversations”

Event - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6BbZwTjNqe4
Purpose & Background

- In the most recent summers, it seemed as if 2020 was its all-time peak of social injustice: from the death of Breonna Taylor, the murder of George Floyd, the sexual assault and protection that lead to Oluwatoyin Salau’s death, to the storming of the U.S. Capitol.
- In 2020, there were 1,004 fatal police shootings, and in 2019, there were 996 fatal shootings. Standing at 34 fatal police shootings per million of population, Black Americans was much higher than that of any other ethnicity (Statista Research Department, 2021).
- Black people were 28% of those killed by police despite being 13% of the population (Mapping Police, 2021).
- Emerging from heightened social injustice, It Takes a Village is virtually held as a platform brought to CSU Dominguez Hills' college community, serving as a "brave" space for students, faculty, and staff members to have courageous and intentional life-changing conversations.
- The title of these collaborative events are called "It Takes a Village" because much like the African proverb, the motive is to bring the campus community together to help nuture the growth towards social justice and racial equality for students, faculty, and staff members of all backgrounds (Healey, J. S., 1996).

The beauty of the world lies in the diversity of its people.
- Ishmael

Timeline

Event Descriptions and Qualitative Data

**Event 1: “It Takes a Village: Black Lives Matter Solidarity and Healing”**

- The first event that "It Takes a Village: Black Lives Matter Healing & Solidarity Event," was held September 3rd. Two hundred seventy-five participants joined the first discussion event. It included a collaboration of many faculty, students, committees of CSUDH, and guest speaker Professor Christian Green.
- The first event’s main purpose was to begin to normalize questioning prejudices on campus and discuss one’s impact as an ally.
- African diaspora and Non-African diaspora Breakout Rooms were created, but due to technology issues all students/faculty/staff joined together.
- Students and faculty were randomly put into breakout rooms which allowed for group conversations about a personal experience, coping skills, and providing a general “check-in.”
- It was relevant in the event that some participants wanted to learn better ways to support anti-racism and to identify what commitments can be made in the University.

**Event 2: “It Takes a Village: Listening to the Voices of the Village”**

- 45-minute Q & A Panel Discussion with previous student-facilitators, participants, and the planning committee
- Qualitative Messages from the event:
  - Importance of listening to others’ when discussing topics on race, even if one does not agree.
  - More diversity on campus is needed and the “village” should be open to evolving.
  - If the “village works together, we can achieve more.
  - Women on campus, faculty and students, are not being respected in the same way as men on campus.
- Not only is there an ethnic disparity, but also gender disparities.

**Event 3: “Opening Your Hearts to Courageous Conversations”**

- Guest Speakers: Dr. Yesenia Fernandez and Dr. Kitty Fortner discussed microaggressions and welcomed a “brave” space for the community while encouraging individuals to open their ears, which may lead to opening their hearts.
- This event focused on how institutional and, sometimes, unintentional microaggressions can be recognized and addressed.
- Discussions were encouraged in break out rooms that were facilitated by students to provide a space where individuals can practice courageous conversations about microaggressions and racism.
- Student facilitators were equipped with training provided by Dr. Tara Victor (Department of Psychology) to support their role facilitating their breakout group discussion
- There was light shed on how these experiences may affect people differently because of biodiversity.
- Suggestions were made on what to consider if the individual decides to respond.

Future Research

- It is clear that microaggressions aren’t new, however, individuals are starting to become more aware of their experiences.
- Individuals want to be heard and their presence to be recognized.
- This is a prospective project sponsored and carried by the Positive Psychology Lab here at CSUDH.
  - Research seeks to explore the way microaggressions impact individuals within different environments and to identify coping strategies utilized to diminish any carried stress.
  - A mixed methods research design is of interest to observe the process in which one experiences microaggressions.
- Future research also seeks to learn how to strengthen one’s self-efficacy and interpersonal relationships.

H.E.L.P. acronym

- Hear P.O.C.’s experiences and stories
- Educate yourself and elevate others
- Leap into action (be actively anti-racist)
- Power-up your phone

Research Questions

- How do microaggressions impact an individual’s self-esteem and self-efficacy?
- How do people of color cope with microaggressions in a work environment?
- What makes it difficult to discuss microaggressions in the classroom?

Operational Definition

- Microaggression— is a subtle expression of bigotry, a term used to describe verbal, behavioral or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostility, derogation, or negate attitudes toward stigmatized or culturally marginalized groups.

Potential Data Collection Procedure

- Individuals want to be heard and their presence to be recognized. Narratives, stores, and vignettes used as a part of the study’s methodology can be a form of resistance that may help people to exercise knowledge to actively challenge oppressions.

References

  - https://mappingpoliceviolence.org