"Keep It 100": A Handbook Promoting Equitable Outcomes for Black University Students Through Mentorship

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Abstract

Black and racialized students attend Canadian universities with the intent of achieving academic success. However, instances of overt and covert racism negatively impact Black and racialized students' academic success and retention rates in university programs. Lee (1999) and Sinanan (2016) suggest mentorship as a key strategy towards increasing academic success and retention rates among Black students. This handbook proposes mentorship strategies for use by university educators and administrators to help build beneficial relationships with Black and racialized students that lead to improved learning outcomes. Specifically, this handbook proposes what Quach et al. (2020) have identified as mentee-focused mentorship. Mentee-focused mentorship centres on the needs of Black students and recognizes the layers of systemic racism that exist in universities. This project provides educators and administrators with an understanding of concepts related to systemic racism, anti-racism, intersectionality, critical race theory (CRT) and CRT-informed practices. Personal stories from Black students collected from the academic literature are presented alongside points of reflection for educators and administrators. Points of reflection are provided with the intent that readers will meaningfully consider their positions of power and the strengths in students' non-academic identities.

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List of Figures

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"KEEP IT 100"

A Handbook Promoting Equitable
Outcomes for Black University
Students Through Mentorship

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1. Introduction and Overview

Students of all ages and backgrounds are bound to encounter obstacles and challenges throughout their academic careers. Some challenges are common—test anxiety, intimidating assignments, and having to skillfully navigate one's first steps into independence. However, racialized students encounter a unique set of experiences and challenges that differ from non-racialized students.

Black students pursuing Canadian university education face the added layer of **racism** in their university experience (Benton, 2001; Gosine, 2007; Henry & Taylor, 1994). Racism in the university can appear in more obvious, overt forms such as:

- racial slurs

- stereotypes

- prejudice

- violence

- and forms of hostility based on race

Racism can also take on less obvious, covert forms that often go undetected or may be internalized by Black students themselves (Benton, 2001; Davis et al., 2004; Feagin & Sikes, 1995; Fraser & Bartlett, 2018). These include:

- feelings of invisibility and hypervisibility

- cultural alienation

- isolation

- pressure to conform

- fears of being judged

If left unaddressed, both overt and covert racism can leave Black students feeling unsupported in university. There is evidence that the feeling of being unsupported correlates with decreased retention rates and lowers academic success for Black students (Nugent et al., 2004).

Mentorship has been demonstrated to positively affect Black students' feelings of support and integration into predominantly white universities (Sinanan, 2016). As well, faculty-to-student relationships have been cited as incredibly beneficial to academic achievement and are often desired by Black and racialized students (Lee, 1999).

To ensure that Canadian universities provide equitable and improved outcomes to Black students, this handbook proposes system-level **mentorship strategies** for university educators and administrators of all backgrounds. These strategies are meant to build mentee-mentor relationships that centres on Black students, validate their experiences with racism and provide them with valuable allies. The following quote from Luedke's (2017) research explores the benefits of mentorship between racialized students and their mentors. Max, a Black student attending a midsize American university said this of his own mentor:

> He gives me honest feedback, and I think that the main thing that really influenced me is that he just—**he keeps it 100**—or I guess I could say he keeps it real with me, and anything I need to hear or needs to be said he'll say it,

> good or bad, and I think that's definitely what I need to hear. (Luedke, 2017, p. 46)

Max's anecdote exemplifies one of many core components of positive mentee-mentor relationships that will be explored in this handbook. That is, "keeping it 100", or in other words, maintaining a level of authenticity with mentees **100%** of the time. Mentees should always examine their level of honesty with students, with current conditions in their institution that may permit racism, and with their position of power.

Why a Handbook?

The choice to design a handbook, rather than provide this material in the form of a professional development session or workshop is related to accessibility. The intent is that this handbook can be accessed in print or digitally at any time and re-visited periodically. Re-visiting this material means that you can consume the information at your own pace, which allows for deeper reflection and retainment of knowledge. Likewise, as a digital handbook, the content can be easily updated in the future based on new developments, extending its accessibility. The language and concepts used to define and identify institutional and systemic racism today may change over time and there is always more to learn. Readers are encouraged to re-visit this handbook and its accompanying materials often.

Why Mentorship?

Mentorship has been identified as a key factor in increasing students' **academic success** and **retention** at the university level (Ashtiani & Feliciano, 2012; Campbell & Campbell, 1997). The ability for mentorship to be an informal or formal process allows it to become a *practical* way to address these issues that can be applied without a set curriculum or extensive planning (Lee, 1999; Sinanan, 2016). Practical application is important for educators and administration who wish to implement this handbook's strategies as needed.

Mentorship for racialized students has been found to be most effective when their mentors recognized them as individuals with diverse backgrounds and experiences beyond their identity as a student (Luedke, 2017). Recognizing students beyond their student identity underscores why it is so important to reorient away from strategies for addressing racism that may portray Black students as powerless victims of racism. Instead, strategies for addressing racism should emphasize the strengths and experiences Black students use to overcome racism in the university (Yosso, 2005). In Eternity Martis' memoir, *They Said This Would Be Fun*, Martis (2020) highlights how overwhelming it can be for Black students to make formal complaints about racist experiences on Canadian university campuses:

> Many students don't report incidents because they fear they won't be believed. When our experiences are treated like they don't matter, we learn to deal with them ourselves, especially when the institutions where we spend

> the first years of adulthood aren't equipped to support us.
>
> (p. 7-8)

Faculty and administrative support have the potential to make students feel comforted and encouraged. Unfortunately, faculty-to-student mentorship programs are scarce in Canadian universities. Of 420 formalized Canadian university mentoring programs, only 23 were found to provide faculty-to-student mentoring, with the large majority of programs being community member-to-student, student-to-student, or faculty-to-faculty (Hobson & Taylor, 2020). This handbook will present both educators and administrators with an understanding of how mentorship can be improved for Black students in the university. Improving mentorship will require a critical lens that examines how racism proliferates within systems and institutions, like any university. Insight into the positive and negative experiences of Black students in universities will be provided from personal stories available in the academic literature. Informed practices for mentorship will also be provided. Through case studies, readers will have the opportunity to reflect and consolidate their knowledge. Lastly, this handbook will conclude by offering additional resources that expand on the topics covered.

Mentorship is not a one-size-fits-all approach. Not every strategy presented in this handbook applies to every student. The Black student experience—and by extension, the Black experience—is not identical. There is a diversity of cultures, backgrounds, and life experiences that students will bring

with them to the university. Remembering this will be essential to centring on Black students and adopting a strengths-focused perspective.

Situating Myself

It is important to provide my own background to contextualize my motivations for pursuing this work. As a Black male graduate student attending a predominantly white university, I recognize and identify with many of the challenges Black students have reported, many of which have been included as a part of this handbook. My personal journey in university has been extremely rewarding and I have benefitted greatly because of it. However, I have seen and personally experienced how difficult it is to find support and a sense of belonging in predominantly white universities, particularly as an undergraduate student. Difficulties can easily give way to feelings of loneliness and isolation. Similarly, individuals in my personal life have expressed their anxieties around attending predominantly white universities and their fear that they will not be successful.

At the graduate level, I have been fortunate to experience how beneficial mentorship relationships are by forming connections with the professors I have met based on shared interests and authenticity. Connecting with my professors has made me feel more of a personal connection to the university and has been a strength to draw on when challenges have arisen. I wish that I had more opportunities to be mentored in the years preceding my graduate education. Based on the connections I have made, I firmly believe mentorship can make a difference in the academic careers of Black students.

Those who face overt and covert racism deserve to be heard and to feel that they are in a welcoming and supportive environment. The desire to address the needs of Black students was also inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement during the summer of 2020. During that period, I was deeply affected by the insistence that institutions be examined for racist practices and historical precedents. During the period that preceded my graduate studies, I did not have a mentor and found it to be an absence in my academic career.

When I was provided with the prospect of completing a major research project, as part of my Master of Education requirements, I could not pass on the opportunity to investigate mentorship racism in Canadian universities. As a creator of knowledge in this program, I wanted to contribute and communicate to others what I had learned in a way that felt relevant, practical, and urgently needed.

Reflect

Before continuing, reflect and situate yourself. What is your own identity? You may use the Social Identity Wheel below to think about all of the aspects that create your identity. Examine your identity in relation to the questions within the wheel. As you proceed through the handbook material, consider how your different identities are received in different social contexts and what privileges are provided by those identities.

Ethnicity

Socio-Economic Status

Race

Religious or Spiritual Affiliation

Gender

1. Identities you think about most often

2. Identities you think about least often

3. Your own identities you would like to learn more about

Sex

Age

4. Identities that have the strongest effect on how you perceive yourself

5. Identities that have the greatest effect on how others perceive you

Sexual Orientation

Physical, Emotional, Developmental (Dis)Ability

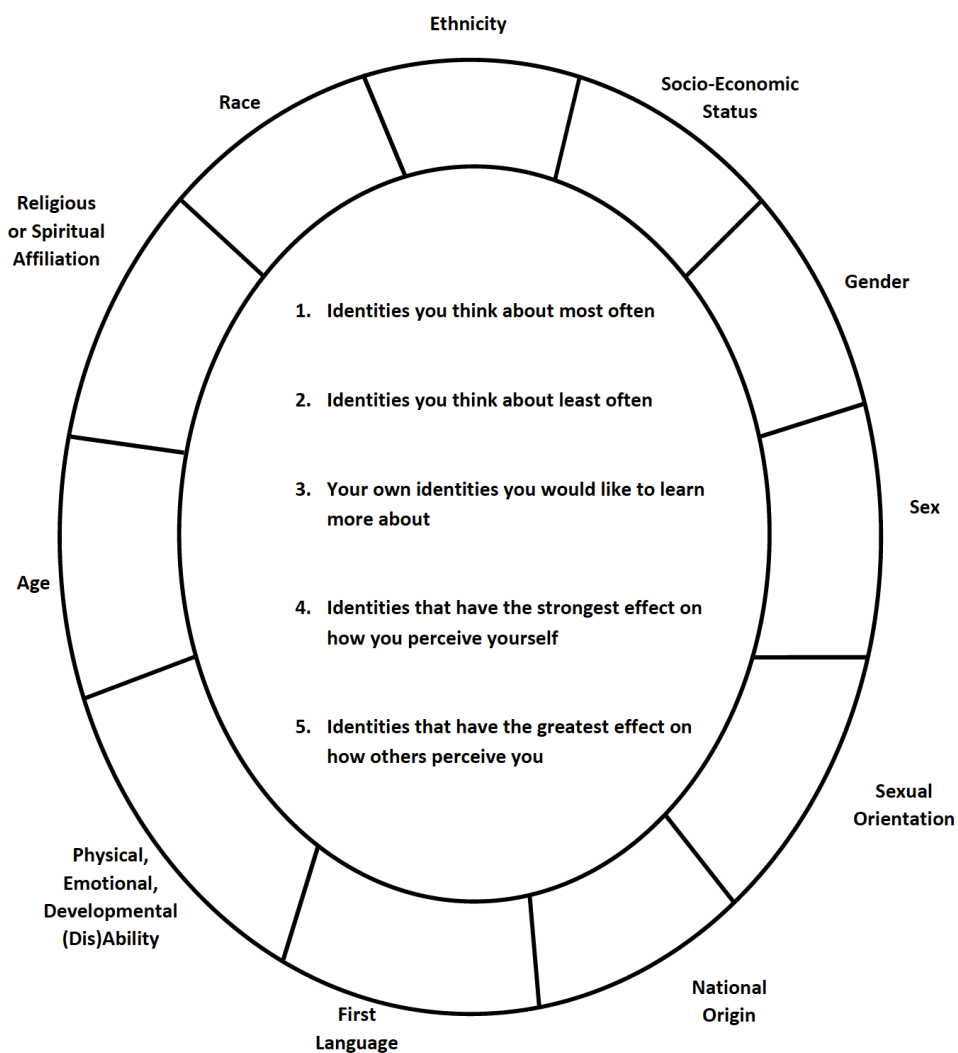National Origin

First Language

Figure 1 *Social Identity Wheel* (University of Michigan, 2021)

2. How to Use This Handbook

The strategies in this handbook seek to familiarize university educators and administrators with an approach to mentorship that centres on the experiences of Black students and is tied to an awareness of systemic racism. This approach has a chronological order that begins with developing the reader's knowledge around issues of race and racism. Starting with the section titled "Developing a Critical Lens", readers will begin to cultivate a critical lens. A **critical lens** is a means of examining inequities in systems and institutions such as the university and is important because it provides insight into the ways racism operates in universities. Racism also intersects with other sources of marginalization, such as **gender**, **class**, and **sexuality**.

The following two sections— "Racism and the University" and "The Experiences of Black Students in Universities" will help readers develop their critical lens further. Both of these sections are meant to illustrate past and current realities for Black students attending universities. The section "Becoming a Mentor" will introduce readers to mentee-focused mentorship. Criticality and the application of mentorship strategies will inform the way readers establish mentee focused mentorships that recognize Black students' strengths. In each section, important terms and keywords will be highlighted in **bold,** and related definitions or explanations will be provided in red. Significant quotes will also be identified by red text and boxes.

As readers proceed through each section, there will be questions posed to guide reflection. The included "Case Studies" are a space to apply newly

developed insights. The final section, "Additional Resources," has links and

reading lists to further deepen understanding.

As an extension of this handbook, a website has also been developed

with multimedia elements, such as videos, podcasts, and additional visuals. The

website is not meant to duplicate the handbook, only compliment the material

and certain key ideas. Certain points in the handbook will reference this

supplemental material. That website can be accessed [here](#).

3. Developing a Critical Lens

> Certainly we need a great deal more than talk, but it is also the case that we need to learn how to talk about race and racism. If we do not know how to meaningfully talk about racism, our actions will move in misleading directions. (Davis, 2016, p. 88)

The above quote from political activist Angela Davis underscores why there ought to be a vocabulary and common understanding when engaging in discussions around racism. A critical lens is a way of viewing, assessing, and participating in discussions involving racism and is important because it will specify the vocabulary and concepts needed to understand it. This section will introduce key terms that are relevant to building positive mentorship relationships with Black students.

Race and Racism

At the outset, it will be important to define the terms race and racism, as they will be referenced extensively throughout this handbook.

Race – The categorizing of people based on physical qualities, such as skin colour. Racial categories do not have a scientific basis and have historically been attached to the dominance of white groups over non-white groups (University of Guelph, n.d.).

Racism – The ideology that maintains the use of racial categories. It is the belief that non-white groups hold certain characteristics that justify domination or superiority over them. Racism is expressed through individual actions, attitudes, values, and stereotypes directed towards non-white people. It can also be conveyed on a system level through the patterns of policies and practices of institutions that consistently disadvantage non-white groups (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017; University of Guelph, n.d.).

> In other words, 'race' is an unequal relationship between social groups, represented by the privileged access to power and resources by one group over another … The unequal boundaries of color have been at times permanent barriers to the economic development, educational and social advancement for millions of [people]. (Marable, 2001, p. 3)

Solórzano (1997) suggests that three core beliefs are central to the way racism operates:

1. One group believes that it is more superior to others
2. The group that believes it is superior has the power to continue to perpetuate its racist beliefs and actions
3. The impact of racism is felt by multiple racial groups

These core beliefs establish racism's connection to **institutional power**. Institutional power is a precedent of the **historical disadvantage** faced by **racialized individuals** in Canada (Mayeda, 2013). Definitions of these terms and other key concepts are described below.

Key Terms

Culture – The practices and norms that define one's worldviews. Everyone has culture, and the differences in culture help to distinguish societies, groups and communities from one another. (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017)

- Music, food, or clothing that is specific to a community are visible examples of **culture**. A community's beliefs, histories, and assumptions about the world are invisible examples of culture

Discrimination – Actions against a person that are guided by prejudice or malice. Actions may include ignoring, avoiding, excluding, ridiculing, making jokes, slandering, threatening, or being violent towards a person on the basis of a belief about that person or their group. (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017)

- Refusing to provide a service to someone because of their race, gender, or sexuality is an example of **discrimination**

Historical disadvantage – The continuous effect of oppression over time on marginalized groups. The effect of oppression over time creates trends in low educational achievement, elevated rates of poverty, little

economic power for marginalized groups and becomes the basis for systemic racism (defined below). (Mayeda, 2013; University of Guelph, n.d.)

- The use of institutional power over many years to deny access to educational institutions for a marginalized group leads to lasting low academic achievement for that group. This is an example of a **historical disadvantage**

Institutional Power – Power is institutionalized when the group represented at top of an institution's hierarchy is able to reproduce their values and practices on their own terms. The issue of power is not limited to notions of power exercised by all white people over all Black people. (Anthias, 1999)

- A group the top of an educational institution's organizational hierarchy extending control over access to knowledge for a minority group is an example of **institutional power** (Anthias, 1999)

Institutions – Refers to an "established set of laws, customs, practices, and organizations that govern the political or social life of a people" and "enforce a society's rules and norms". (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017, p. 125)

- A place of learning, such as an elementary school, secondary school, college, or university, would be an example of an **educational institution**

Intersectionality – Intersectionality accounts for the ways social experiences are influenced by the overlapping identities and categorizations to which one belongs. (Crenshaw, 1991)

- For a detailed explanation of intersectionality, see the Intersectionality section

Oppression – "The prejudice and discrimination of one social group against another backed by institutional power" (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017, p. 84). Oppressive groups are able to reinforce their prejudice and discrimination through the use of institutions that they control and affect entire marginalized groups, not just individuals. (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017)

- The use of legal systems to deny basic rights to Black people because of beliefs that they are inferior would be considered **oppression**

Othering – "Using stereotypes and representations about the other when meeting [them] and talking about [them]" (Dervin, 2016, p. 43). Othering creates distinctions between in-group members and out-group members. (Dervin, 2016)

- For a detailed explanation of othering, see the section on Race as a Social Construct

Prejudice – "Learned prejudgment about members of social groups to which we don't belong. Prejudice is based on limited knowledge or

experience with the group" (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017, p. 75). Prejudices can be expressed positively or negatively but are always unearned by the individual. They are given simply because of ideas about the group an individual belongs to. (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017)

- Preferring to teach math to Asian students instead of Black students because of a prejudgment that Asian students will perform better is an example of **prejudice** (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017)

Racialization – Individuals and groups become racialized when their racial meanings affect their everyday life in social, political, or economic spheres. Similar to the term "visible minority" but expanded to include those affected by Islamophobia and antisemitism. (*Data Standards*, 2019)

- The daily experiences of a Black woman would be different from a white woman's because the former is **racialized**

Stereotyping – "Prejudices begin as stereotypes … Stereotypes refer to reduced or simplified characteristics attributed to a group" (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017, p. 76). Similar to prejudices, stereotypes can be positively or negatively expressed, but are an oversimplification of a characteristic given to a group (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017).

- The assumption that all Black people are naturally athletic is an example of a **stereotype**, which some may believe to be a positive quality, but instead reinforces oversimplifications based on an assumed characteristic about a group

As has been some of these concepts illustrate, racism operates beyond individual beliefs and behaviours. **Systemic racism** (sometimes referred to as institutional racism) occurs when systems or institutions have policies, practices and procedures that disadvantage racialized people (*Data Standards*, 2019; University of Guelph, n.d.). While people themselves can certainly hold racist beliefs, it is often the systems in place that impede the progress of racialized groups overall. Without discussing it systemically, racism can be seen as a belief that is only adopted and operational at the individual level (Kempf, 2020). Systems can be and are racist, and without change on a systems level, individual acts of racism will continue (Kempf, 2020). To further this understanding of systemic racism in a specifically Canadian context, please view the following CBC News (2020b) video that briefly explores the subject here. The video is also available on this handbook's companion website.
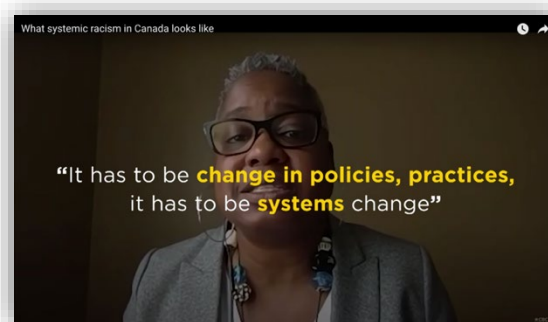

Figure 2 *Dr. Kathy Hogarth as featured in* What systemic racism in Canada looks like (CBC News, 2020b)

At the beginning of this video, there are claims that systemic racism does not exist in Canada and that it is an American specific phenomenon (CBC News,

2020b). As the two following professors, Rinaldo Walcott and Kathy Hogarth contend, this is a false notion (CBC News, 2020b). Systemic racism is present in Canada, as evident by:

- Canada's history of colonialism and slavery (CBC News, 2020b)

- police violence against Black and Indigenous communities (CBC News, 2020b)

- overrepresentation of Black students in lower-level education programs, such as special education (James & Turner, 2017)

- Black students being suspended, expelled, and dropping out at higher rates than non-Black students (James & Turner, 2017)

These instances hint at the invisible nature of racism and the difficulty in pinpointing if it is not explicitly identified. Anti-racism requires racism to be challenged and identified. The idea that *calling* someone or something racist, should not be considered *worse* than the racist action itself. Artist Paul Rucker (2018) alludes to such a notion in his TED Talk, "The symbols of systemic racism—and how to take away their power" (available here):

> The stealth aspect of racism is part of its power. When you're discriminated against, you can't always prove you're discriminated against. Racism has the power to hide, and when it hides, it's kept safe because it blends in. (Rucker, 2018, 4:00)

Reflect

Consider the ways you may or may not have benefitted from certain privileges afforded by systemic racism using the reflective questions below. Compare your answers here with your answers to the [Social Identity Wheel](). These questions were developed by McIntosh (1998) and a full list is available on this [handbook's companion website]():

1. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.

2. When I am told about our national heritage or about "civilization," I am shown that people of my colour made it what it is.

3. I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.

4. I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to "the person in charge," I will be facing a person of my race.

5. I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help, my race will not work against me.

If you have said yes to many of these questions, what does that say about the privilege you have in certain social contexts? Can you think of someone other than yourself, perhaps a colleague or a student, who may have different answers

to these questions? What are some ways to share institutional power and improve

these situations for marginalized individuals?

Race as a Social Construct

Although it is widely understood that there is no biological basis for race, race continues to influence the experiences of racialized people through powerful social effects that change over time (e.g., a social construct) (Dei, 2013). The social effects of racism and being racialized results in "**Othering**"— seeing racialized individuals as *the Other*, an out-group that is considered distinct from the dominant white in-group (Dei, 2013). The differences assigned to the other is where the harmful practices of stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, oppression, and racism begin. In the case of Black people and anti-Black racism, perceived differences in intelligence, inferiority, criminality, and dispositions to violence have historically been applied based on skin colour (Dei, 2013).

The distinction of race as a social construct can be difficult to make. For assistance, the following video from Vox (2015) gives examples of how race has changed over time and is not the fixed category it is believed it to be:
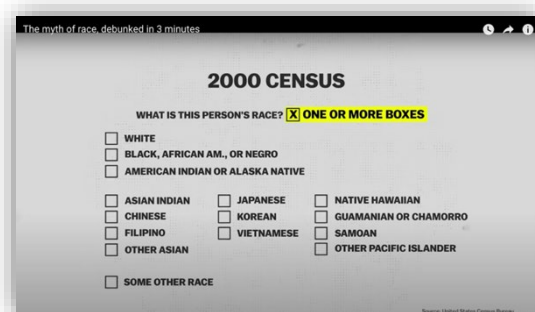
Figure 3 *An American census from the year 2000 as featured in* The myth of race debunked in 3 minutes (Vox, 2015)

While the Vox (2015) video is correct in its assertion that race is a shifting social construct, an important note to make is that the original attribution of skull analysis as justification for racism is attributed to German physiologist Franz Gall (*Phrenology and Scientific Racism*, 2017). Notwithstanding, the ideas expressed in the Vox (2015) video are pertinent.

Despite the implication that race is a social construct, it still carries meaning in the lives of individuals. Dei (2013) proposes race, gender, sexuality, (dis)ability, and all the things that make people who they are should be looked at as opportunities to build resistance to dominant white narratives. Race and other sources of marginalization are a part of the identity of learners, educators, and administrators. Mentorship with Black students should draw from the same principles that Dei (2013) proposes and value differences in race, gender, sexuality, and (dis)ability as strengths.

Reflect

Spend a moment reflecting on race as a social construct by answering the following questions adapted from Obach (1999):

1. Where has your understanding of racial categories come from?

2. How would you classify persons from different ethnic groups (e.g., Middle East, the Pacific Islands, Latinx, and Moroccans) into the understood racial categories (e.g., white, Black, brown, Asian)?

3. Were the distinctions you made in question 2 easy to make? Or were they more difficult than you anticipated?

After answering these questions, you may find that when the basis for racial categories is challenged, there is more subjectivity to these distinctions than initially believed.

Intersectionality

Dei's (2013) proposal regarding race and other identities, such as gender, sexuality, and (dis)ability, all require discussion as well. Often, race overlaps with these other identities. The interconnectedness that this implies is precisely related to intersectionality.

Intersectionality - Intersectionality accounts for the ways one's social experiences are influenced by the overlapping identities and categorizations to which they belong (Crenshaw, 1991). Identities that may overlap in relation to intersectionality include (Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research, n.d.):

- Race
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Physical (dis)ability
- Religion
- Social class
- Level of education

A brief video explaining intersectionality is also available [here](#) (Hopkins, 2018).

Figure 4 *Scene from* What is intersectionality? (Hopkins, 2018)

Crenshaw (1991), who originally theorized intersectionality, elaborates further on the concept:

> By tracing the categories [of race and gender] to their intersections, I hope to suggest a methodology that will ultimately disrupt the tendencies to see race and gender as exclusive or separable … the concept can and should be expanded by factoring in issues such as class, sexual orientation, age, and color. (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1245)

Intersectionality is in many ways a framework for analyzing the world, the experiences that people have, and who might be affected by important decisions. It is a reminder to be inclusive and cognizant of the advantages and disadvantages afforded that people have (Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research, n.d.). Intersectionality, put simply, is acknowledging that the experiences of a Black male are going to be much different from a white woman. A Black woman, however, will have a different experience than either of them, and in the same way, a Black woman identifying as LGBTQ+ will have even more of a vastly distinctive experience, and so on. Intersectionality should be used by mentors to understand the experiences of Black students based on intersections between race, gender, class, and other factors that this section has highlighted.

Reflect
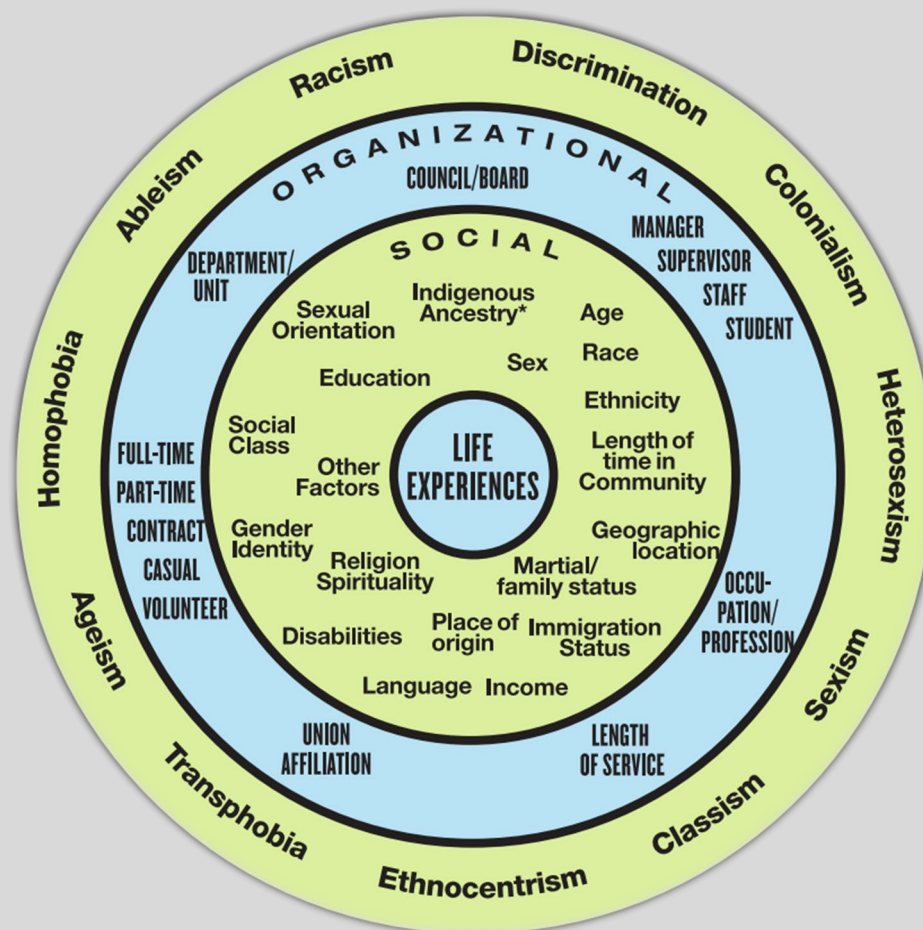
Figure 5 *Intersectionality Wheel diagram* (Knowledge Translation Program, 2019)

The above Intersectionality Wheel from the Knowledge Translation Program (2019) demonstrates some of the ways experiences provide individuals an advantage or a disadvantage. Consider your own experiences by examining this diagram. A larger, printable version of this diagram is available on the handbook's companion website here.

If you print the diagram, circle the elements that bring you an advantage and underline the elements that bring you a disadvantage. Interestingly, you may find that some bring you both advantages and disadvantages.

A description of the diagram circles in Figure 5 is as follows, adapted from Knowledge Translation Program (2019):

Inner circle (Social) – This circle contains social identities that may bring individuals certain advantages, disadvantages, or both in their daily lives. The way these identities interact with each other influences one's life experiences on a local level.

Middle circle (Organization) – The middle layer highlights the status and titles individuals hold within institutions. One's status and title grants different conceptions of power and influence that when layered with the social identities of the inner circle, provide different opportunities that may not be available to others. Consider your status and title in the university and where it has placed you on your department, unit, or faculty's hierarchy.

Outer circle (Discrimination) – The outermost circle lists different forms of discrimination that one may experience. Sometimes individuals experience multiple forms of discrimination at a time. The way one is discriminated against interacts with broader social, historical, political, and economic forces. For example, the historically racist policies of an institution may interact with the racism a person may identify in this outer circle.

With this activity in mind, consider the following self-reflexive questions. This activity is meant to make mentors more aware of their position of power as educators or administrators. Likewise, it is an opportunity to challenge persistent

assumptions and identify opportunities to share power. These questions are adapted from the Knowledge Translation Program (2019) Intersectionality Guide, which is available on this handbook's [companion website](#):

1. What are your personal values, experiences, interests, and beliefs and how do they relate to the department, unit, or faculty of which you are a part of?

2. Do you feel that others in your team, department, or faculty share your values and experiences?

3. Do you feel that everyone in your team, department, or faculty is able to have their voice and opinions heard?

4. Does your team, department, or faculty reflect the social identities that makeup the student population? Why or why not?

5. How do your values, experiences, and assumptions relate to the student population you interact with?

6. From your perspective, what current inequities and potential sources of discrimination exist in your university, department, unit, or faculty? What about the student population?

7. How do you think students in the university who face discrimination would like their lived experiences addressed? Is there a way to include them in the process?

Critical Race Theory (CRT) And CRT-Informed Practice

Any lens examining systemic racism and the inequities of institutional power would be incomplete without an inclusion or discussion of critical race theory (CRT). As this handbook will be borrowing from certain tenets of CRT, this section will begin with an overview of how it came to be and what the theory entails. A short primer on CRT is available here and on this handbook's companion website (Washington Post, 2021).
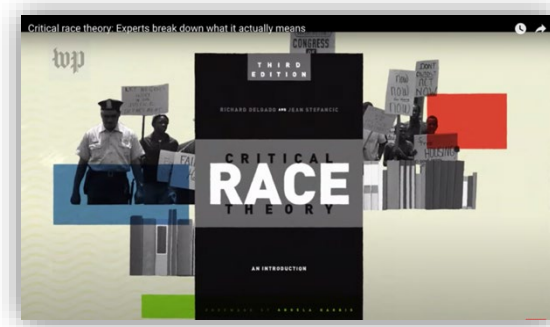
Figure 6 *Scene from* Critical race theory: Experts break down what it actually means (Washington Post, 2021)

What is Critical Race Theory?

Taylor (1998) extensively defines Critical Race Theory as a form of study that analyzes the structures in society that uphold white supremacy. CRT challenges the **dominant narratives** that preserve the experiences of white people as the norm. It also elevates perspectives that exist outside of whiteness, such as Black perspectives. The idea behind a dominant narrative is that perceptions of what is fair, just, and equitable are closely tied to an individual's subjective experiences. In brief, whiteness is often seen as objective reality,

whereas perspectives outside of whiteness are not, and this has considerable effects on what a society defined by whiteness deems as fair and just (Taylor, 1998).

Originally, CRT began in the 1970s as a means of examining American legal policies and racial reform (Delgado & Stancic, 2012). As Delgado and Stefancic (2012) describe, CRT has since been a framework for many scholars to critically analyze more than just legal institutions. Scholars such as Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) were at the forefront of CRT's expansion into the field of education. Subsequently, they questioned the intent of education policies and the implementation of social justice values. CRT includes five core tenets:

1. The centrality of race in individual experiences. Meaning race will **intersect** with other sources of marginalization, such as gender, class, sexuality, and immigration status (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

2. The necessary criticality of the dominant narratives protecting institutional power and white privilege, such as **colour blindness** and **meritocracy** (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

   - **Colour Blindness –** Colour blindness is a position where one decides not to acknowledge or 'see' race as a part of an individual's identity (Dixson & Anderson, 2018)

   - **Meritocracy -** The idea that social and career advancement is based solely on one's skills and qualifications alone (Viesca et al., 2013)

     - **It is important to be critical of colour blindness and meritocracy –** Colour blindness and meritocracy attempt to

neutralize the role of race by separating race from historical contexts and the present-day institutions that maintain racial discrimination (Parker, 1998). By detaching racial discrimination from its historical context, the true impact of systemic racism is concealed, and establishing that connection from the past to the present is a vital function of CRT (Parker, 1998). [This video](#) featuring equity expert Raël Nelson James provides further explanation for caution towards colour-blind and merit-based perspectives (PBS Newshour, 2020).

3. The commitment to social justice, eliminating sources of marginalization (e.g., sexism, poverty) and the empowerment of marginalized groups (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

4. The use of multiple sources of knowledge. Critical knowledge is drawn from multiple disciplines, such as ethnic studies, women's studies, sociology, history, and law, rather than relying on a singular source of historical knowledge (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

5. The recognition of Black experiences as sources of strength and knowledge. **Counter-stories** are used to elevate Black experiences as valid and critical to understanding racism (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

CRT makes use of the counter-story—the elevation of alternative viewpoints and an opportunity for those without a voice to present their own perspective. To support Black students with positive mentorship that elevates their strengths and perspectives, mentors should view personal experiences from Black students. A

selection of experiences will be explored in the chapter titled "The Experiences of Black Students in University". The chapter will include both positive and negative experiences to communicate the dual realities that many Black students face and showcase their resilience and strength. Effective counter-stories should convey broader meanings about social justice or how certain policies harm marginalized people (Ladson-Billings, 2013).

> Until lions have their historians, tales of the hunt shall always glorify the hunter. (African proverb, as cited in Ladson-Billings, 2013, p. 41)

There are other, major core beliefs that are vital to understanding CRT that have been briefly touched on so far. However, they are essential to know as they will illuminate an understanding of systemic racism and privilege. The following explanations are provided by Dixson and Anderson (2018):

> **Interest convergence –** Interest convergence states that progress towards racial equality can only be achieved when it becomes of shared interest to white people in positions of power, not necessarily those who do not hold power. It also states that progress towards racial equality is only supported to the extent that white people retain their status as a dominant group. This progressive action is typically less about cooperating, and more so an acknowledgement that whites in power have more to lose if they do not act. Critical race theorists use interest

convergence to make sense of the intersection between race, class, and key policy decisions.

Whiteness as property – A concept that examines how whiteness is protected as a property right under the law (e.g., right to disposition, right to use and enjoy, right to exclusion). For example, DeCuir and Dixson (2004) studied the way in which an American K-12 school implemented policies that regulated the appearance of Black students (e.g., hair, clothing, cultural expressions) to match the established white standards of the school.

Detailed explanations of either of these concepts, are available in the corresponding articles provided in *Additional Resources*.

At the time of writing this handbook, CRT has been misrepresented and criticized in the media. These recent criticisms ignore the full history of CRT and its origins as a long-standing legal scholarship tool that has historically been receptive to critiques, revisions, and diversity of opinion among its scholars (Goldberg, 2021). In short, critical race theory is just another way for us to understand and interpret society in general and organizations, such as universities and colleges, specifically. CRT does not ask us to divide and villainize each other on the basis of race. Instead, it encourages us to ask questions and be critical of institutions, even when their motivations seem well-intentioned.

Reflect

Consider the following questions and answer them honestly.

1. What were your initial thoughts and impressions of critical race theory?

2. Has this section on CRT changed your thoughts about it? Maybe it has confirmed them? If you are new to CRT, how has it changed your perspective on race?

3. If you were to describe CRT to a student or colleague that believed the theory was harmful and divisive, what would you say?

4. What are some ways you can incorporate CRT concepts into your own practice?

CRT-Informed Practice

 Critical race theory contains a wide range of thought and definitions of concepts. To assist with incorporating CRT into mentorship, Powell et al. (2020) have developed a model that distills CRT concepts into simplified terms that can be applied to the university.
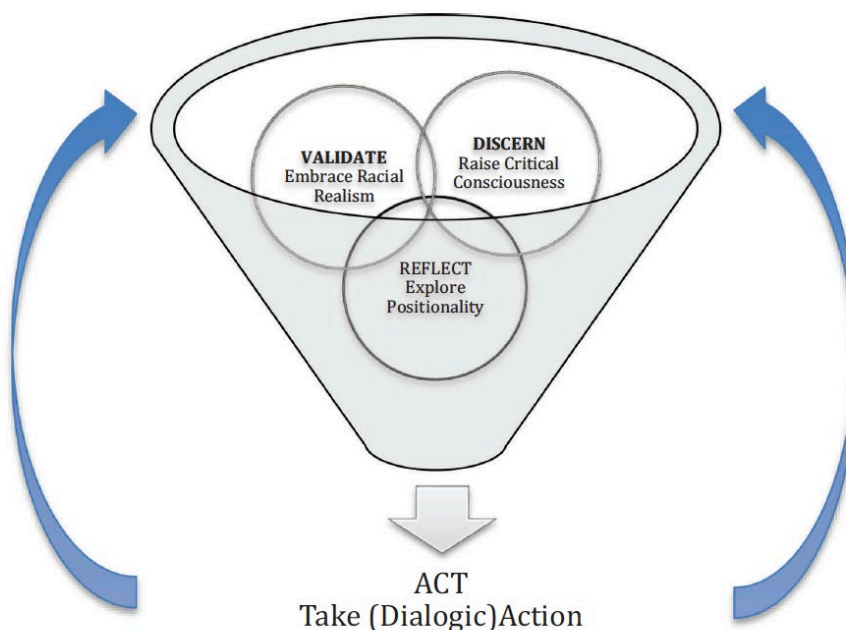
Figure 7 *Model for CRT-informed approach to working with black students for educators and administrators* (Powell et al., 2020)

Powell et al.'s (2020) model contains four practices that will be explored in further detail—**validate**, **reflect**, **discern**, and **act**:

- **Validate** — Validation involves the acceptance of **racial realism**—that racism exists. It is a recognition of racism as a permanent, systemic reality for many racialized individuals and an emerging awareness of how racialized students are affected by racism.

- **Reflect** — Sustained reflection on the position of power and privilege that an educator or administrator might have due to their race, education, gender, or other sources of marginalization. Sustained reflection can be done through personal journaling, workshops related to racism, and reflection activities, such as those included in this handbook.

- **Discern** — Discernment requires educators and administrators to develop a **critical awareness** and understanding of how systems and institutions oppress people. A key motivation behind creating this handbook with the development of a critical lens is to build a foundation to discern oppression. A critical lens will inform the examination of policies in the university and the related historical context. Discernment may also begin a dialogue around improving those policies. Another component of discerning is making a personal commitment to discontinue such oppression.

- **Act** — Taking **dialogic action**, which are actions taken in solidarity with those who are oppressed to improve their conditions. This may translate to the disruption of practices, systems, and conditions that are inequitable. Any action in solidarity must treat students as equitable partners who hold valuable knowledge about their own experiences and provide them with a seat at the decision-making table.

This final practice—*act*—includes the actions mentors will take that are shaped by critical thought about existing institutions, such as the university with the aim of ameliorating practices. Without the proper, consistent, implementation of the first

three practices, action cannot be implemented successfully. Powell et al. (2020) have provided the following suggestions for actions to be taken in solidarity with Black and racialized students:

- **Challenge notions of neutrality and meritocracy** — This suggestion is an extension of validation and discernment practices. Educators and administrators should engage in critical reflection of
  - o policies that reward or punish specific social group experiences
  - o policies that exclude certain social group experiences
  - o practices or program-related beliefs that may reflect hidden racist ideology or history

Consider collaborating with students to perform equity audits of recruitment, admission, and student supports. Pedagogical practices and learning supports should be designed with anti-racism practices in mind as well.

- **Recognize, legitimize, and elevate experiential knowledge** — Provided students are not harmed, have them contribute their lived experiences as Black and racialized individuals. One way is through participatory action research. This data can then be used to inform program development, research, and other university initiatives. Empower students by involving them in decision-making processes.
- **Storytelling** — Allowing students to share their stories of racism in the university can be a powerful tool for collective sense-making, empathizing, and fostering connection amongst all students. When these

stories become widespread within the university, racism is unable to remain invisible. There are several unique ways to tell stories, such as social media, videos, and written publications.

- **Challenge dominant white narratives and advocate for the inclusion of the contributions of racialized individuals** — A thorough thread throughout this model that continues in this approach is the challenging of whiteness as the norm. Dominant white narratives have the tendency to paint Black and racialized experiences as **monolithic**—that is, experiences that are considered to all be the same. Programs, courses, and support services should be designed with the contributions, backgrounds, and opinions of Black and racialized students in mind.

Overall, one of the leading values to embrace when engaging in dialogic action is that experiences of those affected inform the actions taken. Dialogic action is most effective when a sense of purpose leads it and shared dialogue occurs with Black and racialized students (Powell et al., 2020).

4. Racism and the University

> The university has been able to maintain its sacrosanct values and traditions for generations because it formerly served a more homogenous population and community, few of whose members challenged the values on which it was based or the regulations governing it. (Henry & Tator, 1994, p. 75)

As Sensoy and DiAngelo (2017) note, educational institutions are not spaces free from social and political issues such as systemic racism. Henry and Tator (1994) identify several ways racism continues to proliferate in Canadian universities:

- lack of educators and administrators from racialized groups
- teachings are focused on a **Eurocentric** course material
  - **Eurocentrism** - a focus on European culture and history to the exclusion of the rest of the world
- limited research and courses on racism
- insufficient, or in some cases, a complete absence of anti-racist training
- continued incidents of race-related harassment on campuses
- lack of resources provided to equity initiatives
- uneven power relations between white and marginalized educators and administrators
- division between white and racialized students

Most recently, the call to address systemic racism in universities has been renewed by academics in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields. Barber et al. (2020) implicate a combination of the summer 2020 Black Lives Matter protests and the disproportionate health and socioeconomic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Black and Latina/o people as a call to action for change in STEM. Sixteen years after Henry and Tator's (1994) study, Barber et al. (2020) call attention to many of the same aspects of the university that must be addressed to build equity, specifically:

- increased support for racialized students transitioning to university life
- implementing equity-based initiatives and course material
- incentivizing racism related research
- relieving the unequal responsibilities placed on marginalized educators and administrators

Barber et al.'s (2020) call to action features the signatures of 10,234 additional STEM researchers who have collectively agreed that everyone in the university has a role to play, from students to educators and administrators.

While the problem of race and racism in universities is certainly more widely publicized in America, Canadian universities are not exempt from the same instances of racism. In one historic example related to the aforementioned STEM fields, Queen's University voted in 1918 to prohibit Black students from attending its medical school and enforced the decision until 1965 (Glauser, 2020). The ban emboldened incidents of hostile racism towards the university's remaining 15 Black students, including a minstrel show performed by white

students (Glauser, 2020; see Howard, 2017 for more on minstrelsy in Canada). The ban was not officially removed from Queen's University mandates until the fall of 2018, when PhD candidate Edward Thomas discovered it still existed (Glauser, 2020; Queen's Gazette, 2020). Similar bans occurred at McGill University, Dalhousie University, and the University of Toronto's medical schools (Glauser, 2020). A public apology from Queen's University can be viewed here (Faculty of Health Sciences Queen's University, 2020).

The history of racism in Canadian universities is relevant to the present-day realities of racism in these same universities. It is imperative that the ways racism appears in the university are widely recognized, as racism can manifest in *any* institution. This chapter will focus specifically on how anti-Black racism appears in the university. The difficulty of identifying racism in universities is elaborated on by Canadian activist and politician, Laura Mae Lindo in the following clip from CTV News (2017).
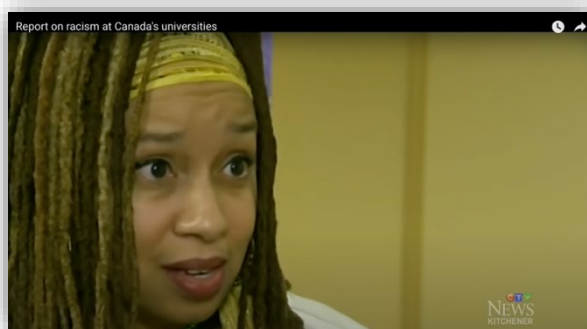
Figure 8 *Laura Mae Lindo, director of diversity and equity at Wilfrid Laurier University, speaking about different forms of racism in universities* (CTV News, 2017)

Reflect

As a quick point of reflection, reflect on the past actions of Queen's University's medical school to understand historical racism more fully. Consider the negative effects of the medical school ban on equal opportunities for Black students, practitioners, and patients alike.

1. How do you think the Queen's medical school ban impacted representation of Black doctors and medical professionals in healthcare during the years it was in place?

2. Do you think those effects on healthcare representation can still be seen today? In what ways?

3. Think back to your **critical lens** and what you have learned about [systemic racism](). Do you think underrepresentation of Black doctors and medical professionals might correlate with health disparities in the Black population? If so, in what ways?

A typical response when historical racism is discussed is that these events are in the past, not a current reality. It is important to remember that the events of the past have a tangible effect on the present. Since whiteness is the dominant narrative, white perceptions of history are normalized and by making such responses it imposes the dominant narrative onto Black and racialized groups

(Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). It is critical to reflect on the ways different groups

perceive reality and note that perception constitutes reality for individuals.

Universities as White Spaces

> Despite a venerable pursuit of truth and knowledge, [the university] too can be permeated with racist attitudes and behaviours. (Henry & Tator, 1994, p. 75)

While modern universities market themselves as welcoming of diversity and make various efforts to provide equitable outcomes to all their students, universities still remain **white spaces**. Anderson (2015) elaborates on this term:

White spaces – White spaces are environments where Black people are historically not included. They may also have racist experiences in these spaces. White spaces include neighbourhoods, schools, and universities. In these spaces, whiteness is considered the default to which all other racialized people and perspectives are compared.
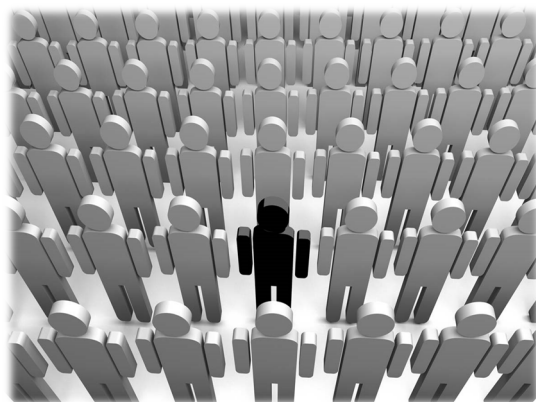
> Black presence [in white spaces] thus becomes a profound and threatening racial symbol that for many whites can personify their own travail … their own sense of inequality … blacks must navigate [white spaces] as a condition of their existence. (Anderson, 2015, p. 15)

It is more than the number of white people that makes a space a white space. Key to this concept is that structurally, **whiteness is the default**. Whiteness is a blank slate that goes unnoticed by many white people simply because it is "normal" to them—it reflects the sensibilities that they have known and are used to (Anderson, 2015). For Black people in white spaces, their level of awareness can become heightened to the point that they may feel uncomfortable in that space.

Returning to Queen's University's medical school ban, as recently as 1965 universities were considered white spaces. The historical context of events such as this matter can directly impact the practices and policies of present-day universities. Disregarding historical racism introduces the risk of repeating similar mistakes in the present.

While people of any race can express stereotypes, discrimination, or prejudice, historically it has been white people that have had the institutional powers in place to reinforce discrimination and prejudice, which becomes oppression (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). Often people do not recognize systemic racism and struggle with this idea because of the assumption that racism is limited to individual acts or that barriers to success are due to individuals, not institutions (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). The reality is that racism exists regardless of individual intentions.

> We do see the race of other people, and that race has meaning for us. Everyone receives racist messages that

> circulate in society; they are all around us. (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017, p. 151)

Hidden messages communicating subtle racism, stereotypes, and dominance of white narratives can be pervasive. For example, when course material in universities do not reflect the diversity that universities would like to project, there is harm being done. The stereotypical perception becomes that white academics, scholars, and writers are the only ones to make major contributions to their respective fields. With respect to academic freedom, continued teaching of [Eurocentric course material](#) risks reinforcing hierarchies that are internalized among white and racialized students that white is the default (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017).

Fan et al. (2017) suggest that white spaces create dangerous conditions for Black and racialized students. These conditions are not necessarily violent or hostile. Still, they result in consistent challenges to academic success for Black and racialized students, such as a lack of support and conflicted feelings of belonging (Fan et al., 2017). Educators and administrators should be cognizant of the message sent to Black and racialized students by building course materials that do not feature them. In the following UCL (2014) [video](#), Black and racialized students and educators at University College London (UCL) speak on how Eurocentric teaching practices have impacted their learning experiences.
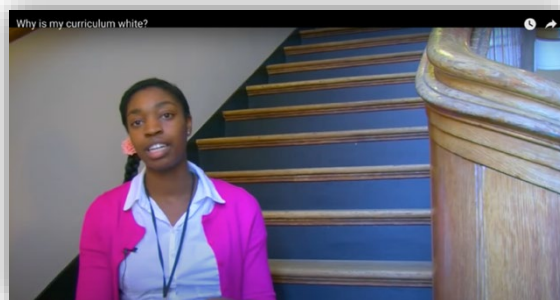
Figure 9 *A female black student attending UCL explains the Eurocentrism present in her medical history lesson* (UCL, 2014)

Students in UCL (2014)'s video recounted many instances of Eurocentric course material across disciplines, such as:

- the disqualification of African and Egyptian contributions to medicine

- omissions of the unfavourable details and beliefs of white academics

- European focused history courses and discussion(s)

- emphasis on white writers and texts as core readings for courses; racialized writers used as supplemental readings

A solution to Eurocentric course material, as was proposed in the video, is to create a more learner-centred education (UCL, 2014). Similar to the previous chapter's CRT-Informed model, students can be included in the decision-making process and made active participants in their education journey. Sharing power and bringing students into decision-making will be a necessary component of the positive mentorship strategies explored later in the handbook.

In a more explicit Canadian example, Henry and Tator (1994) identified the research interests and course teachings of Western University psychology

professor Phillippe Rushton, a white male. Rushton's work is based on the white supremacist belief that there are biological differences in intelligence and that Black people were intellectually inferior (Henry & Tator, 1994). Due to his tenure, Rushton was able to continue this work until his death nearly two decades later in 2012 (Martis, 2020). This is an overt example of harmful course material, which shows that with academic freedom comes the power and responsibility that educators and administrators have over what is taught. Like Queen's University, Western University has since apologized, following a 66-page report released in 2020 that called for an apology among its recommendations (CBC News, 2020a). An article featuring a former Black student of Rushton's and what she experienced is available under *Additional Resources*.

Henry and Tator (1994) make a note of the **hidden curriculum**, the continuously demonstrated values and norms of those who work in the university; their attitudes and teaching practices can be a source of learning separate from texts alone. The hidden curriculum is reflected in the images around the university, what books libraries choose to collect and display, the types of clubs available on campus, and the ideas expressed in student publications (Henry & Tator, 1994). Most of all, the hidden curriculum is enacted in the university's response to racist incidents. The authors suggest that an incident that passes without adequate consequences sends mixed and negative messages to Black and racialized students.

When hidden curricula are perceived as non-inclusive, Black and racialized students begin to do what they can to find academic success within their university—by adapting.

Reflect

Reflect on what you have just read about white spaces, historical contexts, and Eurocentric course material by responding to the following questions.

These questions are adapted from Baker (2020):

1. What is the historical context of race, racism, and culture as it appears in the courses your department offers?

2. What do you know of the history of your university institution?

3. In relation to your answers from question 1 and 2, how have you come to know these historical details?

4. If you are an educator, are the courses you teach inclusive of non-white academics? If not, what can you do to change this?

5. If you are an administrator, is the hidden curriculum in your university inclusive? If not, what can you do to change it?

Adapting to the University

When navigating white spaces and predominantly white institutions, many Black and racialized students are faced with a significant decision. Either resist the dominant whiteness of universities and risk feelings of isolation or attempt to "blend in" by adapting to the values of the majority-white student population (Barajas & Pierce, 2001; Benton, 2001). The latter choice—adapting—often means making changes to one's cultural identity. It is a strategy that can positively and negatively affect racialized students' self-identity and self-esteem (Barajas & Pierce, 2001). However, this adaption is complex and does not fall into the do-or-do-not binary. Racialized students will have varying degrees of values they will adapt or resist within predominantly white institutions (Barajas & Pierce, 2001).

In popular culture, a Black person who has forgone their cultural identity in favour of what are considered white characteristics is adversely referred to as **acting white** (Fryer, 2006). The notion of acting white is crucial for mentors to be aware of, as it is emblematic of the way white spaces may strip racialized students of their diversity and strengths. Neal-Barnett et al. (2010) identify several common traits and behaviours commonly attached to acting white:

- speaking "proper" English
- dressing in "preppy" clothes—classically styled clothing with a neat appearance
- attaining high marks in school

Forham and Ogbu (1986) first explored the burdens that come with acting white. The burdens they analyzed detailed the psychological stress Black students experienced from feeling as though they may have betrayed their cultural identity. In some cases, this feeling was made explicit by peers from the same racial group who themselves were not considered as acting white (Forham & Ogbu, 1986). The authors state that the association of academic success with whiteness is an example of a dominant white narratives. Milner (2008b) refers to false narratives about the capability of Black achievement as **deficit narratives**:

> **Deficit narratives** – Negative portrayals of Black students that attribute differences in academic success to problems with their families, culture, communities, or students themselves. Deficit narratives describe Black students as "disadvantaged," "at-risk," or "oppressed". Deficit narratives often do not account for historical and systemic factors when discussing differences in academic success.

Durkee and Williams (2015) investigated acting white at the university level. A survey of Black students attending predominantly white institutions found that the frequency to which these students were labelled as acting white was correlated with lower racial and ethnic identity and increased symptoms of mental health (Durkee & Williams, 2015). In this instance, racial and ethnic identity refers to the extent that students were attached to and sought out information related to their ethnic group. Those who were frequently labelled as "acting white" experienced more depressive symptoms, anxiety, and emotional stress (Durkee & Williams, 2015).

Even so, questions such as "What achievements Black students are capable of?" are instilled prior to attending university. James and Turner (2017) outlined in detail how streaming practices harm Black students in the Toronto District School Board. Black students were twice as likely to be placed in *Applied* level courses and three times as likely to be placed in *Essentials* level courses, and both levels would not allow them to immediately attend university (James & Turner, 2017). About 53% of Black students were placed in *Academic* level courses, which would prepare them for university, but this proportion was significantly smaller compared to 81% and 80% of white and other racialized students, respectively (James & Turner, 2017). The authors' data also showed that only 25% of Black students applied to and were accepted by an Ontario university. As Bernard & Smith (2018) note, Black Canadian students are told implicit messages about their academic ability and future opportunities early in their education.

The adverse effects of adapting are key reasons why educators and administrators should validate the diversity, cultural backgrounds, and strengths of Black students in noticeable and hidden curricula. By not doing so, it can reinforce negative stereotypes about who can achieve, and risks leaving these students vulnerable to continued mental health struggles. Where academic success is concerned, there is academic literature that suggests a strong Black identity and connection to the Black community enables academic success (Gosine, 2007).

> In a race-conscious society, the development of a positive sense of racial/ethnic identity not based on assumed superiority or inferiority is an important task for both white people and people of color. The development of this positive identity is a lifelong process that often requires unlearning the misinformation and stereotypes we have internalized not only about others, but also about ourselves. (Tatum, 2001, p. 53)

Capability to achieve academic success should not be a question of students' ability to "fit in" to a particular ideal. Black and racialized students should feel comfortable arriving in the university knowing that their identity will be valued and respected the same as white students.

Figure 10 *Jane Elliott discusses acting white as a survival technique for Black and racialized students* (TheRegisMagazine, 2016)

In conclusion, readers should view [this interview](#) with American educator and anti-racism activist Jane Elliott. In this clip, Elliott illustrates the connection between Eurocentric course material and adapting to a white space (TheRegisMagazine, 2016).

University Decision-Making

Discussing decision-making would be incomplete without some explanation of **neoliberalism**, the prevailing philosophy driving university policies:

> **Neoliberalism –** A philosophy characterized by free market ideals, reduction of spending, privatization, and emphasis on holding institutions accountable to performance indicators. (Henry et al., 2017)

The growth of neoliberalism has led to the widespread adoption of key performance indicators in Canadian universities and an increased emphasis on inputs and outcomes (Henry et al., 2017). This emphasis moves universities further away from the esteemed aspects of university education—access to knowledge, inclusion, diversity of thought—and repurposes them. Rather than address issues of racism, the university becomes more attentive to its ability to be efficient and competitive in meeting indicators such as enrolment and graduation rates (Henry et al., 2017). Competitiveness has led some universities to infuse themselves with more business-like practices (Giroux, 2009). As a result, there are negative effects for Black and racialized students, educators, and administrators. Hamer and Lang (2015) call this **structural violence**—the harm done to individuals based on structural arrangements in political and economic organizations. Hamer and Lang (2015) identify the ways neoliberalism and structural violence may affect Black and racialized students:

- increased financial pressures from rising tuition rates

- increased student loan debt as a result of rising tuition rates

- reduced humanities and ethnic studies course offerings due to their perceived value as unmarketable skills

- reduced funding for humanities and ethnic studies courses due to perceived unmarketability

Giroux (2009) and Hamer and Lang (2015) identify similar effects of neoliberalism for Black and racialized educators:

- increased competition for fewer full-time positions

- reduced protections and benefits for those that do not acquire full-time positions

- increased expectation to produce research that financially benefits the university

- increased threat to job security out of fear that one's research or teaching will not generate revenue for the university

Due to neoliberal practices, students are left with fewer opportunities to engage with courses where they may receive the most anti-racist instruction and be exposed to material from racialized scholars. Likewise, pressure to produce research leaves educators with less time to fill integral service roles such as mentoring students. Educators may also leave their positions entirely, as was pointed out by Charles Martin-Standley II, a Black doctoral student attending the University of Iowa College of Education:

> As students, we create these bonds with Black faculty, staff, and administrators and then they leave. Then we create bonds with the next individual and they leave, it is a cycle … Institutions put their money where their priorities are. If you care about race, equity, and inclusion, your budget structure needs to reflect that and you need to pay for structures and people that will help you move forward. (University of Iowa College of Education, 2020, para. 35-37)

A substantial change in university decision-making must begin with higher level administrators (Benton, 2001). To counteract the structural violence that follows neoliberalism, high level administrators should be encouraged to adopt anti-racist approaches that understand intersectionality and the identities of those who may be affected by their decisions.

It should also be mentioned that for all the indicators that universities collect, Canadian institutions do not collect race-based data. Without data indicating trends or demographics, there is no incentive towards implementing meaningful measures to address racism and structural violence. Collecting race-based data would demonstrate that Black and racialized students are not being supported by decision-making guided by neoliberalism (Asiedu, 2020; Bernard & Smith, 2018). As Hamer and Lang (2015) illustrate, universities should invest more resources in addressing racism rather than prioritizing generating profit:

> Universities have not invested in the resources necessary to address the complexities of racial and ethnic diversity on predominantly white campuses … pervasive negative stereotypes and microaggressions often inhibit black students' capacity to seek professional psychological help for the emotional strain that may characterize their encounters in the classroom, laboratories and libraries, and student health care facilities. (Hamer & Lang, 2015, p. 905)

By focusing more on outcomes and performance rather than supporting students and those who support them, universities jeopardize the goal that should matter the most—the academic success of students and their personal fulfilment.

Reflect

Reflect again on what you have just read about white spaces, historical contexts, and now, decision-making in the university. Now consider these aspects, in addition to your individual role. These questions are adapted from Baker (2020):

1. What is your position of influence? What changes could you make to ensure that your campus environment is more inclusive to Black and racialized students?

2. Does the administration in your university support or allow you to take an anti-racist approach to teaching? If not, what needs to change?

3. How easy or difficult would it be for you to collaborate with other educators or administrators in your university on anti-racist strategies? Are there significant barriers?

4. How can you come together with fellow educators and administrators to discuss some of these issues related to decisions and how they are made in the university?

5. The Experiences of Black Students in Universities

> And so a lot of times I felt out of place, because you see all white faces. You know I'm the only fly in the buttermilk.
>
> (Davis et al., 2004, p. 434)

The above quote from a Black undergraduate student stands as an elegant anecdote of the nature of some Black student experiences. At only 3.5% of the Canadian population, Black Canadians are considered a minority compared to the rest of the larger white population (Government of Canada, 2019). Since race-based data is not collected in Canadian universities (see Asiedu, 2018), it is conceivable that compared to white university student populations, Black students would also be considered a minority.

As explored in this chapter, the Black university experience is not always an easy one. These personal accounts are meant to provide a different perspective. They will also be another chance to reflect on the positions of power educators and administrators hold within the university.

Most of all, these personal accounts are meant to counter the unchallenged, deficit narratives around Black students and their abilities. The inclusion of positive experiences is intended to bring Black voices and their strengths to the forefront (see counter-story). Reading both negative and positive experiences will contribute to mentorship with Black students by:

- specifying the stressors that they encounter

- introducing the strengths that they successfully employ

- deepening mentor understandings of systemic racism

- validating their experiences

- creating a foundation of understanding between mentors and

  mentees

Negative Experiences

My experience at Western meant being hyper aware of my blackness. There were few students who looked like me, and I did not see professors who looked like me. I had an experience where I had questions about the material I had just learned in class. The professor felt bold enough to let me know that if I hadn't missed the previous class, then I would have understood what was taught. What stood out to me is that out of hundreds of students, she knew that I was missing and I didn't have to guess why. I felt as though I had to hold my tongue on many occasions when white students made hurtful racist remarks, for fear of being the angry Black woman if I spoke up. I never fully felt comfortable on campus, which meant a lot of time spent in my place of residence, rather than experiencing campus as a safe, inclusive, multicultural space.

Class of 2016

Figure 11 *Anonymous Instagram post featuring a black student's experience at Western University* (Black at Western Association, 2020)

The above anecdote is from a Western University Instagram page titled, *[Black at Western](#)*, a page for students to anonymously submit their various experiences with racism while attending the university. Posts are labelled with the graduating class of the student, such as the one above which features "Class of 2016." Anecdotes span graduating years, with students who attended Western University submitting stories from 1985, to as recently as 2020 (Black at Western Association, 2020). What pages like *Black at Western* have done is make it undeniable that the problem of racism in Canadian universities is a persistent

one. More pages similar to *Black at Western* exist for other Canadian universities, all dedicated to chronicling instances of discrimination on campus:

- **Stolen by Smith** – Queen's University's Smith School of Business in Kingston, Ontario

- **Untold McGill** – McGill University in Montréal, Quebec

- **Silenced at Schulich** – York University's Schulich School of Business in Toronto, Ontario

- **Black at UBC** and **Sauder, Unspoken** – University of British Columbia and their Sauder School of Business in Vancouver, British Columbia

- **Untold uOttawa** – University of Ottawa in Ottawa, Ontario

- **Discrimination at Dal** – Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova scotia

- **Untold Concordia** – Concordia University in Montréal, Quebec

Looking through any of these Instagram pages and other social media platforms such as Twitter (see DiSabatino, 2020), will reveal the hidden and invisible nature of racism and racist experiences. When grouped together, it appears there is a clear and persistent issue that is not localized to one university; it is system and country wide. The anonymity of the Internet has afforded a space where marginalized students can feel heard in sharing their experiences. As stated in this handbook's introduction, many Black students do not feel comfortable or confident reporting their experiences with racism on campus (Martis, 2020).

Minority Status Stress and Racial Opportunity Costs

Black students may also encounter feelings of cultural alienation and isolation in university (Henry & Tator, 1994), which is often referred to as **minority status stress (MSS)**:

> **Minority status stress –** A unique set of racialized stressors caused by experiences with racism, traumatic stress, unsupportive learning environments, insensitive comments, and feelings of isolation on one's university campus. Students managing MSS may adopt particular coping strategies, experience poorer mental health (e.g., depression), and have difficulty adjusting to university life. (Cokley et al., 2013)

A study by Cokley et al. (2013) found that of several racial groups surveyed—Black, Asian, and Latinx—Black students reported the highest levels of MSS. This high level of MSS has largely been attributed to Black students encountering a higher number of negative racial stereotypes than other racial groups (Cokley et al., 2013).

To better navigate challenges associated with MSS, some Black students will make specific trade-offs. Similar to the discussion of adapting to the university, the **Racial Opportunity Cost (ROC)** suggests that academic success comes at a price for racialized students and highlights the connection between students and their non-academic identities (Chambers et al., 2014). According to Chambers et al. (2014) ROCs appear in the form of:

- **psychological costs** that impact a student's psychological well-being

- **community costs** that negatively affect a student's connection to their racial community

- **representation costs** that include feelings of being on display and having to "represent" one's race

Chambers et al. (2014) interviewed Black university students who provided the following anecdotes related to these costs in their own words. Carla, a high-achieving student, describes how the psychological cost for success distanced her from her friends of the same background and influenced her feelings of isolation:

> I mean, I was doing well … I got an 'A' in the class. I was really into it … Like, I loved school. And, it was really hard because I didn't have anybody to relate to. Like my friends, they did well in school, but I'm not gonna say they liked school like I did. So when I would get excited about something, they'd be like, 'What is wrong with you?' So, I started to find comfort in myself. (p. 477)

Ice, another Black student, explained how a difference in the way he spoke affected his connection to his own family and encountered a community cost:

> Some people may think you're stuck up or something … not being able to talk like the rest of the people when I go to visit my family … One of [my aunts] asked me, "Could

> you go to the gas station to get me something, like some
> cigarettes or something?" … But, I responded in the way
> that I'm talking now. And, she like snarls her lip. And, she's
> like, "Errr!" (p. 481)

A third student, Micayla, experienced the reality of representation costs and the pressures placed on her from being academically successful in a predominantly white university:

> When you are a minority, it's like you are not just
> representing yourself; you are representing your entire race
> whenever you step into a classroom … Instead of being,
> you know, the really smart Black person with the whole
> group of Black people, you're like the smart [Black] person
> with the whole group of high-achieving White students. (p.
> 483)

The Black Tax

In many ways, the ROC represents what is referred to as the **black tax**, which primarily refers to the psychological stressors that Black people experience from consciously or unconsciously thinking about how their Blackness is perceived (Palmer & Walker, 2020). There are several interpretations:

- A black tax can refer to the stressors that Black professionals experience from being overlooked when they perform a task well but face disproportionate criticism when they perform a task incorrectly. The effect

is more pronounced for Black women, who report higher degrees of isolation, an absence of mentorship and meaningful work (Prince, 2017). A Black woman spoke about this interpretation of the black tax and her experience as a law student:

> "One of the things I remember most [about the summer associate program] was how quickly the White men became indoctrinated into the firm … they created bonds not only based on work, but socially and outside of work as well. There really wasn't that opportunity for women in general." (Prince, 2017, p. 33)

- The black tax is also experienced when a Black person must contend with the perception that they have reached an achievement solely because of diversity initiatives, not of their own merit. The intersection between race and gender means that Black women will feel this tax more (Prince, 2017). Such beliefs are frustrating when contrasted with widespread beliefs in meritocracy and colour blindness present in white spaces. Chinoso, a Black mechanical engineering PhD student, described resisting perceptions of who he was in the university:

> I had to prove … just with the … the cultural baggage … but just the perception and persona of African American men that it's … it's kind of "bigger than me"-type sense. And again, knowing that … this is what they're probably

> thinking of me, I feel I want to conduct myself in a way that would, you know, disavow any stereotypes. (McGee et al., 2019, para. 51)

- A third way that the black tax manifests itself is in connections between a Black person and their community, family, and racial group. This conception refers to the pressure to financially support relatives and community members. There is intense pressure on Black students to be successful so that they are able to support others and give back to their community (Magubane, 2016). The financial implications of having to give back to relatives and community have been linked to lower earnings for Black Canadians (Chiwanza, 2020). A Black respondent, in a South African study based on the black tax, explained what it means to them:

> In my view black tax is basically giving back to your society, to your family. Basically for me, I strongly feel for us to have a better society it starts at home. (Magubane, 2016, p. 37)

All Black students experiencing an ROC, or a black tax could benefit from positive mentorship. A trusted educator or faculty member in any of these situations could act as guide and support against the isolating nature of psychological, representative, and community related pressures.

Retention

When Black students do not have mentors or support from educators and administrators available during their education, some may experience poor grades or withdraw from their programs entirely (Trent et al., 2020). If retention is a goal for the university, society, and individuals, then institutions must assess what factors are causing students to feel unsupported enough to withdraw from their studies. Trent et al. (2020) interviewed several Black students who withdrew from social and academic life in response to the hostility they experienced. A Black student at an American university shared how being in a learning environment that did not embrace anti-racism made them feel:

> The pushback that I've gotten from being in a cohort with these individuals who do not want to discuss race or class or gender and the hostility I've gotten instead has been really punishing to me wanting to participate. (p. 224)

A Black graduate student recalled feeling unsupported by educators and administrators in their department after identifying racism from other students:

> They said it was … like children … [they] compared it to children fighting and … told me to keep my head down. And the next day I left the program. (p. 225)

Without demonstrated positive mentorship and support, universities risk losing Black students at all levels of the university. To remedy this, mentors must consider

who has been historically marginalized in the university, and what can be done differently.

Distrust of University Educators and Administrators

So far, this chapter has relied heavily on non-Canadian examples and experiences. Canadian examples of racist experiences at universities do exist. Take for instance, the story of Black Canadian law student Jordan Afolabi, who experienced a racist incident at the University of Windsor (an extended overview of this incident is provided in the first five minutes of this video from The Fifth Estate, 2021). Jordan's altercation with a white student on campus led to both students filing reports with university administrators. Despite maintaining that the other student was being more aggressive and that he was only defending himself, Jordan was the only one of the two to be suspended from campus. Jordan then filed a human rights complaint with the university. When he attempted to follow up on his complaint, the university president's administrative secretary called the police to escort him out. In Jordan's words:

> I tried to speak but she just wasn't giving me a moment to speak … I said, "Look, I'm going to need you to calm down" … she kept cutting me off. She felt rather upset that I would tell her to calm down and she turned and walked away. (Tomlinson et al., 2021, para. 13)

Jordan played a recording of his phone conversation with the secretary for police, which showed a much different side to the story than what she had told them. The recording had saved him from being arrested.

Jordan received an apology from the University of Windsor, but only after an adjudicator's independent investigation determined that the treatment Jordan received may have been due to unconscious racial profiling and stereotypes (Tomlinson et al., 2021). Stories similar to Jordan's are common, but as has been established repeatedly throughout this handbook, countless go unreported. Many Black students consider that they may end up in situations such as Jordan's, without the benefit of a recording to corroborate their story.

A distrust of educators, administrators, and staff is pervasive in the experiences of Black students at Canadian universities. Black Nova Scotian students expressed how their relationship with library staff was a barrier to using library facilities. Some interactions were described as unfriendly, condescending, and enough to reinforce stereotyped feelings (Fraser & Barlett, 2018).

Aaron, a Black student at an Ontario university describes several experiences with the educators and administrators in his department in Gosine's (2007) study:

> I didn't feel I could make a connection with a lot of [the faculty], or that they wanted to make a connection with me. (p. 10)

Aaron retells a particular incident with a white professor where he attempted to discuss a mark he had received:

> I went to see her. I was poised and I wasn't confrontational at all and within the first two sentences that came out of my mouth, she was automatically on the defensive, very threatened by me…she automatically said, "I want you out of my office, can you leave, or else I'm gonna go get the Dean" … I left immediately. (p. 10)

Such encounters have affected his self-esteem:

> I definitely go through that and I think for Black students, it's even worse because you're even more insecure about yourself. So when a professor, whom you respect and is your supervisor, but you can't get along with, you start to question yourself in different kinds of ways than people who probably aren't Black. (p. 11)

Health Effects

Repeated instances of racial stressors and hostility can have prolonged effects on the health of Black students. One can view these experiences through the lens of **systemic trauma**—the cultural norms, dominant narratives, and political leanings of institutions that preserve traumatic responses (Williams et al., 2021). Systemic trauma identifies students' constant racial stress, while attending

the university, as harmful to their physiological and psychological well-being (McGee et al., 2019; Williams et al., 2021).

Interviews with Black, Indigenous, and other racialized students at a university in Western Canada revealed that students were experiencing migraines, fatigue, and panic attacks from the addition of racial stressors to their other academic demands (Shankar et al., 2013). Other students reported that their coping issues such as drinking, smoking, and overeating were magnified (Shankar et al., 2013). While some may consider these effects a symptom of young age and inexperience, it is worth noting that the students Shankar et al. (2013) interviewed were what the university considered mature students—25 years and older.

Although universities have made progress in providing more accessible mental health services in the last several years, approaching these services can still be a point of contention for Black youth. Cultural backgrounds tend to place a stigma on treating and even discussing mental health—the reluctance to use mental health services was even more prominent amongst Black males (Arday, 2018). Those that did access their university mental health supports found the service unequipped to meet their diverse needs. As one Black female explains, discussing issues of racism with her university's mental health professionals can be challenging:

> I have also found that when you, for instance, discuss how racism impacts your daily existence … that actually a lot of them get uncomfortable. (Arday, 2018, p.15)

Despite these stressors and their effects, the Black student experience is multilayered and is more than its negatives. The next section will look at how Black students succeed and overcome the challenges.

Positive Experiences

It is critical to remember that Black students are not helpless—in fact, they are resilient despite the myriad aforementioned challenges. There are still countless Black students that continue to attend university and thrive even in the face of overt and covert racism. To avoid a perspective that only focuses on the stress and shortcomings that come with racist experiences, it is necessary to consider the positive experiences of Black students who have overcome the hostility and navigated barriers. It is imperative that mentors recognize and elevate these strengths.

Inclusive Environments and Knowledgeable Educators

In the previous section, there was a discussion about the distrust of educators and administrators by Black students. As Gosine (2007) confirmed, distrust varies greatly between students and is largely dependent on how the educators, administrators, and the university approach issues of racism. Aaron, a Black Canadian student who provided his experience in the previous section,

had a more positive experience at his graduate law school, as opposed to his undergraduate university:

> I loved it … in terms of political and ideological culture … this is my kind of place. The professors are very progressive minded and critical thinkers. I don't necessarily agree with all of them, but I love the fact that I can go into many classrooms, not all but many classrooms, with the professors here and hear discussions of class, race, gender, sexual orientation. Those kinds of issues that were foreign in most classrooms at [the university where Aaron took his undergraduate degree]. (Gosine, 2007, p. 9)

Provided they are handled well, some Black students are receptive to respectful acknowledgement and discussions of class, race, and gender in universities. It can be relieving when educators and administrators approach these issues from a place of understanding, where it is clear that they are educated on the subject. In interviewing Black and racialized students attending American graduate-level programs, Seward (2014) found that more than half of respondents expected educators to possess a competent knowledge of diversity. Competency included racialized and white educators who could share personal experiences with discrimination (Seward, 2014). One student remarked that her educator's competency with diversity made her more attentive in class (Seward, 2014):

> Some of my other professors, I don't feel like they have a real-world handle on topics. So a lot of things they might say go in one ear and out the other. I don't really take notes in the class. I'm just kind of listening. But with her, I feel like she has the experience. So my ears perk up. (p. 71)

This is why a critical lens is vital to conversations about racism, so that mentors will have the language and knowledge to address racism constructively. Linder et al. (2015) interviewed several students with positive feedback regarding their knowledgeable educators. One student described how building a common understanding with educators improved her learning experience:

> Prior to going to college, I never met a faculty member in my life. So for me, it was really important to have that, to see that they were real people. They're not just people that come into the classroom, teach a class, and leave. It was interesting to build those relationships because that positively affected my participation in the classroom. (p. 188)

Another student identified the example set by inclusive educators and the subsequent benefits:

> Seeing how they interact with different groups of students and so it's like, ok, this is kind of the model that we should

> follow and this is how we should be with our students and
>
> how we should be with each other. (p. 188)

Eric explained how a close relationship with an educator added to his personal growth:

> I remember him saying to me, many months ago, "Eric, you know, I know you have so much passion and I want to see it, I know it's there and I can't wait for you to bring it out." And that kind of made me feel good, I was like, "You know what, you're right, I really have not been able to bring out that [*sic*] and I don't know why" … but for him to say something that was inspiring was great and very uplifting. (p. 189)

Personal Resilience

Personal resilience and determination have also been identified as factors contributing to the academic success of Black students. Some students may engage in a reconceptualizing and breaking of negative stereotypes that others may have of Blackness. Wilson-Forsberg et al. (2020) interviewed several African immigrants who attended universities in Ontario and asked them to share the different ways they had reconceptualized the identity of the Black student. Christian explained the importance of proving the stereotypes placed on Black students as incorrect:

> So I feel like sometimes there's a microscope on us, and when you notice a microscope on you, you have to find your way to move through it and not give them the bait; don't let them take you; you have to rise above it. (p. 702)

Augustine spoke of his family's cultural background and how their values were key to changing how non-Black educators and administrators saw him:

> Well, they taught me how to, you know, fight for myself … But for me, the training that I got back home, it's still keeping me moving. It keeps me working hard and fighting for myself, providing for myself and my other family members. (p. 705)

It is encouraging that students such as Christian and Augustine are able to draw on their experiences with marginalization and turn it into a source of resilience. However, marginalization should not be the natural state of affairs. These students should not have to feel that they have to prove stereotypes wrong, much less feel stereotyped at all. As Ehler (2008) states, constant surveillance of racialized individuals—or the feeling of being surveyed—tends to influence what actions and behaviours are most acceptable for them. Without dismantling racist stereotypes and beliefs in universities there is a danger of imposing behaviour onto Black students, rather than empowering them.

A consistent thread among stories of personal resilience is motivation from family members. To counteract stressors of racist experiences, Black, Indigenous, and racialized students identified utilizing support from family and community members whom they did not want to disappoint (Shankar et al., 2013). Mentors may have to fill in gaps, related to absent community support, to alleviate the separation racialized students feel.

Peer Support and Counter-Spaces

Black students have shown that they can come together to uplift one another in the absence of outside support. Peer support groups have often provided Black students a means to study together and discuss discrimination with like-minded others who have had the same experiences (Feagin & Sikes, 1995). Racialized students in British Columbia commented that their peer groups acted as informal support networks to further challenge the dominant white narratives at their university (Caxaj et al., 2018). One racialized student in Caxaj et al.'s (2018) study referred to peer support groups as "a form of celebrating and coming together" (p. 15). Palmer et al.'s (2011) investigation featured racialized STEM students attending American universities who pointed towards peer support groups as a component of their academic success. Larry, a computer science student, shared the benefits of his peer support group:

> [We were] almost like family, so we kind of built a family atmosphere you know. I kind of surrounded myself with the same people throughout college … [we were] all born in a

> position to graduate … I learned a lot from them and about the kind of work ethic it really takes [to succeed.] (p. 497)

A Black female student illustrated the emotional and cultural comfort she found in her peer support group:

> The benefit that I have gained from [a study group of African American students] is that my involvement in the African American community has grown, and that's where I found a lot of my support. Even in terms of academics, I go study with the "homies" all the time … You might not get that much studying done, but it's a cool little network that's created because classes are so uncomfortable. (Solórzano et al., 2000, p. 71)

Solórzano et al. (2000) describe on campus and off campus environments, where positive representations of Black identity and experience are shared and valued as **counter-spaces**. Parallel to counter-stories, counter-spaces also challenge the dominant narratives and elevate alternative voices. Students may informally create their own support groups or formally create them in the form of student associations with their own offices and services. Black student associations or clubs, with defined social media presence, meeting spaces, and scheduled events, are common in Canadian universities. Below are some

examples of Instagram pages for Black student associations at Canadian universities:

- [BLSA](#) – Brock University's Black Students' Association

- [BSA Western](#) – The Black Students' Association at Western University

- [BSN McGill](#) – Black Students' Network of McGill University

- [GBSA](#) – University of Guelph Black Students Association

- [UABSA](#) – The Black Students' Association at the University of Alberta

- [UTM Black](#) – The Black Students' Association at the University of Toronto

Instagram pages for Black Student Associations contrast with the [pages capturing student encounters with discrimination](#) in the previous section. In addition to being a space to share their negative experiences, social media has also acted as a virtual counter-space to organize and share positive depictions of Black student life. Whether online or offline, a sense of community has been identified as a remedy to the isolation Black and racialized students feel in white spaces (Arday, 2018).

The academic literature examining informal and formal peer support groups does not conclusively state whether these support groups must consist of students from the same racial background. There is some evidence that Black students gravitate towards having more friends of the same racial background when they perceive their campus climate as hostile to themselves and their racial group (Levin et al., 2006). Friendships with students of the same racial background were found to have a positive effect on the commitment to success and connection to the campus for Black students (Levin et al., 2006). However,

this should not take away from the learning, tolerance, and cross-pollination of ideas that occur when students interact outside of their racial groups. Same race friendships are presented here as one of many ways for Black and racialized students to find strength.

Minnett et al.'s (2019) self-documenting of the peer support within her own network of Black women is an example of beneficial same race friendships. The three Black women, including the author, were doctoral students attending the same American university, and each adopted a different role (e.g., The Wordsmith, The Sensei, and The Pragmatist), which allowed them to care for and be cared for by each other (Minnett et al., 2019). Minnett, the "Wordsmith," described the purpose of her friendship—or sistership as it is also referred to:

> The purposes of our informal peer-mentoring group are to create a sense of home and the conditions we need to survive. These two goals run parallel because creating home helps foster the context necessary for our survival both in the academy and society. As a group, we navigate these dual purposes by tapping into our peer-network for support, friendship, affirmation, callouts, challenges, and accountability. (Minnett et al., 2019, p. 218)

Minnett also described the nature of the group's roles:

> We have defined our roles within this peer mentorship framework based upon our unique experiences coupled with our natural inclinations … our roles of mentor and mentee shift often and at will. (Minnett et al., 2019, p. 218)

Cultural Capital

The sentiment to take from these same-race friendships is not one of segregation. Instead, this particular brand of friendship is proof of the value of connection and **cultural capital**. Dominant white narratives often define capital as access and possession of assets and resources (Yosso, 2005). As Yosso (2005) determines, one can find that the cultural capital of Black and racialized persons is defined by:

- **one's aspirations** – the pursuit of possibilities beyond one's present circumstances and sharing these stories with family and community members
- **familial and community connections** – knowledge acquired from family and community and commitments to their well-being
- **mastering different languages and communication styles** – the multiple languages, communication skills, and storytelling abilities of Black persons. Communication may include visual art, music, and poetry in addition to storytelling
- **one's ability to navigate predominantly white institutions** – the ability to achieve and remain successful in institutions not designed for the success of racialized persons

- **one's ability to challenge inequality** – oppositional behaviour and assertion of oneself in ways that challenge the status quo

- **social connections** – the ability to draw on supportive social networks, community resources, and informal contacts as resources for success

Counter-spaces contain deep, meaningful connections and a cultural capital full of knowledge, skills, and interactions. Mentors should recognize and validate the rich cultural capital of Black students.

Some universities have already begun to create more formalized recognitions of Black student perseverance, such as those at Concordia University and Ryerson University (Mercurio, 2020; Roach, 2021). Similarly, another Toronto based university has started a Black Excellence at York University initiative to support Black students as they transition into and navigate their academic careers (York University, n.d.). These celebrations and initiatives should be accompanied by support from educators and administrators to Black students on an individual level through approaches such as mentorship.

Reflect

For this reflection activity, imagine the following scenario. You are preparing to teach a course at the beginning of a new semester. The course material has been chosen with anti-racist teaching and diverse perspectives in mind. Your course also has a fairly small class size (approx. 15-20 students), which you hope will make students more comfortable with class discussions. On the first day of the course, you notice that there are a few Black and racialized students, but the large majority of students are white. You want to make sure that everyone is comfortable sharing their perspectives and that class discussions remain respectful. Try to think of solutions to the following questions, before viewing strategies on the following page.

1. How will you create a respectful and inclusive classroom environment between yourself and the students?

2. How will you create a respectful and inclusive classroom environment between students themselves?

3. How will you approach class discussions about racism?

The following strategies for creating respectful classroom environments are adapted from the Columbia Center for Teaching and Learning (n.d.) Guide for Inclusive Teaching (also available on this handbook's companion website):

When building an inclusive relationship between yourself as an educator and your students, consider

- learning the names of students and getting to know them through class surveys, activities, and one-on-one chats—this will help to reduce anonymity in the class
- letting students get to know you and how the course material relates to your own career and life by sharing your interests and personal learning journey
- sharing any fears or struggles you have in previous learning experiences or teaching this material to create a more open learning process

When building a classroom that fosters inclusive relationships between students, consider

- implementing icebreaker and group work activities that allow students to get to know each other
- starting discussions about students' learning experiences and inviting them to share what is most conducive to their learning in the classroom
  - record the insights students provide and share them either on a board or in an online medium so that all students can see the diversity of experiences in the class
- using activities throughout the course that encourage students to draw on their own diverse capital and backgrounds

When facilitating class discussions about racism, consider the following classroom strategies adapted from Harbin et al. (2019):

- challenge students' misconceptions of racism proactively by designating readings and assignments that challenge assumptions about race earlier in the course
  - build competencies by designing a **concept-centered approach** to course material (examination of key concepts, e.g., prejudice, stereotypes, discrimination) rather than a group-centered approach (examination of individual racialized groups)
- normalize discomfort with discussing racism by having students write reflections on issues or feelings they have related to course topics

- address emotional and uncivil classroom debates (e.g., microaggressions) by remaining calm, measured, and non-reactive
  - how you respond to debates may be dependent on the following factors:
    - is the debate related to the student's misunderstanding of the civility that is expected in the classroom?
    - is the debate related to the student disagreeing with a single viewpoint in the course material, lecture, or discussion?
    - is the debate related to a personal experience the student has had?
  - respond to microaggressions in ways that facilitate learning and elevate openness to other perspectives
    - For example, during a class discussion about an assigned reading, a student may contend that, "I don't believe that whites are the only people who can be racist." You might reorient them to openness by encouraging them to instead say, "The author is arguing that only whites can be racist, can you help me to understand that?"
- overall, students should be encouraged to share their perspectives, embrace their emotional responses, and develop empathy for the lived experiences of others in an inclusive community of learning

6. Becoming a Mentor

> [My mentor] kind of knows me a little bit more, because we've done other things besides just advising. I was in a scholarship my freshman year and she was the advisor for that. So she's known me on other levels besides just education ... I mean that really helps, too, knowing that person and [her] knowing you as well ... I don't know maybe it's just me, but I really love the personal connections that you can make. (Luedke, 2017, p. 44)

The above quote from an American Black university student, named Tenishia, encapsulates what an ideal positive mentee-focused mentor relationship could look like. In this quote, Tenisha feels acknowledged and seen as a culmination of experiences and talents beyond her student identity. To invoke Max once again—the student quoted in the opening of this handbook and the source of its title—mentors "keep it 100," they are honest and able to build authentic rapport. These qualities are a few of several, which will be discussed in this chapter, that mentors should seek to implement. Integrating these different qualities will improve the foundation of a supportive relationship.

What Does It Mean to Be a Mentor?

According to Campbell and Campbell (1997), mentorship refers to a supportive relationship between an experienced member of an organization

and a less-experienced member of an organization. They also state that the less-experienced member will engage in this relationship to increase their knowledge and expertise in one or multiple areas, with the more knowledgeable member being referred to as a mentor. However, this is not always the case and the lack of a widely applied definition of mentorship suggests that the dynamics of mentorship can shift depending on the context (Campbell & Campbell, 1997).

Margolis and Romero (2002) suggest that a mentor is an alignment of several key roles:

- **a teacher –** fostering skill and intellectual development of the less experienced member
- **a sponsor –** influencing the less experienced member's advancement using one's own status
- **a host or guide –** introducing a less experienced member to a new organization or environment and its various values, key players, and resources
- **an exemplar –** setting standards for less experienced members to follow

From this point onwards, the term mentor will refer to a combination of all of these roles. The mentor role will also be discussed in reference to university educators and administrators. The less-experienced individual, on the receiving end of a relationship with a mentor, will be referred to as a mentee from this point. Black students will be the mentees in this context.

Relationships between mentors and mentees are common in graduate-level education. They offer a way for educators to individualize student support through socializing and/or personalized teaching of subject matter (Posselt, 2018). Likewise, Margolis and Romero (2002) identify mentorship in graduate-level education as a means of selecting and grooming the successors to the current generation of educators. Mentorship as a means of selecting successors is what the authors call the most significant piece of the [hidden curriculum]—the values held by members of the university.

Another way to think of mentorship is the guidance that it provides to students in non-academic contexts. James (2000) highlighted that some students may search for members of the university who are competent individuals and have braved various social, economic, and political systems with tangible success. In the case of Black students who are first-generation Canadians, this is especially important, as they typically do not have parents with Canadian university experience that can help them navigate universities (Fan et al., 2017). For these students, mentorship relationships can be vital to integrating them with the university at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

Mentorship Versus Leaders and Role Models
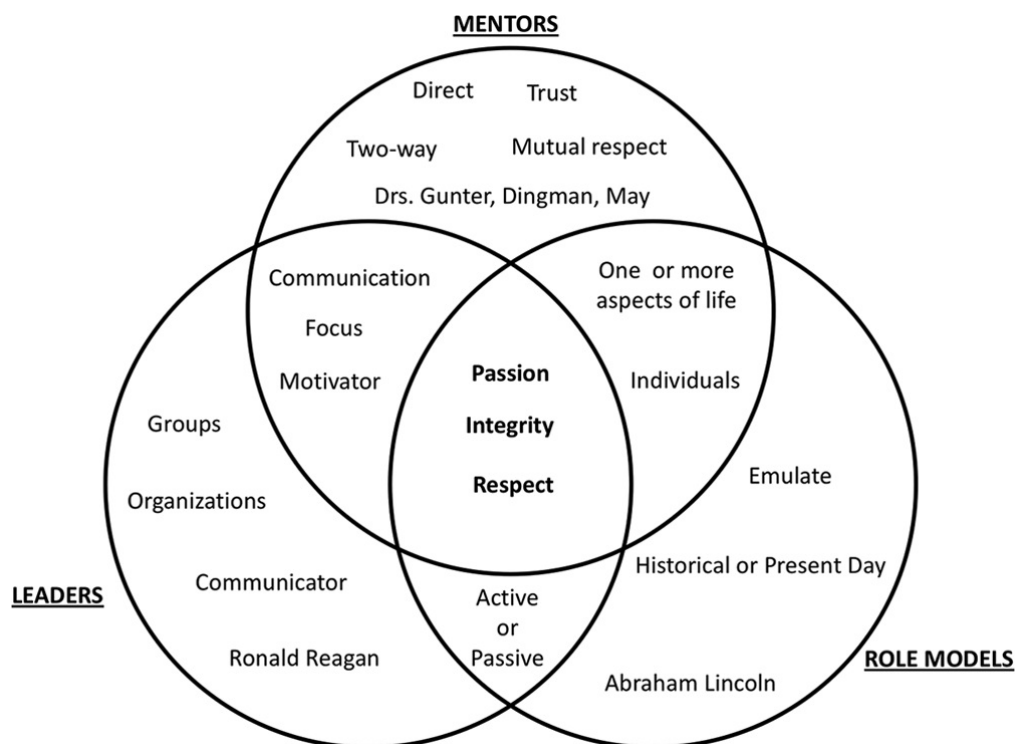
Figure 12 *Venn diagram of similar and distinctive traits of mentors, leaders, and role models* (Rohrich & Durand, 2020)

Rohrich and Durand (2020) note that while the terms mentor, leader, and role model are used synonymously, there are some defined differences between them. Figure 12 shows how these terms may overlap and diverge, with some well-known examples of each.

Beginning with leadership, Rohrich and Durand (2020) define a **leader** as someone who galvanizes a group towards one or a set of common goals, such as a manager or politician. Comparably, mentorship typically occurs between two people, rather than a group (Rohrich & Durand, 2020).

Role models are often imitated by those who look up to them and do not have close relationships with their pupils, unlike the close, interpersonal relationships that mentors, and mentees will typically have (Rohrich & Durand, 2020). This is why historical figures, such as Abraham Lincoln, can become role models, despite many people in the present day having never met him.

Mentors guide mentees in their personal and professional lives and often affect their growth in both areas (Rohrich & Durand, 2020). Key to mentorship is that it cannot be forced. Mentees may go through multiple mentors depending on the dynamics of their personal and professional growth (Rohrich & Durand, 2020). This is not to say that mentors are better than leaders or role models, as they will each have contexts that are most appropriate for them. Although, "the mentor" is not the component of the mentor relationship that will be emphasized throughout this chapter.

Mentee-Focused Mentorship

To ensure that mentorship strategies benefit Black students, this handbook proposes Quach et al.'s (2020) idea of **mentee-focused mentorship**. Where the standard model of mentorship can sometimes remain focused on the mentor and their own career advancement, mentee-focused mentorship empowers the mentee's career by centring on their skills and experiences. Mentee-focused mentorship also acknowledges the barriers to academic success that may exist for Black and racialized students (Quach et al., 2020).

Quach et al.'s (2020) conceptualization of mentee-focused mentorship was originally proposed with Black and racialized STEM students in mind. Despite this, the spectrum in Figure 13 could be adapted for a wider range of disciplines outside of STEM fields, with the role of "senior scientist" filled by any educator or administrator.
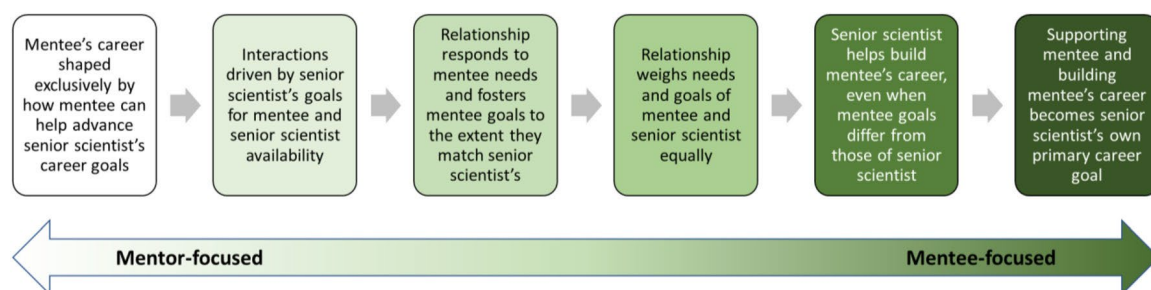
Figure 13 *Spectrum of mentor-focused to mentee-focused mentorships* (Quach et al., 2020).

Mentee-focused mentorship features three central concepts meant to disrupt inequitable practices and mentor-focused relationships (Quach et al., 2020):

- **Dialogue and disagreement when communicating** – Mentors and mentees should agree on how to address disagreements or disputes in their relationship as they arise
- **Defining goals through different ideas and perspectives** – Based on their unique backgrounds, mentors and mentees may have different conceptions of goals and how to reach them
  - Mentors and mentees should practice active listening to understand each other better and disrupt the tendency to prioritize the mentor's goals and knowledge.

- **Remaining proactive without acting on the mentee's behalf** – Both mentors and mentees should work together to achieve the mentee's goals, but mentors should be aware of actions that act on the mentee's behalf and deny their empowerment

> The mentee is not an empty vessel receiving the mentor's advice and wisdom, but rather, an active participant, shaping the relationship. (Zerzan et al,, 2009, p. 140)

The empowerment of the mentee is critical to their personal and professional growth. Mentees should be comfortable in managing the direction of the relationship, directing meeting discussions, and requesting feedback when needed (Zerzan et al., 2009). When mentees manage their mentorships, mentors are given a clearer idea of what the mentee's needs are, which benefits the relationship for both individuals (Zerzan et al., 2009). To encourage mentees to make such decisions, it may be useful to provide them with a checklist of items to establish before, during, and after their first meeting. This checklist can be provided to students during program orientations, introductory classes, or by mentors themselves during the initial meeting. A selection of items from Zerzan et al.'s (2009) checklist is provided on page 91, with a checklist also available on the handbook's companion [website](). Educators and administrators who are prospective mentors, may find it suitable to complete some pieces of the checklist themselves and have their answers or preferences ready to compare with potential mentees.

Checklist for mentees to manage their mentor relationships (adapted from Zerzan et al., 2009):

Getting ready
    a. Identify your values
    b. Identify your work style, habits, and the way you learn best
    c. What opportunities are you looking for? E.g., grant writing, presentation skills
    d. What are your goals for the next 3 months, 6 months, 1 year, and 1-5 years?

Finding a mentor
    a. Meet educators and administrators you already know
    b. Get recommendations on mentors from other people
    c. Find multiple mentors at different levels of experience

Things to look for in a mentor
    a. Are they available and accessible?
    b. Do they provide opportunities?
    c. Do they encourage risk taking?
    d. Has prior mentoring experience
    e. Allows you to develop agenda, without acting on your behalf

The first meeting
    a. Tell your mentor how they have helped you already
    b. Share your needs, your personal journey, and what is most valuable to you
    c. Thank the mentor after the meeting

Developing the mentor-mentee relationship
    a. Define goals and expectations of the relationship for both individuals
    b. Plan ahead, create meeting agendas and regular meeting schedules
    c. Ask questions and ask for feedback
    d. Active listening, be responsive
    e. Commit to assigned tasks and remain flexible

Separation
    a. Discuss when the relationship should end and how it will end
    b. What are next steps? Will future mentors be involved?

Informed Practices for Mentorship

This section will seek to answer, "What makes a good mentor?"

Positive Mentorship Qualities

There is an abundance of different beliefs in what qualities make for a positive, fruitful mentorship. In an article published on *Forbes'* website, Andersen (2014) identified five qualities that could elevate mentors from being satisfactory to excellent:

- **Self-reflection** – providing mentees with the "why" behind the mentor's personal journey

- **Discretion** – ensuring that mentees are comfortable confiding in their mentor and that what is said stays between mentee and mentor

- **Honesty** – the responsibility mentors have to provide truthful, authentic feedback

- **Curiosity** – mentors should be curious about the people they are mentoring to better tailor the guidance they provide

- **Generosity** – excellent mentors should not feel intimidated by the achievements and growth of their mentees; they should want the best for them in both their successes and setbacks

Beyond traits, Baker and Griffin (2010) suggest mentorship should involve an emotional attachment between mentors and mentees. The authors also state that positive mentorship should include a level of care for the mentee's personal and professional growth. Care in mentee-focused relationships should be

fostered through mutual respect, a willingness to understand each other, and an inclination to engage in a relationship based on care (Baker & Griffin, 2010). Mentors may find Christina Sharpe's definition of Black care as one model of care to emulate:

> The work of what I imagine, theorize, and activate as practices of care is not to extend suffering or to make the one suffering at one with the nation-state or institution inflicting that suffering. (Sharpe, 2018, p.172)

Mentors should seek to inspire a growth mindset in mentees. A **growth mindset** views intelligence and achievement as adaptable rather than fixed (Posselt, 2018). This mindset encourages students to view their learning and development as an ever-changing progression over time. Mentors who hold a growth mindset, and were able to inspire that mindset in mentees, countered the students' feelings of inadequacy about their own success (Posselt, 2018). It is believed that support from mentors with growth mindsets can strengthen the connection students feel to their respective fields (Posselt, 2018).

Speaking to Black and racialized students about the traits they desire most in mentors, Luedke (2017) found that mentors who saw their mentees as complete individuals, with experiences outside of being students, were essential to beneficial mentorships. When students were seen and spoken to as more than just students, they reported feeling more comfortable with their mentors (Luedke, 2017). Often, these mentors were able to have more informal conversations with

their mentees about non-academic topics, such as events in the mentee's personal life (Luedke, 2017). Of course, mentors and mentees may have distinctive comfort levels before reaching the point of being able to share personal details. That is why finding a match between mentee and mentor values--potentially through a [mentee checklist](#)—is vital to building a relationship.

As the mentorship progresses, the relationship will need to be maintained. Black et al. (2004) suggests that both mentors and mentees commit to recognizing each other's needs, preserving mutual respect, and communicating effectively. The relationship may change and fluctuate as it progresses, sometimes coming to an unexpected conclusion. In any case, both individuals should be prepared for any changes or conclusions, and discuss these potentialities early on (Black et al., 2004).

Reflect

How much do you know about mentorship? What do you still have to learn? Answer these questions about mentorship truthfully and honestly (adapted from Black et al., 2004):

1. What does a mentor do?
2. What is the definition of mentoring?
3. How long are mentoring relationships supposed to last?
4. What could I offer to a mentee?
5. How will I know what a mentee's interests are?

Additionally, take the time to view Shawn Blanchard's TED Talk, *Science of Mentorship*. In this TED Talk, Blanchard discusses how excellent mentors recognize the significant life events in the lives of their mentees and use them to mould mentees for success (TEDx Talks, 2016). Can Blanchard's ideas help us see mentees as complete individuals outside of their student identity?

Figure 14 *Shawn Blanchard speaks on the science behind mentorship (TEDx Talks, 2016)*

Negative Mentorship Qualities

To avoid the pitfalls of mentorship, this section will discuss the traits that cause mentor relationships to deteriorate and identify practices to avoid when interacting with mentees. Brunsma et al. (2017) outline some of the reasons mentorships fail to benefit mentees:

- **Time constraints on mentoring** – the expansion of demands placed on educators and faculty (e.g., research duties, service duties to departments) leave less time for adequate mentorship

- **Narcissism and conflicts of interest** – some educators and administrators may have self-serving reasons for becoming mentors (e.g., maintaining one's public image) or their role as mentor may conflict with their own aspirations (e.g., competing with mentees in the job market)

- **Poor training** – little training is done in the university on how to mentor students and access to mentorship resources is often limited

- **Department culture** – tenure and career advancement practices depend on research achievements rather than engaging with students—making mentorship less of a priority

These are not the only reasons mentorship can begin to fall apart. Margolis and Romero (2002) note the connection between mentorship and the [hidden curriculum](#)—the values and norms of educators and administrators that permeate the university—and how this dynamic can create conflict for mentees. Mentorship by nature is informal, operating outside of any formal curriculum or university-developed scoring system (Margolis & Romero, 2002). Without a focus

on mentees, mentorship relies heavily on the subjectivity of the mentor, meaning any student that does not meet their standard is at a possible disadvantage of having fewer mentorship opportunities (Margolis & Romero, 2002). Educators and administrators should be keenly aware of their biases and any tendencies to gravitate towards mentoring "easy" students. Mentorship should be for the benefit of the mentee, and not only because of the mentor's belief that the student can contribute to the status quo of the university (Margolis & Romero, 2002).

Mentors should also pay close attention to the power dynamics present in their relationship. Some students may require more autonomy than others. As one Black female in Margolis and Romero's (2002) study notes, the nature of mentors can represent undesirable authoritative figures:

> I like to keep distance in those relationships. I don't want to add too much personality into it. Because sometimes people can get into arguments on a personal level that they wouldn't get involved with on an academic or professional level. (p. 87)

Situations such as the one this student describes are a primary reason why conversations on boundaries and the nature of the relationship should occur during initial meetings between mentors and mentees. A less personal relationship may be best depending on the mentee's comfort level. This information may seem incompatible with what has been covered in the previous

section on "Positive Mentorship Qualities", but mentors should be aware that the nature of the relationship may change over time. Mentees can become more willing to engage on a personal level as the mentorship progresses. The key takeaway is that mentors should avoid making assumptions, and mentors and mentees should get to know each other's personal dispositions early on in the relationship.

How Do Students Benefit?

It is important to know the end result of this work or the intended benefits. Much of the academic literature available indicates that mentorship with educators and administrators is an excellent strategy for improving academic success and rates of retention across different levels of the university.

For instance, some Black and racialized students may identify as low-income or come from low-income neighbourhoods with primarily racialized populations and resource-limited secondary schools (James & Turner, 2017). Mentorship has demonstrated improvement in enrolment rates among low-income high school students to universities (Ashtiani & Feliciano, 2012). As well, mentorship was shown to be a factor in increasing completion rates of bachelor's degrees for low-income students (Ashtiani & Feliciano, 2012).

Once attending universities, the benefit of mentorship continues. For Black and racialized undergraduate students, mentorship with educators and administrators has been linked with increased retention and academic success (Campbell & Campbell, 1997). The authors investigation of mentorship programs

found that students that were involved in mentorship attained higher GPAs and lower drop-out rates. The drop-out rate of students in mentorships was lower than students not in mentorships by approximately 50% (Campbell & Campbell, 1997).

In STEM fields, formalized mentorship has been recommended to increase Black and racialized student interest and retention in related programs (Tsui, 2007). In addition to higher GPAs and lower drop-out rates, favourable outcomes such as increased competency and more well-defined academic ambitions, have been correlated with STEM-related mentorship (Tsui, 2007). Beyond STEM fields, mentorship has been critical to the pursuit of further graduate and doctoral studies for Black graduate students, in addition to preparing them for careers in academia (Posselt, 2018).

By taking a mentorship approach specifically for Black and racialized students, it is worth considering whether same race or same-gender mentors are more beneficial than non-matched relationships. There is some evidence that the quality of the mentee-mentor relationship is much more important than the race of the mentor (Lee, 1999). Likewise, perceived similarities between Black mentees and non-Black mentors have been identified as having greater

importance than demographic similarities when it comes to beneficial mentorships (Hernandez et al., 2017). In this study, perceived similarities were based on matches in values and perspectives, resulting in the mentee's increased satisfaction with their mentor relationship (Hernandez et al., 2017). Hernandez et al. (2017) recommend that educators and administrators set non-academic "get to know each other" (p. 463) meetings that build rapport based on both deeper similarities (e.g., discussing family, ideal qualities in friends) and more commonplace connections (e.g., favourite foods, hobbies). Examples exist in the academic literature of Black students who have found relationships with knowledgeable, empathetic white mentors as helpful to their academic success. For instance, the following anecdote comes from a Black graduate student, who's gender is not identified:

> Having an immediate source of support … a secondary advisor, was helpful … even if he wasn't a woman of color and in some ways had more social power. He still had racial consciousness that a lot of the faculty didn't have. (Trent et al., 2020, p. 225)

Despite indications that perceived similarities are more important than demographics, non-Black mentors should be aware of how they approach mentoring Black students. McCoy et al. (2015) found that white faculty at a predominantly white American university often took a colour-blind approach to mentoring where they "treated students the same" (p. 233). On the surface, this may seem innocuous, but colour-blind approaches to mentorship have the

potential to erase the cultural identities that Black and racialized students often draw strength from (McCoy, 2015; Yosso, 2005). In contrast to treating students the same, many of the white faculty members sampled also disclosed that they made compromises for Black students. These compromises were made with the belief that the Black students were not as well-prepared academically as non-Black students (McCoy, 2015).

In Lensmire and Lozenski's (2020) "Anti-racist Mentoring: For White Faculty Who Want to Engage in Black Mentorship", a dialogue between a white mentor and a Black mentee reveals some key insights that could aid non-Black mentors in avoiding the pitfalls found in McCoy's (2015) study. The authors recognize that mentorship as commonly perceived is still based on the university's historical conceptions of social hierarchy. White educators and administrators should reflect honestly on the limits of their knowledge and practices and distinguish the ways their knowledge and practices are contextualized by historically white narratives and ideas (Lensmire & Lozenski, 2020). White educators and administrators should embody the criticality displayed throughout this handbook, and challenge racist practices in the institution, including those perpetrated by themselves. Lensmire and Lozenski (2020) conceptualize this mentorship as **Black mentorship**— opposition to the white university's overreliance on credentials, criteria, and rigidity:

> If white mentorship is about tradition, deference to authority, and false seriousness, then black mentorship is about expression through laughter and tears, recognition

> of eldership, and the pursuit of truth, no matter who it offends. (Lensmire & Lozenski, 2020, p. 20)

Some students still seek out same-race mentors. Black male students considered their relationships with Black mentors to be an essential source of perseverance (Brooms & Davis, 2017). These Black male students credit their mentor relationships as enhancing their ability to navigate unfamiliar and stressful university systems and preparing them for life after university (Brooms & Davis, 2017). Malik, a Black student attending an American university, described his experience with Black male mentors:

> They understood and spoke at length about the issues with Blacks and law enforcement. They were very knowledgeable and easy to approach if you had any issues during class or on the campus. They put together a mentoring group for Black males and we could contact them if we had any problems. (Brooms & Davis, 2017, p. 319)

Akin to Black men, Black women have also been instrumental as mentors to Black female students. Guidance through career advancement and support in overcoming barriers present in white male-dominated fields are only a few of the benefits Black female doctoral student, Cosette Grant, provided an autobiographical account of:

> African-American female mentors have been vital to my academic success. These mentors have been advisers, sharing knowledge based on career experience; supporters, providing emotional and spiritual encouragement and reinforcement; experts, sharing specific feedback on academic performance and scholarly work; resources, providing equal access of information. (Grant & Simmons, 2008, p. 507)

These descriptions of Black mentors are only further evidence of the need for representation across disciplines. Although mentorship is not dependent on demographics to be effective, a mentee-focused approach within universities should provide racialized students with the chance to have a same-race and/or gender mentor if they desire. In any case, there are many demonstrated benefits of mentorship. Educators and administrators—prospective mentors—should utilize these informed practices and look towards these benefits as guiding principles.

7. Case Studies

This section is an opportunity for sustained reflection on the concepts covered. It is also a chance to apply the concepts to fictional mentorship case studies. Mentorship involves actions and decisions that mentors will make for the benefit of their mentee. Mentors must view these actions and decisions through a critical lens. Another tool to help simplify critical concepts from this handbook is the **Take 5 Process** adapted from Portland Community College (n.d.) designed for equity-based decision-making:

1. **Acknowledge Intersectionality**

What identities (e.g., race, class, gender, sexuality, [dis]ability) are at play? How are those identities currently being affected and how will those identities be affected by your decisions?

2. **Confront the Dominant Narratives**

Are there any existing practices or perspectives that may be affecting the personal and professional growth of the mentee? Are those practices or perspectives overtly or systemically racist? If so, what can be done differently?

3. **Remain Dedicated to Social Justice**

If you have identified any harmful practices or perspectives in step 2, you must commit to not replicating those practices. Instead commit to

practices and perspectives that bring benefits to a mentee's personal and professional growth.

4. Identify and Elevate Experiential Knowledge

What are the real-life experiences of the mentee? Who are they outside of their identity as a student? Are there strengths hidden in their real-life experiences that you can pinpoint and uplift in the mentee?

5. Empower Your Mentee

Make your mentee an equal stakeholder in all decisions and solutions, rather than imposing decisions onto them. Ensure that you and your mentee are communicating openly and honestly.

Case #1

Martin is your mentee and you have recently agreed to become his mentor. He is a Black male student in a graduate-level social science related program. During your last meeting, Martin shared that he would like to apply for a research grant that is currently accepting applications. The context of his proposed research idea would involve issues related to the Black community, which is a group that he has a strong desire to support in his professional career. Martin is unsure whether he should include his race in his grant application. While being a Black individual is a part of his rationale for pursuing this research, he has concerns about "playing the race card" and portraying himself as expecting differential treatment on the basis of race (adapted from Webb, 2011).

- What are the main issues raised in this case?
- How would you encourage Martin to apply for the grant and pursue his professional development?

Potential Responses for Case #1

- Dei (2013) suggests that one's multiple identities and sources of marginalization, such as race, <u>should be seen as a strength</u>. You could encourage Martin to view his personal experiences as an asset to his research as a Black male. His personal experience may provide him with insight that he would not possess otherwise and could help bolster his application.

- Henry and Tator (1994) <u>identify the underrepresentation of racialized educators</u> as one of several explanations for continued racism in Canadian universities. If Martin is encouraged to continue pursuing his professional aspirations, his willingness to self-identify as a Black male could increase representation in the university.

- If you have such experience, you could suggest sharing your personal experiences with the grant application process. Doing so may ease his worries. It may also be the case that in your experience self-identifying is often encouraged, or a non-factor in the application process.

- To understand more of what Martin might be feeling, revisit <u>representation costs</u> and the <u>2nd iteration of the black tax</u> (Chambers et al., 2014; Prince, 2017). Perhaps having a conversation about these two ideas and allowing Martin to express what he is feeling will be beneficial for his concerns.

Case #2

You have been mentoring Jenna, a female Black undergraduate student, for some time now. Jenna has privately disclosed to you her orientation as a lesbian woman, which she is not completely comfortable with expressing publicly. While she would like to be more open with this part of her identity, she is finding difficulty in doing so. A compulsory course she is enrolled in for the current semester requires students to work with their assigned group members on a semester-long project. One of her group members tends to make homophobic comments about the LGBTQ community whenever the topic arises. When these comments are made, other group members laugh but do not seem to reciprocate them. Jenna is unsure what to do in these situations, as her group members are non-Black, and she does not want to portray an "angry Black woman" stereotype (adapted from Webb, 2011).

- What are the main issues raised in this case?
- What identities are involved in this case?
- How would you advise Jenna to handle this situation and relax her fears?
- How can you encourage Jenna to draw on the strengths of her identity?

Potential Responses for Case #2

- [Validation and dialogic action](#) are two key components of CRT-informed approaches to working with Black students (Powell et al., 2020). Engage in a conversation where Jenna's concerns are made to feel valid. You might also demonstrate how important it is to speak up when discriminatory comments are made and what it means to disrupt dominant narratives. Ask Jenna how you can support her and encourage her to take the most comfortable action. She does not have to identify herself as a member of the LGBTQ community if she does not want to, and ultimately, that decision should be up to her.

- Similar to the personal anecdotes of students in Wilson-Forsberg et al.'s (2020) study, you might assist Jenna in [building personal resilience by reconceptualizing negative stereotypes](#). You may explain to Jenna that she is not fulfilling a stereotype just for expressing her experiences, which are always valid.

- You may suggest to Jenna that she have a private conversation with the group member making discriminatory comments, if she is comfortable doing so. This way she can avoid having a dispute in front of the other group members and lessen any fears of being seen as angry.

- Likewise, Jenna could have a private conversation one-on-one with her other group members. Peer support has been identified as a source of strength for Black, racialized, and marginalized students (Caxaj et al., 2018; Feagin & Sikes, 1995; Palmer et al., 2011). She may find support from

other group members that feel the comments are inappropriate as well.

Members can then confront the issue in a way that benefits everyone in

the group.

- If you have personal experience or a competent understanding of

  Jenna's concerns, sharing that knowledge could make Jenna feel

  supported (see Linder et al., 2015; Seward, 2014; Trent et al., 2020).

Case #3

Maya has been your mentee for two
months now. Your initial meetings were
very lively conversations where you both
discovered you have a lot more in
common than you initially believed.
Recently she has either been late to or
entirely absent from the regular weekly
meetings that you both agreed to. You
have reached out to Maya several times about the missed meetings over email.
Maya is apologetic when she responds, but there are other instances where she
does not respond at all or acknowledge her lateness. You mention your
frustrations with the situation to a colleague in your department who comments
that "some cultures have poor time-management skills" and that you should
"demand an apology." You are scheduled to meet with Maya in the near future
and intend to address this issue (adapted from Webb, 2011).

- What are the main issues raised in this case?
- How can you discuss this with Maya in a meaningful way?
- What changes need to be made to your relationship with Maya?
- Are there any institutional issues you can address?

Potential Responses for Case #3

- Consider that Maya may be experiencing personal issues, for example, psychological and community ROCs (Chambers et al., 2014). Depending on the commonalities you and Maya found in your initial meetings, you could ask how things are in her non-academic life. Be cautious of prescribing advice. As well, be prepared if Maya chooses not to share her non-academic life and do not pressure her to share if that is the case. If Maya does confide in you, remember to implement the positive mentorship quality of discretion (Andersen, 2014).

- Revisit Maya's initial meeting checklist or establish one if she has not already (Zerzan et al., 2009). Is there anything about your mentor relationship that she would like to change? Perhaps the frequency of the meetings? Centre on Maya's needs and ask how you can support her in this regard. It may be the case that another mentor can best meet Maya's needs.

- Review positive mentorship qualities, such as honesty, mutual respect, and a willingness to understand each other (Andersen, 2014; Baker & Griffin, 2010). Do not demand an apology, but be honest with your own feelings in a respectful way. You may say to Maya that you value transparency and would appreciate Maya giving you advance notice when she cannot attend your meetings.

- Communication is key to effective mentorship (Black et al., 2004). You could create more lines of communication for her to reach you that are more convenient, such as text messages.

- It is essential for anti-racist educators and administrators to confront and disrupt dominant narratives (Portland Community College, n.d.; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Discuss your colleague's comments with them. Comments implying stereotypes are not appropriate and can perpetuate harmful practices in the university. It should be explained to your colleague that they do not know enough about your mentee to make assumptions about them.

Case #4

Your mentee, Javaughn, is also a student in one of your graduate-level courses, a small class of fewer than 10 students. In your one-on-one meetings, Javaughn is animated, talkative, and enthusiastic, but in class discussions, he is reserved and quiet. In some of these class discussions, you call on Javaughn for his thoughts on the course material. His responses are mostly in agreement with the opinions of other students. You feel strongly that Javaughn has great ideas in your mentorship meetings and that those contributions would be valued by the rest of the class, so you begin to think of other ways to get Javaughn involved. Noticing that Javaughn is the only Black student in the class, you decide to tailor some of the next class's material towards more culturally Black topics such as hip hop and basketball with the hopes that Javaughn will be encouraged to contribute. During the next class, Javaughn seems even less engaged when this new material is introduced and once again does not contribute to the class discussion. You send an email to Javaughn asking how he felt about the most recent class with the hopes that your idea worked. Javaughn quickly responds to the email, saying that the new material "felt like pandering" and that he is "disappointed you would do something like that" (Adapted from Brown Graduate School, 2017).

- **What are the main issues raised in this case?**

- **How can you make amends to your relationship with Javaughn?**

- **Are there other ways of addressing Javaughn's reservedness in class?**

Potential Responses for Case #4

- In McCoy et al. (2015), white educators were making concessions for Black students and reinforcing stereotypes of Black students. No matter what the intentions are, non-Black mentors should be aware of how their actions might be perceived by Black students and what historical and social contexts are most prominent related to those decisions. Non-Black mentors are responsible for their cultural and racial competence when it comes to mentoring Black students (Smith et al., 2017).

- Discuss your error honestly with Javaughn and ensure that your relationship with him is in a positive space. Addressing disagreements as they arise is essential to mentee-focused mentorship (Quach et al., 2020). Do not shy away from accepting errors. As Lensmire and Lozenski (2020) suggest, fear of talking about race is incompatible with healthy mentorship.

- When discussing the error, be mindful of desires to be seen as not racist. Smith et al. (2017) caution white mentors of finding themselves "preaching" or oversharing their knowledge about racism in an attempt to portray themselves as such.

- Depending on the state of your relationship with Javaughn, you might ask him how he feels about the course material and if there is anything you can do differently to make it more engaging. His feedback is valuable and could benefit both your course and your mentor relationship. You

may also open this question to the whole class for more opinions (Zerzan et al., 2009).

- Revisit material discussing stereotypes to avoid similar situations in the future

Case #5

You have recently been
approached by your
department head about
leading the department's
equity, diversity, and
inclusion (EDI)
committee. The
committee is meant to bring anti-racist practices to the department and its
course materials. The department head cites your recent mentoring of several
Black students over the last several semesters as a reason for approaching you.
You are happy to receive recognition for your mentorship and embrace such an
important role, but you also worry about being a non-racialized individual
leading such a critical committee.

- Should you take the position? What considerations should be made?
- If you were to take the position, what consideration should you make to
  ensure that the EDI committee is as effective as possible?

Potential Responses for Case #5

- Part of being a mentor to Black students is the anti-racist work done outside of mentoring. Taking the position may mean taking a candid look at your own identity and knowledge. For white educators and administrators, this may include:
  - recognizing that you are still in a process of learning about racism and whiteness that might not allow you to take on such a prominent role at this time (see Smith et al., 2017 for more on developing antiracist knowledge as a white educator)
  - identifying other racialized faculty who may be more well-suited for the role. However, this response should be approached with caution. Henry and Tator (1994) highlight the responsibility placed on racialized faculty to take on advocacy roles simply because of their racialization as a major source of burnout and feeling overworked
- If you were to take the position, ensure that
  - you commit to an evolving understanding of racial identity, privilege, and intersectionality and self-reflection on how these concepts relate to you (Smith et al., 2017)
  - your commitment is visible and not something that is discussed only in meetings. Anti-racism should be a part of the other aspects of your role as educator or administrator as well (Smith et al., 2017)

- o there is diverse representation of educators and administrators on the committee, or advocate for their inclusion. Henry et al.'s (2017) findings stated that many racialized educators at Canadian universities felt that equity was not a major consideration when it came to committee appointments

- o racialized members of the department and EDI committee are empowered to state their opinions and desires for equity-based solutions (Lensmire & Lozenski, 2020)

- o you identify department or institutional practices that continue to perpetuate racism or harm to Black students (Lensmire & Lozenski, 2020; Portland Community College, n.d.)

8. Future Considerations

The final suggestion of the handbook contains important considerations to be made for implementing more formalized mentorship. As was stated in the opening chapters of this handbook, formalized faculty to student mentor programs in Canadian universities are rare (Hobson & Taylor, 2020). Beyond the individual, informal mentor relationships, significant change must occur on a system level for formalized mentorship to become a reality. The following considerations for system-level change are aimed at the key players who will make this change possible.

Considerations for Higher-Level Administrators

Change in organizations has been defined as a product of discourse and that discourse exists on a spectrum (Hotho, 2013). One end of the spectrum considers discourse a **shared sense-making** process where organizational members construct understandings of organizational activities together (Hotho, 2013). The other end of the spectrum portrays discourse as **contested terrain**, where members compete to construct discourse in a way that benefits their interests (Hotho, 2013). Universities as organizations find themselves on the spectrum, where discourses are balanced between shared and competitive constructions of meaning (Hotho, 2013).

The organizational members—educators, and lower-level administrators— who will be implementing the informed practices contained in this handbook, must be coordinated to engage in discourse and bring about the goal of

organizational change in mentorship practices. Bolman and Deal (2017) highlight specific structural forms that attempt to explain the coordination of members' individual efforts. The forms specify either a vertical or lateral coordination:

- **Vertical coordination** implies that directives are provided from higher-level management down towards lower-lever members through a "chain of command" (Bolman & Deal, 2017).
- **Lateral coordination** surpasses a chain of command by bringing members together through meetings, task forces, and networks. While lateral coordination is more effective, it is typically costlier (Bolman & Deal, 2017).

With two types of discourse and coordination in mind, high-level administrators should also consider the challenges most unique to the university when implementing change. For instance, universities are distinctive organizations with their own internal history of decision-making patterns and values, and no university will react to change in the same way (Eckel et al., 1999). Another complication arises because the diverse collection of departments, units, and offices within a university are **loosely coupled**—or rather, they typically act independently of each other instead of working together (Eckel et al., 1999). Eckel et al. (1999) propose a few suggestions for coordinating members and allowing discourse in distinctive and loosely coupled university organizations:

- Form work groups by bringing together people from different areas of the university to address specific issues (and ensuring racialized voices are present)

- Develop a common vocabulary of terms, information, and examples (such as the ones throughout the third chapter, <u>"Developing A Critical Lens"</u>)

- Ensure clear and consistent messaging from leaders

- Develop interest groups, forums, and lines of communication that cut across boundaries of the university by bringing together faculty from across disciplines (may include partnerships with established Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion offices)

- Require mandatory training of faculty and staff at every level to ensure knowledge of the relevant issues

There is the question of who should join and lead these work groups? Who is most qualified? In a similar fashion to the empowerment of Black and racialized students, Black and racialized educators should be empowered as well and present in equity and anti-racist decision-making. There are two indicators of structural inequality in Canadian universities that high-level administrators must pay attention to when selecting members of the organization:

- **The need for representation among educators** – Many universities lack educators that are racialized and/or women. This is in stark contrast to their student populations, which have substantial numbers of racialized and female students at the undergraduate level. According to Universities Canada (2018), 40% of Canadian university students are racialized, and 57% are women. When racialized educators are present, they are typically relegated to specialized fields, such as African Studies, Native Studies, or Asian Studies. Educators in other marginalized groups, such as

Indigenous or Persons with Disabilities, are even less common (Henry &

Tator, 1994)

- o Racialized and Indigenous women teaching in universities state

  that underrepresentation often interfered with anti-racist

  pedagogy. Underrepresentation was so widespread that

  specialized fields, for example, Native Studies were often

  spearheaded by majority white educators (Dua & Lawrence, 2000)

- o Many Canadian racialized educators have identified

  representation as a reason for the continued prevalence of

  Eurocentric course material and scarcity of anti-racist pedagogy

  (Henry & Tator, 2012)

- o Interviewees noted the necessity for diversity among administrator

  roles (Henry & Tator, 2012). Lack of administrative support was

  highlighted as a significant impediment to employing anti-racist

  pedagogy in classrooms (Dua & Lawrence, 2000)

- **Barriers to promotion and tenure** – When educators from marginalized

  groups become concentrated in specialized fields, their achievements

  are often overlooked. They may also be the only faculty to advocate for

  causes related to marginalization, and are left with less time to attend to

  students for that reason (Henry & Tator, 1994)

  - o Racialized educators report feeling disadvantaged because their

    work is generally not published in major journals and are further

    overlooked for promotions and tenure (Henry & Tator, 2012)

- o Many racialized educators experience burnout from taking part in high levels of service work related to equity and diversity. These additional hours, while rewarding and meaningful, are not as highly valued by the university as academic and research work (Mohamed & Beagan, 2019)

As a solution, high-level administrators may conduct a self-audit of their departments to ensure that diversity and representation are being maintained. Queen's University's Equity Services have developed an online Diversity and Equity Assessment and Planning (DEAP) tool for this exact use (DEAP Equity Services, n.d.).

Higher-level leadership is identified as a top factor affecting successful system level change (Hotho, 2013). Chun and Evans (2018) implicate leadership that acknowledges the full spectrum of intersectionality, such as race, ethnicity, gender, culture, and language, as most effective and culturally responsive. In recent years, high-level culturally responsive leadership has been relegated to the Chief Diversity Officer role, which still shows some indications of being a symbolic position without the authority or support to create effective change (Chun & Evans, 2018). It is clear that for this handbook to be disseminated widely, it will need the backing of higher-level leadership. Perhaps there is an opportunity to lead through some of the methods identified in this section—such as a strategically selected work group of educators across units, as well as those in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion adjacent roles—and coming together to consult on the implementation of this handbook.

Considerations for Educators and Administrators

Until the aforementioned strategies are implemented by higher-level administration, informal mentorship led by individual educators and administrators may be the most immediate method to apply the content of this handbook. Without institutions that are focused on significantly addressing systemic racism, educators and administrators embracing criticality and challenging dominant white narratives may encounter resistance. Opponents of anti-racist practice and mentoring may imply that the financial and staffing resources are not available for these interventions (Cropper, 2000). Milner (2008a) stipulates some helpful tenets for responding to such resistance:

- **Group convergence between social-justice-minded educators and administrators** — A united group of educators and administrators with the shared desire to challenge racism can present a stronger case for new equity informed practices than individual educators and administrators can. This group of educators and administrators does not have to agree on every issue, but they should share the same investment in social justice. Group convergence should be based on shared values first and course-of-action second.

- **Agreement that implementing equity informed practices are not for personal gain but for a collective benefit** — The actions you and like-minded educators and/or administrators would like to implement, such as mentorship, will require a unified vision. You may not be able to benefit personally from these actions, but a group of students, educators, or

administrators in the future will. The disruptions you make today could have the ripple effect of creating lasting, equitable change.

- **Long-term commitment to the fight against oppression** — Overcoming resistance to dialogical action and equity informed practices does not happen overnight. It is a journey with social change as its destination. There may be frustration, deterrence, or obstacles, but educators and administrators must remain committed. There are no set timelines to social change, and it is often non-linear.

In Closing

Entering the white space of Canadian universities is a decision that many Black and racialized students decide to take every day. Despite accounts of racist practices, hostile encounters, and often being unable to see themselves accurately represented in the university, Black students still find the strength to succeed time after time. Their strengths should be recognized and celebrated, rather than marginalized. However, the burden of changing the university and making it more equitable and inclusive should not rely on Black students alone. Educators and administrators in positions of power have a role to play as well. Becoming aware of what racism looks like and how the system can be racist is fundamental to supporting Black students and transforming the university into the equitable institution that it can and should be.

Mentorship—specifically mentee-focused mentorship—can lead to long-lasting bonds and allyship between faculty and Black students. But mentorship is only one possible strategy towards addressing systemic racism. As Cropper (2000) effectively summarizes:

> Mentoring must not be seen as the main or only approach to tackle issues of racism or other related issues which many non-traditional learners may experience. It needs to be seen as one strategy amongst many, but one that is based on supporting individuals which is carried out within a framework [that] acknowledges structural issues. (p. 605)

As Cropper (2000) states, acknowledging the issues that allow racism to occur must remain at the core of any strategy addressing racism. Educators and administrators should prioritize remaining critical of the institutions they are a part of both in and outside of their role as a mentor. Opposition to and challenging of the status quo are at the heart of anti-racist work.

It is not enough to be "not racist." A commitment to allyship and addressing systemic racism is more than a mask worn when it is most convenient. It is a mindset that must be consistently promoted, grown, and nurtured.

The following section is a list of resources that can be used by educators and administrators looking for further guidance and understanding of the topics covered in this handbook.

Resources are organized by the medium through which they can be accessed (e.g., articles, documentaries, and podcasts). Included with each resource is a brief description of the topic covered and its relevancy to this handbook.

Articles

Mirza, H., Gopal, P., & Rollock, N. (2019, October 24). 'Monolithically white places': Academics on racism in universities. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/oct/24/monolithically-white-places-academics-on-racism-in-universities

- Mirza et al. (2019) discuss the ways whiteness dominates their university institutions, following the release of an Equality and Human Rights Commission report alluding to systemic racism in universities

News, CBC. (2020, July 21). She was the only Black student in one of J. Philippe Ruston's classes. She never got an apology. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/london/black-student-never-got-apology-philippe-rushton-teachings-1.5657024

- A former Black Western University student provides her experience as a student in Phillippe Ruston's class

Shih, D. (2017, April 19). A theory to better understand diversity, and who really benefits. NPR. *https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2017/04/19/523563345/a-theory-to-better-understand-diversity-and-who-really-benefits*

- Shih (2017) outlines the merits of interest convergence and how schools and universities are sites where interest convergence has and continues to occur

Shih, D. (n.d.). Campus protests and whiteness as property. Arcade. **https://arcade.stanford.edu/blogs/campus-protests-and-whiteness-property**

- Shih (n.d.) uses the CRT tenet of whiteness as property to demonstrate how dominant white narratives influence university course material and the power educators have in constructing that material

Wingfield, A. H. (2015, September 13). If you don't see Race, how can you see racial inequality? *The Atlantic*. *https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/09/color-blindness-is-counterproductive/405037/*

- Wingfield (2015) critically responds to a writer who believes colour blindness has merit and that being too conscious of race is harmful

Books

Cole, D. (2020). The skin we're in: A year of black resistance and power. Doubleday Canada.

- Journalist and activist Desmond Cole (2020) illustrates the existence of systemic racism in Canada through various events in the year 2017. Cole's (2020) work demonstrates that there is still much to be done about racism in Canada

Kendi, I. X. (2019). How to be an antiracist. One World.

- Using a combination of his personal experiences and multidisciplinary knowledge, such as history, law, and science, Professor Ibram X. Kendi (2019) introduces anti-racism, systemic racism, and related concepts. Kendi (2019) also provides proposals for individual and systemic anti-racist action

Martis, E. (2020). They said this would be fun: Race, campus life, and growing up. McClelland & Stewart.

- Author Eternity Martis (2020) retells her experience growing up as a Black woman, and as a Black student attending a Canadian predominantly white university. Martis (2020) connects her experiences to the larger systemic issues Black and racialized students face in Canadian universities

Maynard, R. (2017). Policing black lives: State violence in Canada from slavery to the present. Fernwood Publishing.

- Using a critical race theory framework, Robyn Maynard (2017) traces and connects the current realities of systemic racism in Canada back to the beginnings of slavery four hundred years ago. Maynard (2017) discusses systemic racism's effects on Black education, unemployment, and incarceration, while also identifying Black resistance and strength

Oluo, I. (2018). So you want to talk about race. Seal Press.

- Ijeoma Oluo (2018) discusses systemic racism and topics such as intersectionality and microaggressions from an American perspective. Oluio (2018) attempts to provide advice to readers who may wonder how to discuss racism and related topics in a meaningful way

Pollock, M. (Ed.). (2008). Everyday antiracism: Getting real about race in school. The New Press.

- The author collects contributions from leading American educators on strategies for anti-racist teaching. While the strategies are focused on primary and secondary school education, it can easily be applied to university classrooms as well

Tatum, B. D. (2017). Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria? And other conversations about race. Basic Books.

- This revised version of Tatum's original text from 1997 dissects race and racism from an American perspective and updates those concepts for the present day. Tatum (2017) explores the history of racism and delves into the psychology around racism as well

Videos

Black Students' Caucus. (2021, February 6). The black student experience in Canada [Video]. Youtube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BGB0Clc1E3w&ab_channel=BlackStudents%27Caucus

- This documentary features interviews with Canadian Black students attending predominantly white universities and their experiences with anti-Black racism in and outside of the classroom.

Black, V. (2018, November). No one is talking to the mentees [Video]. TED.

https://www.ted.com/talks/victoria_black_no_one_is_talking_to_the_mentees/up-next

- In this TED talk, Victoria Black, Director of PACE Mentoring at Texas State University suggests that "mentorability" is a quality that can be fostered. Black (2018) provides considerations for mentors and mentees to make as they engage in mentor relationships

CBC Docs. (2017, November 3). The skin we're in: Pulling back the curtain on racism in Canada [Video]. Youtube.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=msoBTlv1VqM&ab_channel=CBCDocs

- This documentary follows journalist Desmond Cole as he engages with a diverse range of Black Canadians and their experiences in preparation for his book of the same name, The Skin We're In: A Year of Black Resistance and Power

Crenshaw, K. (2016, October). The urgency of intersectionality [Video]. TED.

https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality/up-next?language=en

- Kimberlé Crenshaw (2016) highlights the importance of intersectionality and the different ways race and gender interact, especially for Black women. Crenshaw (2016) maintains that intersectionality is essential to addressing issues of racism

Global News. (2020, June 12). Living in colour: The history of anti-Black racism in Canada [Video]. Youtube.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RoJPO1PsRnw&ab_channel=GlobalNews

- This short video examines Canada's history of anti-Black racism from 1969 to the present

TVO. (2020, July 7). Eternity Martis: Being black in a white place – The agenda with Steve Paikin [Video]. TVO. https://www.tvo.org/video/eternity-martis-being-black-in-a-white-place

- Journalist and author Eternity Maris discusses her book, *They Said This Would Be Fun: Race, Campus Life, and Growing Up*, and provides further insight into her experience as a Black woman attending a Canadian predominantly white university

Williams, S. (2021, May 3). Minority stress theory [Video]. Youtube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0mf1rTN28j4&ab_channel=SaraWilliams

- In relation to minority status stress, this video explores Meyer's (2003) Minority Stress Theory. The video demonstrates connections between minority status stress and negative health outcomes for minorities

Podcasts

Knight, A. W. & Penddah, Z. (Hosts). (2021, May 21). Ivelaw Griffith (No. 5) [Audio podcast episode]. In BlackTalk. University of Alberta. https://soundcloud.com/user-468210839/blacktalk-podcast-episode-05-dr-ivelaw-griffith

- This episode of the BlackTalk podcast features Dr. Ivelaw Griffith, former president of Fort Valley University, a historically Black university in the United States. Dr. Griffith discusses his personal journey and thoughts on systemic racism and what changes should be made to systems such as education to improve outcomes for Black students, such as changes to Eurocentric course material

Mills, K. I. (Host). (2020, July). The invisibility of white privilege with Brian Lowery, PhD (No. 110) [Audio podcast episode]. In Speaking of Psychology. American Psychological Association. https://www.apa.org/research/action/speaking-of-psychology/white-privilege

- American professor Brian Lowery discusses white privilege and the invisibility of whiteness

Taylor, C. S. & Rose, R. (Hosts). (2020, February 18). The legacy of anti-black racism in education (No. 2) [Audio podcast episode]. In Centennial College Podcast. Centennial College. https://soundcloud.com/user-411541364/decodingcblack-episode-2

- Dr. Christopher Stuart Taylor and Letecia Rose examine anti-Black racism as it exists in the Canadian education system from primary school to university

Guides and Websites

Columbia Center for Teaching and Learning. (n.d.). Anti-racist pedagogy in action: First steps. https://ctl.columbia.edu/resources-and-technology/resources/anti-racist-pedagogy/

- This collection of anti-racism resources from Columbia University's Centre for Teaching and Learning is meant to help educators interrogate their own assumptions about racism and address racism in and outside of the classroom

Portland Community College. (n.d.). *Critical race theory (CRT) decision making toolkit*. https://www.pcc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/159/documents/take-5-toolkit.pdf

- A toolkit meant to assist educators and administrators in making decisions with Critical Race Theory tenets in mind

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