

INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY AND PROMOTION OF RACE AND CULTURE



About ISPRC

The Institute for the Study and Promotion of Race and Culture (ISPRC) was founded in 2000 at Boston College (BC), under the direction of Dr. Janet E. Helms, to promote the assets and address the societal conflicts associated with race or culture in theory and research, mental health practice, education, business, and society at-large. The Institute

offers pragmatic information about teaching, conducting research, and applying interventions intended to promote the benefits of racial and ethnic cultural diversity and resolve related social problems. The Institute is unique in its emphasis on addressing psychological issues related to race and ethnic culture from an interdisciplinary perspective.

In this Issue:

- About ISPRC
- Diversity Challenge
- A Message from the Director
- Burke School Initiative
- Consultation Programs and Community Collaboration
- ISPRC Staff Update
- News from Affiliates and Associates
- Current Projects: Research Initiatives
- ISPRC Staff Publications and Presentations

13th Annual Diversity Challenge: Intersections of Race and Culture and Health and Mental Health

On October 18-19, 2013, ISPRC hosted its thirteenth annual Diversity Challenge. The Challenge is a two-day interactive conference that brings together scholars, educators, mental health practitioners, and other parties interested in promoting social justice across racial and cultural groups. The theme of Diversity Challenge 2013 was “Intersections of Race and Culture and Health and Mental Health.”



Over 110 presentations focused on the Challenge theme and more than 300 people participated in the sessions, which included workshops, individual presentations, posters, symposia, structured discussions and panels. Invited speakers included Esteban Cardemil, L. Kevin Chapman, DJ Ida, Marcia Liu, Alex Pieterse, Melba Vasquez, Mary Walsh, and Nadia Ward.

The conference concluded with a catered reception and entertainment including a dance performance by F.I.S.T.S. (Females Incorporating Sisterhood Through Step) and P.A.T.U. (Presenting Africa to You), and a traditional Chinese fan dance performed by Qingyi Yu. This year’s conference, Diversity Challenge 2014, “Racial and Ethnic Discrimination across the Lifespan,” will take place at Boston College on October 24-25, 2014.





THE INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY AND PROMOTION OF RACE AND CULTURE

A Message from the Director



In this newsletter for the 2013/2014 year, the staff of the Institute for the Study and Promotion of Race and Culture (ISPRC) offers an overview of our new and ongoing activities in the domains of theory, research, practice, and community activism with a racial and ethnic cultural focus. As usual, the annual Diversity Challenge in October was the highlight of the ISPRC year and, if you missed it, perhaps our synopsis of events and festivities throughout the newsletter will encourage you to join us in October of 2014.

Our high school counseling advocacy program, offered in collaboration with the Jeremiah Burke School, is now in its fourth year and continues to be a major focus of the ISPRC community activism this year, which we describe in this issue. ISPRC extended our community activism to the Boston College campus where the office of AHANA Services collaborated with ISPRC to pilot a racial identity retreat called RIDE, as a safe place for undergraduates to discuss and encourage others to discuss difficult racial issues in the BC environment.

Many of the ISPRC team are moving on to new professional roles next year, and we congratulate and bid farewell to them in this issue. Also, former team member share their accomplishments since leaving ISPRC.

~Janet E. Helms, Ph.D.

Scenes from Diversity Challenge 2013



Burke School Initiative — Year Four

Burke School Advocacy Program

Over the last four years, the ISPRC has provided advocacy services to the students at Jeremiah Burke High School, a racial, ethnic, and social class diverse high school in Dorchester, MA. The goal of the advocacy program is to provide voice for the students and their needs while connecting them with appropriate resources. Mental Health Counseling graduate students from Boston College volunteer to participate in a Social Justice Lab section during their class on Principles and Techniques in Counseling Skills. Throughout the year, the graduate students worked as advocates for one to two students at Jeremiah Burke High School. Advocates assess emotional and social barriers to school engagement while collaborating with students, teachers, and parents to develop goals and problem-solving strategies. The advocacy program provides the graduate students with feedback on interviewing, rapport building, and the provision of culturally competent support. Assessments inform individualized interventions for addressing barriers to student engagement and success. Interventions are aimed at improving students' grades, increasing self-esteem and motivation, and navigating the college application process. Advocates help students identify issues that may inhibit academic success and help them gain access to health and mental health treatment, extracurricular and tutoring services. Finally, advocates are encouraged to build awareness of the effects of context on their student's development, co-navigate the school system with students, and identify opportunities to change systems to optimally support their students.



An Advocate's Experiences By: Janae Sernoffsky



Deciding to become involved with a social justice lab has been one of the best ways for me to become truly engaged in my program of study at the Mental Health Counseling master's program. Working as an advocate at Jeremiah E. Burke High School has given me the opportunity to apply the counseling and advocacy skills I have learned in the program to real life cases. Volunteering at the Burke has allowed me to strengthen qualities needed for case-level advocacy, such as persistence and flexibility. My time as an advocate has also provided me with space to explore my identity, power, and privilege, which became critical as I developed relationships with students facing oppression and institutional barriers. My self-exploration coupled with my experiences at the Burke has helped me understand the importance of multicultural competence development. My experiences at the Burke have greatly impacted me as an advocate and future mental health professional. The variability between our visits to the Burke motivates us to provide consistency and support to our students. Our main goal is to help our students become visible and heard by listening to and assessing their needs, and then connecting them with supporting resources. The relationship building process has allowed us to understand the ways in which our students' social and emotional needs are intertwined with their academic functioning. Understanding the intersection of the systems that affect our students has been difficult but critical in our work. Finding the balance between listening to our students and working with the teachers and policies is another way advocates demonstrate flexibility and perspective taking. Our time at the Burke has given us a taste of the daily life of the students, teachers, and supporters. Though each of our students has unique and sometimes severe troubles, their resiliency and motivation have inspired us. For instance, many students have begun to show self-advocacy skills by obtaining make-up work from their teachers, finding summer opportunities, or signing-up for after school support. As advocates we have had the privilege of helping our students develop the self-advocacy skills that enable them to feel empowered to advocate for themselves after our year as advocates has ended.

Training Social Justice Advocates in Counseling Skills

As members of the Social Justice lab, Mental Health Counseling students are trained to develop both advocacy and counseling skills. In addition to their advocacy bi-weekly supervision and trainings, the students attend a weekly lab to practice counseling skills and process material related to becoming a counselor. The lab provides a unique opportunity to build awareness about social justice issues while learning counseling skills within a small group setting. The primary goals of trainings are to help students develop culturally informed counseling knowledge and skills, and to help them understand how such skills differ and overlap with advocacy.



Consultation Programs and Community Collaboration

Bold, Educated and Empowered Sisters: A Support Group for Women of Color at Salem State University

At her current practicum site at Salem State University Counseling and Health Services, Dericka Canada collaborated with the Center for Diversity and Cultural Enrichment to develop an ongoing support group for women of Color on campus called BEES, Bold, Educated and Empowered Sisters. BEES was organized for women on campus seeking a community to discuss social and personal issues while providing a network centered on connecting women of Color. This group addresses the experience of women of Color in exploring self, navigating educational environments and being empowered to engender change in one's community. Topics discussed in this group are based on the needs of the participants and have included exploring cultural respect among and between women of Color, relationships, body image and the experience of colorism, as well as feminism and womanism.

Intersections of Racial Identity and College Student Development: A Training at Salem State University

Dericka Canada facilitated a training on racial identity and college student development for counseling staff in Health and Counseling services at Salem State University. The training provided an overview of Helms's People of Color and White Racial Identity Models. In addition, staff members were introduced to the interconnections of these racial identity models with other college student development paradigms. Recent and relevant local college student led movements, such as the "I, Too, Am Harvard" campaign were highlighted to engage staff in a discussion about the experiences of invisibility and sense of belonging among students of Color in college as well as the relevance of racial identity and dialogues about race on campuses among all students. The training concluded with providing campus system level strategies and frameworks for clinical interventions in addressing race-related challenges students may face and for supporting racial identity development.

Prejudice is a burden that confuses the past, threatens the future and renders the present inaccessible..

- Maya Angelou

Microaggressions Project

Kimberly Ashby is an editor for the Microaggressions Project, a blog that seeks to provide a visual representation of the people's everyday experiences of "microaggressions." This project is about showing how microaggressions create and enforce uncomfortable, violent, and unsafe realities in people's workplaces, homes, schools, and public transportation/space environments. The Microaggressions Project has been featured in *Bitch Magazine*, *Racialicious*, and *Ms. Magazine*. Kimberly and several other editors frequently facilitate workshops on microaggressions and have recently done so at the 2012 New York City Asian American Student Conference at NYU, the 2013 East Coast Asian American Student Union Conference at Columbia University, and the 2013 Students Working For Asian and Asian American Growth Conference at Cornell University. The blog can be found at www.microaggressions.com.

Community Outreach

Shatina Williams participated in a panel, "The Nuts and Bolts of Graduate School", hosted by the Learning to Learn program at Boston College. The Learning to Learn program works with underrepresented, first generation, low-income students and students with disabilities with the goal of providing these students with the skills and resources to reach their educational potential. The panel focused on graduate students' educational journeys and goals. Learning to Learn students had the opportunity to ask a panel of four graduate students about their experiences, mistakes, and decision-making processes.

Continued Connections: Outreach for "Students of African Descent" at Wellesley College

Dericka Canada reconnected with her previous practicum site at Stone Counseling Center at Wellesley College and collaborated with a post-doctoral fellow in conducting a workshop on emotional, social, and cultural wellness for students of African descent on campus. This discussion-based workshop explored the unique experiences of students of African descent at Wellesley as well as navigating multiple cultural identities at a predominantly White institution. The goal of this workshop was to provide a space for dialogue about the experience of cultural differences among students of African descent at Wellesley College and to provide students with relevant information and resources for addressing these experiences.

Community Collaboration (cont.)

The Journey of the RIDE: A Racial Identity Development Experience (RIDE) for Undergraduate Students at Boston College

Attending college is often considered to be a consciousness raising experience, providing students with opportunities to learn about themselves and others through exposure to diverse perspectives and experiences. These opportunities include involving students' engagement in difficult dialogues with their peers regarding issues about race, racial identity, discrimination, and stereotypes. Structured racial intergroup dialogues in higher education can provide students with confidence and skills to personally consider and confront their own experience with race and racism and encourage collaboration that can promote social change on campus.

Dericka Canada, Talya Gunasekara and Eva Wilson collaborated with the Office of AHANA and Office of Student Formation at Boston College to create and pilot a racial identity retreat (RIDE) that would support this dialogue for students at Boston College. The mission of the Racial Identity Development Experience (RIDE) was to create a safe space for undergraduate students to gather, reflect and engage in honest, rich conversations about race and racial identity. About 50 undergraduate students from diverse backgrounds were recruited to participate in this overnight two-day weekend retreat. The RIDE was facilitated by staff from the Office of AHANA and ISPRC along with master's students in BC's mental health program. The RIDE aimed to increase students' ability to critically reflect on their own identities and social experiences, as well as develop an action plan to further racial identity development and campus engagement in dialogues about race and racial identity in the future. The Office of AHANA and ISPRC are currently organizing a post-retreat focus group to connect both RIDE pilot cohorts, engage in a dialogue concerning how the retreat was influential to students and to follow up with student plans for broader campus engagement.

No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.

- Nelson Mandela

ISPRC Staff Update

Moving On...

Talya Gunasekara has successfully completed her master's program and will be moving to New Jersey. She is hoping to do some overseas volunteer work before settling down into a new job.

Philip McHarris has decided to pursue graduate studies at Yale University in the combined Ph.D program in Sociology and African American Studies.

Shatina Williams will be beginning her Predoctoral Internship in Psychology at American University's Counseling Center in Washington, DC. She will be providing mental health counseling, consultation, and outreach services to individual students and the American University community.

Eva Wilson will be returning to Boston College to enter the doctoral program in Counseling Psychology.

Awards

Kim Ashby was selected as a finalist for the Ford Foundation Award.

Philip McHarris was inducted into the Order of the Cross and Crown at Boston College and was chosen to be one of the Marshals in the honor society.

News from Our Affiliates/Associates

Carlton Green has accepted a position as Staff Counselor at the University of Maryland Counseling Center.

Ethan Mereish, a recent Ph.D. and former ISPRC team member accepted a Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Center for Alcohol and Addiction Studies at Brown University.

Anmol Satiani is Assistant Director for Clinical Training at DePaul University Counseling Services where she supervises an Advanced Therapy program for practicum students who are completing doctoral degrees in the Chicago area.

Christina Solomon teaches psychology classes at Washtenaw Community College in Michigan. Christina also has a position at Hegira Programs Inc. as a home-based therapist for children and adolescents. She is looking forward to pursuing a joint MPH/PhD program in the future.

Current Projects: Research Initiatives

The Experience of Colorism among Black Women

People of Color, stigmatized by physical markers of group membership, are challenged to maintain healthy self-concepts in a society that historically has labeled them as deviant from the ideal, primarily based on presumed skin color. Skin color appears to play a significant, but unacknowledged role in the lives of Black women. Yet, this topic remains an understudied issue with little empirical support for how these complex constructs can be measured. Many researchers point to the difficulty of examining these constructs due to the multi-dimensionality of skin color and many relevant psycho-social factors, such as racial identity and gender socialization. Such empirical imprecision underscores the need for additional exploratory research to focus attention on more deeply understanding the nuances of skin color attitudes among Black women in order to promote appropriate interventions that foster resilience. Therefore, this pilot study seeks to understand this concept in depth by providing a qualitative account of these experiences through focus groups with students who identify as Black women at Boston College.

Racial Identity Attitudes as Predictors of Black Women's Body Image and Health Orientation

Researchers have been interested in understanding how women think about their bodies for quite some time. However, these researchers often have not included messages regarding race as it pertains to Black women's perceptions of their bodies and health. When examining the relationship between race and body image and health, researchers cannot capture the complexity of this experience quantitatively due to the limited statistical approaches available. Using data collected from non-immigrant Black women, this study uses canonical correlation analyses to investigate racial identity, body image perceptions, and health and fitness attitudes and practices in order to discover what role Black women's racial identity development plays in their perception of body satisfaction, physical health, and decisions to engage in fitness activities, or the lack of which may contribute to health disparities.

Womanist Identity Attitudes, Acculturation Status, and Gender Role Identity: An Examination of Chinese Female Students in the United States

As the first generation who were born after China introduced its "one-child policy", Chinese female international students in the United States belong to a special population who are under pressures of their parents' expectations to succeed which conflicts with traditional Chinese stereotypes of women as dependent and home orientated as well as western stereotypes on Asian women. The current study is to explore how Chinese female students define their gender roles and the gender role conflicts while living in the United States. Specifically, the current study examines the the relationship between Chinese female students' womanist identity attitudes, acculturation and their gender role identity discrepancy. This study will be the first to investigate the effect of internal psychological developmental transitions of Chinese female international students' cultural adaptations.

Seeking Self: Intersecting Influences on Multiracial Identity

In counseling psychology, and in psychology more broadly, multiracial individuals are understudied. The most commonly researched, as well as the most numerous within society, are individuals of Black-White or Asian-White ancestry. Nevertheless, these groups are rarely studied together or comparatively. Thus, this study aimed to better understand multiracial identity development and to address limitations in the literature by utilizing in-depth, semi-structured interviews of Black-White and Asian-White women from around the United States. This approach allowed participants to discuss the ways in which factors present in the literature affected their racial identity development and allowed for comparisons between groups. This study was the second phase of a larger study examining multiracial identity development in a diverse sample. Follow-up interviews of 10 Black-White and Asian-White female participants ranging from 22 to 35 years of age were conducted using a semi-structured interview format. Interviews were transcribed and have been coded using directed content analysis. Additional analyses are currently underway. The study will be presented at the Critical Mixed Race Studies Conference at DePaul University in November 2014.

Standing still is never an option so long as inequities remain embedded in the very fabric of the culture.

- Tim Wise

Current Projects: Research Initiatives

Examining Self-Reported Influences on Multiracial Identity Development Through the Lens of an Ecological Model

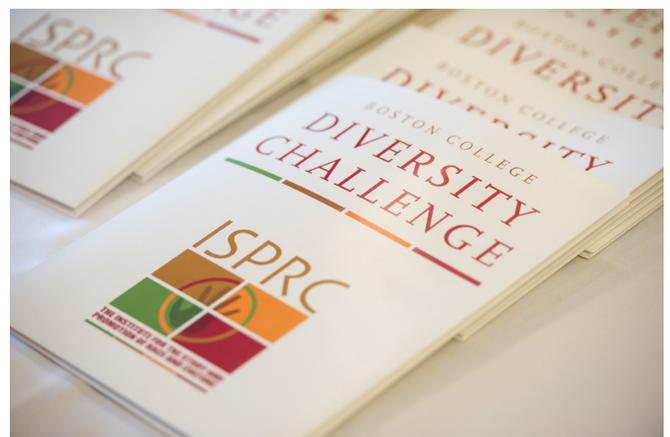
Despite its rapid growth, there is limited research on multiracial individuals in the United States. In particular, the current research tends to be focused on racially and demographically homogenous samples and is rarely guided by extant theories. For this research project, participants of various multiracial backgrounds were recruited online and from colleges across the United States to complete an online, 26-item survey comprised of multiple choice and short-answer questions. The purpose of this study was to address some of the limitations in the current literature by recruiting a demographically and racially diverse sample and using a current theory of multiracial identity as a guide. Root's (1999) Ecological Framework for Understanding Multiracial Identity Development, which considers the dynamic interaction between personal and contextual variables in identity development, was used as a framework for this study. Results identified seven important, interacting, factors in participants' racial identity development, including: family, phenotype, cultural exposure/knowledge, environment, external factors, desire to include all aspects of identity, and education about racial theory. These results provided support for the current literature, while identifying some additional relevant factors. Additionally, responses underscore the complexity of multiracial identity development and suggest ways to intervene to support individuals of multiracial heritage.

Discussions on Race Assessment

In partnership with the Office of AHANA Student Programs (OASP), Kimberly Ashby and Dana Collins are conducting an assessment of Discussions On Race (DOR), a peer facilitation group at Boston College for upper classmen, focused on conversations about race and racism. The assessment seeks to measure the degree to which DOR meets its objectives, including, 1. Increase participants' comfort talking about race, 2. Strengthen participants' understanding of institutional racism, and 3. Create group cohesion among participants. Results from this assessment may help OASP better understand how well DOR is meeting its objectives and it may point towards ways to improve DOR's efficacy. This research may contribute to building a more critically conscious campus community and a campus environment that supports and encourages dialogue about race, power, and privilege.

Facilitating Opportunities for Growth in Social Advocacy Training: Exploration of Racial Identity Dynamics

A review of the literature indicates that there is a dearth of research on advocacy training in counseling psychology, particularly with regard to race and multiculturalism. Advocacy in the context of counseling psychology refers to actions that are taken by a counseling professional to facilitate the removal of external barriers to clients' well-being. Given the interplay between systemic barriers and race, it is crucial that counseling trainees are educated about issues of race and racial identity development. Not only are social justice advocacy skills taught in very a small proportion of multicultural courses in counseling psychology, but it is yet unclear if and how issues of race are discussed in these trainings, and what resultant difficulties may arise. Literature on pedagogy of race and multiculturalism indicates that educators and other specialists are often met with various types of resistance from their students (e.g., disengagement, racial harassment). Given the salience of race in advocacy work, it is important to better understand difficulties that may arise in advocacy and counselor training as well as ways to overcome them. To address this gap in the literature, the current study seeks to examine the role of race in counselor training by conducting interviews with counseling psychology doctoral students who have trained master's students in counseling skills. Findings from this project will be presented at the 2014 APA Convention in Washington, D.C.





2013-2014 ISPRC Staff

Director

Janet E. Helms, Ph.D.

Talya Gunasekara

Aleesha Harris

Administrative Associates

Kathleen Flaherty

Susan Ginivisian

Hannah Hernandez

Philip McHarris

Stephanie Paulk

Maggi Price

Research Assistants

Kimberly Ashby

Dericka Canada

Dana Collins

Natasha Torkelson

Shatina Williams

Eva Wilson

Qingyi Yu



ISPRC Staff Publications and Presentations

- Helms, J. E., (in press).** A review of the White racial identity theory; The sociopolitical implications of studying white racial identity in psychology. In S. Cooper and K. Ratele (Eds.) *Psychology Serving Humanity: Proceedings of the 30th International Congress of Psychology, Volume II: Western Psychology* (pp.12-27). East Sussex BN3 2FA: Taylor & Francis.
- Helms, J. E., & Mereish, E. H. (2013).** How racial-group comparisons create misinformation in depression research: Using racial identity theory to conceptualize health disparities. In L. Gomez & N. Lopez (Eds.) *Mapping "Race": Critical Approaches to Health Disparities Research* (pp.146-162). New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.
- Price, M.,** Chin, M., Higa-McMillan, C., Kim, S., & Frueh, B. C. (2013). Prevalence and internalizing problems of ethnoracially diverse victims of traditional and cyber bullying. *School Mental Health, 5*, 183-191.
- Price, M.,** Higa-McMillan, C., Ebesutani, C. Okamura, K., Nakamura, B., Chorpita, B. F., & Weisz, J. (2013). Symptom differentiation of anxiety and depression across youth development and clinic-referred/non-referred samples: An examination of competing factor structures of the Child Behavior checklist DSM-Oriented Scales. *Development and Psychopathology, 25*, 1005-1015.
- Price, M.,** Higa-McMillan, C., Kim, S., & Frueh, B. C. (2013). Trauma experience in children and adolescents: An assessment of the effects of trauma type and role of interpersonal proximity. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders, 27*, 652-660.

* * * * *

- Helms, J.E.** (June, 2013) Diversity Mentoring Workshop, Brown University Alpert Medical School, Providence, RI.
- Helms, J.E.** (July, 2013) Commencement Keynote Address: "Race Matters in a Post Racial Society," Chicago School of Professional Psychology, Chicago, IL.
- Ashby, K. A. & Bhattacharyya, S.** (2014, March). *Student voices on community advocacy training in counseling.* Workshop presented at the Counseling Psychology Conference, Atlanta, GA.
- Ashby, K. A. & Bhattacharyya, S.** (2014, March). *Counseling out of the box: Engaging college communities in social justice.* Workshop presented at the Counseling Psychology Conference, Atlanta, GA.
- Ashby, K. A. & Bhattacharyya, S.** (2014, February). *Responding to social injustice in an Islamophobic climate: A contextual intervention using allyship and intergroup dialogue.* Paper presented at the Winter Roundtable Conference, Columbia University, Teachers College New York, NY.