Advising Black Males in 2020 and Beyond

Overview

In the September 2020 edition of Academic Advising Today, six Black male NACADA leaders began the dialogue “for improving and strengthening the Black male student academic advising experience.” Having “experienced microaggressions, subtle and overt racism, and prejudgment” in their own personal and professional lives, they consider how academic advisors and advising administrators “can work together to improve the overall experience for Black male students.”

In this webinar, sponsored by NACADA’s Inclusion and Engagement Committee and moderated by committee Chair Locksley Knibbs, these scholars come to the virtual environment to take the conversation to a broader and deeper level. They will discuss the variation and complexity of Black male identity and address some of the challenges faced by Black males in higher education settings (such as microaggressions, racial battle fatigue, John Henryism, and imposter syndrome). They will consider what advising professionals can do to facilitate the development of Black male resilience, including cultivating self-efficacy, identifying coping mechanisms, and nurturing hope. In this solution-focused presentation, they will share how these narratives can increase retention and graduation for Black male students.

Pre-Webinar Activity Suggestion

Additional Information

Why this conversation is needed

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**Figure 23.2.** Graduation rate within 6 years (150 percent of normal time) for degree completion from first institution attended for first-time, full-time bachelor's degree-seeking students at 4-year postsecondary institutions, by race/ethnicity and sex: Cohort entry year 2010

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**Figure 23.1.** Graduation rates from first institution attended for first-time, full-time bachelor’s degree-seeking students at 4-year postsecondary institutions, by race/ethnicity and time to completion: Cohort entry year 2010
Cross' 5-Stage Model of Racial Identity Development (1971, 1991)

1. Pre-encounter
   - Absorbed beliefs/values of White culture ("White is right.")
2. Encounter
   - Critical incidents==> impact on racism on self==>forced focus on membership of racially target group
3. Immersion/Emersion
   - Desire to embrace Blackness/Avoidance of Whiteness
   - Explores Black history/culture with peer support
4. Internalization
   - Pro-Black attitude
   - Less Defensive
   - Establishes meaningful relationships with Whites
5. Internalization-Commitment
   - Sustained advocacy/commitment for Black concerns

References and Recommended Resources


Culturally Responsive Academic Advisement
[https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/bitstream/handle/1774.2/58660/BOWES-DISSERTATION-2017.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/bitstream/handle/1774.2/58660/BOWES-DISSERTATION-2017.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

Eberhardt, J.L. (2020). *Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think, and Do*. Available at Amazon.com

Advising Black Males

Implicit Bias - [https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html](https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html)

Kendi, Ibram X., (2019). *How to Be an Antiracist*. Available at Amazon.com


RAVEN framework:

Wood, J. Luke & Harris, Frank, Ill. (2020, May 5). How to respond to microaggressions when they occur. *Diverse.* [https://diverseeducation.com/article/176397/?fbclid=IwAR3UvnPRmLacwDYPocmaunzPXRPlQ-JlxA03dnDyt_fRdUHSkUKPkmA81zA](https://diverseeducation.com/article/176397/?fbclid=IwAR3UvnPRmLacwDYPocmaunzPXRPlQ-JlxA03dnDyt_fRdUHSkUKPkmA81zA)


**Recommended documentaries and movies**

When They See Us – Available at [https://www.netflix.com/title/80200549](https://www.netflix.com/title/80200549)

The Great Debaters – Available at [https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0427309/](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0427309/)

Selma – Available at [http://www.selmamovie.com/](http://www.selmamovie.com/)


John Lewis: Good Trouble – Available at [https://www.johnlewisgoodtrouble.com/](https://www.johnlewisgoodtrouble.com/)
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The Reason for the Discussion

Black Male Identity Perception vs Reality

A Story from the Field

What Does Black Male Racial Identity Formation Look Like on a Predominantly White Campus?

Complexity of Black Male Identity Formation

• Cross’ 5-Stage Model of Racial Identity Development (Cross, 1971, 1991)
- Pre-encounter
- Encounter
- Immersion/Emersion
- Internalization
- Internalization-Commitment

ACTIVE FORM: Anti-Black...Pro-White. Students’ race is no longer “seen.” It’s invisible to them. Students may have emotional issues like poor self-esteem and anxiety.
PASSIVE FORM: Thirst for acceptance from White counterparts.
What Does Black Male Identity Formation Look Like on a Predominantly White Campus?

Student realizes now that they are a misfit for both the minority and majority group. They experience life changing event that shatters their view on life and rocks how they look at their identity.

Anti-Racist Education Classroom Discussion

Student sees their old outlook as irrelevant. They experience mixed feelings because their identity is lost

Confusion
Anxiety
Depression
Anger

Internalization
IMMERSION: The time has come to embrace and adopt a sense of Black pride. This may include rejecting anything that is not related to their race. They may feel guilty for their position of oppression or the total opposite and feel pride.

EMERSION: There is no longer the need to impress others (Whites). Embracing Black culture allows for kinship, education, and interaction with like-minded people.

Anti-Racist Classroom Discussion

What Does Black Male Identity Formation Look Like on a Predominantly White Campus?

Intersections of Black Male Identity
My Story

• Gender
• Ethnicity
• Social Class
• Sexual Orientation
• Religion (Dis)beliefs
• Languages
• Political Allegiances
• (Dis)abilities
• Other Historically Contextualized Markers

Advise the Student -Not the Race

• Implicit Bias - "Are you sure you will do well in that course?"
• Microaggression - "Hey, you would know where to get some Jordans."

Narrative Advising: Reflections and Conversations
Question...

How are you seen by your students?

How do you see yourself?

Underutilized Skill: Self-Awareness

Definition: Conscious knowledge of one's own character, feelings, motives, and desires.

Application: Understand who you are and what you have to offer.

Story: "I Am Because You Were"

• The "I Am Because You Were" statement directly affirms that your identity today can be connected to a person who was there for you in the past.
• Tells a story about someone who has made a difference or a positive impact on your life.
• Use your statement as a tribute to a person who had a role in you becoming who you are today.

Activity: I am because you were

1. Think of someone who made a difference in or a positive impact on your life.
2. Then, complete the following sentence:
   I am _______________ Because you were _______________
3. Write down the name of that person and how they made a difference.

Student Examples

• I am able to serve others because you were always caring about other people. (Teacher)
• I am successful in life because you were always sacrificing for me. (Mom)
• I am dedicated because you were there to push me to do and be better. (Teacher)
• I am successful because you were always pushing me to be my greatest. (Aunt)
• I am thankful because you were the greatest gift I could ask for. (Daughter)
• I am open-minded because you were intrigued by diversity. (Teacher)
• I am inspiring girls to love their bodies because you were the one to inspire me to love my body first. (Therapist)
• I am passionate about working with kids because you were there for me when I was young. (Stepdad)
• I am successful because you believed in me when I didn't believe in myself. (Teacher)
• I am becoming more confident in myself because you were there to tell me I am enough. (Best Friend)

Bill’s Examples

I am A BETTER MAN AND A BETTER PERSON because you were THE TWO GREATEST GIFTS THAT GOD HAS GIVEN ME. (My daughters Bethany and Amanda)

I am EMPOWERING PEOPLE TO CREATE PURPOSEFUL LIVES because you were WILLING TO SHOW UP FOR ME AT MY DARKEST MOMENT. (My mentor and friend Skip Downing)
Activity: I am because you were

1. Think of someone who made a difference in and/or a positive impact on your life.
2. Now, complete the following sentence:
   I am _______________
   Because you were _______________
3. Write down the name of that person and how they made a difference.
4. Feel free to send me your statement at whjohnso@uncg.edu.

Challenge

• Who do YOU need to be – or what do YOU need to do – to have an "I Am Because You Were" statement written about you?

   • Don’t know? Start Here: “Be who you needed when you were younger.”
   • As you listen to the fabulous speakers in this session, I challenge you to think of ONE THING you can do to make a difference your students’ lives, especially your Black male students.

“There are only two things in this world that we have 100 percent control over, 100 percent of the time - our effort and our attitude. You can’t control what other people say or do, but you do control how you respond and react.”

Alan Stein Jr

Types of Microaggressions

• Microinsult – e.g. Telling an Asian American that they “speak good English” as a compliment

• Microinvalidation – e.g. When a white person tells a person of color that racism does not exist

• Microassault – e.g. Referring to someone as “colored” or “Oriental”

• Microexclusion – e.g. Excluding from conversations creating a sense of not belonging

(Sue, D. W. et al. 2007)
Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF)

Physical and psychological stress that comes from being immersed in chronically racist environments (Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007)

Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF)

John Henryism

Strong behavioral predisposition to cope actively with psychosocial and environmental stressors (Angner & Allison, 2011)

Imposter Syndrome

Refers to an individual who doubts their own skills, abilities, successes, and overall capabilities in their life (Parkman, 2016)

Responding to Microaggressions

• Redirect the interaction
• Ask probing questions
• Values clarification
• Emphasize your own thoughts and feelings
• Next steps

(Wood & Harris, 2020)

Self-Efficacy

Person’s belief that they can be successful when carrying out a particular task

Cambridge Dictionary

Helping them believe they can achieve!
Believe They Can Achieve!

In Your Conversations...(RAISE)
• Reflect on others body language
• Ask about observations of other people and groups
• Inquire about positive/negative feedback from others related to task performance
• Speak about successful experiences
• Engage in probing questions

Self-Advocacy

The action of representing oneself of one’s views or interests

Helping Them Find Their Voice

Positive Relationship Building!

Relationships Building Tips
• 1st Impressions Matter!
• Be Sincere, Build Rapport
• Trust is Important
• Use Active Listening Techniques
• Be Sympathetic and Use Patience
• Follow Through & Follow Up!

Finding & Using their Voice!!

Advisors Should Help Black Males...
• Research How To Find Information & Resources
• Seek Additional Individuals/Mentors For Guidance and Advice
• Determine When and How to Ask for Help
• Develop Self-Determination

Factors of Black Male Resilience

Resilience is often defined as the ability to bounce back or recover from difficulties. However, educational resilience is the ability of [students] to succeed academically despite risk factors that make it difficult to achieve success.

Factors of Black Males Resilience

Advisor-centered Factors

- Advisor Competency
- Advisor Commitment
- Advisor Caring & Compassion

1. Advise to build Resilience

Demonstrate interest in the student.

Seize the opportunity to teach when the moment presents itself.
1. Charge the student to evaluate difficult issues with available resources.

2. Work through Privilege to build Resilience
   - Acknowledge privilege by accepting any invitation to consider concepts foreign to your own situational awareness.
   - Aim to expand situational awareness by asking thoughtful questions for clarity.

3. Brookfield's Self-Directed Learning
   - Definition: learning in which decisions around what to learn, how to learn it, and how to decide if one has learned something well enough (p. 90).

4. Respond through transformational learning
   - “Discourse is not a war or a debate; it is a conscientious effort to find agreement.”
     - (Mezirow, 1998)
   - Advocate within inner circles
   - Eliminate implicit bias

5. Minimize Implicit Bias
   - Do not mistake confidence, resilience, and anger for arrogance and insecurity.
Factors of Black Males Resilience

Svinicki (2003) describes this process as chaining.

In contrast, EQUITY redirects resources to the pathways with greatest need to fix barriers and intentionally provide support.

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