

## **KSOM Anti-Racism Task Force: Wellness Working Group Report**

*Mission: To dismantle racial inequality and foster racial justice in KSOM administration, student affairs, curriculum and medical education, wellness, and the community we serve.*

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### Committee Charges

- A. Continue to advocate for trauma-informed and culturally aware mental health and wellness resources for students, especially Black students, as they cope with the stress of current events surrounding police brutality.
- B. Add a component to the Student Wellness Survey that evaluates student experiences with racism and report aggregate results.

### Guidelines & Recommendations

#### Charge A: Mental Health and Wellness Resources

Based on our evaluation of the current mental health and wellness resources available for students of color, especially Black students, we have concluded that multiple avenues exist through which students can seek help and support. However, some clarifying changes are needed to improve students' access and experience with available resources. Additionally, existing programs at Keck – specifically Keck Peer Support – can be better leveraged to raise awareness and respond to student experiences with racism and microaggressions. Lastly, in an ongoing effort to improve the inclusivity of the learning environment (i.e. the physical space), students should be engaged to provide suggestions that are then compiled and delivered to administration.

1. Identify therapists who identify as Black at USC and in the community who are interested in engaging with students on race-related issues including trauma and microaggressions. Disseminate this list to students along with a review of mental health services at USC for students of color.
  - a. Upon consulting with Dr. Edden Agonafer, Counseling and Mental Health (CMH) Multicultural Director, we were informed that CMH is currently in the process of developing a BIPOC mental health resource guide (a website that includes a list of BIPOC providers and resources for BIPOC students). This website should be up and running by late March or early April 2021 per a discussion with Dr. Agonafer on 3/7/21. Furthermore, as part of the existing therapy consultation and referral process at USC, students can request therapist preferences and specialty; care coordinators provide students with a list of available providers meeting those criteria at USC and in the community. This working group will publicize this website when it is made available, review the therapy consultation/referral process via email, and emphasize therapy resources that are free for students. Dr. Young will send an email to the student body covering this information.
  - b. Culturally-specific “Let’s talk” sessions (free 30-minute appointments with a counselor) are available to students of color and LGBT students (<https://studenthealth.usc.edu/lets-talk-drop-in-schedule-for-students/>). These appointments can be an opportunity for students to learn

about CMH resources and may be preferable to Keck Checks for students of these groups. However, current scheduling instructions are incorrect and may result in confusion (see below).

**Sign up for Let's Talk in mySHR and get the Zoom link. Check the "workshops" tab in [usc.edu/myshr](https://usc.edu/myshr) for the most up to date schedule. *Schedule subject to change.***

This working group will provide feedback to student health to recommend updating this webpage to reflect current scheduling methods: Login to MySHR > Appointments > Schedule and appointment > Counseling and Mental Health > Let's Talk

- c. "Let's Talk" appointments are held by an embedded counselor who is affiliated with specific cultural or student communities at USC (e.g., the Center for Black Cultural and Student Affairs (CBCSA)). These communities may offer additional resources or events for culturally-specific mental health and wellness but are not well described and are not linked to on the student health website, which may be the first access point to these communities for Keck students. (<https://studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling/community-centered-services-embedded-counselors-and-liaisons/>). Our suggestion would be to better describe and link directly to these community centers (<https://seip.usc.edu/>) on the student health website to provide another access point for Keck students. Again, this working group will provide this feedback to student health.
2. Develop collaboration with Keck Peer Support (KPS) to utilize their platform as a forum to discuss racial microaggressions.
    - a. Microaggressions have been associated with multiple mental health problems including depression, anxiety, and trauma. In his "A Guide to Responding to Microaggressions", Kevin L. Nadal, PhD, describes the importance of seeking support after an individual has experienced a microaggression. Seeking social support can help validate an individual's experience as well as serve as a forum for the individual to process their cognitive and emotional reactions to the microaggression.
      - i. [https://advancingjustice-la.org/sites/default/files/ELAMICRO%20A\\_Guide\\_to\\_Responding\\_to\\_Microaggressions.pdf](https://advancingjustice-la.org/sites/default/files/ELAMICRO%20A_Guide_to_Responding_to_Microaggressions.pdf)
    - b. KPS and their 1:1 support model, as well as their online submission portal, may provide avenues for students seeking social support after they experience a microaggression.
    - c. This working group collaborated with KPS to develop new affirming responses to help peer mentors effectively respond to experiences of microaggressions. These responses were developed under the guidance of Dr. Young. The affirming responses are as follows:
      - i. "What feelings did you experience as the situation unfolded and why?"
      - ii. "What would you like for the person who did this to know?"
      - iii. "Is there anything we or anyone else at Keck can do to support you?"
    - d. Wellness group members met KPS leadership on 3/18/21 to present affirming responses, share a training video on microaggressions, discuss next steps, and develop a timeline for implementation. KPS will advertise on social media that they are available for 1:1 peer

support for anyone who has experienced microaggressions. KPS will also host a “Let’s Talk About It: Microaggressions” event in May 2021 for students of all years and potentially including residents and attendings.

3. Survey students to determine ways to improve the inclusivity of the physical campus environment.
  - a. At the first steering committee meeting, faculty leadership brought up that leadership portraits in KAM will be removed in an effort to promote a more inclusive learning environment. To continue to promote an environment of inclusivity, we concluded that it would be best to survey members of the community at large for what changes they would want to see in terms of the physical environment at Keck. This will ensure a diversity of perspectives and that all voices will be heard. We recommend this be assessed semi-annually, with aggregate responses emailed to the Keck community at large and a description of what actions, if any, will be taken.
    - i. Survey will include a free-response section. Including the leadership portrait example should help appropriately focus student responses.
    - ii. <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1exV5DVt9yPfdtChkUkBBkDPuDJVLIFJZyhyVrnChdxE/edit?ts=60331e7d>
4. Review and post guide for anti-racism resources.
  - a. To support the whole of the student body at Keck, the wellness group has compiled anti-racism resources and resources for racially-informed medical care. These resources include and extend resources previously compiled by USC (i.e., race, privilege, building allyship and advocacy) and may help students gain a broader perspective on these issues.
  - b. Plan for dissemination: Include a link to anti-racism resources under KSOM Anti-Racism Task Force website under Student and Faculty links (Student Members working with Dr. Elliott on this). Announcement of resource link and directions to the Anti-Racism Task Force website for future updates can be sent through an email to all classes by Student Members.
  - c. Timeline for completion: May 2021
  - d. Links:
    - i. <https://libguides.usc.edu/socialwork/antiracism>
    - ii. <https://libguides.usc.edu/diversityandinclusion/race>
    - iii. <https://dornsife.usc.edu/news/stories/3230/systemic-racism-protests-books-to-read/>
    - iv. [https://www.abct.org/Information/?m=mInformation&fa=Anti\\_Racism\\_Resource\\_List](https://www.abct.org/Information/?m=mInformation&fa=Anti_Racism_Resource_List)
    - v. [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/antiracist\\_resources\\_from\\_greater\\_good](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/antiracist_resources_from_greater_good)
    - vi. <https://diversity.berkeley.edu/anti-racism-resources-0>
    - vii. <https://www.washington.edu/raceequity/resources/anti-racism-resources/>
    - viii. Racially informed care
      1. <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hblog20201029.167296/full/>
      2. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK220349/>
      3. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40615-020-00881-w#Sec7>

- ix. Podcast recommendations that our group found speaks to our experience and may apply to others:
  1. Therapy for Black Girls Podcast Ep. 21 “How Racism Impacts our Mental Health”
  2. Code Switch Podcast, a podcast with fearless conversations about race by NPR
5. Educate the community by sharing stories of microaggressions.
  - a. Our working decided that it is important that the medical school community become more aware of microaggressions experienced by members of our community. To that end, we are working on developing an anonymous survey for students to anonymously submit descriptions of various microaggressions they may have experienced. Every month, after scrupulous review of each submission to protect the identities of all involved in the experience, we will share a document to highlight people’s experience and how they reacted to or felt about the situation. This will be done in an effort to educate others in our community what microaggressions may look like in practice, and how they may be perceived by others, in order to further an atmosphere of inclusivity and cultural competence.

#### Charge B: Yearly Wellness Review Survey

The committee was tasked with evaluating student experiences with racism at Keck through a new item in the Yearly Wellness Review survey (YWR). Dr. Young is a member of a medical student wellness professionals listserv and reached out to her colleagues for recommendations. Based on these recommendations, student members conducted a thorough literature review to determine appropriateness, completeness, and feasibility of various survey items. Given the overall length of the YWR, students were asked to limit the survey(s) to 10 questions or less. We recommended the Everyday Discrimination Scale – short version (EDS), as this was the only validated survey of such length. The EDS has been included in the YWR which so far has been rolled out to the MS3 class and will be rolled out to the other classes toward the end of the spring semester.

While the EDS does include a measure of race-related discrimination, it is less specific for evaluating student experiences with racism than other longer questionnaires. Student members remain concerned that the EDS is insufficient to assess student experiences with racism at Keck as discrimination and racism are distinct entities and racism is multi-dimensional. Moreover, the EDS does not include an assessment of racial microaggressions, which are common in medical education settings. We suggest that the steering committee determine whether the EDS is sufficient for evaluating student experiences with racism and consider implementing one of the following options:

1. Administer a more detailed assessment of student experiences with racism to a random subset of students as part of the SWS. Additional survey items could include the Schedule of Racist Events (SRE) and the Racial Microaggressions Scale (RMAS), both validated surveys specific to the experience of racism.

2. Administer an additional (optional) survey that includes the EDS, SRE, and RMAS to all students via class listservs. While this approach may suffer from response bias, the responding individuals are likely the same individuals that this survey and the ARTF as a whole are trying to better serve.

It is imperative that the ARTF adequately assess students' experience of racism in order to appropriately address the issue in meaningful and sustainable ways. If not, we risk compiling solutions to a poorly understood problem.

An initial overview of the preliminary data from the EDS from the MS3 administration will be analyzed and presented to the ARTF in April 2021.