THE DIVERSITY FACTOR

THE SOCIETY OF COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY'S SECTION ON ETHNIC AND RACIAL DIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

Winter 2014

Table of Contents

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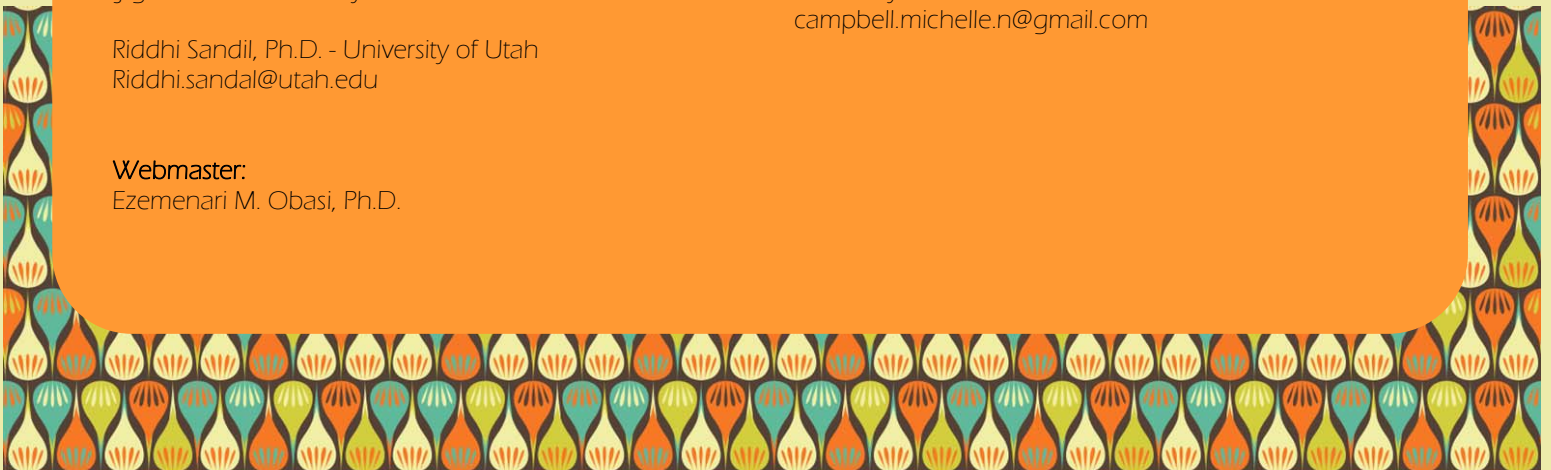jtgibson@uhs.Berkeley.edu

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Greetings SERD Members!

In this issue of *The Diversity Factor*, you will find a number of articles that highlight aspects of multiculturalism that have implications with a variety of factors in society. For example, you will be able to read information on the multicultural implications with respect to *DSM* diagnoses, career development applications with international students, and professional identity development.

For our Cultural Expressions Section, Elizabeth Aranda provides a reflection on the role of African American women actors in television. Specifically, the television show *Scandal.* Her reflection on this television show includes the need for open dialogue regarding culture and potential implications for "color-blindness".

Sutha Kanagasingam, an international student from Malaysia majoring in counseling psychology at the University of Nebraska, is the focus of our Psychologists in Training Section. In this section, Sutha entertains the need for career counselors to explore Westernized career concepts among international students. The author also sheds light on the need to consider contextual factors when providing career counseling services to international students, but also the need for professional development opportunities to be guided toward international students.

In the Here and Now section, John Lucas calls attention to the need to be cognizant of cultural implications with respect to the *DSM* diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder among children. He highlights the need for early diagnosis to be considered in effort to increase our understanding and ability to guide effective services.

The Chronicles section includes an article written by Kimber Shelton. This submission involves a transparent, introspective account of her experiences with professional identity development. In essence, this is an autobiographical account of how an emerging professional has developed awareness and insight of the influential impact pivotal life moments can have on identity development.

The Cultural Mosaic section includes an interview with Amina Simmons. Amina provides a reflection on how mentorship has impacted her life as a psychologist-in-training. She highlights the struggles, as well as the positive aspects of growth inherent within "uncomfortable spaces", or situations that spark difficult dialogue regarding cultural diversity.

Happy reading!

▮▮▮▮ HERE AND NOW ▮▮▮▮

CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND DIAGNOSES OF ADHD IN HISPANIC CHILDREN

by John D. Lucas, M.S., BHRS, Providence of Oklahoma, Counseling Services

According to the Journal of the National Medical Association (2005), Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is diagnosed in the Hispanic community much more often than in Caucasian patients. Likewise, ABC News reports that Hispanic and Black children have seen a rise in their diagnosis rate for Attention Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder, but is that a good thing?

According to Maggie Fox (2013), Senior Writer, NBC News Health, the most comprehensive report on specific mental disorders in children shows attention deficit hyperactivity disorder ADHD is the most commonly diagnosed problem in Kids. No parent, grandparent, friend, teacher or therapist wants to see a child struggle with these issues. Thus, it is a concern for all of us. Dr. Tom Friedin CDC Director, as said that we are working on both understanding and strategies to prevent this disorder.

The US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that between 4 and 12 percent of children have ADHD. Troubles with reading, mathematics and languages usage lead most educators to think that these children are just lazy or faking their learning disabilities. However, recent studies and other research in this area should open up a better chance for more learning experiences for children with ADHD.

While increased diagnoses have been reported, a question still remains whether the results of these diagnoses were influenced because the assessments were performed later in adolescence (after children were identified by parents and doctors). Darious Gatahun, author and research scientist, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, January 2013 report suggests that early diagnoses is important and needed in diverse communities in order to increase the effectiveness of prevention. The timing of diagnoses is very important, reported Gatahun, and offers the possibly of better outcome.

The cost of children with ADHD is important also. Reports show that the children with ADHD miss more school, have learning difficulty and are prone to injury. With cost playing a factor in our health care industry, early diagnosis is generally supported by Health Care professionals. Gatahun also believes that early diagnoses will help these children perform better socially at school and will give them a better chance for a greater future. I totally agree with these statements.

Furthermore, it is important to note that children with ADHD struggle with perception issues that cause many challenges for them. Larry S. Goldman, M.D. (1998), reports the diagnostic criteria for ADHD are based on empirical research and, if applied in proper manner, lead to the diagnosis of a syndrome with high inter-rater reliability, face validity, and good predictability of course and medication responsiveness. ADHD in children has widened and there is a growing acceptance of the persistence of ADHD into adolescence and adulthood. As a result, more children (especially girls), adolescents (including Latinos) are being diagnosed and treated. Meanwhile, there is little evidence that abuse of stimulant medication is a major problem.
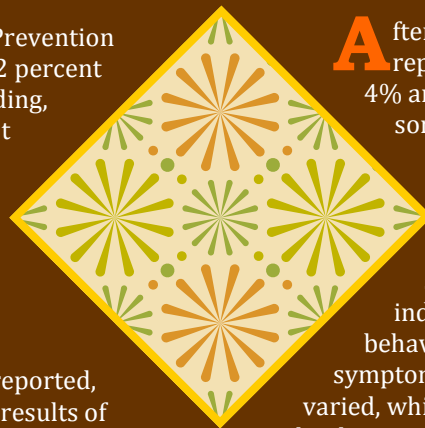
After all, the American Psychiatric Association reports in the DSM-IV-TR (2000) that between 4% and 7% of school aged children suffer from some level of ADHD. With the known benefits of early detection, it is alarming to think that a significant number of children have yet to be diagnosed with this disorder. To be sure, therapists and the media are slowly coming to realize just how individualized human physiology and human behavior really are. On a genetic level, the symptoms of ADHD in patients will most likely be varied, which presents additional challenges. In a large school setting, the diversity of individual students can be great, meaning that any two children may have differing symptoms but the same diagnoses.

In the end, the rise in diagnoses is not completely understood at this time. Still, it is likely that that identification of ADHD in these school age children will mean quicker results for these children. It is unfortunate, however, that increases in diagnoses of ADHD in Latino individuals may result in further marginalization of Latino students in public schools. This is a problem that will have to be addressed by mental health professionals moving forward. In light of the many factors I have highlighted, I find it helpful to remember that a diagnosis, no matter how prevalent in one group or another, is only a small part of the story.

▐▐▐▐ PSYCHOLOGIST IN TRAINING ▐▐▐▐
Sutha K Kanagasingam
Associate Editor: Kavitha Dharmalingam

Sutha K Kanagasingam, an international student from Malaysia, is a first-year student in the Counseling Psychology doctoral program and a Graduate Assistant in Career Services at University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Her research interests are in the area of cross-cultural career development and counseling. These interests were cultivated from reflecting upon her own experiences as an undergraduate international student at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor and during her Master's program in Higher Education and Student Affairs at the University of Connecticut-Storrs.

Career counseling that transcends nationality and place of origin

International students on college campuses in the United States (US), all 764,495 of them, have a distinct identity (Institute of International Education, 2012). Nonetheless, international students face similar language, cultural, and societal barriers in acclimating to their new community (Sandhu, 1994). These pressures from acculturation are in addition to the regular academic and career related concerns that any college student faces (Leong & Sedlacek, 1989). Furthermore, depending on international students' intention of career placement following graduation, in the United States or in their home country, their career counseling needs vary and the challenges are increased.

Relevant issues to consider when providing career counseling services for international students include their lack of familiarity with Western career exploration concepts, the incompatibility of autonomous career decision-making models toward their collectivist inclinations, language and cultural barriers, and the limited understanding of their career adjustment outcomes (Arthur, 2007; Brown, 2002; Fitzgerald & Betz, 1994; Reynolds & Constantine, 2007; Singaravelu, White & Bringaze, 2005; Spencer-Rodgers, 2000). Therefore, Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) is recommended for working with international students, especially because of its empirical support of application on diverse populations and the established relationship between self-efficacy and performance (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002; Leong & Brown, 1995).

According to SCCT, an individual's self-efficacy attitudes and outcome expectations toward an activity affect his ability and motivation to perform the activity (Lent et al., 2002). Self-efficacy and outcome expectations are informed by personal and contextual factors (Lent et al., 2002). It is hypothesized that international students who have low self-efficacy in career choice and decision-making activities have suboptimal career outcomes.

Interventions that are geared toward increasing an international student's self-efficacy in career choice and decision-making include introducing the student to new and diverse career paths, identifying the student's personal and contextual limitations in the process, connecting student's strengths to the career exploration or job search process, and developing and modifying self-efficacy perceptions (Lent et al., 2002; Spencer-Rodgers & Cotijo, 1998). These interventions are intended to empower international students and to allow them the opportunity to conceptualize their career outcomes within an individual framework.

Beyond one-on-one services, counselors can organize conational group sessions for international students that promote career choice and decision-making activities such as assessing skills, values and interests, exploring career paths within a major, and preparing for the job search. Singaravelu and colleagues (2005) found that conational peers were highly instrumental in international students' career development. This finding echoes the Bikos and Furry (1999) evaluation that participation in a job search club, comprised only by international students, increased their career self-efficacy.

As the research on international students' career counseling needs and related best practices continue to grow, Heppner and Jung (2012) articulated the importance of training counselors and career center staff about the intricate needs and contextual factors that are essential to consider when working with international students. Specifically, they recommended that training directors and supervisors work actively to find "teachable moments" from counseling sessions or program development to educate their staff. Essentially, the development of overall career counselor skills such

as multicultural competence, flexibility, and empathy, to work with international students is more worthwhile than the determination of specific counseling interventions and techniques.

Conclusively, researchers and counselors have limited information about how to most appropriately serve international students' career counseling needs. But there is evidence that points out the importance of contextual considerations such as cultural expectations, adjustment and acculturation, and others in working with international students' career choice and decision-making. Therefore, career counselors should utilize the tenets of SCCT to empower students to make career choices and decisions for a meaningful, positive career adjustment outcome.

Additionally, career counselors must continue to utilize professional development opportunities to discuss the needs and experiences of international students. As individuals who see first-hand international students' struggles with career exploration concerns, career counselors have the ability to advocate for resources, propose research ideas, and start discussions that will continue to educate the field about this topic.

Submissions to *The Diversity Factor* are welcome for any of the following sections:

Announcements/Achievements: (1) any relevant announcements, (e.g., new appointments, awards, available positions, promotions, etc.) and/or (2) information about upcoming events that will likely be of interest to SERD members.

Chronicles: Share a short story from your professional life as an educator, counselor, and/or researcher. Submissions should provide recommendations for students managing the journey of graduate school while acknowledging and managing their own cultural, racial, and ethnic biases – insight into how this could influence their work.
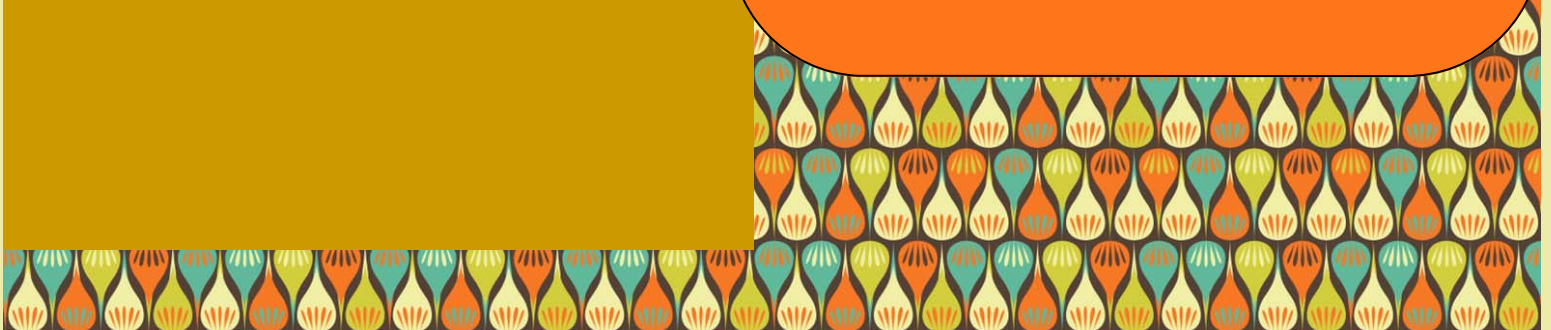
Cultural Expressions: Cultural Expressions is seeking your brief reviews of movies, books, television shows, YouTube clips, plays, music, and other art or media forms that creatively or educationally speak to racial/ethnic diversity.

Here & Now: This column focuses on current events around any of these topics and how they relate, interact, and intersect with issues of ethnicity, race, and racism: the media's coverage of the benefits of psychotherapy; the media's coverage of the impact of universal healthcare on mental health clinicians' use of evidence-based practice; or social justice efforts that can be used to educate the media about multiculturally diverse individuals.

Mosaic: This column focuses on teaching and supervision in counseling psychology. We encourage submissions that discuss how issues of diversity are addressed by clinical supervisors and faculty.

Psychologists-in-Training: This column includes articles that highlight professional psychological activities conducted by psychologist-in-training. Other writing related to psychologists-in-training are always welcomed.

Up Close & Personal: This column is an opportunity for a student to interview a professional or researcher who may be of interest to the other SERD members. We're interested in submissions that involve interviews with people who might be creating change in our field either at the micro or macro level.

▌▌▌▌ CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS ▌▌▌▌

Associate Editor: Ryan McMahan

## *Scandal: First female African American lead since 1974*

By: Elizabeth Aranda, M.A., Texas Woman's University

There is no question that the U.S. television landscape has changed dramatically throughout the years. Representations of different cultures, ethnicities, and sexual or gender identities appear to have become more acceptable by our society as a whole.

Yet, despite this undercurrent of change, Kerry Washington's role as Olivia Pope on the hit primetime television show Scandal is the first African American female lead in a major network drama since 1974. Affectionately referred to as "Pope-heads", fans are fascinated with the representation of a headstrong, tenacious, unapologetic and impeccably dressed Black woman who (Spoiler alert!!) has an affair with the President of the United States. Considering the relative dearth of diverse representations on television, Pope is one of the few, if not only, role models for women of color. Admirable qualities aside, Pope is also a character who could be considered by some as a narcissistic, manipulative, and deceitful homewrecker.

In addition to its main character, Scandal also presents a portrayal of ethnic and gender diversity that extends further than prototypical stereotypes. Referred to as "gladiators", members of Pope's political team are a motley crew of characters including: Harrison (played by Columbus Short) as the lawyer with a history in white-collar crime; Huck (played by the openly gay actor Guillermo Diaz), the military recruit who has been trained as a lethal Black Ops member of the C.I.A; Quinn (played by Katie Lowes) and Abby (Darby Stanchfield), women who, respectively, serve as an explosive specialist and technology guru, skills that are not often flagged as feminine hobbies of interest. Through the portrayal of these "gladiators," audiences are able to connect with a Black male who is well-educated, the Latino without an accent, and two White women who have the smarts to hack into high-ranked security protocols. Nevertheless, the fact that cultural expectations are violated is never directly addressed. For example, audiences are left unaware of how Harrison could afford his Ivy League education, or even if Huck identifies as Latino, an assumption made based on the actor's personal background and phenotype.

Without making cultural conversations explicit, the question remains if Scandal runs the risk of promoting "color-blindness" or revolutionizes diversity on television. On the one hand, the appreciation for Scandal's willingness to integrate characters of color is commendable and quite frankly, refreshing. On the other hand, the recognition that Scandal's characters portray race in a way that seems to avoid the implications of race suggests diversity cannot be accepted unless the challenges of life as a racial or gender minority are not directly confronted.
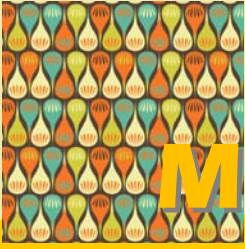
MOSAIC

Associate Editor: Dominique Alexis

Awakening: Personal Reflections on Engaging Diversity as a Tool for Growth

By: Amina Simmons, B.A., University of Missouri

As a counseling psychologist in-training, I am constantly being challenged to think about the topic of diversity and the many forms it takes. Interacting in various spaces (e.g., academic, clinical), I am beginning to see that there are essential components of teaching and supervision that enhance my experience of addressing diversity, intersectionality, and social justice: mentorship, self-reflection, academic discomfort, and organic teachable moments. These components are vital for my personal growth. Specifically, they serve to enhance my understanding, inform my training and my teaching, and further my development on both personal and professional levels in a way that creates lasting change.

Mentorship is probably the most important aspect for me as a counseling psychologist in-training. I cannot imagine facing some of the things I have come up against (e.g., attempting to navigate various parts of my identity across training environments) without the guidance from scholars that have come before me. As a Black, first generation, female graduate student, working with someone who understands the tumultuous history between the Black community and the field of Psychology is crucial. For me, the importance of this signifies an understanding of the frustration of simultaneously doing the work and being the work. Moreover, it is refreshing, uplifting, and validating to know that I can sit across from tenured male and female professors of color, who once felt like me.

Particularly, they could serve as mentors who know what it feels like to constantly question their value, their worth, and their ability within an academic space that appears to struggle to function in a way that allows students of color to thrive. The value of the mentoring relationship is like the foundation of a house—a solid support system. They provide the mentee with the tools to think critically and reflect while also urging them to mentor others. As members in this relationship we are called to connect with one another—to heal, to restore, and to persevere.

Self-reflection is another key element in making meaning of messages regarding diversity. When I enter a classroom as a guest lecturer, I present my knowledge in a way that says, "Who am I and who are you? How can we make essential pieces of ourselves communicate in a way that allows room for growth on both ends?" We, as learners and teachers, are called to question; no longer should we passively accept knowledge as is. I aim for the cultivation of critical thought. By engaging in the process of questioning my positionality and myself along with students, I am creating a space for transparency and modeling the process of self-reflection. It is in those moments, I want students to know that I have one lens and one perspective that speak to multiple aspects of my identity. This approach may be fully understood by some and completely incoherent to others, but I strive to connect, challenge, and foster an atmosphere where the classroom conversation moves to the dinner table conversation. It is my belief that any space can be a platform where social justice issues are discussed, considered, and made salient.

Part of specifying my positionality and lens also contributes to what oftentimes creates an uncomfortable space—the third crucial factor in my growth as a scholar and counselor in-training. I remember one professor that said to us on the first day of class, "You're going to walk out of here hating

this class some days. I'm challenging you right now, to come back." She was right, and so were many other professors that created spaces in their classrooms where discomfort served as a catalyst for my growth. I found myself questioning the politics of knowledge, and subsequently, power. Who is writing the texts you read? Whose story is being told? Where is my voice? I have cried, I have laughed, I have been stunned into silence, and every experience has shown me the importance of using the classroom to aid the work of social justice.

I continue to question, what does it mean to encourage your students to leave room for ignorance, while simultaneously communicating that their ignorance will be challenged? As I move forward as a prospective professor, I think that is one of the most important pieces I hope to take with me. I want to create a space in my classroom where through the discomfort of growth, my students learn to be more comfortable challenging themselves and others to have productive dialogues around diversity issues. Imagine how educational spaces could change if we challenged our students to engage in these difficult dialogues—both asserting their knowledge and humbling themselves to the knowledge of others. Black feminist scholar, bell hooks (1989), would say that teachers must be committed to the "full self-realization of [their] students…that ideas [are] not neutral, [teaching] in a way that liberates, that expands consciousness, that awakens…" Professors will begin to see more confused faces, hear more snaps of affirmation, and experience classroom silences that are so loud you can hear the thoughts percolating inside students' heads. This awakening sparks a feeling inside, an ache for something different, something more.

Finally, if we would stop to think about it, we would be surprised at how many of our daily interactions have the ability to be teachable moments. I appreciate the brief, stern, and loving "check" my advisor gives me when I am ranting about a fellow classmate, "Remember, not everyone is where you're at, we all have a different journey." I appreciate the moments

where I am able to validate my students when they return from a class utterly disheveled because of the racist comment just made by their professor. "I promise you're not crazy, what you heard was real, and it's okay for you to feel hurt and angry." Sometimes it is not about strategically organizing an experience for your students to engage in to evaluate their grasp on issues of diversity. Honestly, I have found that the experiences and lessons that have made the biggest impact on me are the ones I was thrown into or stumbled upon.

I find myself unsure of what to say, how to say it, and worrying like hell that I am going to do something wrong. However, I allow the assurance of support from my supervisor, mentor, or advisor to push me forward. The thing about really engaging with issues of diversity is that you will almost never be fully prepared for it. The times when I do not know what to do and the book scenario does not seem to fit reality, I am reminded to go with the flow. Some of us are called to this work and others have to work harder to remain focused and present. Although, if you allow yourself to consider every moment and step a teachable one, whether you are the teacher or the student, you will be surprised at the knowledge you will gain in the process.

Reference:
Hooks, b. (1989). Toward a revolutionary feminist pedagogy. Talking back: thinking feminist, thinking black (pp. 50-54). Boston, MA: South End Press.

Author's Bio:
Amina Simmons, B.A. is a second year masters student in the counseling psychology program that the University of Missouri Columbia. She received her B.A. in Psychology with a minor in Africana studies from Pomona College. Her research interests include, Black student experiences in higher education, specifically predominantly White Institutions, as well as exploring the experiences of Black Student Mothers. Her clinical interests include working with youth and their families, and she is currently a practicum intern at Great Circle Boys & Girls Town in Columbia, MO. She also works with student parents through her position as the Graduate Assistant at the MU Women's Center, aiming to create a more family-friendly atmosphere at the university.

CHRONICLES

Associate Editor: Ciera Scott

"I do not want to be seen as an African-American female counselor. I just want my clients to see me as a competent counselor." These are the lines I wrote in the professional identity section of my master's portfolio. I wrote this before I really understood microaggressions, racial identity development models, and internalized oppression. This was before I grasped what power, privilege and injustice really meant. These are lines I wrote before I knew I could own both the hurt and the pride associated with my identities.

It makes perfect sense to me why I would write such a thing. I am one of the Black people who grew up in the world of, "You talk White" and "You do not act Black." In the second grade my White friends told me that I could not like Barry—the blonde hair, blue-eyed boy everyone else had a crush on. I had to marry the only Black boy in my school, otherwise we would be "gay." These second grade students were clearly misinformed regarding the definition of the word "gay." It was rare to find dolls that looked like me or see girls that looked like me on TV. I grew up in the world of, "You have to work twice as hard" and "Never let them see you cry".

Saying those lines aloud was one of my many diversity "light bulb" moments. I realized that I had attached inferiority with my ethnic and gender identities. I was trying to hide who I was from myself and hoped that my clients would not notice or attach inadequacy or incompetency to my identities. I also was tired of being given "exceptional" status by those who stereotyped Black people as all being the same. Immediately after my light bulb moment I found myself feeling ashamed and frustrated. Ashamed and frustrated that despite the fact that I had taken a diversity class, grew up in a family with strong and beautiful African American female role models, and never saw myself as a victim, I had still internalized oppressive messages. I was also angry and sorrowful. What do these internalized messages do to people who are not provided with the protection of positive affirmation and the familial unconditional acceptance that I had?

As time has passed, my awareness has not removed frustration and pain from my life; if anything it has enhanced it. I still battle the internal voice that says I should be a superwoman and at times conform my behaviors due to stereotype threat. I am easily enraged by endless stories like that of Trayvon Martin, songs that label me as either a bitch or a hoe, or my eight year old niece telling me that she would hurt herself if she were gay. There is temptation to pull away from anyone and anything that represents White privilege, misogyny or heterosexism, but I know this is not the answer.

My moment of shame, frustration, anger and sorrow was also a moment of freedom. I allowed myself to accept and appreciate my identities and bring them more fully into the therapy room. I stopped running from things that made me who I was and the type of psychologist I developed into. The way in which I see the world, conceptualize clients, express myself and connect with others are all done in relation to my experiences and identity as an African American woman. I freed myself to be more present and honored myself, which also freed up energy to focus on combating discrimination and bias. I am better equipped to empathize with clients who struggle with identity integration, educate trainees on the emotional and

cognitive impact of systemic oppression, and challenge students who place limits on their identity or the identity of others.

There is a second part to this story. Those lines showed both my ignorance and forwarded my journey of identity liberation. They also reinforced my commitment to my own ally development and appreciation for those who are unafraid to rally for change. During my master's portfolio defense I recited the fears related to my identity. My advisor, a White man from Arkansas, simply stated, "You might want to think about that some more." People can have an impact on us when we least expect it. My minority statuses did not inherently make me an expert on diversity and White male status does not necessarily diminish one's value of diversity. When I feel like withdrawing and digging my heels into an emersion identity status I remember the responsibility I have in working within my sphere of influence and appreciating the mentors and allies who affect change where they can.

Seven years later, my professional identity statement is much different. With great respect, I bring my identity as a competent African American female psychologist into the therapy room and build authentic relationships with clients that are both supportive and appropriately challenging. I bring my identity into my advocacy and ally work to challenge heterosexism and homophobia with the hope of creating safer and affirming environments for sexual and gender minority individuals. I use my identity to try to inspire my nieces and nephew and set up a system where their identity battles will be less severe than mine. Finally, I integrate my identity with my status as an early career counseling psychologist who is proud to be in a profession where self-reflection and social justice are priorities.

Kimber Shelton, Ph.D.

SERD Executive Board Positions Open

SERD Chair:

The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the Section and the Governing Board. Other responsibilities of the Chairperson shall include, but are not limited to, the following: preside at and prepare the agenda for all meetings; have one vote in all meetings; exercise general supervision of the affairs of the Section; delegate responsibility for special projects or tasks not specifically assigned in the By-laws; articulate and advocate the Section's position to others; and prepare an annual budget with the Treasurer.

Treasurer:

The treasurer will serve a two-year term from Fall 2013 to Fall 2015. The primary responsibility of the treasurer is to collect dues and manage SERD related expenditures (awards, plaques, receptions, etc.). The treasurer will also work closely with the membership chair to keep an accurate assessment of the SERD membership. Finally, the treasurer will generate semi-annual budget reports.

Newsletter Co-Editors:

The newsletter co-editors shall maintain responsibility for the production of a biannual newsletter aimed at highlighting topics germane to SERD's mission. Along with an additional Co-Editors these persons will need to monitor a small administrative team who are each given unique responsibilities to aide in the production of the newsletter. The Co-Editors will also provide an annual report at the SERD board meeting.

Awards Committee Members (Appointed)

2 positions available

Award committee members serve a 2-year term from Fall 2014 to Fall 2016. Members are primarily responsible for coordinating award solicitation and review process. General responsibilities include establishing a submission deadline, soliciting reviewers and coordinating review process, disseminating information about SERD awards, notifying applicants of the results, working with the plaque company to create award plaque, attending APA to present summary of the committee's activities and present the awards. In this position, members are also responsible for contacting the webmaster to update the SERD website with award winner information and due dates for the following year.