



UNIVERSITY of
SOUTH FLORIDA
ST. PETERSBURG CAMPUS



HOW TO SUPPORT THE MENTAL HEALTH OF STUDENTS OF COLOR AT A PREDOMINATELY WHITE INSTITUTION

A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR PROFESSORS, FACULTY, AND STAFF

Presented by Students of Color Advisory Board



STUDENTS OF COLOR ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACTED BY MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES EXACERBATED BY THEIR RACIAL IDENTITY.

RACISM – prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against a person or people based on their membership in a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized.

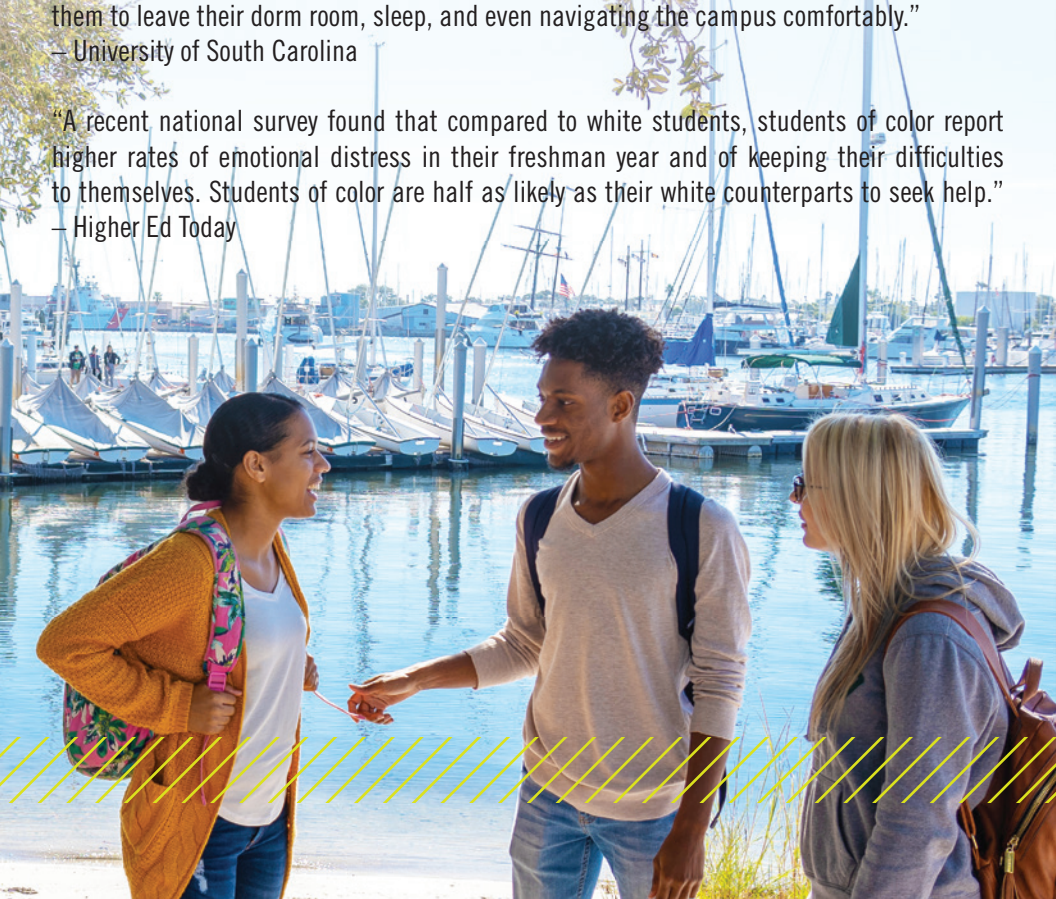
MICROAGGRESSIONS – brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color.

“Among the college-attending population of Black Americans, perceptions of racial discrimination are associated with higher levels of psychological distress, suicidal ideation, anxiety, depression, and stress. A number of students detailed how racism-related stress impacted their mental health. Students discussed stress impacting their overall college experience, ability to concentrate in class, engagement in university activities that require them to leave their dorm room, sleep, and even navigating the campus comfortably.”

– University of South Carolina

“A recent national survey found that compared to white students, students of color report higher rates of emotional distress in their freshman year and of keeping their difficulties to themselves. Students of color are half as likely as their white counterparts to seek help.”

– Higher Ed Today



MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR CLASSROOM

RECOGNIZE TRAUMA AND MAKE STUDENTS FEEL SAFE.

Try phrases to open dialogues like “I don’t know what you’re going through, but I’ll always be willing to listen and support you in any way I can.”

ACKNOWLEDGE AND INTERRUPT MICROAGGRESSIONS.

Intervene by saying, “Hold on a moment, let’s examine what just occurred,” and open discussion about intent versus impact. Invite students to point out when you commit a microaggression, too, by creating an anonymous feedback survey where accountability is encouraged.

CREATE A SENSE OF BELONGING FOR YOUR STUDENTS.

Tell students, “You belong here” or “You are seen.” Actively reach out to students, simply to say you notice their contributions in class or their academic progress.

USE INCLUSIVE TEACHING AND GRADING PRACTICES.

Intentionally design learning opportunities to achieve more equity. Disrupt the paradigm of whom students think are most intelligent through randomized calling and small group discussions.

DEVELOP EMPATHY AND SELF-AWARENESS.

Examine your own social identity, power, privilege, and biases to engage with others inclusively.



GET TO KNOW STUDENTS HOLISTICALLY.

Use office hours to have conversations with students beyond course content, initiating discussion about their hometown and the hobbies and jobs they’ve had.

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS OF COLOR TO BOND TOGETHER.

Within racial groups, among other students of color, and with the majority of students on campus. Research shows that students of color gain self-confidence from exposure to diversity as they see their value and worth when interacting with others.

TAKE RACIAL INCIDENTS ON CAMPUS SERIOUSLY.

Realize the ramifications of these incidents and communicate the actions of the institutions to students of color so they are not left wondering, angry and scared.

EDUCATE WHITE STUDENTS AS WELL.

Make sure they learn that their world is not the only world, that their perspective is not the only perspective, and that they have much to learn from those who have varied experiences.

WHAT IS SOCAB?

OUR MISSION

The Student of Color Advisory Board (SOCAB) is an advisory board comprised of student leaders at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg campus, focusing on addressing the needs for students of color on campus. SOCAB is a group dedicated to active listening when it comes to the needs of students of color, while working very closely with the Dean of Students to establish a collaborative effort that supports students of color and creates real change.

To contact SOCAB for more information about our initiatives please email DeWayne Anderson at anderson85@usf.edu.

Please scan the QR code to the right for additional information and resources.





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