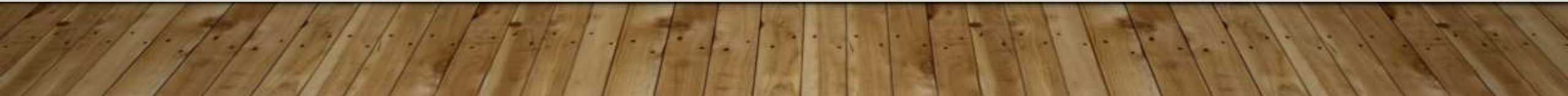# Do we belong? Perceptions of PoC within the VA

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Microaggression Survey

- Designed to identify if Psychologists of color (PoC) working within the VA system nationwide experience any type of microaggressions within their work environment

- Adapted from Torres-Harding, Andrade, & Romero Diaz (2012)
  - Instructions asked to focus on work experiences alone within the past year
  - Added ethnicity to wording of questions
  - Modified question #23 to focus specifically on VA Canteen

Microaggression Survey Example

2. Because of my race/ethnicity, people suggest that I am not a 'true' American.

	Never/Not at all	Rarely/A little	Sometimes/Moderately	Often/Highly
HOW OFTEN does this happen to you?	○	○	○	○
IF THIS DOES HAPPEN TO YOU, how *stressful, upsetting, or bothersome* is this for you?	○	○	○	○

3. Other people often ask me where I am from, suggesting that i don't belong.

	Never/Not at all	Rarely/A little	Sometimes/Moderately	Often/Highly
HOW OFTEN does this happen to you?	○	○	○	○
IF THIS DOES HAPPEN TO YOU, how *stressful, upsetting, or bothersome* is this for you?	○	○	○	○

Factor Structure

- **Devaluation** (α = .90) - feelings as if one's ethnic group is looked down upon, that all members are interchangeable, incompetent and requiring special treatment to succeed
  - e.g., assume successful due to affirmative action, others suggesting that people from one's ethnic background get unfair benefits, others denying people of one's ethnic group face extra obstacles in life compared to Whites, others preferring that one assimilates to White culture and downplay one's ethnic background, other focusing on negative aspects of one's ethnic background

- **Environmental Microinvalidations** (α = .81) - lack of representation of one's ethnic group at work
  - e.g., being the only individual at work from one's ethnic group, seeing few individuals from one's ethnic group, interacting with authority figures of a different ethnic background, few role models of one's ethnic background in chosen career

- **Not Belonging** (α = .84) - feelings of not belonging because of one's ethnic identity
  - e.g., made to feel as a foreigner or that one does not belong, not a "true" American

- **Invisibility/Objectification** (α = .90) - feeling ignored, invisible, dismissed, or sexually objectified because of one's ethnic identity
  - e.g., contributions are dismissed due to ethnicity, ignored at work due to ethnicity, others don't see me due to ethnicity, feel invisible due to ethnicity, others holding sexual stereotypes in relation to one's ethnicity, viewed in an overly sexual way due to ethnicity, viewed as sexually exotic due to ethnicity

- **Criminalization** (α = .80) – viewed as a criminal
  - e.g., being treated as a criminal, perceiving that others are scared due to one's ethnicity, being singled out by police or security due to ethnicity

Devaluation Factor

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Devaluation	African American	63	1.49	.89
	Asian American	37	1.10	.65
	Latinx	31	1.42	.91
	Multiracial	36	1.44	.78
	Total	167	1.38	.83

Environmental Microinvalidations Factor

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Environmental	African American	63	1.89	.78
	Asian American	37	2.59	.50
	Latinx	31	2.14	.96
	Multiracial	36	2.31	.72
	Total	167	2.18	.79

Not Belonging Factor

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
NotBelonging	African American	63	.33	.51
	Asian American	37	1.50	.82
	Latinx	31	1.22	.94
	Multiracial	36	.96	.82
	Total	167	.89	.87

Invisibility/Objectification Factor

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Invisibility/Objectification	African American	63	.88	.79
	Asian American	37	1.12	.89
	Latinx	31	1.07	1.02
	Multiracial	36	.97	.71
	Total	167	.99	.84

Criminalization Factor

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Criminalization	African American	63	.65	.69
	Asian American	37	.29	.57
	Latinx	31	.33	.46
	Multiracial	36	.40	.55
	Total	167	.46	.61

One-Way ANOVA

- Five One-way ANOVAs were conducted to investigate any differences between ethnic groups in relation to the individual factors (No MANOVA on PSPP)

- To minimize Type 1 error, the p value was adjusted to only report results at the $p < .001$

- Two results produced significant findings

Results

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Environmental	Between Groups	12.43	3	4.14	7.35	.000
	Within Groups	91.83	163	.56		
	Total	104.26	166			
NotBelonging	Between Groups	36.55	3	12.18	22.07	.000
	Within Groups	89.99	163	.55		
	Total	126.54	166			

- Effect size = .12 and .29, respectively
  - .10 = small effect size, .25 = medium effect size, .40 = large effect size (Cohen, 1992)

Post-hoc

Environmental			Mean Difference		
	(I) Ethnicity	(J) Ethnicity	(I - J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Games-Howell					
	Asian American	African American	.71	.16	.000

NotBelonging			Mean Difference		
	(I) Ethnicity	(J) Ethnicity	(I - J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Games-Howell					
	Asian American	African American	1.16	.15	.000
	Latinx	African American	.88	.16	.000

Summary

- Results indicate that PoC are underrepresented at their respective VA workplaces; this is more pronounced for Asian American psychologists (Environmental Microinvalidation)

- Both Asian American & Latinx psychologists report feeling as if they are foreigners/not Americans and/or don't belong (Microinsult)

- Efforts should be directed to increase recruitment and retention of psychologists of color
  - Diversity Audit
    - Quantitative: % of PoC within the VA healthcare system (nationally & locally), % of PoC outside the VA healthcare system (nationally & locally), % of PoC compared to the Veterans served (nationally & locally), the # and % of new hires of PoC within the VA healthcare system, the # and % of PoC who leave the VA healthcare system for outside employment, and the benchmarks for success
    - Qualitative: Attitudes and perceptions of diversity within the VA healthcare system, attitudes of VA executive leadership in relation to diversity, challenges and obstacles to recruitment and retention of PoC
    - 1) Opportunities for advancement, 2) diversity of activities in job & FS, 3) increased commitment to diversity by administrative/executive team, 4) PoC in positions of authority, 5) race/ethnicity based support groups/mentoring program for staff, 6) increased visibility in media within VA

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