# A CLASS OF OUR OWN: SUPPORTING THE MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF STUDENTS OF COLOR

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## TODAY'S GOALS

1. Discuss mental illness prevalence rates of college students of color in the United States.

2. Identify the unique stressors faced by students of color at PWI's.

3. Highlight factors to consider in supporting the mental health needs of college students of color.

# KEY CONCEPTS

- Racial Minorities[1]

- Predominately White Institutions (PWI's)

Undergraduate Enrollment, by Race and Ethnicity: 1995-96 and 2015-16

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, NATIONAL POSTSECONDARY STUDENT AID STUDY, 1996 AND 2016

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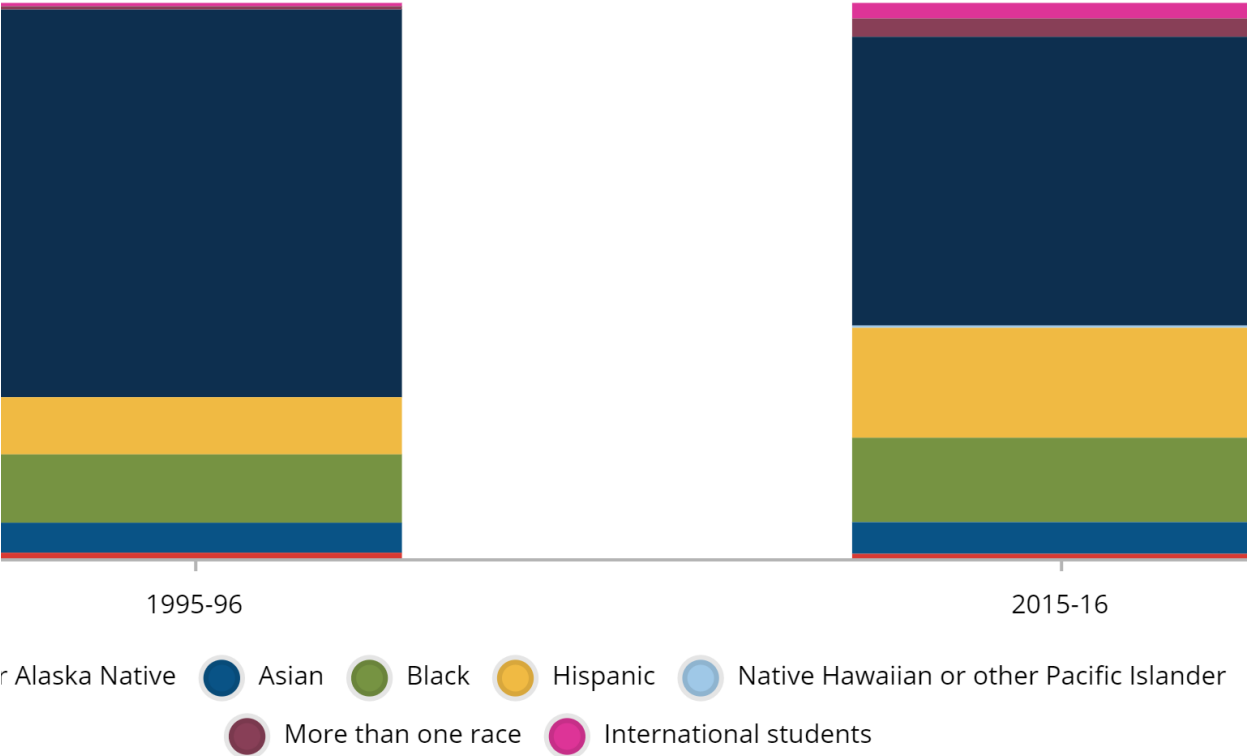
# A MOMENT OF REFLECTION

- Who are the students of color on your campus?

# PREVALENCE RATES

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- Mental health among college students of color is an understudied topic[2]


- Inconclusive Results:
  - Higher rates of depression, anxiety, and functional impairment among college students of color in comparison to whites[3].
  - Other studies find no difference in mental illness prevalence rates[4].


- Being a member of a minority group at a PWI/U can decrease the psychological functioning of students of color[5].

- Increasing rates of suicide among people of color [6,7]

- Students of color are less likely to utilize campus counseling services [8].

- Predictors include [8]
  - Greater psychological distress
  - Previous history of psychological distress
  - Less family Support

- Students of color report higher levels of stress than white college students who suffer from depression or anxiety[9].

# A MOMENT OF REFLECTION

- What challenges might students of color on your campus face when seeking help and utilizing campus mental health resources?

# STRESSORS AMONG STUDENTS OF COLOR AT PWI'S

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# LIVED EXPERIENCES OF STUDENTS OF COLOR

On-Campus

Society

Off Campus
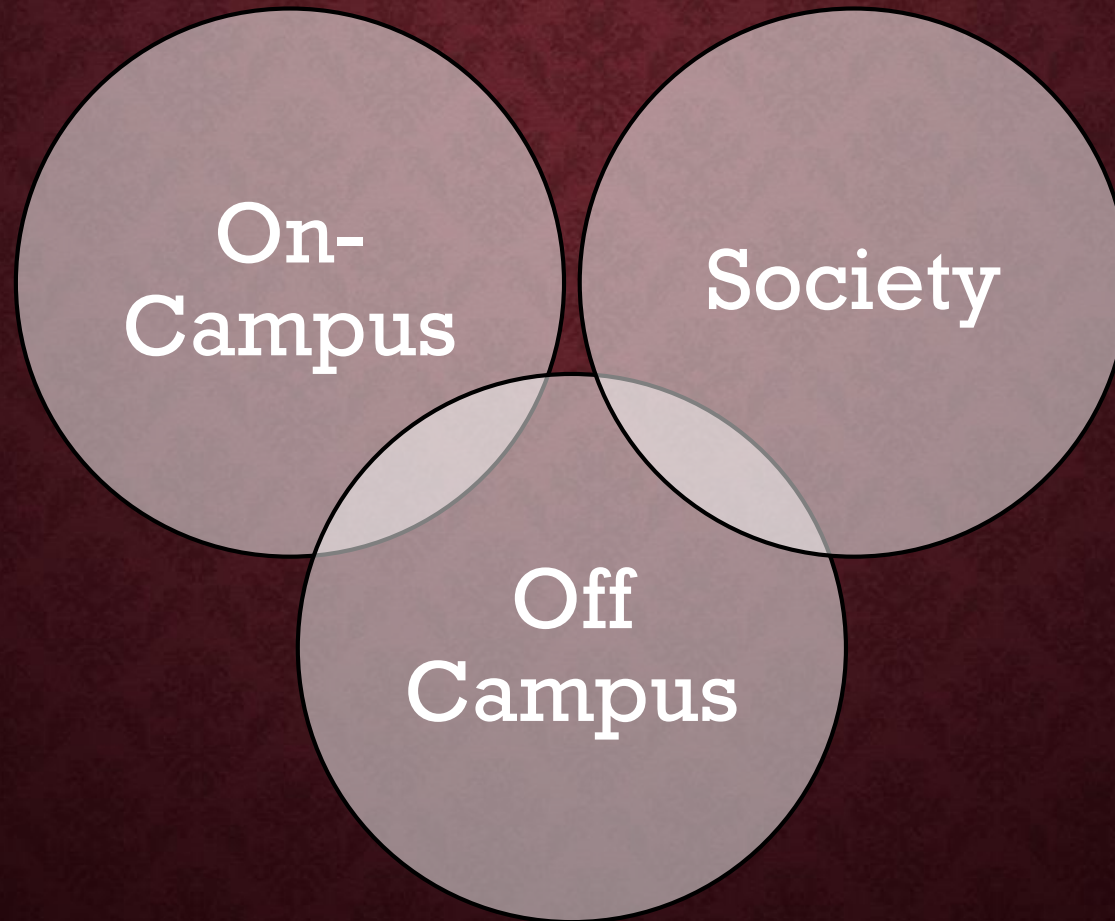
# SOCIAL STRESSORS

- Structural Challenges[9]

  - Prejudice and discrimination

  - More likely to come from lower SES backgrounds

  - More likely to be first in family (FOF)

  - More likely to have graduated from underperforming High Schools

# NAVIGATING LIFE AS A STUDENT OF COLOR AT A PWI

- Acculturative Stress [10]

- Being a member of a minority group at a PWI/U can decrease the psychological functioning of students of color[5]

- Academic Inferiority or Academic Phoniness[5]

- The impact of Microaggressions on mental health and self-esteem[11]

- Perceptions of being a burden[12]

- Racial Battle Fatigue[13]

- AWA [14]

# SUPPORTING THE MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF STUDENTS OF COLOR

# A MOMENT OF REFLECTION

- What steps has your campus community taken to support the mental health needs of students of color?

- SHARE WITH OTHERS!!!

# CONSIDER A MULTI-CULTURAL STRENGTH-BASED APPROACH

- Ethnic Identity[5]

- Political Activism[15]

- Spirituality [16, 17]

- Parental and extended family support [17]

- Involvement in student organizations [17]

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# LITERATURE-BASED RECOMMENDATIONS

- Climate study to capture the experiences of each marginalized group members both on and off campus [18,19]

- A mental health needs assessment[8]

- Campus administrators should consider societal implications of being a racial or ethnic minority including intersecting identities [18,19, 20]

- Foster a sense of belonging[21]

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# "FEELINGS OF BELONGING"[21]

- Culturally competent staff and faculty members

- Create a space for sense of belonging

- Pedagogical approaches and campus programming should be culturally sensitive

- Establish a multi-dimensional system of mentorship compassion

**The Equity in Mental Health Framework**
– from –
THE STEVE FUND AND THE JED FOUNDATION

1. Identify and promote the mental health and well-being of students of color as a campus-wide priority

2. Engage students to provide guidance and feedback on matters of student mental health and emotional well-being

3. Actively recruit, train and retain a diverse and culturally competent faculty and professional staff

4. Create opportunities to engage around national and international issues/events

5. Create dedicated roles to support well-being and success of students of color

6. Support and promote accessible, safe communication with campus administration and an effective response system

7. Offer a range of supportive programs and services in varied formats

8. Help students learn about programs and services by advertising and promoting through multiple channels

9. Identify and utilize culturally relevant and promising programs and practices, and collect data on effectiveness

10. Participate in resource and information sharing (within and between schools).

## QUESTIONS?

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