

Questions taken from Q&A:

- **Who's job is it to combat racism, surely its allies, as BAME people are exhausted with the daily microaggressions and therefore, their mental health needs to be acknowledged?**

During the meeting, I expressed my perspective on addressing the issue of racism with a compassionate outlook. I firmly believe that every individual holds the responsibility of combating racism. With a compassionate approach, we can create a culture of accountability without the need for assigning blame. This approach will further encourage open and honest conversations, allowing us to work collaboratively towards the changes we all aspire for.

- **How do we get others races to understand our blackness, because I feel we are still very behind as a society in terms of diversity and inclusion within the workplace and general society, many in the sector still feel isolated due to being the minority; how can we make experience's more open and pleasant.**

It is truly heartening to observe the extensive efforts being implemented at a systemic level in order to combat racism and discrimination in various domains, including the workforce. It is understandable that this progress may seem gradual and one may feel powerless in bringing about any meaningful change. Thus, the talk aimed to inspire us to initiate changes within our circle of influence, starting with working on ourselves and embracing vulnerability by being our true selves. I strongly believe that this approach can help us bridge the gap caused by fear of the unknown.

- **That was amazing thank you Jeri, I wonder how we can balance having sensitivity towards the suffering (including the trickiness to navigate systemic structures and how they impact people) and the connectedness to the pride of our culture/heritage we can strive to maintain within these systems.**

Thank you for your question. Balancing this issue can be difficult. To start, it's important to understand and empathize with the suffering of all involved. Additionally, it can be challenging to balance the fear of disconnection with pride in our culture and heritage. It's crucial to remember that self-compassion is an active process that we must encourage ourselves to engage in. This can help us better deal with the unknown and ultimately combat racism.

- **What are your thoughts on the dynamic of minority staff championing and challenging racism whilst others from the minority community stay silent and not sharing the burden?**

I appreciate you posing this question. I understand that it can be a daunting task to effect change and that progress may seem slow. It may be beneficial to consider the barriers that we all put up in order to maintain social connections and our fear of not being a part of a group. This fear can be overwhelming, and it may seem more manageable to remain silent rather than confront and challenge racism.

- **I often wonder about whether I should wait for people who have experienced racism to feel safe to talk about this, or whether I should ask about these experiences directly? How**

to get the balance between saying this is a safe space vs not disempowering people to speak up themselves?

Thank you for this question. I can empathize with the challenge you are facing, having encountered a similar situation during my training in psychology as a male trainee from an underrepresented group. Looking back, it would have been favourable if my supervisors, who were all of the same background (white), had taken the time to consider my perspective and how I might have been feeling. This could have assisted me in coping with my difficulties more effectively. I am grateful that my University, Lancaster University, provides therapy sessions for trainees, which I made use of. This allowed me to gain the courage to discuss my issues. As you suggested, opening up a dialogue on this topic and working to ensure that the space you share with the practitioners feels safe enough to share their experiences may serve as an excellent starting point for addressing these concerns during your meetings.

- **Recently, I was racially profiled in America last week as I was walking in a liquor store near a library to get a snack because I was informed by the receptionist that they didn't have a vending machine after asking them. So I walked over to the nearby liquor store to get a snack, and to cut long story short, I was racially profiled by people working in the shop that may have been of Indian descent. I was given dirty looks, asked silly questions that just triggered me, and ended up getting into an argument with them. This experience has made me not want to deal with Indians and other races outside of black people on a social and romantic level because I'm tired of the disrespect. Is there any way I can overcome this feeling as a black man of not wanting to deal with other races anymore due to this incident?**

Thank you for sharing your experience with us. It is unfortunate that you had to go through such a difficult situation. I can only imagine how hard it must have been and still is for you. Experiences like these can leave us with a range of emotions that may be hard to understand. Your example highlights that we need to address racism as a collective battle rather than an 'us versus them' mentality. It is easy to generalize and stay away from people who might not understand us, but in my opinion, that creates a barrier to learning about each other. Despite these challenges, we can work on showing up as our true selves and not hide away. This is a way to challenge racism from the bottom-up by working on ourselves.

- **Hello! Is there a risk of centering White feelings if we over-focus on compassion when people and systems are perpetuating racism - knowingly or not? I'm mindful that when White fragility is triggered often this manifests in further harm to racially minoritized people and it isn't the responsibility of those who are being harmed to focus on compassion - (hope that makes sense!! Thank you :-)**

Thank you for your question. I understand your concerns about the potential for prioritizing/centring white feelings in discussions of racism. However, I believe it is important to approach this as a shared human challenge rather than an "us versus them" situation. Building a culture of non-blame is crucial for productive conversations about racism, which can only happen when people feel safe enough to engage with each other and the problems. As I mentioned in my talk, it can be useful to consider the potential threats involved in these conversations in order to communicate effectively and ensure that everyone is heard.

- **How do I know as a black person that I can trust other races of people to be our allies in combating predominantly anti black racism?**

Thank you once again for your question. I want to emphasize that we are all in this together, and I hope you don't tire of hearing that. Research has shown that when societies are diverse and integrated, there are numerous benefits to be gained. These benefits include increased social cohesion, economic growth, innovation, education, health outcomes, resilience, and adaptability. As a result, it is worth considering how we, as a society consisting of individuals from various backgrounds, cultures, and social groups, can work together to address issues of racism.

- **How can black people get power in a good way to level the playing field?**

From my perspective, it is essential to acknowledge the complex power dynamics that exist and recognize the strength of our individual voices. To create a fair and equitable environment, I think we must first confront any feelings of shame that may arise as members of marginalized groups and have the courage to turn up as our authentic selves. In my opinion, taking this step can serve as a significant move towards achieving equality.

- **I find that often these discussions I've had about my own experiences as an ethnic minority are met with a defensiveness of how "white privilege is not a thing anymore" and how ethnic minorities have it "so good" now. I wonder how you respond to these sorts of comments.**

Thank you for your question. From what you have described, it seems like I can understand the concerns of the individuals around you. I am guessing they might mean that we have made steady progress in moving forward and tackling racism. However, I will share with them that there is still much to do. So, I feel that it might be helpful to be calm and patient and acknowledge their perspective. Some of these things discussed, such as "white privilege not being a thing anymore", could come from a lack of awareness and understanding. If you find yourself in a situation where you can present your perspective to these individuals, it may be helpful to share recent data and research, or even personal stories or experiences that illustrate the ongoing need for progress. It's important to approach these conversations in a way that is non-judgmental and avoids blame, as this can lead to defensiveness and apprehension. Ultimately, fostering a sense of empathy and understanding can help move us forward towards greater equality.

- **I recently did a short talk on anti-racist practice for a group of aspiring psychologists. This has allowed me to think how helpful it would be to include a CFT model. One feedback we got was how useful it was just to start conversations about racism when there are not regular opportunities to do so. What do you think would help facilitate regular conversations about racism for all staff member?**

This is a lovely question, and it is really nice to hear the feedback from your group, as it also sparked some thoughts in my mind.

I believe that organizing talks like the one held by the "Let Face Change" group can be beneficial. However, I think it is crucial for us to focus on our personal interactions in our daily lives. Our actions

at work, school, social events, and other places are significant in initiating these conversations. By breaking down the barriers we put up and showing up as our authentic selves, we can foster connections and encourage dialogue. When we present as our true selves, people will naturally ask questions, creating opportunities to discuss our struggles and efforts towards making positive changes.