



#BlackAtSchool #BlackInCollegeAdmission #BlackInCollegeCounseling

The Sobering Truth About the Black Experience at Your Institution

PART ONE

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Mindfulness Moment



Guidelines for Engaging in Conversations About Race by Ijeoma Oluo and Jamie Jin Lewis

- **Listen to understand, not to respond.**
- **Lean into discomfort.** The work of addressing injustice is sometimes uncomfortable, especially aspects we've never had to think about it before. Trust that the reward will outweigh discomfort.
- **Name race and racism.** Avoid using coded or vague language. Use the words you know to talk about racism specifically.
- **Flow in, flow out.** Monitor how much space you're taking up in a conversation. If you tend to be the first one to speak up, challenge yourself to listen to others first. If you usually hang back in a conversation, challenge yourself to speak your truth.
- **Speak from the "I" perspective;** avoid generalizations.
- **What's said here, stays here.** What's learned here, leaves here. This is a space to build trust and deepen relationships. If you feel an urge to gossip about something you heard, challenge yourself to think about why that story feels so thorny and how you might address that underlying issue in a constructive way.
- **Remember, this is not a debate.** We are talking about people's lived experiences and real pain that people are feeling and your goal should not be to be declared the "winner."
- **Think about your goal for the conversation** and state it at the beginning, so that everyone in the conversation will be on the same page and you'll have a touchpoint to bring the conversation back to if things get off track.
- **Remember that people of color are often speaking from a lifetime of painful experiences around race,** and therefore their emotional response in the conversation may not be one that white people will fully understand, but that doesn't make those responses any less valid.
- **Seek growth, not closure.**

White Supremacy Culture

15 Characteristics of White Supremacy Culture

- Perfectionism
- Sense of Urgency
- Defensiveness
- Quantity Over Quality
- Worship of the Written Word
- Only One Right Way
- Paternalism
- Either/Or Thinking
- Power Hoarding
- Fear of Open Conflict
- Individualism
- I'm the Only One
- Progress is Bigger, More
- Objectivity
- Right to Comfort

Tema Okun and Kenneth Jones,
Dismantling Racism Workbook, 2001

“**White supremacy culture** is the idea (ideology) that white people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of white people are superior to People of Color and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions.”

“Because we all live in a white supremacy culture, these characteristics show up in the attitudes and behaviors of all of us – **people of color and white people**. Therefore, these attitudes and behaviors can show up in any group or organization, whether it is white-led or predominantly white or people of color-led or predominantly people of color.”

Perfectionism

- Little appreciation expressed for the work that others are doing
- More common to point out either how the person or work is inadequate
- Or even more common, to talk to others about the inadequacies of a person or their work without ever talking directly to them
- Making a mistake is confused with being a mistake

Sense of Urgency

- Makes it difficult to be inclusive, encourage democratic and/or thoughtful decisions
- Does not give the opportunity to think of potential long-term consequences
- Frequently results in sacrificing potential allies for quick or highly visible results
- Often reinforced in funding, too much work for too little money

Defensiveness

- Significant time & energy spent on trying to protect power as it exists & covering up abuses of power
- Criticism of those in power are viewed as threatening, inappropriate, or rude
- Not listening to each other or help each other feel heard
- Prohibits or dissuades growth, change, or new ideas
- Energy is spent on making sure that people's feelings aren't getting hurt or protecting the defensive people

Quantity Over Quality

- Time & resources directed towards producing measurable goals
- There is little or no:
 - Value attached to process
 - Comfort with feelings & emotions
 - Capacity for handling complexity
 - Effort to capture qualitative information
- Process may be sacrificed in favor of efficiency or getting things done

Worship of the Written Word

- “If it is not written, it does not exist”
- Does not take into account or value other ways in which information can be shared
- Those with strong documentation & writing skills are highly valued
- Lack of trust & micromanagement culture exists

Only One Right Way

- Notions that a position is final & not up for discussion
- Once people are introduced to “the right way,” the majority will likely adopt it as a norm
- Causes significant barriers to change, agility, innovation, and teamwork
- Creates a sense of exclusion and isolation for people who are not comfortable or at ease with “the right way”

Paternalism

- Decision-making is clear to those with power & unclear to those without it
- Those with power think they are capable of making decisions for & in the interests of those without power
- Those with power don't think it is important to understand the viewpoint or experience of those for whom they are making decisions
- Those without power don't really know how decisions are made & who makes what decisions, but are familiar with the impact of decisions on them

Either/Or Thinking

- Things are “good/bad, right/wrong, with us/against us”
- Closely linked to perfectionism
- No sense that things can be both/and
- Results in trying to simplify complex things
- Often used by those with a clear agenda

Power Hoarding

- Little value placed on sharing power
- Those with power feel threatened when anyone suggests changes to how things could or should be done
- Ideas of leadership are rooted in a culture of “leader worship”
- Often requires secrecy; those with power control what, when, and with whom information is shared

Fear of Open Conflict

- People in power avoid disagreement
- When someone raises an issue that causes discomfort, the response is to blame the person who raises the issue than the issue itself
- Emphasis on being polite to deny people space to feel & be themselves
- Equating difficult issues to being impolite, rude, or out of line

Individualism

- Little experience or comfort working as part of a team
- Belief that problems or challenges are best handled alone
- Creates a lack of accountability and leads to isolation
- Competition > cooperation
- Recognition is often on an individual level, those in power often get most or all of the credit

I'm the Only One

- Connected to individualism
- “If something is going to be done right, I have to do it”
- Little or no ability to trust or delegate work to others
- Linked to a culture of perfectionism & disempowerment

Progress is Bigger, More

- Belief that success & progress is synonymous with “bigger” & “more”
- Progress is understood as organizational expansion or ability to serve more people
- Gives little to no consideration for the cost associated with expansion

Objectivity

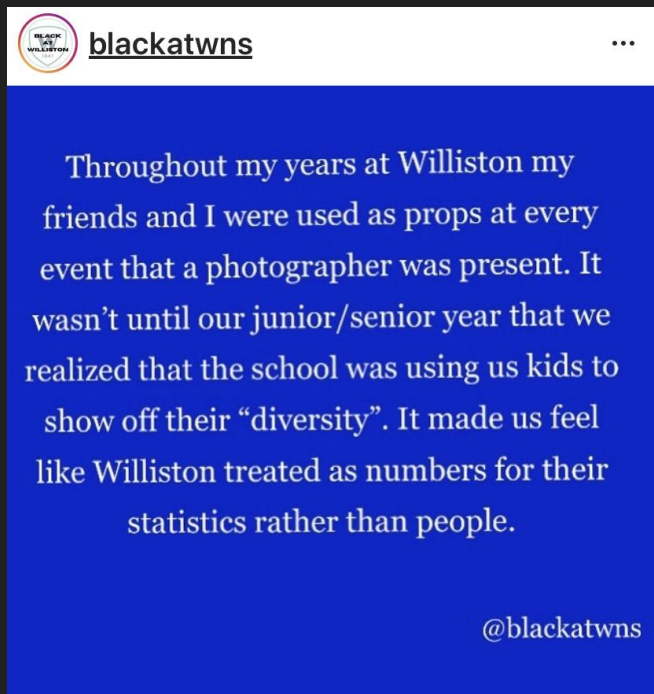
- Belief that people can be objective or “neutral” in their viewpoints or analyses
- Belief that emotions are inherently destructive, irrational, & should not play a role in decision-making or group processes
- Invalidating or punishing people who show emotion

Right to Comfort

- Belief that those with power have a right to emotional comfort
- Scapegoating those who cause discomfort
- Individual acts of unfairness against White people are conflated with the same analysis as systemic and structural racism that targets BIPOC folx

Black At (School) Posts

Tokenization



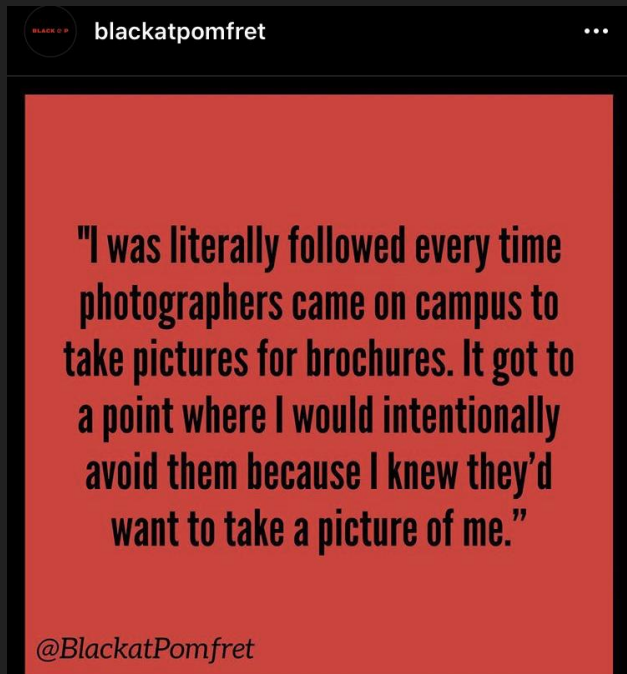
Williston Northampton School an independent, coeducational, boarding and day school in Easthampton, MA.

Example of:

Progress is bigger, more - “progress is an organization which expands (adds staff, adds projects) or develops the ability to serve more people (regardless of how well they are serving them)”

Quantity over quality - “all resources of organization are directed toward producing measurable goals”

Tokenization



Example of:

Quantity over quality - “all resources of organization are directed toward producing measurable goals”

Paternalism - “those with power often don’t think it is important or necessary to understand the viewpoint or experience of those for whom they are making decisions”

Pomfret School is an independent, coeducational, college preparatory boarding and day school in Pomfret, CT.

Tokenization



University of New Hampshire- Durham, NH

Example of:

Sense of urgency - “frequently results in sacrificing potential allies for quick or highly visible results”

Quantity over quality - “no understanding that when there is a conflict between content (the agenda of the meeting) and process (people’s need to be heard or engaged), process will prevail”

Paternalism - “those with power often don’t think it is important or necessary to understand the viewpoint or experience of those for whom they are making decisions”

Undermatching

"My daughter graduated in the Class of 2012. She made her college list and when I was reviewing it, I noticed one of her top schools was no longer listed. I called her and she explained her college counselor took it off and explained it was too much of a reach. I immediately called the counselor and told her who was she to decide what schools my daughter applied to once our family had already decided with her. I demanded she put the school back on the list immediately and I followed up to make sure her transcripts went in."

•• **#blackatnmh**

"Needless to say, my daughter graduated from that same school Swarthmore in 2016. My daughter's lesson was **NEVER** let anyone talk you out of your worth & **MOMS** always know best."

•• **#blackatnmh**

Northfield Mount Hermon is a coeducational preparatory school in Mount Hermon, MA.

Example of:

Paternalism - "those with power think they are capable of making decisions for and in the interests of those without power"

Power hoarding - "those with power assume they have the best interests of the organization at heart and assume those wanting change are ill-informed (stupid), emotional, inexperienced"

Undermatching

"I FORGET MY COLLEGE ADVISORS NAME, BUT SHE TOLD ME THE BEST COLLEGE I COULD HOPE FOR WAS BOSTON UNIVERSITY, EVEN THOUGH I SCORED A 2130 ON THE SATs, HAD A A-/B+ AVERAGE, EXTRACURRICULARS AND A GREAT ART PORTFOLIO. I TOLD MY MOM, AND SHE TALKED A PARENT OF ANOTHER BLACK STUDENT, WHO SAID "SHE SAYS THAT TO ALL THE POC". I ENDED UP GETTING ACCEPTED TO COLUMBIA, NYU, COOPER UNION AND SAIC, WHICH WERE THE ONLY SCHOOLS I APPLIED TO. ON TOP OF THAT, IT'S HARD TO EXPRESS HOW FRUSTRATING A DYNAMIC IT IS TO BE UNDERVALUED BY YOUR COLLEGE ADVISOR ON ONE HAND, AND THEN WHEN YOU GET INTO AN IVY LEAGUE SCHOOL, HAVE WHITE FRIENDS OF YOURS TELL YOU THAT YOU GOT IN BECAUSE YOU'RE BLACK."

#BLACKATDALTON

Example of:

Perfectionism - "more common is to point out either how the person or work is inadequate"

Objectivity - "impatience with any thinking that does not appear 'logical'"

Either/or thinking - "things are either/or — good/bad, right/wrong, with us/against us;" "results in trying to simplify complex things"

The Dalton School is an independent, coeducational day school in New York, NY.

Institutional discomfort or lack of transparency

I remember when the admissions office got the art department to take down some of the “I too, am Milton” artworks, mostly drawn by POC, during revisit day because they talked about the racism and bigotry that students had experienced by other students and faculty members. So much for “Dare to be true”.

@BlackAtMiltonAcad

Milton Academy is a coeducational, independent preparatory, boarding and day school in Milton, MA.

Example of:

Defensiveness - “because of either/or thinking (see below), criticism of those with power is viewed as threatening and inappropriate (or rude),” “the defensiveness of people in power creates an oppressive culture”

Fear of open conflict - “people in power are scared of expressed conflict and try to ignore it or run from it”

Right to comfort - “the belief that those with power have a right to emotional and psychological comfort”

Harmful actions followed by bystander inaction



SENIOR YEAR, ONE OF MY FRIENDS PUT UP A SIGN IN THE SAC ADVISING STUDENTS TO REFRAIN FROM SAYING HARMFUL WORDS SUCH AS THE N-WORD, RATCHET, GHETTO, RETARD, ETC. A WHITE STUDENT TORE IT DOWN STATING IT WAS INFRINGING ON HER RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF SPEECH.

I WAS LIVID AND POURED OUT MY HEART TO PEOPLE SITTING IN THE SAC THE MOMENT I FOUND OUT. I BECAME THE ANGRY BLACK GIRL. SCHOOL SHOULD FEEL LIKE A SAFE PLACE FOR STUDENTS TO LEARN. AS A BLACK WOMAN, I SHOULDN'T HAVE TO ADDRESS MY PEERS ON THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF BEING CALLED THE N-WORD OR ANY DEROGATORY.

THEY DIDN'T CARE AND THEY CLEARLY HAD NO RESPECT FOR ME AND THE PEOPLE WHO LOOK LIKE ME. THEY BEING THE PERSON WHO TORE DOWN THE SIGN AND THOSE WHO SAID NOTHING.

Dana Hall is an independent boarding and day school for girls in Wellesley, MA.

Example of:

Defensiveness - "because of either/or thinking (see below), criticism of those with power is viewed as threatening and inappropriate (or rude);" "the defensiveness of people in power creates an oppressive culture"

Fear of open conflict - "when someone raises an issue that causes discomfort, the response is to blame the person for raising the issue rather than to look at the issue which is actually causing the problem;" "equating the raising of difficult issues with being impolite, rude, or out of line"

Right to comfort - "scapegoating those who cause discomfort"

Objectivity - "the belief that there is such a thing as being objective or 'neutral'"

Otherization or made to feel othered

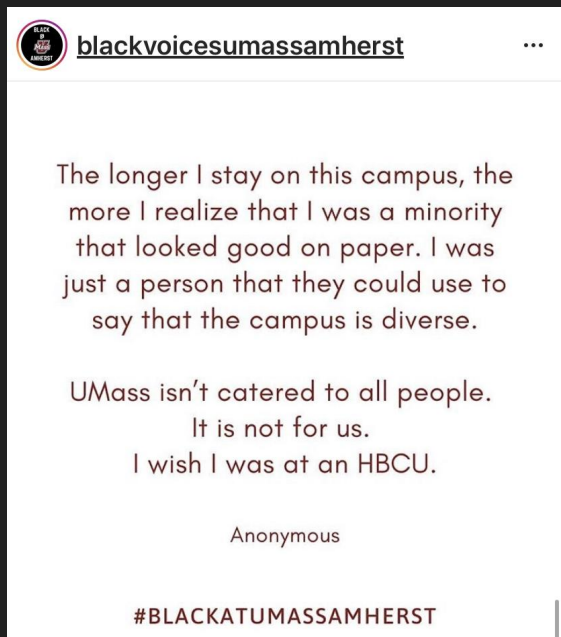
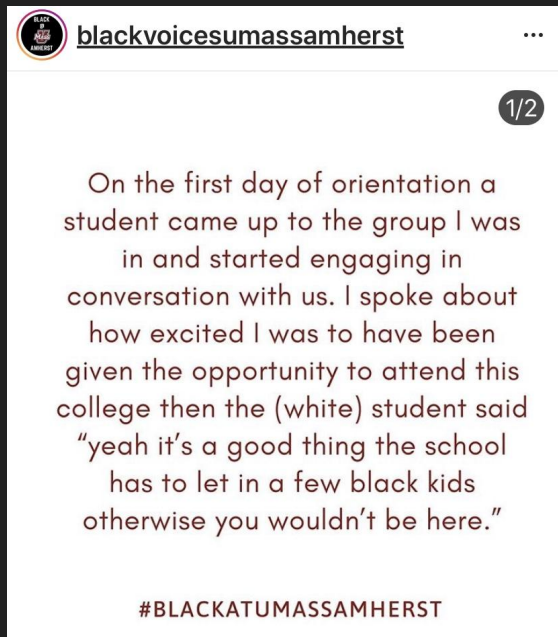


Example of:

Power hoarding - “power seen as limited, only so much to go around;”
“those with power don’t see themselves as hoarding power or as feeling threatened”

Amherst College- Amherst, MA

Otherization or made to feel othered



Example of:

Either/or thinking - “things are either/or — good/bad, right/wrong, with us/against us;” “results in trying to simplify complex things”

Progress is bigger, more - “progress is an organization which expands (adds staff, adds projects) or develops the ability to serve more people (regardless of how well they are serving them)”

Quantity over quality - “all resources of organization are directed toward producing measurable goals”

University of Massachusetts Amherst - Amherst, MA

Otherization or made to feel othered

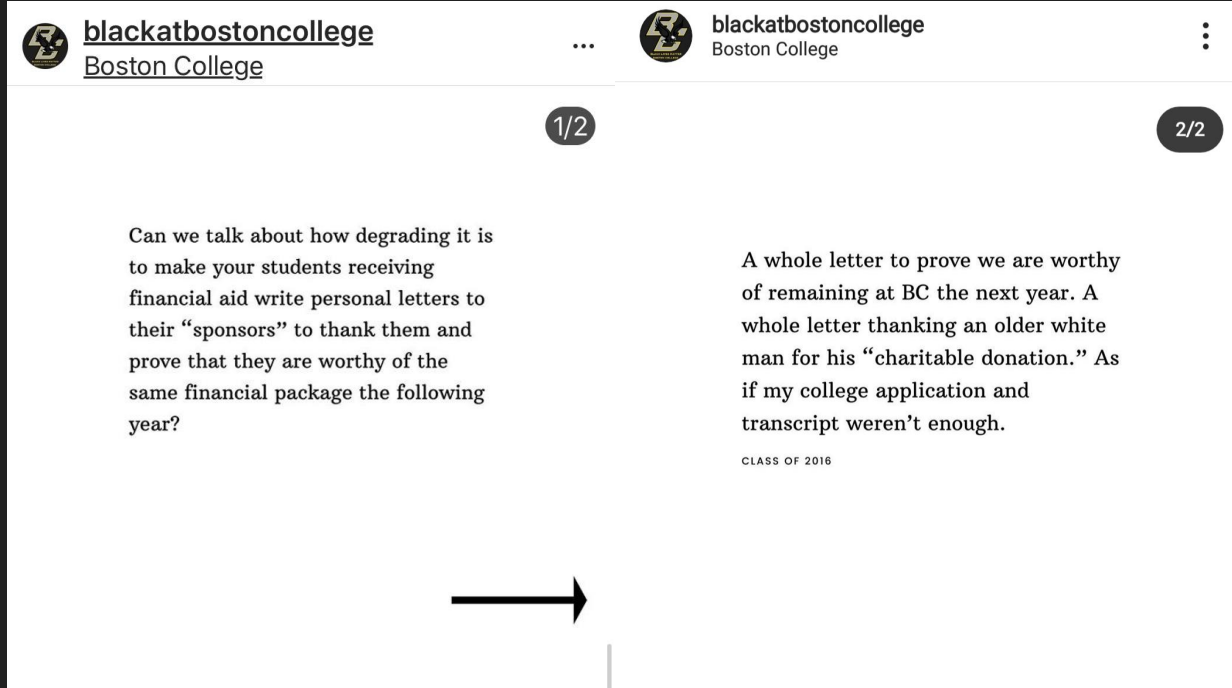


Example of:

Either/or thinking - “things are either/or — good/bad, right/wrong, with us/against us;”
“results in trying to simplify complex things”

Paternalism - “those without power understand they do not have it and understand who does”

Otherization or made to feel othered



Example of:

Paternalism -
“those without
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they do not have it
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does”

Boston College- Newton, MA

Otherization or made to feel othered



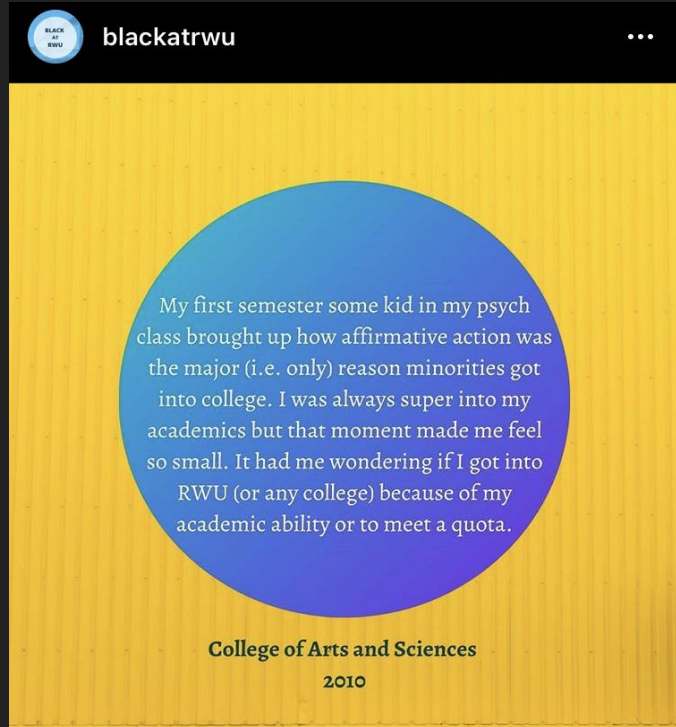
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Deerfield Academy is an independent, co-educational boarding and day school in Deerfield, MA.

Otherization or made to feel othered

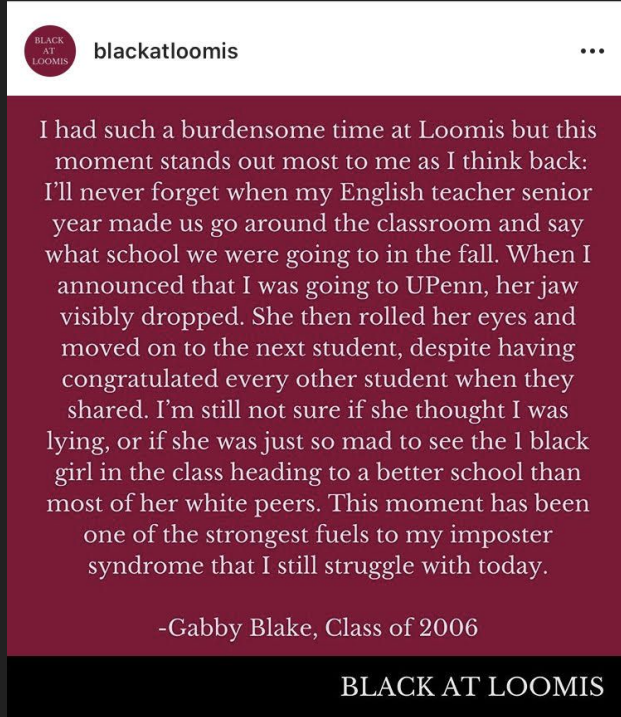


Example of:

Either/or thinking - “things are either/or — good/bad, right/wrong, with us/against us;”
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Otherization or made to feel othered



Example of:

Power hoarding - “those with power don’t see themselves as hoarding power or as feeling threatened”

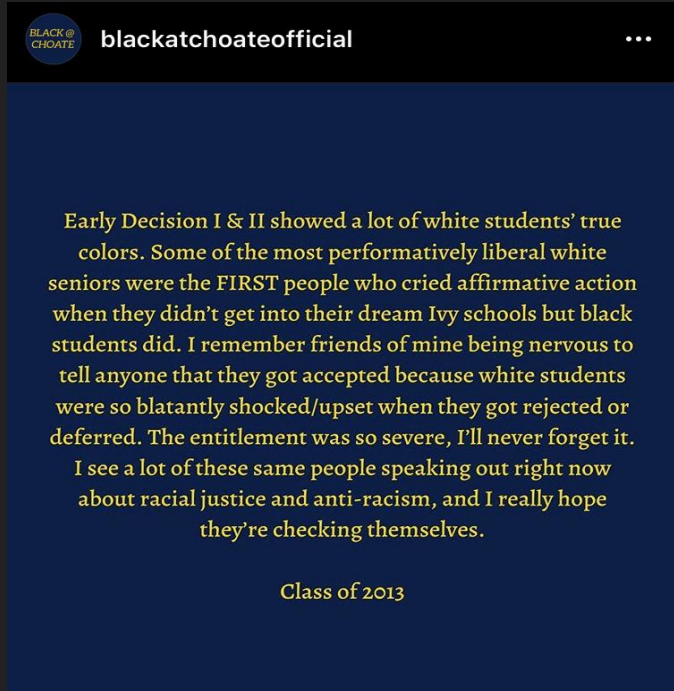
Paternalism - “those without power understand they do not have it and understand who does”

Perfectionism - “little appreciation expressed among people for the work that others are doing”

Objectivity - “impatience with any thinking that does not appear ‘logical’”

The Loomis Chaffee School is an independent, coeducational, college preparatory boarding and day school in Windsor, CT.

Otherization or made to feel othered



Example of:

Perfectionism - “little appreciation expressed among people for the work that others are doing”

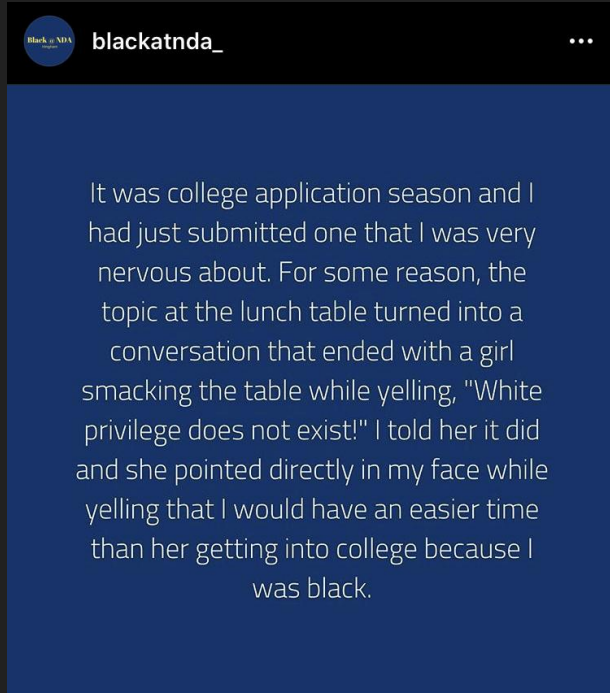
Defensiveness - “a lot of energy in the organization is spent trying to make sure that people’s feelings aren’t getting hurt or working around defensive people;” “the defensiveness of people in power creates an oppressive culture”

Either/or thinking - “things are either/or — good/bad, right/wrong, with us/against us;” “results in trying to simplify complex things”

Paternalism - “those without power understand they do not have it and understand who does”

Choate Rosemary Hall is an independent, coeducational, boarding and day school in Wallingford, CT.

Otherization or made to feel othered



Example of:

Perfectionism - "little appreciation expressed among people for the work that others are doing"

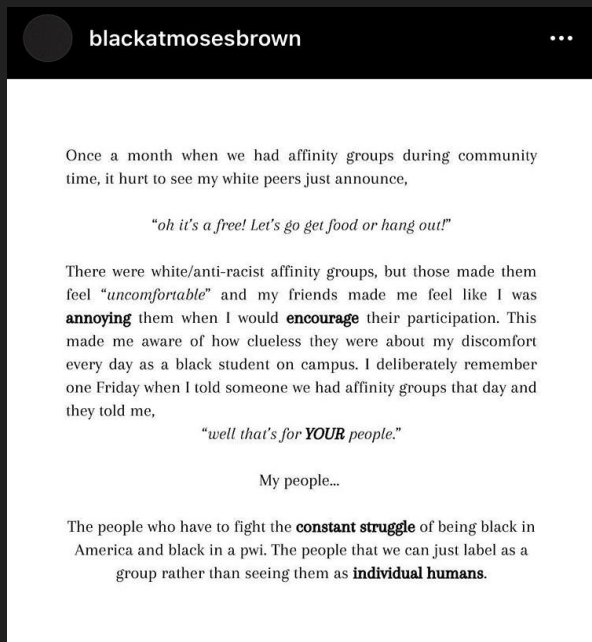
Defensiveness - "because of either/or thinking (see below), criticism of those with power is viewed as threatening;" "white people spend energy defending against charges of racism instead of examining how racism might actually be happening;" "the defensiveness of people in power creates an oppressive culture"

Either/or thinking - "things are either/or — good/bad, right/wrong, with us/against us;" "results in trying to simplify complex things"

Fear of open conflict - "when someone raises an issue that causes discomfort, the response is to blame the person for raising the issue rather than to look at the issue which is actually causing the problem"

Notre Dame Academy is a private, all-girls Roman Catholic high school in Hingham, MA.

Otherization or made to feel othered



Example of:

Only one right way - “the belief there is one right way to do things”

Objectivity - “the belief that there is such a thing as being objective or ‘neutral;” “impatience with any thinking that does not appear ‘logical””

Fear of open conflict - “when someone raises an issue that causes discomfort, the response is to blame the person for raising the issue rather than to look at the issue which is actually causing the problem”

Moses Brown School is a coeducational, Quaker, day school in Providence, RI.

Otherization or made to feel othered



Example of:

Paternalism - “those without power understand they do not have it and understand who does”

Perfectionism - “little time, energy, or money put into reflection or identifying lessons learned that can improve practice, in other words little or no learning from mistakes”

Fear of open conflict - “emphasis on being polite”

**BLACK
LIVES
MATTER**



Advice for being a better ally to your Black students

- Listen, listen, listen.
- Stop policing their narratives.
- Stop policing their tone.
- Identify students by their name and pronounce it correctly.
- Partner with the diversity office on your initiatives.
- Stop relying on tradition as a guide--some of your events/activities may need to be completely redesigned or come to an end.
- View failures as a problem of the institution, not the student.
- Understand undermatching and acknowledge the moments where you may have done it. Commit to holding students to high expectations and truly believe that they can succeed (let them define success).
- Question your school's policies and procedures and pay attention to how they are implemented. Ask yourself, "Are Black students being negatively impacted?"
- Include students in steering committees to ensure their voices are heard when it comes to equity, diversity, inclusion, and access initiatives.
- Demand that your institution invest in high quality diversity, equity, and inclusion training for all faculty and staff.
- Promote self-care practices and identify allies on campus to help with support and wellbeing.
- Check your privilege, embrace it/own it, and use it to create change. Check your biases.

