CHAPTER ONE

Taking Responsibility to Address Bias and Discrimination

> We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people.
>
> – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

> I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.
>
> – Helen Keller

These two quotes are reflective of attempts to answer several questions echoed in this chapter and throughout the rest of the book: (a) what makes it so difficult for people, whether targets of discrimination or those in the majority group to engage in antibias actions when prejudice, racism or xenophobia rear their ugly heads; (b) can the actions of a single person actually do any good in overcoming the immensity of racism; (c) what changes must occur in

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well-intentioned individuals to make them valuable social advocate allies; and (d) what are the tools and strategies that have proven effective in combatting racist expressions on individual and institutional levels? To answer these key questions, we must first understand the internal struggle and complex array of embedded or nested emotions that keep each of us from confronting the meaning of racism.

For White Americans, this confrontation and the fears it generates are eloquently expressed by Tatum (2002):

> Fear is a powerful emotion, one that immobilizes, traps words in our throats, and stills our tongues. Like a deer on the highway, frozen in the panic induced by the lights of an oncoming car, when we are afraid it seems that we cannot think, we cannot speak, we cannot move…What do we fear? Isolation from friends and family, ostracism for speaking of things that generate discomfort, rejection by those who may be offended by what we have to say, the loss of privilege or status for speaking in support of those who have been marginalized by society, physical harm caused by the irrational wrath of those who disagree with your stance?
>
> (pp. 115–116)

For people of color, the barriers to confronting biases are summed up in these narratives by a Latina and African American about the racism they experience.

> "It seems to never end. 'You're different, you're stupid. You don't belong!' You get angry but have to hold it in. How does it make me feel? It hurts a lot, especially if it comes from your friends and even your teachers. Explaining, doesn't help. They will just say, 'It wasn't my intention.' 'Why are you always so sensitive?' 'Can't you take a joke?' And, I can't say anything because I am so emotional. I don't want them to see me cry or they'll think I'm weak." (Latina participant)

> "I have to stop and think sometimes. 'Are they being racist? Or, is that just how they act? Or, are they just not being friendly because they had a bad day?' I feel like there's nothing I can do. Show my anger or say something, I'll get in trouble. I try to walk away sometimes, but it just eats away at you. Then you take it out on yourself, 'Why didn't you stand up for your rights?' You begin to feel like a weak coward." (African American participant)

Increasingly, scholars and practitioners in the fields of psychology and education have stressed the responsibility of all concerned citizens to address issues of interpersonal bias/discrimination and systemic oppression (APA, 2019c; Brown & Ostrove, 2013; Obear, 2017; Olle, 2018; Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, & McCullough, 2016; Sue, 2017b). The call to action

was especially urgent when on May 25, 2020, a video of a Minneapolis police officer kneeling on the neck of George Floyd for nearly nine minutes surfaced. Floyd died from asphyxiation and four officers were arrested for participating in his murder. The event sent shock waves throughout the nation, sparked weeks of widespread protests, resulted in calls for police reform, energized the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, and ignited public debate about individual and systemic racism. Unlike other unarmed killings of Black men, the George Floyd murder seemed different as it somehow pricked the conscience of the nation and the rest of the world. Ironically, despite the protests and renewed concern with police brutality, Jacob Blake, a Black man was shot seven times in the back that left him paralyzed by a White police officer on August 23, 2020.

For years, social justice advocates have underscored the social responsibility of everyone to (a) take action against prejudice and discrimination (Tatum, 1997); (b) develop the awareness, knowledge and skills necessary to confront individual and institutional manifestations of oppression (Spanierman & Smith, 2017a); and (c) actively promote conditions that allow for equal access and opportunities for marginalized groups in our society (Goodman, Wilson, Helms, Greenstein, & Medzhitova, 2018). Despite these pressing calls to combat bias and bigotry, many have noted the appalling silence and inaction that often accompanies an incident or expression of prejudice and discrimination in our everyday lives (Byrd, 2018; Potok, 2017; Sue & Spanierman, 2020). Because of their often-unintentional nature and invisibility, this seems particularly true for expressions that take the form of micro and macroaggressions (Nadal, Griffin, Wong, Hamit, & Rasmus, 2014; Torino, Rivera, Capodilupo, Nadal, & Sue, 2018).

Sue, Alsaidi, Awad, Glaeser, Calle, and Mendez (2019) have introduced the concept of "microinterventions" or interpersonal antibias strategies used by targets, allies and bystanders to disrupt, diminish, and terminate prejudice and discrimination arising from the actions of individual perpetrators. In their original formulation, they focused on interpersonal microinterventions directed toward offenders who deliver everyday affronts that communicate race-based "put-downs," insults, and invalidations. These antiracism strategies were organized under four conceptual categories: (1) making the "invisible" visible, (2) disarming the microaggression, (3) educating the offender, and (4) seeking external support and intervention. The authors also called for the development of individual actions and tactics

that would change, nullify or minimize the expression of macroaggressions (biased institutional policies, practices, structures, and social norms) as distinct from microaggressions (interpersonal slights).

In this book, we extend and expand the concept of microinterventions to include their role in nullifying the harmful impact of not only microaggressions but also macroaggressions directed toward marginalized groups in our society. Although we primarily use racial bias as an example, it is important to note that women, LGBTQ individuals, people with disabilities, and other socially devalued groups in our society can also experience micro- and macroaggressions in the form of unfair and biased institutional policies and practices. Many of these antibias strategies seem equally applicable to combat sexism, heterosexism, ableism, and classism as well.

In this chapter, we make a major conceptual distinction between micro- and macroaggressions, and explicate the manifestation, dynamics and impact of both forms on the lived experience of marginalized groups in our society. We reveal how microaggressions are often hidden in the implicit biases of individuals and describe how macroaggressions can be disguised in the customs and practices of institutions, the public policies of our society, and the racialized ideological beliefs of the general public.

In Chapter 2, we provide a new conceptual framework and working definition of microinterventions and organize them into three types: microaffirmations, microprotections and microchallenges. We explore how each uniquely immunizes targets against and/or nullifies and minimizes the negative impact of micro- and macroaggressions.

In Chapter 3, we review literature that discuss the positive benefits that often accrue to targets, significant others, allies, well-intentioned bystanders, and interestingly to our broader social norms when concerned individuals engage in microinterventions. In addition, we cite scholarly work that explicates the personal costs of inaction (to the target or onlooker) in the face of racially biased and unfair actions.

In Chapter 4, we identify major barriers to acting against prejudice and discrimination, and how they often force silence and complicity on targets, White allies, and bystanders into accepting the manifestation of bias. Among one of the major forces to overcome is the fear of personal and professional retribution.

In Chapter 5, we spend considerable time suggesting solutions for overcoming these challenges. Receiving and providing social support from

like-minded individuals or groups may represent a major strategy in combatting racism. The old adage that there is strength and safety in numbers not only applies to individual, but to group action as well.

In Chapters 6–9, we add to the original conceptual framework of microinterventions, formulate new strategies associated with social advocacy principles, and provide examples of effective and functional antibias actions and tactics that can potentially be used by targets, parents, teachers, significant others, allies and bystanders. These chapters are organized around four strategic goals:

- Chapter 6 – Make the "invisible" visible.
- Chapter 7 – Educate perpetrators and stakeholders.
- Chapter 8 – Disarm and neutralize micro- and macroaggressions.
- Chapter 9 – Seek external help from authoritative individuals, groups and organizations.

Finally, in Chapter 10, we discuss the implications of microintervention work, summarize our findings, and provide suggestions and actions for caretakers, educators, and other concerned citizens and professionals.

The Failure to Act

The notable quotes at the start of this chapter echo the sentiment of many social justice advocates regarding the appalling worldwide silence and inaction of people in the face of injustice, hatred and oppression directed toward socially marginalized group members (Freire, 1970; Potok, 2017; Tatum, 1997). In the United States, the omnipresence of racial bias and bigotry has led many to question the reasons for their persistence in light of widespread public condemnation. Social scientists have proposed a number of reasons for people's failure to act: (a) the invisibility of modern forms of bias; (b) trivializing an incident as innocuous; (c) diffusion of responsibility; (d) fear of repercussions or retaliation; and (e) the paralysis of not knowing what to do (Goodman, 2011; Kawakami, Dunn, Karmali, & Dovidio, 2009; Latane & Darley, 1968; Scully & Rowe, 2009; Shelton, Richeson, Salvatore, & Hill, 2006; Sue, 2003).

These reasons apply equally to targets of discrimination, White allies, and "innocent" bystanders (Scully & Rowe, 2009; Sue, 2015a). In many cases, bias

and discrimination go unchallenged because the behaviors and words are disguised in ways that provide cover for their expression and/or the belief that they are harmless and insignificant. Even when the biased intent and detrimental impact are unmasked, the possible actions to be taken are unclear and filled with potential pitfalls. The reasons for inaction appear particularly pronounced and applicable to the expression of racial microaggressions (Sue et al., 2007) and racial *macro*aggressions, a concept to be introduced shortly (Huber & Solorzano, 2014).

The bombardment of racial micro-/macroaggressions in the life experience of persons of color has been described as a chronic state of "racial battle fatigue" that taxes the resources of target groups (Smith, Hung, & Franklin, 2011). In the stress-coping literature, two forms of managing stress have been identified: emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The former is a strategy utilized by individuals to reduce or manage the intensity of the emotive distress (internal self-care) and tends to be more passive, while the latter is used to target the cause of the distress (external). Problem-focused strategies are more long-term solutions that are proactive and directed to altering, or challenging the source of the stressor. Although there is considerable scholarly work on general models of stress coping (Lazarus, 2000; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), there is less research that take into consideration how people of color cope with prejudice and discrimination (Brondolo, Brady Ver Halen, Pencille, Beatty, & Contrada, 2009). Even when race-related stress and coping are discussed, it seldom explores questions about what people of color can do to disarm, challenge and change perpetrators or institutional systems that oppress target populations (Mellor, 2004). Throughout this book, we anchor our proposed race-related coping strategies to the more active problem-focused strategies in navigating prejudice and discrimination, preserving well-being, and promoting institutional and societal equity.

Additionally, scholars have largely ignored the role that White allies and well-intentioned bystanders play in the struggle for equal rights (Scully & Rowe, 2009; Spanierman & Smith, 2017). Most research and training have attempted to identify how White Americans become allies, but there is an absence of work on the types of actions or strategies that can be used to directly combat racism (Sue, 2017b). In this chapter, we (a) distinguish between individual microaggressions that arise interpersonally and *macroaggressions* that arise on a systemic level, (b) highlight the importance of

disarming and neutralizing harmful micro- and macroaggressions, and (c) discuss the unique challenges of targets, allies and bystanders to engage in microinterventions.

The Relationship between Macroaggressions and Microaggressions

The use of the term *macroaggression* is a relatively new one that is often confused, confounded or mistakenly differentiated from microaggressions (Pérez Huber & Solorzano, 2015; Sue et al., 2019). Although both are entirely different concepts, the confusion surrounds the misperception that microaggressions (a) refer to relatively small slights and possess minimal harmful impact, (b) are always unintentional acts outside the level of conscious awareness, and (c) do not include overt displays of bigotry such as voicing demeaning group-based epithets. White parents who forbid their sons or daughters from dating or marrying a Latinx, police who profile and shoot an unarmed African American suspect, or calling an Asian American a "Chink" or "Jap" hardly seem like *micro* acts but rather *macro* ones. For these behaviors, some have mistakenly referred to them as macroaggressions (Torino et al., 2018). Yet, it is important to note that intentionality, harmful impact, and overtness are criteria that do not necessarily distinguish one from the other.

Sue and colleagues (Sue et al., 2007) originally defined microaggressions as brief and commonplace daily verbal and behavioral interpersonal indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights, invalidations, and insults to an individual because of their marginalized status in society. Racial microaggressions are the everyday slights, insults, put-downs, invalidations, and offensive behaviors that people of color experience in daily interactions with generally well-intentioned White Americans who may be unaware that they have engaged in racially demeaning ways toward target groups. The taxonomy of microaggressions includes microassaults, microinsults and microinvalidations.

A microassault is an explicit racial derogation characterized primarily by a verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions. Referring to someone as "Colored" or "Oriental," using racial epithets, discouraging interracial interactions, deliberately serving a White patron

before someone of color, and displaying a swastika are examples. Microassaults are most similar to what has been called "old-fashioned" racism conducted on an individual level. They are most likely to be conscious and deliberate, although it is generally expressed in limited "private" situations (micro) that allow the perpetrator some degree of anonymity. In other words, people are likely to hold notions of minority inferiority privately and will only display it publicly when they (a) lose control or (b) feel relatively safe to engage in a microassault. With the election of President Trump and the rise of right-wing groups, however, overt expressions of racism, sexism, and heterosexism have increased. For many, the public statements from the president and the Twitter expressions of racial bias have seemingly given permission for others to do likewise.

A microinsult is characterized by communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person's racial heritage or identity. Microinsults represent subtle snubs, frequently unknown to the perpetrator, but clearly convey a hidden insulting message to the recipient of color. When a White employer tells a prospective candidate of color that "I believe the most qualified person should get the job, regardless of race" or when an employee of color is asked "How did you get your job?," the underlying message from the perspective of the recipient may be twofold: (a) people of color are not qualified and (b) as a minority group member, you must have obtained the position through some affirmative action or quota program and not because of ability. Such statements are not necessarily microaggressions, but context is important. Hearing these statements frequently when used against affirmative action makes the recipient likely to experience it as such. Microinsults can also occur nonverbally, as when a White teacher fails to acknowledge students of color in the classroom or when a White supervisor seems distracted during a conversation with a Black employee by avoiding eye contact or turning away (Hinton, 2004). In this case, the message conveyed to persons of color is their contributions are unimportant.

Microinvalidations are characterized by communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of color. When Asian Americans (born and raised in the United States) are complimented for speaking good English or repeatedly asked where they were born, the impact is to negate their American heritage and conveys that they are perpetual foreigners. When Blacks are told that "I don't see color" or "We are all human beings," the effect is to negate their

experiences as racial/cultural beings (Helms, 1995). When a Latinx couple is given poor service at a restaurant and shares their experience with White friends, only to be told "Don't be so oversensitive" or "Don't be so petty," the racial experience of the couple is being nullified and its importance is being diminished.

The two latter forms of microaggressions are generally outside the level of conscious awareness of the perpetrator but may vary in their degrees of consciousness. Microassaults, however, are frequently confused as macroaggressions because they are overt, intentional and have an obvious distressing impact. As stressed earlier, microassaults are most similar to blatant overt racism where no guesswork is involved in determining the conscious intent of the perpetrator. The overtness (name-calling) of microassaults, conscious intentionality (expressing racial inferiority), and harmful consequences (shooting an unarmed African American suspect) are forms of microaggressions, and calling them macroaggressions is a misnomer. Pierce (1974) first coined the term (*micro*) aggressions to mean *everyday* racism that are *commonplace* and delivered *interpersonally* by offenders. Microaggressions can and do result in macro harm to targets, but they are not macroaggressions.

How Macroaggressions Differ from Microaggressions

Macroaggressions are the active manifestation of systemic or institutional biases that reside in the philosophy, policies, programs, practices and structures of institutions and communities (Pérez Huber & Solorzano, 2015; Sue et al., 2019). Oftentimes, they may be codified into laws, such as gerrymandering, where voting districts are drawn up to favor a particular party or constituency. They are the primary culprits for creating disparities in education, employment, and health care, and result in harmful detrimental consequences to a socially devalued group's standard of living and quality of life (Jones, 1997). There are three major differences between macroaggressions and microaggressions summarized in Table 1.1. First, while the manifestation of microaggressions resides in the biased attitudes and behaviors of an individual (the perpetrator), macroaggressions reside in the biased programs, policies, and practices of institutions, communities, and society (Sue et al., 2019). Second, microaggressions are generally directed toward a specific individual target, while macroaggressions are group-focused and

Table 1.1 Differences between microaggressions and macroaggressions

	SOURCE	TARGET	INTERVENTION
Microaggression	Reside in biased attitudes and behaviors of individuals	Directed toward an individual	Changing or neutralizing the bigotry of an individual
Macroaggression	Reside in biased programs, policies, practices and customs of institutions, communities, and society	Directed toward large classes of socially marginalized groups of people	Altering institutional policies and practices that oppress and deny equal access and opportunity to marginalized groups

affect an entire socially marginalized class of people. Third, although remedying microaggressions involves changing or neutralizing the bigotry of the person, combatting macroaggressions means altering institutional policies and practices that oppress and deny equal access and opportunity to marginalized groups.

Central to understanding the dynamism and distinction between racial macroaggressions and microaggressions is the multidimensional model of racism (MMR) proposed by Jones (Jones, 1972; Jones & Rolon-Dow, 2018b). The MMR describes three levels of racism analysis: individual racism, institutional racism, and cultural racism.

> Cultural racism comprises the cumulative effects of a racialized worldview, based on belief in essential racial differences that favor the dominant racial group over others. These effects are suffused throughout the culture via institutional structures, ideological beliefs, and personal everyday actions of people in the culture, and these effects are passed on from generation to generations.
>
> (Jones, 1997, p. 472)

From this definition, it is our contention that individual racism is the source of microaggressions; institutional/societal racism is the source of macroaggressions; and cultural racism is the overarching umbrella that gives rise to both through the expression and enforcement of a White supremacy doctrine. In other words, cultural racism is the individual and institutional

expression of the superiority of one group's cultural heritage over another (arts, crafts, language, traditions, beliefs, and values) with the power to impose and enforce these beliefs upon people of color and their communities (Sue, 2006). It is the glue that holds together an interlocking set of ideological beliefs and principles (White superiority and non-White inferiority) that justifies discrimination, segregation, and domination of people of color through individual actions of perpetrators (microaggressions) and through the practice of institutional/societal racism (macroaggressions). Micro- and macroaggressions are active manifestations of bias that detrimentally affect individual targets or whole classes of people. For microaggressions, the bias resides in the prejudicial beliefs, attitudes and behaviors of an individual, while macroaggression bias resides in societal social policies and standards of practice (SOP) in institutions.

It is important to note, however, that most active manifestations of macroaggressions are still individually mediated: people act as agents of institutions by practicing and applying their biased rules and regulations. Macroaggressions are most likely enforced by people in positions of power, authority or leadership: employers who decide who to hire, fire, retain and promote; judges who make judicial rulings about the fate of defendants; educators who administer school policies that affect curriculum and acquisition of knowledge; politicians who pass laws and social policies; and health-care providers who determine the quality and quantity of care for patients or clients (Sue, 2006). What makes biased decisions and actions especially deleterious is that they are backed by the full force and power of an institution or community. Like microaggressions, macroaggressions vary in terms of their visibility and conscious intentionality. Institutional and societal macroaggressions can be quite blatant or they can be hidden, considered fair, reasonable, and race-neutral in impact (Jones, 1997; Jones & Dovidio, 2018).

Macroassaults in Institutional Policies and Practices

Macroassaults are social or institutional policies and practices (laws, rules and regulations) that are *highly visible*, *purposeful* and *relatively undisguised* in their intended racial impact upon people of color. In our society, there is a long history of the deliberate use of societal philosophy, laws, and policies to oppress and to force compliance (assimilation), to treat people of color as lesser human beings (second-class citizens), to restrict or reduce their number

in the United States (immigration policies), and to disempower them (restricting voting rights) (Cortes, 2013; Huber & Solorzano, 2014; Jones, 1997). There are numerous historical examples of macroaggressions that evolved from racist institutional and societal practices, often with devastating results: (a) the nineteenth-century philosophy of "manifest destiny" justified the forced removal of Native Americans from their lands; (b) the passage of state and local Jim Crow laws enforced racial segregation in the South; (c) the laws and practice of slavery based on Black individuals being less than human and/or property; (d) the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 that forbid the immigration of Chinese to the United States because their presence led to "a race problem"; and (e) the internment of 110,000 Japanese Americans, two-thirds were citizens by virtue of birth in the United States during World War II because they "posed a threat to national security."

Ironically, history seems to be repeating itself in the present day. The proposed building of the southern border wall and the passage of a travel ban on individuals from Muslim majority countries are prime examples of macroaggressions (Potok, 2017). Passing strict voter ID laws that inconvenience and discourage voters of color, attempting to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) puts at risk some 700,000 immigrant children for deportation, creating policies to erode transgender rights (i.e. inability to serve in the military), and diverting educational funds from public to private schools all have catastrophic harmful impact upon those groups targeted (SPLC, 2018). Fortunately, with respect to DACA, the US Supreme Court ruled on June 18, 2020, that the President could not immediately end the program with the justification they provided. Especially harmful has been President Trump's May 2018 "Family Separation Policy" for migrants attempting to escape persecution and violence in their own countries by entering the United States. It has resulted in the separation of thousands of children (including infants) from their parents and families under the guise of national security and disavowing the real reasons of bias and discrimination (Rhodan, 2018).

Macroaggressions as Systemic Racism

The COVID-19 crisis has created a threat to the physical well-being of humankind as a whole. The novel virus has spread throughout the globe and has created widespread panic and anxiety, killing hundreds of thousands and leaving uncertainty and fear. The level of panic and threat has unfortunately

bred negative sentiments, more specifically anti-Asian sentiment and xenophobia toward this group (CDC, 2020). This response to pandemics and foreign agents is not a new sentiment or reaction; it mirrors the reaction to the AIDS epidemic when an early "diagnosis" named the disease as "gay-related-immune deficiency" (Hussain, 2020). Unfortunately, the effects have also laid bare the continuing existence of systemic racism in our society.

While experts and the general public initially believed that COVID-19 impacted all individuals – regardless of race and socioeconomic status equally, all have come to see how communities of color, especially African Americans, Latinx Americans, and Indigenous peoples, suffer from the virus at a disproportionate high rate when compared to their White counterparts (CDC, 2020; Dorn, Cooney, & Sabin, 2020; Jean-Baptiste & Green, 2020; Kaur, 2020). Macroaggressions that exist in structural inequities, programs, policies and practices become visible due to the discriminating impact of COVID-19. Systemic racism and the dangers associated with this societal virus span across various institutions (i.e. health care, education, justice system, employment, law enforcement, and housing). As stated by Laurencin and McClinton (2020), while COVID-19 itself does not discriminate, years of racial and economic disparities defined how the virus disproportionately impacted Black and Brown communities.

An important aspect of understanding how macroaggressions operate via systemic racism is to acknowledge how structural factors (inadequate health care, poverty, housing inequalities, etc.) prevented communities of color from practicing social distancing, obtaining access to personal protective equipment, avoiding use of public transportation, and so forth in the same manner as more privileged individuals (Dorn et al., 2020). When thinking specifically about the impact of COVID-19 in Black and Brown communities, there are three major systems/institutions to focus on: (a) healthcare, (b) housing, and (c) employment. According to the CDC (2020), Latinx individuals are three times as likely to be uninsured and Black individuals are almost two times as likely to be uninsured. In addition to this statistic, African Americans and Latinx Americans suffer from higher rates of preexisting conditions when compared to their White counterparts (Dorn et al., 2020). This medical fact makes them more vulnerable to infections and deaths. The disparities within the healthcare system in the United States have impacted Black and Brown communities for many years and the outcomes of COVID-19 have only highlighted this long-lasting disparity. Native American (and

Indigenous) individuals also suffer from much higher levels of underlying conditions including diabetes and heart disease, which make individuals more susceptible to more dire symptoms of COVID-19 (Dorn et al., 2020).

Another major factor that has contributed to the differential impact of COVID-19 is housing inadequacies and discrimination experienced by communities of color, especially Black and Latinx Americans. According to the CDC (2020), housing plays a large role in outcomes of COVID-19 in communities of color due to the following reasons: (a) Marginalized individuals often live in densely populated areas due to housing segregation and discrimination against communities of color. This reality makes it more difficult for individuals to follow preventative care and social distancing. (b) African Americans and Latinx Americans often live in areas that are further away from grocery stores and medical facilities, which in turn make it increasingly difficult to seek care, and stock up on supplies that would allow them to isolate at home. (c) People of color more often live in multigenerational households, which therefore make it more difficult to socially distance and protect more vulnerable family members.

Finally, employment within Black and Brown communities is a major and important factor that has impacted how COVID-19 discriminates between groups. During the COVID-19 pandemic, essential workers have been on the frontlines, and therefore at the highest risk to virus exposure. While nurses and doctors have worked directly with COVID-19-positive patients, they have also received (for the most part) protective gear to lessen the possibility of becoming ill. On the other hand, other essential workers such as retail, grocery, food, agriculture, delivery, and cleaning workers typically do not have the same, if any, protective gear. Of course, this puts all essential workers at a higher risk than the average population, but there are important trends to highlight within the aforementioned essential workers. About 25% of employed Latinx and Black people work in service industry jobs as compared to 16% of their White counterparts (CDC, 2020). Additionally, Latinx workers make up about 17% of total employment in the United States but account for approximately 53% of agricultural workers. African Americans make up 12% of total employment in the United States but approximately 30% of licensed practical and vocational nurses (CDC, 2020). Other discriminating factors that unfairly impact people of color include lack of financial stability and economic resources, inability to work from home, and lack of paid sick leave within essential jobs (not including high-paying medical fields). With these

employment trends, it becomes evident how Black and Latinx communities were at a higher risk of contracting COVID-19 in the first place. As concluded by Jean-Baptiste and Green (2020), "*COVID-19 is illuminating disparities that have been long been denied, ignored, and continue exasperating a significant majority of the Black population*," as well as other communities of color.

Macroaggressions in Standard Operating Procedures

Another form of macroaggressions that may be equally insidious are those hidden in the standards of practice of institutions or society and appear unbiased, fair, and necessary for smooth operation and efficiency. They are often referred to as standard operating procedures (SOPs) that are applied equally to everyone, across all domains and situations (Jones, 1997). The potential inherent biases in policies and practices, for example, are especially difficult to unmask because there is a confounding belief that equal treatment is fair treatment and cannot be discriminatory. Biased SOPs, for example, inundate nearly all aspects of institutional and societal life: (a) criterion for admissions into college (test scores); (b) performance appraisal systems that use a common standard to hire, retain, promote or fire employees; (c) bank lending practices for home mortgages that consider creditworthiness on the basis of location; (d) law enforcement "stop and frisk" policies; (e) biased curricula, books and reading materials that affirm the identity of one group, but ignore or denigrate the contributions of people of color; and (f) media portrayals that foster stereotypes rather than realistic images of people of color.

Sue (2008) provides a real-life example of how SOPs embedded in performance appraisal systems of organizations may appear gender and race neutral, but in fact produce biased outcomes that disadvantage certain groups, but advantage others. A Fortune 500 company hired Sue to provide assertiveness training for an Asian American technical workforce and to help them develop leadership skills. The company made the request because a survey of employees revealed many Asian and Asian American workers planned to seek employment elsewhere. They complained of bias from management who failed to recommend them for promotion when otherwise qualified. The company, however, explained the underrepresentation of Asian Americans in management, as due to "lack of leadership and social skills," and their need to be "more assertive, commanding, and competitive." They disavowed any bias in their promotion of employees to management-level

positions, and pointed to company-defined leadership criteria used for all workers regardless of race and gender.

Interestingly, the problem definition paralleled societal stereotypes of the group: Asian Americans are passive, inhibited, and unassertive, make poor leaders and managers, are poor in people relationships, but make good scientists and technical workers (Sue, Sue, Zane, & Wong, 1985). Furthermore, the hiring and promotion criteria outlined in the job description for managers valued "assertiveness and aggressiveness," "taking charge," "being competitive," and "being highly visible." To make a long story short, Sue was able to show the management team that Asian communication styles were often culturally determined (subtlety and indirectness), and that Western definitions of leadership were strongly influenced by culture. Asians, for example, consider leadership competence to be a person who is able to work behind the scenes, building group consensus, and motivating the team to increase productivity. When work units at the company were asked to identify members who were most instrumental in the success of their teams, Asian American employee names would consistently be mentioned. Thus, while not outwardly visible as leaders, they were nevertheless central in getting fellow workers to increase both efficiency and productivity (important qualities of a leader). Interestingly, the company never considered these individuals as candidates for promotion to the managerial ranks.

Sue notes that he was able to help the company examine closely their performance appraisal system (job description criteria) used for hiring and promotion of employees. In essence, their performance appraisal system was culture-bound, and potentially biased toward Asian Americans and women who operate from a much more collaborative and cooperative group approach (Lee, Soto, Swim, & Bernstein, 2012). Biased performance appraisal systems serve powerful gate-keeping functions that allow certain groups to benefit, while holding others back. Applying biased standards may not be an intentional or deliberate act, but the issue is still one of control, power and privilege. Just as promotion and tenure systems in higher education serve gate-keeping functions that determine rank and security, the criteria used for promotion in businesses may be fraught with bias and account for many of the inequities in senior leadership positions, and the standard of living for marginalized groups in our society (Holder, 2019b; Kim, Nguyen, & Block, 2019).

In conclusion, macroaggressions are many times more harmful to marginalized group members because they affect large classes of people and create

disparities in education, employment, health care, and the standard of living for people of color (Jones, 1997; Mazzula & Campon, 2018). Systemic change, however, is quite different from dealing with relational microaggressions that focus on the interpersonal actions of individuals. In the case of macroaggressions, biased policies and organizational structures that inherently discriminate are often not directly amenable to change. Change comes from presenting convincing evidence to those in leadership positions, and/or increasing public pressure on them to (a) end discriminatory policies and (b) create new programs and practices that allow for equal access and opportunity (Goodman et al., 2018; Kozan & Blustein, 2018).

The Need to Take Action: People of Color, White Allies, and Bystanders

Given the immense harm inflicted on individuals and groups of color via prejudice and discrimination, it becomes imperative for our nation to begin the process of disarming, disrupting, and dismantling the constant onslaught of micro- and macroaggressions. In this section, we describe the potential antiracist actions of three major groups – *targets, allies* and *bystanders* – in their struggle against racism; we advocate the need for these constituents to take a proactive stance against the discriminatory actions of perpetrators.

Targets

Targets are people of color who are objects of racial prejudice and discrimination expressed through microaggressions or macroaggressions. The experience of a microaggression can often feel isolating, painful and filled with threat (Sue, 2010b). In the race-related stress-coping literature, the first rule of thumb for targets is to *take care of oneself* (Holder, Jackson, & Ponterotto, 2015; Mellor, 2004). In this respect, it is important to distinguish between the internal (survival and self-care goals of the target) and the external (confronting the source) objectives in dealing with bias and discrimination. It is often problematic to ask people of color to educate or confront perpetrators when the sting of prejudice and discrimination pains them. A number of coping or self-care strategies in the face of racism have been identified: social support (Shorter-Gooden, 2004), spirituality and religion (Holder et al., 2015), humor (Houshmand, Spanierman, & De Stephano, 2017), role shifting (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003), armoring

(Mellor, 2004), cognitive reinterpretation (Brondolo et al., 2009), withdrawing for self-protection (Mellor, 2004), self-affirmations (Jones & Rolon-Dow, 2018), and directly or indirectly confronting the racism (Obear, 2017). It is this last proactive response that we believe merits much more attention as it is one of the main explanations for inaction in the face of microaggressions.

Little has been done to offer people of color the tools and strategies needed to disarm, diminish, deflect, and challenge experiences of bias, prejudice, or aggression (Mellor, 2004). Although it is important not to negate the functional survival value of self-care for people of color, it represents a defensive or reactive strategy that does not eliminate the source of future acts of bias. The experiences of discrimination can be jarring and can cause a "freeze effect" (Goodman, 2011). Without knowing what to do or how to respond, targets often experience great anxiety, guilt, and self-disappointment. People of color often wish to confront the aggressor, but their lack of action or paralysis leads to later rumination about the situation and to negative self-evaluations (Shelton et al., 2006; Sue et al., 2007). Additionally, individuals who do not stand up for themselves often experience feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. The result may be a fatalistic attitude and belief that racism is normative and must be accepted (Williams & Williams-Morris, 2000).

Rather than perpetuate a sense of resignation, it would be beneficial to (a) provide targets with a repertoire of interpersonal responses to racism, (b) arm them with the ability to defend themselves, (c) offer guiding principles and a rationale behind using external intervention strategies, and (d) decrease the negative impact on their mental health and well-being. Response strategies provide targets with the tools to be brave in the face of adversity and to feel dignified, leading to an increased sense of self-worth. They also provide targets with the ability to dispel racist attitudes of perpetrators through educational and action-oriented approaches, leading to a greater sense of self-efficacy. Unfortunately, not responding often leads to internalizing prevalent racist attitudes and negative beliefs about oneself (Speight, 2007).

White Allies

Allies are individuals who belong to dominant social groups (e.g. Whites, males, heterosexuals) and, through their support of nondominant groups (e.g. people of color, women, LGBTQ individuals), actively work toward the eradication of prejudicial practices they witness in both their personal and

professional lives (Broido, 2000; Brown & Ostrove, 2013). Allies surpass individuals who simply refrain from engaging in overt sexist, racist, ethnocentrist, or heterosexist behaviors. But rather, because of their desire to bolster social justice and equity, to end the social disparities from which they reap unearned benefits, and to maintain accountability of their actions to marginalized group members, they are motivated to take action at the interpersonal and institutional levels by actively promoting the rights of the oppressed (Brown & Ostrove, 2013). Like targets, allyship development involves internal and painful self-reckoning and a commitment to external action.

The internal component for potential White allies involves soul searching as to who they are as racial/cultural beings, acknowledging and overcoming their biases, confronting their motivations for engaging in antiracism work, and recognizing how their lives would be changed for the better in the absence of oppression (Edwards, 2006; Helms, 1995). As indicated by Helms (1996), developing a nonracist White identity is a major step toward social justice work; allies are motivated by an intrinsic desire to advocate for equity rather than by White guilt or to seek glorification as a "White savior." Her theory of White racial identity development addresses this issue profoundly and is central to our understanding of the difference between the development of a nonracist identity (interpersonal reconciliation with whiteness) and an antiracist identity (taking external actions against racism). When individuals expect credit for being an ally, broadcast their self-righteousness to others, or do not accept criticism (especially from persons of color) thoughtfully, their work as an ally becomes questionable (Spanierman & Smith, 2017).

Scholars in the field of racism have been advocating for dialogue, openness, and social action for many years (Helms, 1996; Sue, 2015a; Tatum, 1997). These works have often been the basis of colloquial strategies for breaking down racism and developing an "allied" identity for White people. It is a concerted movement from words toward action, from privilege toward understanding one's positionality in oppression, and from identifying oppression to making a daily effort to resist that make allies distinct from bystanders, families, friends (Brown, 2015; Reason & Broido, 2005b). Allies possess affirmative attitudes on issues of diversity (Broido, 2000), consciously commit to disrupting cycles of injustice (Waters, 2010), and do not view their work as a means to a measurable end but a constant dismantlement of the individual, and institutional beliefs, practices, and policies that have impeded the social growth and well-being of persons of color.

The shift from a nonracist identity to an action-oriented approach, however, assumes that activists have in their response repertoire the knowledge and skills to combat racism effectively. This may be a fallacious assumption as most educational and training programs often fall far short of teaching White allies the concrete and direct action strategies needed to influence perpetrators and social systems (Scully & Rowe, 2009; Sue, 2017b).

Bystanders

Bystanders can be anyone who become aware of and/or witness unjust behavior or practices that are worthy of comment or action (Scully & Rowe, 2009). In many respects, the definitions of targets, allies, and bystanders may overlap, but research on White allyship suggests that allies are more likely to have an evolved awareness of themselves as racial/cultural beings and to be more attuned to sociopolitical dynamics of race and racism (Broido, 2000; Helms, 1996). Although anyone can be a bystander, including targets (witnessing discrimination against a member of their group), we reserve this term for individuals who may possess only a superficially developed or a nebulous awareness of racially biased behaviors and of institutional policies and practices that are not fair to a person of color or racial group. These individuals do not fall into the classes of targets or White allies but represent the largest plurality of people in society.

Most bystanders experience themselves as good, moral, and decent human beings who move about in an invisible veil of whiteness (Sue & Sue, 2015), have minimal awareness of themselves as a racial/cultural being (Helms, 1996), and possess limited experiences with people of color (Jones, 1997). Their naiveté about race and racism makes it very difficult for them to recognize bias or discrimination in others, and/or how institutional policies and practices advantage select groups and disadvantage groups of color. When they witness a discriminatory incident, for example, they may have difficulty labeling it as a racist act or they may excuse or rationalize away the behavior as due to reasons other than racism (Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, & Hodson, 2002; Obear, 2017). Even when right or wrong behavior is recognized, inaction seems to be the norm rather than the exception.

Considerable scholarly work has attempted to explain the passivity of bystanders, even in the face of clear normative violations (Latané & Darley, 1968, 1970; Scully, 2005). Diffusion of responsibility, fear of retaliation, fear of

losing friends, not wanting to get involved, and other anticipated negative consequences have all been proposed as inhibiting active bystander interventions. A number of social scientists, however, have begun to turn their attention to exploring conditions that would enhance or enable bystanders to intervene (Ashburn-Nardo, Morris, & Goodwin, 2008; Rowe, 2008; Scully, 2005). Four requirements for bystander action seem important: (a) the ability to recognize acceptable and unacceptable behaviors; (b) the positive benefits that accrue to the target, perpetrator, bystander, and organization through taking action; (c) providing a toolkit for active bystander interventions; and (d) the use of bystander training and rehearsal (Scully & Rowe, 2009).