



Episode 5: Cultural Humility in Supervision and Mentorship

Dr. Riana Anderson is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Health Behavior and Health Education at the University of Michigan School of Public Health. She earned her PhD in Clinical and Community Psychology at the University of Virginia and completed a Clinical and Community Psychology residency at Yale School of Medicine. She also completed a fellowship in Applied Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania. Overall, Dr Anderson aims to facilitate healing in Black families with practical applications of her research and clinical services, as well as through public engagement, teaching, mentorship, and policy recommendations. Dr. Anderson uses mixed methods to study discrimination and racial socialization in Black families and to apply her findings to help families reduce racial stress and heal from racial trauma. She is particularly interested in how family-based interventions help to improve Black youth's psychosocial wellbeing and health-related behaviors.

Dr. Anderson is the developer and director of EMBRace (Engaging, Managing, and Bonding through Race) intervention. She loves to translate her work for a variety of audiences, particularly those who she serves in the community via blogs, video, and literary articles. Dr. Anderson's work has garnered hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants, and has been supported by the Ford Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the National Institute of Health, Society for Research and Child Development, and the Michigan Health Endowment Foundation. She has published over 30 peer-reviewed articles and has contributed to a range of blogs, articles, and media, including features with CNN, The New York Times, The Times London, Huffington Post, Psychology Today, Women's Health, WebMD and NBC's Newsroom. Dr. Anderson is involved nationally and is an appointed member of several work groups, including the American Psychological Association's Children, Youth and Families Committee, and the Society for Research on Adolescence Anti-Racism Task Force. Additionally, Dr. Anderson consults with national companies and organizations including Google, YouTube, and Nickelodeon. Dr. Anderson also serves as the co-host of Our Mental Health Minute, a multimedia organization geared toward reducing stigma in Black communities. Finally, Dr. Anderson was born, raised for, and returned to Detroit. You can find her on Twitter **@rianaelyse** or visit her website www.rianaelyse.com.

Before You Listen: *Self-reflect and/or journal about the following*

- Reflect on your own experiences as a supervisee/mentee. Identify how culture and discussions about culture have impacted your supervision and mentorship settings and/or relationships.
- Have you ever talked with your supervisor/mentor or supervisees/mentees about racism and discrimination? If so, how have those conversations gone? If not, why not?

Episode Summary

- Dr. Anderson begins with the importance of acknowledging cultural context as a relevant factor impacting trainees and clients.
- Dr. Anderson highlights a broader societal discomfort with talking about race and culture and how this discomfort and lack of safety is reflected in the academic and therapeutic setting. She challenges the field to create a space in courses and meetings for these conversations in order to better serve trainees and clients.

- For supervisors and mentors, Dr. Anderson discusses structuring courses and conversations surrounding race and culture in a similar manner to other training content. Specifically, being familiar with the research and encouraging students to discuss the material and share their lived experiences.
- Further, when supporting trainees who experience racism/discrimination, Dr. Anderson provides a structure for acknowledging the harm done, taking a diagnostic assessment of the broader institution or program for areas of improvement, and coming to affected/vulnerable students with ideas and asking for feedback, *before* jumping to advocacy and change. In this way, change is not reactive to a current situation but is foundational for promoting long-term wellness.
- For those trainees affected by racism/discrimination, Dr. Anderson states that power differentials and variability in individuals make disclosing experiences of racism/discrimination a subjective process, such that there is never a guarantee of a supportive response. However, she encourages trainees to find a way to get these experiences off their chests so that they do not impact internal regulatory systems (e.g., ability to think clearly, sleep well). This may look like talking with an accountability partner or writing it down and throwing it away.
- Dr. Anderson shares her experiences as a mentor and Black woman in academia, particularly the emotional tax and work placed on Black women. She recommends protecting time to balance responsibilities and personal time.
- When speaking about common pitfalls in academia, Dr. Anderson discusses how discomfort from supervisors and mentors often looks like talking too much instead of addressing situations and department climate issues directly. To avoid this, she states that departments need to take a diagnostic assessment (similar to that described above), such that departments are better able to understand and create an environment that allows faculty/staff/students to thrive.
- *Dr. Anderson shouts out colleagues [Dr. Isha Metzger](#) and [Dr. Shawn C.T. Jones](#).*

After You Listen: *Discuss the following with an accountability group and/or partner*

- Trainees:
 - What steps can you take to educate yourself and practice having conversations about culture? How can you then translate this into clinical training and practice?
 - What does your support system or process look like for “getting out” experiences of racism/discrimination? Or talking about race/culture in the supervision/mentorship context more broadly?
- Supervisors/mentors:
 - How can you re-structure classes and meetings to create a safe space for trainees to have conversations about race and culture?
- How can your department be more intentional in promoting wellness and a safe environment for faculty, staff, and students of color?

After You Listen: *Self-reflect and/or journal about the following*

- Trainees:
 - Reflect on your personal comfort having conversations about race and culture across different areas of your life.
 - Identify or seek out a supervisor/mentor you feel safe having conversations about race/culture with.
- Supervisors:

- In what areas might you be unaware of power differentials and the unique needs of trainees and colleagues from different underrepresented backgrounds? What invisible curricula might be present for trainees from underrepresented backgrounds?
- In what areas might you need to be vulnerable with trainees about topics/situations in which you are unfamiliar? Reflect on situations in which you have felt this discomfort/unfamiliarity in meetings with trainees.
- Take a diagnostic assessment of your supervision and mentorship domains to better understand how you can support your trainees.

Additional Resources and Further Reading

- Read more about the [American Psychological Association's Apology to People of Color](#).

Host Bios

Déjà Clement, M.S., is a cisgender heterosexual Caribbean American/Black woman, originally from NY. She is a 4th year Clinical Psychology doctoral student whose research takes an interdisciplinary approach by combining public health and clinical psychology to examine risk and resilience factors for mental health outcomes and health behaviors for Black women. Outside of grad school, she loves food and taking pictures of food and spending time with her people. You can follow her Twitter [@ClementDeja](#).

Harley Layman, M.S., is a cisgender heterosexual white American woman of Polish descent, originally from MI. She is a first-generation college student from a low-income background. She is a 3rd year Clinical Psychology doctoral student whose research focuses on body image ideals and associated psychological, cognitive, and physiological outcomes. She enjoys exercise and walking her Goldendoodle, Winston, in her spare time. You can find her on Twitter [@laymanharley](#).