Greetings to all our students, faculty, administrators, coaches and staff! Within the context of the recent bias incidents that have occurred on our campuses and the current (and historical) racial landscape of our nation, CPS has deepened its’ commitment to examining, understanding and addressing the impact of implicit, internalized and systemic bias on the mental health and wellness of our students and community. President McShane, in an email to the Fordham community last semester, called on all faculty and administrators to engage in meaningful dialogue about the roots and reverberations of racism, and perhaps more importantly, on how we can contribute to healing the injuries and divisions that stem from racial injustice. In response to our President’s calling, CPS has dedicated this issue of “Welcome to Wellness” to unpacking and exploring the intersections of bias, racism, diversity and mental health.

As we begin this exploration, I’m reminded of my own personal encounters with racial bias. As a Chinese-American immigrant, I’ve no doubt experienced my share of implicit and institutional racism in their various forms and manifestations, including microaggressions, stereotyping and marginalization. While these experiences of being on the receiving end of racism have been impactful, the trajectory of my life has been shaped just as much, if not more, by those moments where I’ve come to recognize, own and examine my own internalized biases. One of these initial moments occurred during my freshman year at Cornell University following a pickup basketball game. Specifically, I had noticed that my wallet was missing after the game and assumed that it was stolen. I subsequently began scanning the gym to locate the “perpetrator.” As I was doing so, I realized that my scanning was neither random nor arbitrary in that I was exclusively (and reflexively) looking for a black man. This early recognition of my own internalized racism, while it alarmed and frightened me at the time, also taught me a profound lesson, namely that we all have internalized and unconscious biases that can be uncovered, examined and undone.

As we work towards healing the wounds and divisions stemming from racism, oppression and other social injustices, I’m reminded of the following proverb:

“The journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step.”

That first step, on our journey towards healing and restorative justice, begins with a commitment to introspection and self-awareness.

Jeffrey Ng, Psy.D
DID YOU KNOW?
According to a 2015 national survey conducted by the Steve Fund, 41% of African American students seriously considered transferring during their first semester of college.

Microaggressions, especially on college campuses, have been highlighted in the news this year, at times disparagingly characterized as the over-sensitive complaints of politically-correct students who lack resilience. However, don’t be fooled by the “micro” in “microaggressions.” This term refers to experiences of marginalization that are very real and can have a major impact. Microaggressions are the “everyday encounters of subtle discrimination that people of various marginalized groups experience throughout their lives.”

These can include verbal and nonverbal communications that subtly convey rudeness and insensitivity, and demean a person’s racial, ethnic, gender, sexual, religious, dis/ability, age, weight/size, SES/class or other identities. For example: A peer asks a student of color how she got into their school, implying she may have been accepted through an affirmative action system, rather than her own merit and qualifications.

Microaggressions also include communications that subtly invalidate the thoughts, feelings or experiential reality of a person of any marginalized group. Examples include: A white professor asks an Asian-American student where he was born, conveying the message that he is a perpetual foreigner in his own country. Or, a straight student repeatedly asks his gay male roommate if he has a girlfriend, indicating an expectation that the student conform to heteronormative culture and behavior.

Some microaggressions are unconscious (i.e., the actor doesn’t even know they did something) while some may be unintentional (i.e., the actor may be aware of their actions, but may not realize the negative impact they have had). Some microaggressions may be veiled as flattery, but may in fact be harmful (e.g., stating “You’re such an inspiration” to someone with a physical disability).

From a mental health perspective, microaggressions have a significant impact on people’s lives. While some of these experiences may seem brief or harmless to an outsider, studies have found that the more that people experience microaggressions, the more likely they are to report depression, psychological distress, and physical health issues.

**So, what can we do?**

Be aware of what we say! Strive to stop using phobic or hateful language, and to avoid making comments that endorse stereotypes or invalidate the experiences of others. Instead, aim for microaffirmations, “tiny acts of opening doors to opportunity, gestures of inclusion and caring, and graceful acts of listening” (Rowe, 2008).

Admit when we commit microaggressions, learn from the wrongdoing, and apologize. We all make mistakes, consciously and not, and we need to do our best to own up to them when we do. Listen to what the hurt person is trying to tell you and try not to be defensive. The worst thing that we can do is to deny that someone is hurt or offended by something we said or did; in fact, invalidating their experience could be considered a microaggression itself.

For those who experience microaggressions, know that you are not alone. Unfortunately, these are common experiences in the lives of people who belong to marginalized groups. Let’s try not to commit microaggressions against each other, but aim for honest and compassionate dialogue when we do.

Recognize areas of privilege and commit to being an ally. Correct other people when they commit microaggressions against others. Step in and offer support when you witness invalidation.

Get support. Share how you’re feeling with a trusted friend, family member, or mentor, or reach out to Fordham staff who are here to support you, such as a dean, professor, RA/RD, coach, student life staff, or CPS.

Adapted from Sue, 2007; Nadal, 2014

Photo credits: (1) http://itooamharvard.tumblr.com/ (2) Kevin Nadal (3) Brown University CSREA
Most people hold both areas of privilege and areas of marginalization. For example, a young White person may also have an invisible disability, a person of color may benefit from male privilege, or an LGBT individual may come from an upper-middle class background. These are of course simplifications, as each individual will have a complex array of identities and experience. As you practice the meditation below, we encourage you to reflect on the meaning and impact of your own intersecting identities (e.g., what privileges do you have in the world? how have you suffered from injustice?) and to empathically open up your mind and heart to the experiences and suffering of others.

**COMPASSION MEDITATION FOR SELF AND OTHERS**

Find a comfortable seated position, close your eyes or lower your gaze, and take three, deep, relaxing breaths.

Open your awareness to the sounds in your environment. Come into the present moment by simply listening to whatever presents itself to your ears.

Note your posture as if you were seeing yourself from the outside.

Next, bring your awareness inside your body. Note the world of sensation occurring there in this very moment—the pulsation and vibration of your body—just as you sat in the midst of the world of sound.

Begin to repeat the following phrase, or a different one that reflects a deep wish you may have for yourself:

*May I be happy and free from suffering*

When you are ready, allow yourself to become aware of any people (individuals or groups) or other living beings that enter your mind. When you notice someone arise, gently offer:

*May you be happy and free from suffering*

Repeat this phrase as long as you wish, and then wait for the next person or group to appear in your mind. Take your time.

Feel free to return to yourself at any time, especially if you need to anchor your awareness in your own body, or if you need to comfort yourself.

Gently open your eyes and reflect on what came up during this exercise.

Adapted from Christopher Germer, PhD, ©2016 Mindful Self-Compassion

**MORE ON PRACTICING SELF-CARE**

We believe that self-care and self-compassion are especially important for individuals and groups vulnerable to experiences of marginalization and oppression. Caring for your body, mind and spirit can take many forms: reading a text that inspires you (sacred or secular), getting your hair or nails done, dancing around your room (alone or with friends), playing basketball, taking a video game break, or taking time to make yourself a healthy meal. Perhaps today's simple gesture could start a lifelong habit of self-love.
COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CPS)

Counseling and Psychological Services is a comprehensive mental health service at Fordham University. Our mission is to promote students’ emotional and psychological health and well-being through counseling, psychotherapy, psychiatric services, consultation, outreach, prevention, and contributions to the mental health professions. We strive to foster a community of care that recognizes and values the depth, dignity and uniqueness of each student.

CPS provides the following confidential and free services in a safe and accepting environment:

- Individual Short-Term Counseling
- Group Counseling & Workshops
- Psychiatric Evaluations and Medication Management
- Crisis Intervention for Urgent Situations
- Personalized Referrals for Specialized and/or Longer Term Services

For a virtual tour of our office and services click on the video below:

www.fordham.edu/counseling

MEET THE STAFF

Ashley Coulter Brown, M.A.R., M.Div. is our new Community Training and Outreach Specialist. After completing a theory based degree in religion at Yale Divinity School, she completed a degree focused on pastoral care and counseling at Princeton Theological Seminary. She is especially appreciative of the Jesuit Tradition due to the insights of Pope John Paul the II, which helped her understand her theological perspective in a family where she was the only one not in the sciences. He wrote, “Science can purify religion from error and superstition. Religion can purify science from idolatry and false absolutes.”

Zhuoying Zhu is a psychological intern at CPS’ Lincoln Center office. She is completing her doctorate of clinical psychology from Teachers College, Columbia University, and will continue at CPS for the 2016-17 year as a postdoctoral fellow. Zhuoying is particularly interested in working with students who experience issues related to immigration and acculturation. She conducts therapy in English or Mandarin based on the student’s needs.

Rosalie Cirillo is the Office Manager of CPS’ Rose Hill office, providing an array of administrative and operational responsibilities. Rosalie previously worked at Fordham’s Enrollment Services Group and is a FCRH alumna. She is a yoga enthusiast and enjoys gardening, travel and cooking.
**DID YOU KNOW?**

When experiencing mental or emotional health distress, college students are much more likely to reach out to their peers for support than any other resource on campus.

LBGT college students are at 2-3 times greater risk of attempting suicide than their straight peers.

While suicide rates among Muslims are relatively low, suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts may be higher among young Muslim women experiencing intergenerational conflict.

In general, African-American college students are less likely to use counseling services due to concerns about stigma, prejudice, & shame.

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**FORDHAM IS DE-STRESSING WITH THE STRESSBUSTERS APP**

CPS is proud to offer the Stressbusters Wellness app to our community! Produced by the national Stressbusters wellness program, this customized app puts Fordham-specific health and wellness information, announcements, and resources right at your fingertips. The app includes features such as:

- **Break Pad**: A “sonic spa” featuring audio tracks to help students increase a sense of calm and focus.
- **Videostream**: A channel of Stressbusters how-to segments, expert interviews, and other wellness-related short videos.
- **Health Rewards**: Like a frequent flyer program, students can accrue award points for participating in CPS and other Fordham wellness activities.
- **Events**: Stay informed about campus wellness events sponsored by a range of departments.
- **Get Help Now**: One-touch emergency buttons to connect students to immediate support day or night.

Download Stressbusters Wellness **FOR FREE** on the App Store and Google Play.

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**HELP A FRIEND WHO IS STRUGGLING: KOGNITO AT-RISK TRAINING**

University and college life can be full of stress, demands and challenges. From exams, papers and internships to navigating our finances, relationships and self-identities, it’s no surprise that 87% of Fordham students described feeling overwhelmed by all they had to do in the past year. At times, these stressors can contribute to emotional distress, poor academic performance and mental health difficulties, such as depression, anxiety, substance abuse and suicidal thoughts.

As students you play an important role in helping each other through challenging and difficult periods. To support you in this role, CPS offers an online, game-based simulation to assist you with recognizing, supporting, and when necessary, referring students who may be struggling. To access this simulation please follow the instructions below:

- Go to [www.kognitocampus.com/login](http://www.kognitocampus.com/login)
- Create a new account using the enrollment key: fordham718
- Follow the On Screen Instructions
- Choose Your Course and Click “Launch”

We strongly encourage you to participate in this training, which we’re confident will contribute to your growth and education at Fordham.
DID YOU KNOW?

Fordham students have started Active Minds chapters at Rose Hill and Lincoln Center!

For information about Active Minds go to www.activeminds.org

To get involved with Active Minds at Fordham please contact

Anika Masand at amasand@fordham.edu (RH)

or

Jacob Azrilyant at jazrilyant@fordham.edu (LC)

RESOURCES ON CAMPUS

The following resources are available to assist and support our students

- Public Safety
- Health Services
- Career Services
- Library Services
- Dean of Students Office
- Resident Advisors/Directors
- Academic Deans and Advisors
- Athletic Coaches and Trainers
- Office of Multicultural Affairs
- Disability Services
- University Mission and Ministry
- Professors and Teaching Assistants
- Substance Abuse Prevention & Student Support
- Alcohol and Other Drug Education
- Office of Student Involvement

Alleviate stress, improve your relationships, increase your ability to focus, enjoy life more fully — Meditation can have all these effects and more!

Strengthen your mind for free with mindfulness tools you can use for a lifetime.

Sign up for KORU Mindfulness classes right here at Fordham. Available at RH and LC in Spanish and English.

For more information e-mail Abrown125@fordham.edu

ONLINE RESOURCES

http://www.stevefund.org/
Online resources & research on mental and emotional health of college students of color

http://mentalhealthchannel.tv/about
Web-based channel with free documentaries, films & programs on mental health

Atlantic article on balancing academia and racism