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EXPLORING WOMEN'S SILENCES IN DIALOGUE ON RACE AND ETHNICITY

By

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ABSTRACT

EXPLORING WOMEN'S SILENCES IN DIALOGUE ON RACE AND ETHNICITY

By

Anna Crombach Hope

Although feminist theory and practice have been acknowledged as potentially relevant to the lives of women of Color (Comas-Diaz, 1988; Greene & Sanchez-Hucles, 1997; Hurtado, 1996), historically feminism has emphasized the concerns of White women while ignoring and silencing the concerns of women of Color (Espin & Gawelek, 1992; Palmer, 1983). Open and ongoing dialogue among women of Color and White women is essential to the future of feminism as an inclusive psychological theory. Silences impede this dialogue, and are the focus of the present inquiry.

Seven women of Color and five White women in the field of counseling psychology were interviewed about the context of their silences. Participants' examples of silences highlight the racism that many women continue to experience in academic and other institutional environments. The costs of silence and the silencing behaviors of others are reviewed. Additionally, results support conceptualization of silence as a person-environment interaction. Personal and environmental factors interact to create the unique context of silence. Implications of the findings are discussed, as well as changes in the researcher's perspective as a result of conducting this study.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Mainstream feminist theory and practice in psychology have been described as emphasizing the concerns of White women while ignoring and silencing the concerns of women of Color (Espin & Gawelek, 1992; Greene & Sanchez-Hucles, 1997; Palmer, 1983). Although the potential relevance of feminist theory and principles to the lives of all women has been recognized regardless of their race, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, physical ability, or religious beliefs (Greene & Sanchez-Hucles, 1997; Hurtado, 1996; Lee, 1995: Espin, 1994; Mays & Comas-Diaz, 1985), historically feminist psychology has been dominated by the perspectives of White, middle class women. One of the problems with development of an inclusive feminist psychology has been the lack of open dialogue among White women and women of Color on race and ethnicity. The purpose of the present inquiry is to examine women's silences in these conversations, with the hope that a better understanding of silence will enhance understanding and empathy, foster dialogue, and promote a more inclusive feminist psychology.

The idea for this study originated at the "Advancing Together: Centralizing Feminism and Multiculturalism in Counseling Psychology" conference that took place in the fall of 1998. The conference was sponsored by the American Psychological Association's Division 17, Society of Counseling Psychology, Section for the Advancement of Women. A diverse group of students, practitioners, and faculty were invited to attend and begin work on a series of

casebooks that would explore the relevance and application of current feminist and multicultural literature to different domains of counseling theory, research, and practice. Additionally, the conference offered an opportunity for Section members to network, develop mentoring relationships, and engage in planning for the Section.

There were sixteen of us in the Supervision and Training Work Group; only two were women of Color. We soon encountered tensions in our dialogue about feminism and multiculturalism (Nelson, Gizara, Hope, Weitzman, Phelps, Steward, et al., in press). We learned that we were working from different assumptions about what it meant to be feminist and multicultural, and found that our discussion stalled when it came to talking about race and privilege. When one of the women of Color wondered aloud about White women's silence on race and ethnicity, the focus of our conversation shifted. We moved from definitions and concepts to an examination of silence and discussion of our individual and collective experiences of oppression. Several themes related to White women's silence emerged, including anxiety and fear about relating to women from diverse backgrounds, feminist silence and White privilege, the importance of self-examination, the need to tolerate uncertainty, and recognition of the difficulty of working in isolation (Nelson et al., in press).

Anecdotal reports suggested that ours was not the only work group to have experienced tensions and conflicts between White women and women of Color. Although not universal, there was a general lack of awareness on the part of White women at the conference regarding feminist assumptions about the

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universality of women's experience and historical tensions between feminism and multiculturalism. During a meeting of the full group at the end of the conference, some women of Color expressed anger and frustration with the tokenism, marginalization, and racism they experienced in their work groups and at the conference in general.

These tensions were not new or unique to the conference. For a number of years, women of Color have been writing about White women's ignorance of the history of racism (Miles, 1995; Palmer, 1983), feminist emphasis on the concerns of White women while ignoring and silencing the concerns of women of Color (Greene & Sanchez-Hucles, 1997; Espin & Gawelek, 1992; Palmer, 1983), barriers to the participation of women of Color in feminism (Chow, 1989), and White women's distancing, denial, and minimization of the experiences of women of Color (Chambers, 1995; hooks, 1984). At the same time, some women of Color have also acknowledged the relevance of feminism to their lives. Feminism has provided women of Color with language to describe their experiences of oppression (Lee, 1995; Morris & Espin, 1995). Specific aspects of feminist theory are also relevant to the lives of women of Color, including emphasis on balance of power between the sexes, recognition of the impact of social forces on women's lives and mental health, a commitment to examination of oppression in the lives of all women, validation of experience without assigning it hierarchical value, and recognition that life is sacred and humans should not be oppressed (Comas-Diaz, 1988; Greene & Sanchez-Hucles, 1997; Hurtado, 1996).

At the beginning of this new millennium, it is clear that while a feminist paradigm may be relevant to the lives of women of Color and may be capable of incorporating a theoretical understanding of how privilege has preserved economic and social inequality (Hurtado, 1996), feminism is a long way from realizing its mandate to address oppression in the lives of all women. Open, ongoing dialogue among White women and women of Color is essential to the development of inclusive feminist theory and practice. However, as recent experiences at the "Advancing Together" conference would suggest, these conversations are difficult to have in the context of current and historical tensions among racial and ethnic groups (Alderfer, 1994).

Dialogue among women on the subjects of race and ethnicity means confronting the reality of racism, a subject that engenders powerful emotions such as anger, guilt, sadness, and shame (Lugones, 1995; hooks, 1995; Siegel, 1990). Methods of coping with these emotions often include avoidance by silencing self or others, closing down curiosity about race and ethnicity rather than opening dialogue. These silences may be adaptive in the sense that they relieve tension and anxiety in the moment, providing safety and escape from discomfort while permitting the coexistence of White women and women of Color in the professional realm. However, silences also come at a cost to the selves of women and perpetuate an oppressive system in which some have the power to speak and be heard while others do not (Reinhartz, 1994).

The purpose of the present inquiry is to develop a better understanding of women's silences in dialogue on race and ethnicity. It is hoped that greater

understanding of silence will increase awareness and decrease assumptions about race and ethnicity, as well as increase curiosity about self and others. Additionally, it is anticipated that results of this study will encourage women to overcome barriers to engaging in conversation about race, promoting dialogue that is essential to developing inclusive psychological theories.

Contextual theory provides a framework for this exploration of silence, and is based on the assumption that behavior is inextricably linked to the context within which it occurs (Landrine, 1995). Although the mechanistic action of silence may appear similar across people and contexts, it is assumed to hold different meanings unless empirical inquiry indicates otherwise. Literature relevant to women's silences in dialogue on race and ethnicity is reviewed to provide a background for the present inquiry, as well as to establish the political, historical, and social context of silence. Emphasis is placed on impediments to open dialogue that have been identified by White women and women of Color, including current and historical tensions between White women and women of Color, White women's racism and ignorance of privilege, ethnic and gender socialization, the multiplicity of identity, and negative affective experience.

As a theoretical base for understanding silence has yet to be established, a qualitative methodology of emergent design is used in the present inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The naturalistic procedures of in-depth interviewing and inductive data analysis accommodate the assumptions of contextualism about multiple meanings of silence and their embeddedness in context. White women and women of Color in the field of counseling psychology were interviewed about

their silences in dialogues on race and ethnicity. An interview guide (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998), based on domains of interest identified in the literature review, provided a loose structure for interviews. Participants' personal histories, salient aspects of identity, and previous experiences in conversations about race and ethnicity were explored as they pertained to specific instances of silence on race and ethnicity. Participants were asked to reflect upon their affective experience, their consideration of the risks and benefits of remaining silent or giving voice to their thoughts, and the setting at the time of their silence. Specifically, the research questions addressed included:

> What are the contextual factors that contribute to women's silences on race and ethnicity?
>
> What are women thinking and feeling in the silence?
>
> What are the risks and benefits of silence in dialogue on race and ethnicity?

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mainstream feminist theory and practice in psychology have been described as emphasizing the concerns of White women while ignoring and silencing the concerns of women of Color (Espin & Gawelek, 1992; Greene & Sanchez-Hucles, 1997; Palmer, 1983). Although some White women and women of Color have recognized the potential relevance of feminist theory and principles to the lives of all women regardless of race, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, physical ability, and religious beliefs (Greene & Sanchez-Hucles, 1997; Hurtado, 1996; Lee, 1995: Espin, 1994; Mays & Comas-Diaz, 1985), historically feminist psychology has been dominated by the perspectives of White, middle class women. One of the problems with development of an inclusive feminist psychology has been the lack of open dialogue among White women and women of Color on race and ethnicity. The purpose of the present inquiry is to examine women's silences in these dialogues. Contextual behaviorism, or contextualism (Landrine, 1995), provides a framework for this study of women's silences. The history of racism in the feminist movement, barriers to the participation of women of Color in feminism, what feminism has to offer women of Color, reasons why White women should engage in antiracist work, and women's reflections on their silences in dialogue on race and ethnicity are explored to provide a rationale and context for the research questions to be addressed in this study.

Contextualism

Contextual theory provides a framework for the exploration of silence in this study. According to Landrine (1995), within contextualism behavior is defined as a, "meaningful exchange with, in, and by virtue of its context. Behavior and its context are a single unit" (p. 7). The basic premise of contextualism is that behavior is inextricably entwined with the context in which it occurs, and that the name for a behavior should reflect act-in-context. Three basic assumptions underlie contextualism: 1) behaviors have no inherent label or meaning; 2) analysis of the context in which a behavior occurs is critical to discovering a label for that behavior; and 3) superficially similar mechanical movements appearing in different contexts are not the same behavior (Landrine, 1995).

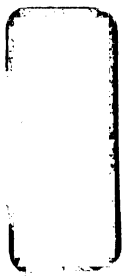
Contextualism lends itself well to this exploration of women's silences in dialogue on race and ethnicity. Based on this perspective, women's silences are assumed to have multiple meanings to be derived from careful examination of the context within which the silences have occurred. For example, a White woman and an Asian American woman may both remain silent in a diversity discussion group when the conversation shifts to White privilege. Inquiry may reveal that the White woman is overwhelmed by guilt and/or is too ashamed to acknowledge her ignorance to the group, while the Asian American woman's silence reflects her exhaustion with the work of educating others and/or her internal struggle to acknowledge and express anger at White women's ignorance. Although similar in terms of mechanical action, these silences are quite different when considered as acts-in-context.

Acts-in-context, "are responses to (elicited by) different stimuli, are maintained by different consequences, and elicit different responses from others" (Landrine, 1995, p. 7). Variability in setting, antecedents, personal history, identity, historical and political context, internal experience (both cognitive and affective), and expected and actual consequences of behavior are essential elements of understanding silence-in-context. The remainder of this chapter includes a review of the historical, political, social, and personal contexts of women's dialogues and silences on race and ethnicity.

Barriers to the Participation of Women of Color in the Feminist Movement

Women of Color have faced many barriers to their participation in mainstream feminist psychology (Chow, 1989; Chambers, 1995; hooks; 1984; Lee, 1995); these barriers have contributed to the relative silence of their voices as compared with the voices of White women in the development of feminist theory and practice. Over the past several decades, many attempts have been made to bring women of Color and White women together at feminist conferences, workshops, retreats, and within organizations. Unfortunately, even efforts made with the best of intentions to dialogue and connect across race have often ended with participants feeling dissatisfied, angry, and misunderstood.

For example, in reflection on her experience as an African American woman working on a feminist magazine in college, Miles (1995) describes the excitement and energy she felt at the first few meetings. She found herself in an environment where there seemed to be a free flow of ideas and personal experiences were shared openly. Over time, race and class conflicts emerged,



the distribution of power among participants became imbalanced, and some members began to feel excluded. Tensions were high as the group was challenged to become more inclusive and to address concerns regarding the apparent inability of White members to hear and acknowledge the experiences of women of Color without becoming defensive and shutting them out—in effect, silencing them. Miles wrote, "We never recovered from the accusations, resentment, and tension that doused us... the group dissolved. We had lasted only two years" (1995, p. 171).

In her struggle to understand what happened, Miles (1995) continued to read, converse, and reflect on the problems the group encountered. She identified some of the problems that served as barriers to the full participation of women of Color on the feminist magazine. One of the problems was the group members' ignorance of feminist history, and, therefore, their inability to draw on the knowledge and experience of women who had already faced similar conflicts. Other problems included the racism of White members, their defensiveness about and resistance to acknowledging their privilege, and their participation in the oppression of others. Miles also noted that members were unprepared for the level of self-awareness they would need to achieve in order to work together.

As she continued to read and explore the history of the feminist movement, Miles learned that she was not the first, nor would she be the last woman of Color to encounter barriers to her participation in feminist groups. Other women have written about the tokenism, racism, marginalization, and resistance to change they have experienced in feminist circles (Lee, 1995;

hooks, 1984; Chambers, 1995), all of which silence feminist dialogue on race. Barriers to participation of women of Color in feminism and to open dialogue on race have resulted in the development of a theory based on the assumption that gender is the primary locus of oppression for all women (Greene, 1994; Greene & Sanchez-Hucles, 1997). As modern feminists move beyond this narrow focus to a more inclusive feminist psychology, these barriers must be known, understood, and confronted. The following sections are an introduction to the barriers of racism, ethnic and gender role socialization, ethnic identity, and ethnic loyalty. These barriers silence dialogue by hindering open communication among women.

Racism

One of the greatest barriers to the participation of women of Color in feminist psychology is the racism of White women. This racism has its roots in slavery and the early women's rights movement, when the racist acts and beliefs of White women were clear and undeniable. For example, despite the fact that the purpose of abolitionist White women's meetings was to work toward the eradication of slavery, Black women were usually barred from attending (Olson, 2001). When the presence of Black women was permitted, it was often accompanied by the request that they enter through the back door. The racist messages of an inherent White superiority and progress toward emancipation but not equality were clear.

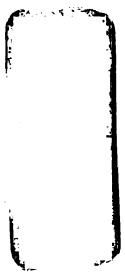
White women's racism also emerged when the social position of White women was likened to that of slaves. White women seemed unaware of and

unconcerned by the grave differences between themselves and female slaves, and they did not understand the pain and anger that their appropriation of slave women's strengths and experiences caused Black women (Palmer, 1983; Spelman, 1993). White women's identification with slavery and Black women's experience served to both subvert and sustain White supremacy (Spelman, 1993). By denying the differences between Black and White women, there was an implied commonality between them based on gender that appeared to transcend race. However, this emphasis on similarity also obscured White women's participation in the support of slavery and their White supremacist beliefs.

Another clear example of White women's racism occurred during the suffrage movement of the 1800s. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony had long believed antislavery to be inseparable from women's rights. When these White women advocated for the inclusion of women in the right to vote, they were encouraged to step aside by Black men, who thought that "while it was important for women to have the vote eventually, it was *essential*—immediately—for the physical and economic survival of black men" (Olson, 2001, p. 31). Stanton and Anthony felt betrayed by the Black men and women they had worked closely with, and their response was racist. The two White women turned their backs on Black women who had been their allies, criticizing Congress for favoring Black men over White women. In their letters to Congress, they argued the superiority of Whites, regardless of sex, over Blacks.

The legacy of slavery and racism in the early women's rights movement laid the foundation for the continued problem of White women's racism in the 20th Century. White women's ignorance of the history of racism in the United States (hooks, 1995; Miles, 1995; Palmer, 1983) and their continued participation in the oppression of people of Color, created a hostile environment for women of Color at feminist meetings. Their racism was different from the racism of the early women's movement, however; White women invited women of Color to participate in feminism—the presence of women of Color in feminist circles was desired, and overt racist actions and statements were often absent. But as bell hooks (1995) and June Lee (1995) have noted, while women of Color were welcomed at feminist meetings, their ideas, perspectives, and experiences were not. hooks (1984) commented that she was not treated as an equal in feminist groups; when she and other women of Color "dared to criticize the movement or to assume responsibility for reshaping feminist ideas and introducing new ideas, our voices were tuned out, dismissed, silenced. We could be heard only if our statements echoed the sentiments of the dominant discourse" (pp. 11-12). Time and again, women of Color have reported anger and frustration at the ways tokenism, marginalization, and racism has silenced them in feminist circles (Chambers, 1995; Lee, 1995, hooks, 1984).

A problem with confronting the racism of White women is the tendency of Whites to associate racism with acts of violence or discrimination perpetrated by identifiable individuals or groups (hooks, 1995). Viewing racism in this way allows Whites to deny their deeply rooted racist assumptions and beliefs and



defensively distance themselves from the systemic oppression of people of Color that they participate in every day, as well to avoid responsibility for their continued racist behavior (Wright, 1998). Whites are often unaware of their participation in a system that privileges their skin color. hooks (1995) began to consider the attitudes and behaviors of White women she encountered in the feminist movement as supportive of White supremacy:

> It is the very small but highly visible liberal movement away from the perpetuation of overtly racist discrimination, exploitation, and oppression of black people which often masks how all-pervasive white supremacy is in this society, both as ideology and as behavior. When liberal whites fail to understand how they can and/or do embody white supremacist values and beliefs even though they may not embrace racism as prejudice or domination (especially domination that involves coercive control), they cannot recognize the ways their actions support and affirm the very structure of racist domination and oppression that they profess to wish to see eradicated. (p. 185)

Wildman and Davis (1996) have written that all Whites are racist when considered from this perspective; Whites are racist when they benefit from participation in an oppressive system that privileges their skin color.

Within the feminist movement, the racism of White women took the form of privileging the concerns of White, middle class women (such as marriage and motherhood, encountering the "glass ceiling"), and assuming these concerns were universal women's issues (Palmer, 1989), while ignoring and silencing women of Color (Espin & Gawelek, 1992; Greene & Sanchez-Hucles, 1997). Chow (1989) and Greene and Sanchez-Hucles (1997) have noted that the experiences of women of Color in feminism parallel those of White women in the "old-boy" network. Just as White women have been frustrated by feelings of

voicelessness and powerlessness in their interactions with men, women of Color have struggled to be heard by White feminists.

McIntosh (1989), a White woman, has also noted the parallel between male privilege and White privilege. She defined privilege as a system of unearned advantage and conferred dominance that benefits Whites of both sexes. She described some of the privileges she believes she has based on skin Color, or conditions she believes she has been able to count on that her African American co-workers have not. For example, McIntosh stated that she could go shopping alone without fear of being followed or harassed, she could see others of her race widely represented on TV and in newspapers, and she could perform well and not be considered a credit or exception to her race. Through these and other examples, McIntosh took an important step in drawing attention to unspoken advantages Whites have had in their daily lives.

Although McIntosh's work has been acknowledged as courageous and insightful, it has also been criticized. Hurtado (1996), a Chicana, commented that McIntosh's essay denied people of Color their subjectivity. McIntosh named privileges she assumed people of Color would also recognize and desire for themselves; she did not consult with people of Color to understand what they would consider the privileges of being White in American society.

Among these privileges has been Whites' ability to choose silence over the struggle against oppression (Wildman & Davis, 1996). Whites' silence, distancing, and denial of privilege and racism have preserved systemic racial oppression (McIntosh, 1989; Hurtado, 1996), both in the larger society and within

feminism. Hurtado (1996) acknowledged that awareness of privilege and one's contribution to the oppression of others can cause Whites considerable stress and pain, and it is understandable that White women would want to avoid this reality. Similarly, Lorde (1984), an African American woman, wrote that "to allow women of Color to step out of stereotypes is too guilt provoking, for it threatens the complacency of those women who view oppression only in terms of sex" (p. 118). Both Hurtado and Lorde would likely agree with Bell (1995), a White woman who commented that "it is the minimum response for those of us with illegitimate power to develop an awareness of that power and to work to undermine the institutions that confer it" (p. 43).

The barrier of White women's racism has silenced the voices of women of Color in the development of feminist theory in many ways. First, Whites have actively silenced women of Color with their behavior of minimizing, distancing, and dismissing their ideas. Second, when women of Color speak about racism, White women are sometimes unable to hear them because they do not understand the privileges of being White or their participation in systemic oppression. Finally, Whites' own silence on race and ethnicity has obstructed productive dialogue.

Ethnic Culture and Gender Role Socialization

Another barrier to the participation of women of Color in feminism is the ethnic culture and gender role socialization of both White women and women of Color. "White" has often been viewed as norm rather than culture, obscuring how the dominant group has obtained and maintained power (Hurtado, 1996). More

recently, White women have been encouraged by women of Color to understand themselves as the products of race and gender (Bell, 1995), and to look within themselves to understand why women of Color have not attended feminist meetings (Chambers, 1995). Some White women have begun this task, describing learned social behaviors that interfere with their ability to communicate with women of Color. Davion (1995), a Jewish woman who learned to "pass" as White, described learned "whitely" behaviors. These behaviors include how to be careful around non-Jews, to tone down her stereotypically Jewish behaviors, to act as if she does not hate anyone, and to behave as though she does not discriminate. In her writing, Davion implies that White women have disliked others, but have hidden their feelings from others and/or themselves; have discriminated, but have either believed or pretended they have not; and have excluded her or rejected her Jewish heritage and culture when she has acted 'more Jewish.'

Additionally, Frye (1995) observed several behaviors and beliefs of Whites that she called "whiteliness," including belief in their moral rightness and ability to know right from wrong; belief that they are basically good, benevolent, fair, and honest; and their belief that they operate by the correct rules of engagement in dialogue and relationships with others. Frye (1995), a White woman, also cautioned that not all Whites engage in behaviors associated with "whiteliness." She likened "whiteliness" to masculinity; just as all males have not been what one might think of as masculine, all Whites have not been "whitely."

Both Davion's and Frye's observations of White women highlight aspects of White women's behavior that have made them "personally obnoxious and insufferable to many other women much of the time" (Frye, 1995, pp. 127-128), and suggest that White women have believed in an inherent superiority of White cultural norms and sense of morality.

Frye (1995) offered an example of how "whitely" behaviors operate to silence women of Color:

> The rules are often-rehearsed. I have participated in whitely women's affirming to each other that some uncomfortable disruption caused by someone objecting to some injustice or offense could have been avoided: had she put the problem forth in the correct way, it could have been correctly processed. We say:
> She should have brought it up in the business meeting.
> She should have just taken the other woman aside and explained that the remark had offended her.
> She should not have personally attacked me; she should have just told me that my behavior made her uncomfortable, and I would have stopped doing it.
> She should take this through the grievance procedure. (p. 121)

The White person assumes no responsibility or ownership over the offending behavior. The rules make it easy for White women to dismiss the comments of women of Color who do not follow the "rules of engagement" in conversation. White women can deny their own racism and focus on the "inappropriate behavior" of women of Color. It is much more difficult for White women to tolerate the anxiety, guilt, shame, and anger elicited by the comments of women of Color (Greene & Sanchez-Hucles, 1997) than to admit the impact of their behavior. The "whitely" rules of engagement in dialogue have conveniently given White women the tools to defensively distance themselves from their own racism and to preserve their privileged status.

The "whitely" behaviors described by Frye (1995) and their use in the preservation of privilege and power are similar to the "tricks" or rules of oppression described by Hurtado (1996). For example, Hurtado's (1996) Trick #2:

> I will claim my right to be central to all action by claiming my special needs as a ...(white) woman with special demands that supersede the needs of anybody else involved in the situation. If you claim your own needs, I will proceed as if I did not hear you and reassert my initial claim. The more you push, the more I persist in my claims, with no reference to yours. Unless I want you to exist, you do not. (p. 133)

Again, it is not difficult to understand how this "trick" might operate at a feminist meeting to minimize or silence the concerns and needs of women of Color. Women of Color have consistently written about White women's distancing, denial, and minimization of the experience of people of Color in feminist organizations (Chambers, 1995; hooks, 1984).

Hurtado (1996) asserted that the continued oppression of women and men of Color is in part the result of the unspoken rules of privilege and socialization into use of the "tricks." Frye (1995) commented that "whiteliness" holds an appeal for White women because it has earned them a sense of dignity and respectability that their contemptible feminine status as weak and dependent has not. She also cautioned that White women are deceived if they believe this elevated status means liberation. Instead, it contributes to White women's denial of their own oppression as women, and results in their participation in a system that preserves privilege and perpetuates the oppression of people of Color. In feminist psychology, "whitely" behaviors have often kept women of Color on the

margins, a token presence at meetings and conferences. In these ways, White culture has acted as a barrier to dialogue with women of Color.

The ethnic culture of women of Color can also present a barrier to their participation in feminism and to political activism in general. Multiple racial and ethnic groups exist, all with different aspects of socialization into the culture and norms of the ethnic group. A thorough discussion of these processes for all ethnic groups is beyond the scope of this dissertation and it would not generalize to the experiences of all women. bell hooks' (1989) discussion of her childhood experiences as an African American female and Chow's (1989) observations of women from her own Asian American background are discussed in order to provide examples of how ethnic culture and socialization have presented a barrier to the participation of women of Color in feminism.

In her book titled, *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black* (1989), bell hooks describes the forms of communication that were considered appropriate and acceptable for a Black woman in her family. They were learned through her personal experiences and observations of the adult women in her life. She noted that the problem was never that Black women lacked for words; in fact, talk and use of descriptive language among Black women was encouraged and a part of her cultural environment. What hooks did learn was not to reveal too much of her experience:

> I was never taught absolute silence, I was taught that it was important to speak but to talk a talk that was in itself a silence. Taught to speak yet beware of the betrayal of too much heard speech, I experienced intense confusion and deep anxiety in my efforts to speak and write. (1989, p. 7)

In other words, hooks had been taught to censor expression of her experience and observations of sexism to meet social norms in her family and cultural environment. hooks did not believe she was alone in fearing exposure and the dismissal of her experience "as mere nonsense" (1989, p. 7); she wrote: "... holding and hiding speech, seems to me now one of the barriers that women have always needed and still need to destroy so that we are no longer pushed into secrecy or silence" (1989, p. 7). hooks indicated that many women of Color have needed to overcome their fear of rejection, punishment, and exposure, and have had to learn to express emotions held deep inside about their personal experiences of sexism, racism, and other forms of oppression in order to participate in feminism.

Similarly, many Asian women have needed to understand socialization processes in order to participate in feminism or other politically active groups; historically, they have been socialized to be politically apathetic rather than politically active (Chow, 1989). This excerpt from Mirikitani's (1987) poem about her mother's 1981 testimony before the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Japanese American Civilians conveys the message that Japanese American women have also learned to silence aspects of their experience:

> There are miracles that happen
> she said.
> From the silences
> in the glass caves of our ears,
> from the crippled tongue,
> from the mute, wet eyelash,
> testimonies waiting like winter.
> We were told
> that silence was better
> golden like our skin,

useful like
go quietly,
easier like
don't make waves,
expedient like
horsestalls and deserts. (p. 33)

Mirikitani's poem evokes a sense of both silence enforced in the internment camps, and silence learned through socialization processes as cultural norm.

Additionally, political participation and activism have meant cultural conflict for many Asian American women. Chow (1989) noted several areas of conflict between Asian cultural norms and mainstream American values, including obedience vs. independence, collective (or familial) vs. individual interests, fatalism vs. change, and self-control vs. self-expression and spontaneity. Asian American women who have participated in feminism have had to learn to negotiate these cultural conflicts and maintain aspects of their ethnic culture in an environment that has supported very different values.

Chow (1989) also discussed another aspect of socialization processes related to ethnic culture that has presented a psychological barrier to the participation of Asian American women in political activism. Ethnic stereotyping of Asian American women as subservient, obedient, passive, hard-working, and exotic can result in internalization of these stereotypes and the belief that they should act accordingly. This scenario creates a lose-lose scenario for many Asian American women; those who act according to stereotyped behaviors may be rejected for doing so, and those who reject stereotypes in favor of another identity may be rejected for not adhering to cultural norms or behaviors expected from Asian American women. Either option can result in significant internal

conflict and stress, interfering with an Asian American woman's ability to freely participate in feminism or political organizing.

bell hooks (1989) and Chow (1989) have indicated that often women of Color must overcome cultural barriers to voice in order to participate in mainstream feminist psychology, tasks that many have not learned in their family and cultural environments. In some ways, this is not so different from the tasks that White feminists are now being called upon to undertake. White women must engage in the internal struggle to understand themselves not just as women, but as White women, as well as to understand how their own socialization into White culture has made it difficult for them to form alliances with women of Color.

Multiple Identities and Feminist Emphasis on Gender Identity

Shared history, culture, religion, and experiences contribute to women of Color's strong sense of ethnic identity and connection with other members of their ethnic groups. For some women of Color, ethnic identity is more salient than gender identity; Chow (1989) observed that for this reason some Asian American women prefer to engage in political organizing with other members of their ethnic group rather than to participate in mostly White feminist organizations.

Other women comment on their hurt and anger at the prospect of privileging gender identity over other aspects of identity in order to participate in feminism. Green (1995) was distressed by feminists' focus on gender and their marginalization of other integral aspects of her identity. As a disabled African American woman, she has identified partially with groups of White, non-disabled women, non-disabled African Americans, and women and men with disabilities;

however, at times she has felt, "contempt and exclusion from all of them" (p. 138). Her choice at the time was to walk away from feminism: "To protect myself from so-called feminist absolutes, I gave up on trying to find a place in the movement" (Green, 1995, p. 144). Curry-Johnson (1995) expressed a similar sentiment when she commented that as a woman, an African American, and a Christian, she experienced inner conflict and felt as if she had to sacrifice parts of herself to participate in feminist, religious, or ethnic groups:

> Each identity defines me; each is responsible for elements of my character; from each I derive some sustenance for my soul. But they do not peacefully coexist within me any more than the duality does in the lives of black men. These elements are in constant conflict, questioning my loyalties, my convictions, my love. How can you love, honor, and cherish your husband, yet keep your last name and high personal aspirations? admonishes my Christian ethic, critical of my feminist dogma. How can you subscribe to a faith that was once used to enslave your people? demands my African American heritage, inspired by the heady themes of black nationalism, suspicious of anything without marked African origins. Why do you buy into the male-dominated media myth of feminine beauty? cries my feminist credo, condemning my quest for a "better" body and lamenting my trivial affinity for high fashion. At times one voice can pull stronger than the others; yet, as I struggle to find my place in the world, I am always aware of each presence. (p. 222)

White feminists' emphasis on gender and lack of recognition of the salience of other aspects of identity has silenced many women of Color on these issues.

Additionally, Chow (1989) noted that ethnic identity presents a barrier to political activism in feminism in another way. Some Asian American women fear the loss of ethnic identity through absorption or cooptation into the larger society, and therefore tend not to participate in predominantly White feminist organizations in an effort to preserve their ethnic culture. In order to become a more inclusive, relevant theory, future feminist theory and practice cannot

"require someone to choose which aspect of her identity is the one to be liberated while others lie silenced, unattended to, or rendered marginal" (Brown, 1994, p. 69).

Ethnic Loyalty

Some women have written of ethnic loyalty and racial solidarity as barriers to the participation of women of Color in a feminism that emphasizes gender as the primary locus of oppression for women. Women of Color have often felt that they must choose between anti-racist and feminist affiliations. Some have maintained their bonds with men of Color in the fight against racism because of their belief that sexism is secondary to the impact of racism on their lives, and that racism must be destroyed before sexism can be addressed (Curry, 1995). Espin (1994) has commented that "because the feminist movement is indeed guilty of racism, the sexism that is prevalent in communities of Color as in the dominant White society hides insidiously behind a cloak of ethnic loyalty" (p. 267). Additionally, Chambers (1995) commented:

> It seems that for sanity's sake you must choose sides—your skin color versus your gender, blacks (implicitly male) versus women (implicitly white). Because of the pressing problems in the community—poverty, drugs, men's absence from many of our families—most young black women choose to play the game like boys on a basketball court. When it comes down to picking teams—skins vs. shirts—most of us opt to play skin, shedding our gender questions like a layer of clothing that becomes tedious and superfluous on a hot ghetto day. (p. 22)

This effort to preserve racial solidarity has often resulted in women of Color's minimization of sexism in their communities.

For example, during the civil rights and Chicano movements, men and women of Color worked together toward common goals in the fight against

shared racial oppression. However, according to Olson (2001), throughout the civil rights movement Black women were often encouraged to defer to Black men in order for men to gain confidence and recognition in leadership roles. At one point,

> within the black community, there was a growing sentiment, promoted by advocates of black power and popularized in black publications like Ebony, that black men needed to step forward and that black women were obligated to support this male ascendancy ... black women were sensitive to the need for racial unity. (p. 370)

While they worked tirelessly and courageously in the civil rights movement, Black women responded to the sexism of Black men and the apparent need for ethnic loyalty to achieve anti-racist goals; they tended to have a less public role in the movement. hooks (1995) argued that Black women have continued to censor themselves on race for fear that "talking race desexualizes, makes one less feminine. Or that to enter these discussions places one in direct competition with black males who feel this is their turf" (p. 3).

Black women have not been alone in their struggle to negotiate the complex relationship between sexism and ethnic loyalty. Other women of Color have feared that questioning sexism would damage racial solidarity and risk dismantling the unified front needed to preserve any advancement made in the fight against racism. Hurtado (1996) noted that intellectual work about sexism has at times "been perceived by both men and women of Color as treason because it may lead to the political demise of our communities ..." (pp. x-xi). The risks of participation in feminist organizations and of addressing sexism in

communities of Color have been well summarized by Chow (1989) in her observation of Asian American women:

> Although many Asian American women do engage in political organizing within ethnic communities, their activity in white feminist organizations is often perceived by their male partners and even their female peers as a move toward separatism. They are warned that the consequences of separation will threaten the male ego, damage working relationships between Asian men and women, and dilute efforts and resources for the Asian American cause. (pp. 369-370)

Summary

Women of Color have faced many barriers to their participation in the feminist movement, including the racism of White women, feminist emphasis on gender rather than other aspects of identity, ethnic loyalty, and the ethnic culture of both White women and women of Color. These are not the only walls that women of Color have encountered; other aspects of identity and sources of oppression have presented formidable barriers to political participation of women of Color, including sexual orientation, physical ability, religious beliefs, age, language, and education. Additionally, in the real lives of women, barriers have not been easily separated into the labels they have been given here. Some women have written of the complexity of identity and the embeddedness of different aspects of identity (Bell, 1995; Curry-Johnson, 1995; Greene & Sanchez-Hucles, 1997).

Barriers to the participation of women of Color in mainstream feminist psychology have interfered with the dialogue that is essential to the development of an inclusive feminist theory. Silences in this dialogue occur when women of Color speak and are not heard; when White women choose not to address their

own racism; when women are struggling with ethnic and gender norms for behavior that silence their voices; and when women of Color feel they are faced with the choice of addressing either racism or sexism.

Women of Color Theories

Despite facing barriers to their participation in feminism, women of Color have persevered in their efforts to challenge White women and feminist theory. As Lee (1995) noted, "women of color feminist theories challenge the fundamental premises of feminism, such as the very definition of 'women,' and call for recognition of the constructed nature of *all* experiences of gender" (pp. 210-211). Women of Color have also forged their own paths to develop psychological theories apart from feminism. Although there is much diversity in women of Color theories, several themes have emerged: 1) women of Color theories have tended to resist organizing oppressions into hierarchies, and instead have worked to understand the complexity of group memberships; 2) they have considered their political activism a part of their group's history of resistance; 3) they have not privileged theorizing from academic institutions over ideas that have emerged from art, everyday life, and political organizing; and 4) many theories have emphasized addressing heterosexism in their ethnic communities (Hurtado, 1996).

What Can Feminism Offer Women of Color?

Women of Color have been actively involved in understanding racism and other forms of oppression, as well as in developing theories of oppression and

domination/subordination. However, some have also commented on the ways they have benefited from contact with feminist theory and practice despite the tokenism, silencing, and marginalization they have experienced in feminist circles. For example, Lee (1995) was frustrated that Asian American women were not represented in her women's studies classes. However, in those same classes she learned a language she could use to describe her experiences of racism and oppression, and to connect them to larger societal structures of power and dominance. Her contact with feminism raised her consciousness, politicized her, and presented her with ways she could resist and fight against oppression. Feminism also gave Espin (Morris & Espin, 1995), a Cuban-born woman, language to describe work she had already been doing, as well as words to bridge multiculturalism, psychology, and feminism. Additionally, Chow (1989) noted that feminism has benefited Asian American women by helping them organize and examine their subordinate status; identify resources and establish their own organizations; gain valuable skills in leadership, assertiveness, and negotiation; and broaden their perspective of political struggle.

Other women of Color have described how women in their ethnic communities have benefited from feminist approaches to therapy. According to Espin (1984), feminist therapy has made positive contributions to the mental health of women of Color by emphasizing empowerment, reproductive choice, social action, and validation of anger. Additionally, feminist therapy has helped women of Color heal through understanding the psychological effects of social forces on their lives (Espin, 1984, Mays & Comas-Diaz, 1985). The principles of

feminist therapy also mandate that "the practitioner to engage in ethical therapeutic practices grounded in experiences that reflect the client's social reality" (Mays & Comas-Diaz, 1985, p. 229), assuring women of Color that, at least in principle, feminist therapists will engage in culturally competent practice.

Some women of Color have recognized the potential relevance of feminism to their lives, particularly when feminist theorists and practitioners follow the mandates of feminist thought. They have noted several aspects of feminist theory as particularly important to the lives of women of Color, including emphasis on balance of power between the sexes, recognition of the importance of the social context on women's lives and mental health, examination of oppression in the lives of all women, validation of experience without assigning it hierarchical value, and the recognition that life is sacred and humans should not be oppressed (Comas-Diaz, 1988; Greene and Sanchez-Hucles, 1997; Hurtado, 1996).

Although these mandates have been interpreted in ways that have led to the privileging of gender as the primary locus of oppression for women, feminist theory holds within it a commitment to social change that supports equality for everyone (Greene & Sanchez-Hucles, 1997). Feminist theory has helped women of Color broaden their focus on racial oppression to develop greater awareness of gender and other forms of oppression (Hurtado, 1989, Chow, 1989). It has also helped women of Color recognize a point of connection with White women: that there lies a potential oppressor within all of us (Lorde, 1984). Power varies from context to context, and "we all have the capacity to act in ways that oppress,

dominate, and wound (whether or not that power is institutionalized)" (hooks, 1989, p. 21). Hurtado (1996) also noted that the feminist paradigm is capable of incorporating a theoretical understanding of privilege, including how oppressive behaviors have been learned and how silence around the rules of privilege preserves economic and social inequality.

According to Chow (1989), women of Color have also made great contributions to the feminist movement. Although Chow's observations were of Asian American women, they would seem to apply to the many women of Color whose challenges to White women's racism have sensitized many White women to their ethnocentric views. Women of Color have also advocated for the civil rights, social equality, and human liberation of all people, and feminism has benefited from their participation in political activities.

Historically, women of Color have benefited from and have contributed to the feminist movement. The potential for future benefits is great if women of Color and White women continue to struggle in partnerships toward the realization of feminism's mandate to understand oppression in the lives of all women. Women of Color have not just suffered the effects of racism, but of sexism, heterosexism, and other forms of oppression. Their continued participation in feminism and in the development of feminist theory and practice would promote awareness that, "all forms of oppression must be taken into account simultaneously; otherwise, they (women of color) will continue to struggle independently from white women, which ultimately will weaken everybody's cause" (Hurtado, 1996, p. 42).

Why White Feminists Need to Engage in Anti-Racism and in Dialogue With Women of Color

Although White women have benefited from a feminism that emphasizes their experience of gender oppression, in its exclusion of women of Color feminist theory can be construed as an instrument of oppression (Greene & Sanchez-Hucles, 1997). This reality is in direct opposition to the mandates of feminism. White women often need women of Color to help them recognize the ways in which their "whitely" and racist behaviors perpetuate the oppression of people of Color. Additionally, women of Color have been instrumental in raising White women's consciousness of the ways in which their acceptance of privilege and the false sense of dignity and goodness it has given them has actually served to bind them to their oppressors (Frye, 1995; Hurtado, 1989). White women's socialization into privilege and dominance seduces them into "accepting a subservient role that meets the material needs of white men" (Hurtado, 1989, p. 845), prolonging their gender oppression and making them perpetrators of oppression. They risk losing group membership if they truly challenge White male domination (Bell, Meyerson, Nkomo, & Scully, 2003; Hurtado, 1989).

Additionally, researchers have begun to explore the negative consequences of racism for Whites. In their development of a scale to assess the psychosocial costs of racism, Spanierman and Heppner (2004) identified affective (e.g., anxiety, fear, anger, and guilt), cognitive (distortions in view of self, other, and reality), and behavioral (e.g., avoidance of social interactions with people of Color) domains. While more study is needed to validate their tripartite

model of these costs, Spanierman and Heppner's (2004) conceptualization of the psychosocial costs of racism to Whites provides White women with a structure for understanding the negative effects of racism on their lives.

Silence

Feminism and White women need women of Color; women of Color can also benefit from participating in the continued development of feminist theory. Open dialogue among women is necessary for the advancement of an inclusive feminist psychology that values all experiences and addresses multiple sources of oppression. Dialogue on the subjects of race and ethnicity means confronting the reality of racism and coping with powerful emotions such as anger, guilt, and shame (Lugones, 1995; hooks, 1995; Siegel, 1990). Methods of coping with these emotions often include avoidance by silencing self or others, which closes down curiosity about race and ethnicity rather than opens dialogue. These silences may be adaptive in the sense that they relieve tension and anxiety in the moment, providing safety and escape from discomfort while permitting the coexistence of White women and women of Color in the professional realm. However, silences also come at a cost to the psychological selves of women and perpetuate an oppressive system in which some have the power to speak and be heard while others do not (Reinhartz, 1994). A better understanding of silences in the dialogue on race will help open conversation and break down barriers to communication among women of different racial and ethnic groups.

According to Scarpi (1987), "to speak of silence is like breaking a taboo" (p. 21); those who have written about the subject of silence agree that silence is

much more than the absence of voice or sound. Instead, "the silences around the words are as profound and numerous in meaning and valence as the words themselves" (Clair, 1998, p. 23). Jaworski (1997) described three functions of silence: 1) to express and display cognitive and emotional states, such as love, anger, embarrassment, respect, and meditation; 2) to resist or defy power (for example, refusal to testify in political trials); and 3) to oppress or dominate.

Silence as reflective of oppression has been the subject of much feminist thought, particularly around the silencing of women throughout history. It is also relevant to understanding silence in the feminist dialogue on race and ethnicity. As previously noted, the silence of Whites protects privilege and perpetuates the oppression of people of Color (McIntosh, 1989; Hurtado, 1996). Whites' silence on racism and how they have been socialized into domination and privilege fits with Jaworski's (1993) description of the silence of omission, or leaving something out as a political tool for imposing the status quo. The voices and concerns of women of Color have also been silenced at feminist meetings (hooks, 1984; Greene & Sanchez-Hucles, 1997), a silence imposed through informal conversation (Clair, 1998). Silence on the subject of racism has also been imposed through state-sanctioned use of violence and of the legal system to enforce discipline on groups that do not consent to domination.

Voice and silence have been recognized as dominant metaphors for power relations: "... voice means having the ability, the means, and the right to express oneself, one's mind, and one's will. If an individual does not have these

abilities, means, or right, he or she is silent" (Reinharz, 1994, p. 180). Reinharz (1994) continued,

> A woman is silenced when no one listens, even when she talks. She is silenced when others do all the talking, including speaking for her, especially speaking about her. She is silenced when people cannot understand what she is saying even when she does speak. They cannot 'hear' what she is saying. (p. 184)

Regardless of how a woman is silenced, the oppressive nature of silencing often has profound effects on her psychological well-being. She and/or her oppressed group may develop a self-image as powerless and inferior, with nothing important or relevant to say (Jaworski, 1993). Finding voice and naming experience is liberating for women who have been socialized to silence themselves and defer to men or whoever may hold power in a given situation. As hooks (1989) noted:

> Moving from silence into speech is for the oppressed, the colonized, the exploited, and those who stand and struggle side by side a gesture of defiance that heals, that makes new life and new growth possible. It is that act of speech, of "talking back," that is no mere gesture of empty words, that is the expression of our movement from object to subject—the liberated voice. (p. 9)

hooks' words provide encouragement for women to continue their struggle against racism and other forms of oppression.

In close examination of White women's silences in their study of Black and White women's efforts to address inequality in the workplace, Bell and her colleagues (2003) raise the question of whether all of White women's silences mean collusion with an unfair system. At times, silence may be a way to work behind the scenes without drawing attention to oneself. Silence may also be a way for White women to move closer to the center of power and use their voices

strategically for change. However, the authors caution that "sometimes, silence really is silence: absence, reneging, complicity" (Bell et al., 2003, p.408).

Whatever the reason for silence, "when there is silence, no criticism is expressed. What we do not say, what we do not talk about, allows the status quo to continue" (Wildman and Davis, 1996, p. 8). The status quo of protecting privilege and silencing women of Color is unacceptable. In the past, feminist paradigms have encouraged the testimony of women and documented how women have perceived themselves at their worst; women have acquired strength through this process of self-examination (Hurtado, 1996). Women of Color and White women must trust in this process and that ultimately, their struggle through pain and uncertainty in dialogue with one another will liberate them from the oppression of silence.

Women's Reflections on Their Silences in Dialogue on Race and Ethnicity

The process of self-examination often involves the risk of experiencing painful emotions avoided by remaining silent. Although women may have believed in the protective nature of their silence, as Lorde (1984) noted, silence has only served to protect the status quo and prevent women from bridging their differences. Silences are not protective, and White women and women of Color must follow the example of Greene and Sanchez-Hucles' (1997) diversity work group by "acknowledging, staying with, and working through our personal anxieties and tensions as they relate to diversity" (p. 183). An atmosphere of openness and trust must be created, one that is conducive to engaging in discussion aimed at understanding racism and other forms of oppression. Some

women of Color and White women have begun this difficult and challenging personal work, and have written about the affective experiences that have interfered with their ability to participate in open discussions with each other. Their reflections on anger, fear, sorrow, exhaustion, guilt, and shame follow.

Anger

According to Miller and Surrey (1997), "anger arises when something is wrong or hurts" (p. 201). As such, "any discussion among women about racism must include the recognition and the use of anger" (Lorde, 1984, p. 128). Despite the appropriateness of rage as a response to the injustices of racism (hooks, 1995; Lorde, 1984; Lugones, 1995), many women of Color have had difficulty both expressing their own anger and hearing and validating the anger of others. Women of Color struggle with their socialization to equate rage with pathology and madness (hooks, 1995; Lugones, 1995).

For example, Lugones (1995), a Hispanic woman, found herself uncomfortable with her own anger and the frequency with which she felt rage at the injustices of racism. In her reflections on anger, she recognized that her discomfort has stemmed from internalization of standards that supported and validated the anger of dominants (Whites), but discouraged and silenced the anger of subordinates (people of Color). State-sanctioned violence and discriminatory laws have been used to force people of Color to repress their rage in order to stay alive and out of prison (hooks, 1995; Hartfeld, 1995). Many people of Color question the validity of their anger. Women of Color are often told the expression of their anger is disruptive and useless, or that White women

cannot "hear" them when they are angry (Lorde, 1984), comments that reinforce the questioning and silencing of their rage.

Several authors recognize that anger and rage not only have the power to destroy, but also to transform (hooks, 1995). Anger has a positive side—it can provide women of Color with the energy they need to take action against racism (Lorde, 1984). According to Lorde (1984), women of Color have been able to use anger to identify their enemies and allies by becoming aware of those who can tolerate and hear their rage. Additionally, Miller and Surrey (1997) considered anger a necessary part of movement in relationships, and encouraged women to create a cultural climate in which anger can be used positively as a resource for change, rather than continue to be associated only negatively with aggression. Unfortunately, becoming comfortable with the anger and rage they have learned to consider inappropriate remains a difficult personal struggle for many women of Color.

In her personal reflections on emotions that have gotten in the way of open discussions with women of Color, Siegel (1990) admitted that as a White, Jewish woman, she has struggled with anger, too. She has felt angry with herself and others for exposing her insensitivities and uncovering her deeply rooted prejudices and biases. She has also been angry when others are unaware of their contributions to her own oppression. Her anger has made her wish to withdraw from others and silence herself. She has had to make a conscious effort to remain present rather than retreat from this uncomfortable emotion.

Although fewer White women than women of Color have written about their anger in dialogue about race and ethnicity, Siegel's (1990) reflections imply that White women may be struggling with understanding and expressing anger, too. Cook-Nobles (Coll, Cook-Nobles, & Surrey, 1997), an African American woman, noted that White women have learned to repress anger, be polite, and consider the expression of anger as rude or scary. They may be less likely than Black women, who have had more permission to be angry and to express it (based on stereotypes of Black women as evil, assertive, and powerful), to acknowledge anger. Additionally, at times White women project their hostility when anger is elicited, distancing themselves from the emotion and minimizing the experience of people of Color (Greene & Sanchez-Hucles, 1997). White women's socialization to repress anger and their defensive distancing from the emotion may be some of the reasons why White women have been relatively silent about their experience of anger in dialogue on race and ethnicity.

Fear

Anger has often been associated with other emotions that silence discussion on race and ethnicity, including fear. White women and women of Color have learned to fear their own anger because it is often associated with aggression in our culture (Miller & Surrey, 1997). Women's expression of anger has historically been met with male violence:

> For women raised to fear, too often anger threatens annihilation. In the male construct of brute force, we were taught that our lives depended upon the good will of patriarchal power. The anger of others was to be avoided at all costs because there was nothing to be learned from it but pain, a judgment that we had been bad girls, come up lacking, not done what we were supposed to do. (Lorde, 1984, p. 131)

Although Lorde's (1984) comments reflect her understanding of how fear of anger has silenced White women and women of Color, she also challenged them to reject powerlessness in the face of anger. She has not accepted White women's fear of the anger of women of Color as reason to turn away from discussion of racism; instead, Lorde considered White women's excuse of intimidation as another way that they protect privilege and the status quo. Lorde's statements are reminiscent of Hurtado's (1996) Trick #2 (previously discussed in the section on ethnic culture), in which she described White women's tool of asserting their own needs as a means to protect privilege by ignoring and minimizing the needs of women of Color.

Fear of anger is not the only fear that has silenced women in dialogue on race and ethnicity. Siegel (1990) described confronting her fear of criticism and rejection when speaking exposes her limitations and ignorance of oppressive biases. She has also written openly of her fear that acknowledging another's oppression will somehow negate or take away from her own wounds and struggle, despite her rational understanding that oppressions are not hierarchical or interchangeable.

Siegel (1990) echoed some of Lorde's (1984) earlier sentiments: "In the cause of silence, each of us draws the face of her own fear—fear of contempt, of censure, or some judgment, or recognition, of challenge, of annihilation" (p. 42). Lorde added that she has feared the transformation of silence into language and action because of the danger and losses associated with such an act of self-revelation.

Sadness

hooks (1995) has been very clear about how painful it has been for her to talk about racism. Talking about race meant confronting the reality of racism and acknowledging the daily racist assaults she has endured as a Black woman in the United States. Being aware of racism in daily life has startled and frightened her, and has sometimes been enough to silence her in an effort to avoid reality. She has also written that, "for some of us talking about race means moving past the pain to speak, not getting caught, trapped, silenced by sadness and sorrow" (hooks, 1995, p. 5). Again, awareness brought with it an acknowledgement of the pain people of Color have suffered because of racial oppression, resulting in sadness and sorrow at the tremendous losses that people of Color have experienced.

Exhaustion

Women of Color sometimes remain silent in dialogue with White women because they are tired of assuming the responsibility for educating White women about racism. Lee (1995) noted that women of Color who have been aware of their tokenization in feminist organizations have wondered whether the ultimate goals of their participation have been worth their continued investment in educating others. Women of Color have often been expected to educate others about their mistakes, a responsibility that has drained energy that "might be better used in redefining ourselves and devising realistic scenarios for altering the present and constructing the future" (Lorde, 1984, 115).

When considered from this perspective, the responsibility for educating others would seem to fit insidiously into part of Hurtado's (1996) Trick #6 as a method for maintaining privilege and power: "I will ask you to educate me and spend your energies in finding ways of saying things so that I can understand... The claim of ignorance is one of my most powerful weapons because, while you spend your time trying to enlighten me, everything remains the same" (p. 135). Although White women may not consciously be attempting to thwart the efforts of women of Color toward change, by expecting women of Color to educate them about racism and their own oppressive behavior, White women have been contributing to the continued oppression of people of Color.

Guilt

White women have often been immobilized and silenced by guilt they feel as they come to understand the history of oppression of people of Color and their participation maintaining White privilege (Coll et al., 1997). Although this sense of guilt has been very real and possibly an integral part of White women's process toward understanding racism, women of Color have been frustrated by White women's guilt and its translation into continued lack of action:

> If it (guilt) leads to change then it can be useful, since it then is no longer guilt but the beginning of knowledge. Yet all too often, guilt is just another name for impotence, for defensiveness, destructive of communication; it becomes a device to protect ignorance and the continuation of things the way they are, the ultimate protection for changelessness. (Lorde, 1984, p. 130)

Shame

Finally, shame has often silenced White women in dialogue on race and ethnicity. Shame has been associated with a deep sense of exposure and

vulnerability, feelings many White women have experienced as they have been confronted with acknowledging their own racist assumptions and beliefs. Siegel (1990) has written of her feelings of shame when she uncovered her own oppressive biases, as well as when her limitations and lack of awareness were exposed. Like guilt, shame has immobilized many White women in their efforts to understand racism, and, like guilt, White women must not let shame overwhelm their responsibility to understand and halt their participation in the oppression of people of Color.

Centralizing This Inquiry in Counseling Psychology

For a number of reasons, women counseling psychologists are the focus of this study of women's silences in dialogue on race and ethnicity. First, the idea for exploring women's silences originated at a conference aimed at centralizing feminism and multiculturalism in counseling psychology. The fact that this conference took place demonstrates the commitment of counseling psychologists to dialogue about diversity. However, despite their commitment, conference attendees experienced difficulty talking about race, ethnicity, and privilege (Nelson et al., in press).

Second, it is assumed that women counseling psychologists share a common professional identity. As such, they emphasize person-environment interactions (Gelso & Fretz, 1991; Sue, 2004) in their research and practice. This perspective is consistent with contextualism, the theory that grounds this exploration of women's silences.

Third, counseling psychologists have demonstrated a commitment to the development of multicultural theory. They have been active in research on multicultural issues and are well-regarded within the American Psychological Association for their contributions to guidelines for working with diverse populations (Sue,2004).

Finally, counseling psychologists have recently been challenged to adopt a social justice agenda and to expand their roles beyond the therapy hour to work for change at societal and institutional levels (Vera & Speight, 2003). Feminist and multicultural theories were used to inform the principles of social justice developed by and for counseling psychologists (Goodman, Liang, Helms, Latta, Sparks, & Weintraub, 2004). Any work in the area of social justice will include efforts to dismantle and eradicate racism. Hopefully, the open dialogue that is essential for this task will be enhanced by the results of this study.

Summary and Research Questions

The purpose of the present inquiry is to develop a better understanding of women's silence in dialogue on race and ethnicity. White women and women of Color have identified several impediments to open dialogue, including current and historical tensions between White women and women of Color, White women's racism and ignorance of privilege, cultural and gender socialization, the multiplicity of identity, and negative affective experience.

Contextual theory provides a framework for exploring silence and is based on the assumption that behavior is inextricably linked to the context within which it has occurred (Landrine, 1995). The mechanistic action of silence may appear

similar across people and contexts, but is assumed to hold different meanings unless empirical inquiry indicates otherwise. Silence will be studied as act-in-context in the current inquiry. The research questions to be addressed are:

> What are the contextual factors that contribute to women's silences on race and ethnicity?
>
> What are women thinking and feeling in the silence?
>
> What are the risks and benefits of silence in dialogue on race and ethnicity?

It is hoped that greater understanding of silence will increase awareness and decrease assumptions about race and ethnicity, as well as increase curiosity about self and others. Additionally, it is anticipated that results of this study will encourage women to overcome barriers to conversation about race, promoting dialogue that is essential to developing inclusive psychological theories.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The Researcher

This study is qualitative in design; data were gathered through interviews with White women and women of Color about their silences in dialogue on race and ethnicity. Researcher's biases, assumptions, values, personal history, and identity are part of the context of the interview and have an impact not only on what they explore and participants choose to discuss, but also on what is attended to in the process of data analysis and case reporting (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998; Oleson, 2000; Fontana and Frey, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Qualitative researchers are encouraged to examine these aspects of self before conducting interviews, as well as throughout the process of data collection, analysis, and writing up results. Additionally, multicultural theorists and researchers encourage researchers to develop an awareness of themselves as cultural beings and confront their biases before they conduct multicultural research, particularly if they are White (Helms, 1993; Parham, 1993; Sue, 1993).

As a White woman with multiple dominant identities, I am aware of my position of relative power and freedom in the United States and the world. Reading, participating in workshops, attending lectures, and conversing with friends and colleagues has increased my understanding of systems of power, privilege, and oppression. I recognize that becoming multiculturally competent and understanding aspects of my own identity are part of an ongoing,

developmental process, and that the present study is a reflection of my current awareness and ability to shift perspectives as I encounter new information and challenges to my biases and assumptions. Aspects of my personal history and developmental process that are relevant to this research are included in the fourth and fifth chapters of this dissertation.

Additionally, my feminist orientation and assumptions about knowledge and experience have informed the design of the present inquiry. I believe that meaning and reality are constructed within the context of social relationships. I assume that personal history, aspects of identity (i.e., race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, religious beliefs), and other contextual features influence our perspectives on (and how we are perceived by) the world and people with whom we have contact.

My perspectives and review of the literature lead me to believe that women's silences in dialogue on race and ethnicity have many meanings that are best explored using an interpretive case study methodology (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The naturalistic procedures of interviewing and inductive data analysis accommodate assumptions of contextualism about multiple meanings and their embeddedness in context, and are described further in the Procedures section of this chapter.

Methods

Participants

Women with the common professional identity as counseling psychologists were solicited for participation in this study. A total of 13 women

were interviewed; however, one woman chose to withdraw from the study due to concerns that she might be identified by the information she provided during the interview. The remaining 12 participants included five White women, three African American women, three Asian American women, and one Latina. Participants ranged in age from 33 to 59 years. One participant lived in Canada; the remaining were residents of the United States. Additional information about participants is included in Chapter 4.

Procedures

A brief description of the study was sent via email to members of APA's Division 17, Society of Counseling Psychology, Section for the Advancement of Women and Section on Ethnic and Racial Diversity (see Appendix). Women interested in the study were asked to contact the investigator for more information, and a list of potential participants was generated. Interviews with both White women and women of Color were sought, and participants were selected to achieve a balance in race and ethnicity in the sample.

Of the 12 women who responded to the initial request for participants, only one was a woman of Color. Two White women lived reasonably close to my Massachusetts residence: within two to eight hours driving distance. These women were interviewed over the summer of 2002. Additionally, only one of the original respondents was a woman of Color. It was clear that I needed to use alternate recruitment methods to locate participants within the Northeast, as well as to connect with women of Color. I forwarded my recruitment email to two friends in major metropolitan areas of the Northeast, one a doctoral student and

the other a faculty member in counseling psychology. In turn, they forwarded my request to their colleagues. Another source of potential participants was an internship supervisor, who helped connect me with women in the profession. Eleven participants were interviewed between June and November of 2003.

Participants signed consent forms and filled out a background information form at the beginning of each interview (see Appendix). They were asked to specify their race/ethnicity and other aspects of identity (sexual orientation, religious affiliation, age, etc.), current professional position and activities, and professional affiliations. Interviews were audiotaped and transcribed for qualitative analysis. Participants were also asked to complete a brief follow-up questionnaire intended to capture the process of the interview, particularly the potential for cross-cultural dynamics (see Appendix). Four of these questionnaires were completed and returned.

Transcripts, tapes, copies of communications with participants, and follow-up questionnaires were kept in a locked cabinet throughout the process of data collection and analysis. Documents and tapes were labeled with participant numbers rather than names, and identifying information has been altered in final documents to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants.

The procedures for qualitative inquiry followed in the present study include three steps, as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985): interviewing, data analysis, and writing the case report.

Interviewing

In-depth interviews are intended to be more like conversations between peers rather than follow a structured question and answer format (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998; Fontana & Frey, 2000; Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). They are not completely free of structure and boundaries, however. Taylor and Bogdan (1998) suggested the use of an interview guide, or a list of general areas to be addressed in the interview. An interview guide "presupposes a certain degree of knowledge about the people one intends to study" (p. 106). The guide used in the current study was based on domains of interest identified in the literature review (see Appendix).

Participants were asked to reflect on at least one particular instance when they were aware of their silence in conversation on race and ethnicity, or when race and ethnicity were relevant, but were not discussed. Personal histories, salient aspects of identity, and previous experiences in conversations about race and ethnicity were explored as they pertained to the setting, participants' affective experience, and their thought process at the time of their silence. The guide was presented to participants at the beginning of each interview as a loose structure for their descriptions of silence.

It was expected that

> by virtue of being interviewed, people develop new insights and understandings of their experiences. They may not have thought about or reflected on events in which the interviewer is interested, and even if they have, they interpret things a bit differently each time. (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998, p. 98)

Time and financial pressures permitted only one 1½ -2 hour face-to-face interview with each participant. However, opportunities for prolonged

engagement with participants were provided. Participants were encouraged to think about silence and voice in dialogue on race and ethnicity before the interview. After the interview, participants were encouraged to contact me with any new thoughts, reflections, or clarifications.

Data Analysis and Coding

Data were analyzed using the procedures for open coding, axial coding, and selective coding outlined in Strauss and Corbin (1998). During open coding, concepts were identified and similar concepts were grouped together to form categories. The properties and dimensions of categories were defined during the process of axial coding. Relational statements regarding the conditions, actions/interactions, and consequences of silence were also developed during axial coding. Finally, categories were integrated and refined during the process of selective coding, and a theory about women's silences in dialogue on race and ethnicity was developed.

Throughout the process, I engaged in memo writing, keeping a written record of the analysis, thoughts, and interpretations (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I also consulted with my academic advisor, two clinical supervisors, and with a peer at different points during the analysis in order to check my assumptions and biases, explore interpretations and their rationales, and test working hypotheses.

Writing the Case Report

The purpose of the case report is to present the findings of the study, including enough information about the constructions so readers can make judgments about the applicability of the study's findings to their own experiences

(Lincoln & Guba, 1985, Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). The final dissertation document serves as the case report.

Trustworthiness

In any research endeavor, researchers must take care to insure that conclusions have been based on sound methods of data collection and analysis. The concepts of internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity represent the criteria for trustworthiness in conventional, positivistic research paradigms. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), parallel trustworthiness criteria for qualitative inquiry include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

Credibility refers to the care that the researcher takes to insure that credible interpretations and findings are achieved. First, investigators can engage in activities that increase the probability of credible findings, including prolonged engagement (discussed previously) and persistent observations (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Persistent observations are a part of the interview process, and include an emphasis on identifying the domains that are most relevant to the research question and studying them in detail across interviews. This activity is included as part of emergent and flexible design, and domains of interest identified in the literature review were explored during interviews.

The second activity in demonstrating credibility is peer debriefing, or contact with an identified, disinterested party who reviews the investigator's progress and process of emerging theory. I consulted with the peers named

above. Additionally, my dissertation committee serves as peer reviewers of the final product of this research.

Third, negative case analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Ryan & Bernard, 2000) was employed to establish credibility. Cases that did not fit identified and defined categories were reviewed and used to adjust, confirm, or disconfirm elements of the emerging construction. In the present study, negative case analysis was conducted as part of the process of selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Finally, member checks are an important activity that demonstrate credibility, and include verifying data, categories, and interpretations with participants or representatives from their groups. I conducted member checks by restating participants' accounts to check my understanding during the course of interviews, and my dissertation committee's review of process and product of the study serve as a member checks.

Transferability

Transferability refers to provision of the tools readers need to make their own decisions about the applicability of findings and interpretations to their own experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability was achieved through careful and thorough writing of the case report.

Dependability and Confirmability

Dependability and confirmability are achieved through the audit process, or review of the process of emergent design and final product. The dissertation committee serves as auditors of the present study.

Limitations

The design and sample of the current study present a few limitations that warrant discussion. First, as noted by Lincoln and Guba (1985), information that emerges from interviews is dependent on the interaction between investigator and context. It has been extremely important for me to continue to explore and understand the impact of my biases and assumptions on interviews and results. I have attempted to address this limitation by continuing my commitment to personal development in the area of study, as well as by including a section on my limitations as a researcher in Chapter 4.

Oleson (2000) has also noted that participants' responses are mediated by the context of the interview, and that silences often occur. Given the nature of the research questions, the same silences I am hoping to study may emerge in the interviews. Participants were asked to complete a brief, written follow-up questionnaire in an attempt to capture the process of the interview. They were also invited to contact me at any time to expand upon their statements and comment on process.

Finally, the sample of women counseling psychologists may limit readers' ability to transfer the results to their own experiences. However, this study is exploratory in nature, and is intended to develop a better understanding of women's silences in dialogue on race and ethnicity, not to account for all women's experiences. Results raise many questions and may provide direction for future research with other populations.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Overview

This chapter consists of seven sections. The first details some of my personal history and developmental process as the researcher in this qualitative study. It is followed by a description of the participants and a section that contains two in-depth examples. The fourth section relates some of participants' observations of silence and dialogue on race and ethnicity in the field of counseling psychology. In the fifth, factors involved in participants' silences are reviewed. Feedback that participants provided about the interview during their sessions and on a follow-up questionnaire is presented sixth section. Results are summarized in the final section.

The Researcher

For me there is no question that this study of women's silences surrounding issues of race and ethnicity is influenced by my beliefs, values, and experiences. A critical component of this research involves self-examination as a means of better understanding and evaluating the degree that the lens through which I view the world shapes the study, from the origins of my interest in silence to the themes I identified during data analysis. I believe it is important to share some portion of this experience so the reader may be able to fully appreciate and critically evaluate the results.

I first became interested in the study of silence during a conference aimed at centralizing feminism and multiculturalism within counseling psychology. Both theoretical orientations were fairly new to me at the time, yet I identified with them almost immediately. My idealistic and naïve sense of what would take place at this working conference was both reinforced within my working group and crushed by what took place at the conference as a whole. My group consisted of mostly White women and two women of Color. In our discussions of feminist and multicultural approaches to supervision and training, we spoke easily about feminism, yet the thread of multiculturalism was lost almost immediately whenever one of the women of Color reminded us that we were there to talk about both. After intervening several times to keep us on task, I watched this woman silently sit back in her chair. I and a few other members made this observation, and after much prompting from one of the women of Color, we began to talk about something that is rarely discussed – silence. Why were the White women I perceived to be so strong, capable, and intelligent rendered speechless when the conversation turned to multiculturalism, and more specifically, race and ethnicity? Why did so many of the White women have difficulty hearing what the women of Color were saying to us? Additionally, the focus on silence and White women's process also distracted us from our mission to discuss feminist and multicultural supervision.

Other working groups at the conference experienced similar problems, many with less satisfactory outcomes. At a large meeting on the last day of the weekend, I listened to the anger, sadness, and frustration expressed by women

of Color at every aspect of their experience, from their lack of participation in conference planning to having yet another disappointing encounter with White women. These experiences raised deeply personal questions for me; I had participated in the conference with the best of intentions only to find that my behavior had aroused negative emotions in others. For many reasons, this dissonance between who I thought I was and how I had been experienced made me extremely uncomfortable. Admittedly, I do not like coming face to face with the way my ignorance and self-absorption can be hurtful.

The opportunity I had at the conference for open dialogue was the necessary impetus for me to begin an examination of my place in the world as a White, heterosexual, well-educated, able-bodied, and middle-class woman with mainstream religious beliefs. Dialogue had brought about this change for me, as I believe it has helped the clients and students with whom I have had the privilege to work, regardless of their presenting concerns. Our practice as counseling psychologists is founded on the basic belief in the healing power of speaking and being heard. While silence may be powerful in its own right - as time for reflection or as a means of communication - it has been my experience that most often silence on matters of race and ethnicity represents a breakdown in dialogue. These silences are frequently laden with discomfort that has negative consequences for the physical and emotional well-being of those silenced, with larger implications for the perpetuation of racism and ethnocentrism within the field of counseling psychology and our society.

The decision to explore women's silences on matters of race and ethnicity was made with the hope that giving voice to the silence would help open the dialogue that I believe is essential to personal development and to the future of our profession. It was also the beginning of a personal and professional journey for me that was painful at times, but for the most part satisfying and energizing.

My use of contextual theory as an approach to understanding silence makes me acutely aware of the fact that I am an integral part of the context of this research, and that the results are a reflection of where I am developmentally in all aspects of my identity. Looking back on my years as a graduate student, it is clear to me that my understanding of course material and the experiences of people of Color in the United States was limited by my own personal development, as this study will be limited by what I am now capable of hearing from participants. I share a bit more about myself and the process of conducting this research in this section in an effort to describe the context within which research questions were formulated, lines of thought were pursued over others in interviews, and the data were analyzed and presented.

I do not like to remember the defensive way in which I responded to a student of Color in my doctoral program who attempted to open dialogue with me on more than one occasion. I did not realize that hearing, being present for another and taking responsibility for my behavior did not mean that I had to give up my own painful past. At that time, it was not possible for me to acknowledge the many advantages I have had due to the dominant aspects of my identity; I clung tightly to the subordinate, wounded identities that I thought defined me. To

acknowledge privilege seemed to somehow negate my own struggles. Despite my avoidance, however, a slow leak had started in the balloon of pride I took in my accomplishments. I became dismayed by my attachment to the past. I began to realize the benefits I have had due to protective factors, from the love of my mother to the dominant aspects of my identity.

I began to revalue my experiences as subordinate when I learned they could provide a point of connection with women of Color. While I will never know first-hand what it is like to be anything other than White, I do know how it feels to be on the margins. I am a woman in a male-dominated society with clear rules for acceptable behavior for women, and have experienced sexism in my academic, professional, and personal lives. While I was growing up, my family struggled to keep afloat financially and we were in a socioeconomic class much different than that of many of my peers. My family system was "dysfunctional" in many ways. I learned early on that conflict was dangerous and developed behaviors aimed at avoiding it. I have been silenced, ignored, my thoughts and feelings minimized – maybe for reasons other than my race and ethnicity, but I believe the basic emotional consequences are the same: confusion, anger, frustration, sadness, and anxiety, to name only a few. My own experiences allow me to connect with the reasons for and consequences of silence, and now I cling to them again for the ways in which they enhance my understanding and empathy.

I recognize that I am describing my own racial identity development here. The process of deconstruction and reintegration took place many times as I worked on the literature review for this dissertation and prepared for interviews; it

happens again every time I am confronted with the less attractive parts of my dominant identities. As I become better at accepting my limitations and appreciating my strengths this is easier. I learned a lot about myself as I conducted and analyzed interviews. I pondered and wrote about my own silences, finding similarities and differences between my own experiences and those of study participants.

These details about my own identity development process and personal history are included because I observed them to play a significant role in my readiness to hear and acknowledge others' experiences. Openness is essential to qualitative research; I will never be completely "objective," but I lay out my limitations with the hope that the results presented may be interpreted with them in mind.

I also do so with some amount of trepidation. I am better able to appreciate the experience of participants in this study as they chose how much to reveal of themselves to a stranger, and trusted that their voices and experiences would be respected. I have attempted to consider both participants' confidentiality and the complexity of the situations they described during their interviews, something that has become a delicate balance. My commitment to maintain participants' confidentiality and anonymity solidified when one woman elected to drop out of the study after her interview due to concerns that she might be identified. I resolved to present the results with as little identifying information attached to quotes and situations as possible. The initial result was a watered-down version of silences women described that did not capture the richness and

complexity of the context. While this section on the common themes surrounding women's silences across participants is critical to answering the research questions, I have come to believe that a few in-depth, within-participant examples are also vital to fully understanding the context within which women make choices regarding voice and silence. These examples are presented in the fourth section of this chapter, followed by across-participants results. A section that describes the participants follows.

Participants

Several participants relate concerns about confidentiality and anonymity; they worry that they or colleagues they discuss may be identified. For that reason, participants' characteristics are described here in aggregate, without linking aspects of their identities.

There are twelve participants in this study. They range in age from 33 to 59 years old; five are White, three are African American, three are Asian American, and one is a Latina. Six women are working in college counseling centers, three in academic programs, one in a psychology training clinic, and two in schools. Eight are heterosexual, two are lesbian, and two identify as bisexual. One woman was trained as a clinical psychologist but working in a counseling psychology training program.

Participants were asked to identify their current socioeconomic status and socioeconomic status at school age. The categories lower, middle, and upper class were left undefined in terms of income ranges so that participants could place themselves into categories based on their subjective experience. Ten

participants define their current socioeconomic status as middle class, with two indicating upper class. For socioeconomic status at school age, two respond lower class, seven middle class, and two upper class. Information on socioeconomic status is missing for one White participant.

Participants also identify other aspects of their identities that they think may be relevant to their participation in dialogue on race and ethnicity. Two women identify themselves as immigrants; other aspects of identity that women wrote in pertain to weight, marital status, having a hidden disability, being a transracial adoptee, and influences of cultures from different countries around the world where one woman has resided.

Participant Examples

Portions of interviews with two participants are presented in detail in this section. Their descriptions illustrate the complex way that factors described in the fifth section of this chapter interact to create the context of silence.

Diane

Diane is a White woman in her mid-forties; counseling psychology is her second career, and she is a doctoral student preparing for internship at the time of interview. She describes herself as heterosexual, divorced, and has non-mainstream religious/spiritual beliefs.

Diane gives several examples of silence on matters of race and ethnicity, describing situations that she encounters in both her personal and professional lives. A theme that persists through all of Diane's examples is the importance of connection and the anxiety she experiences when she feels abandoned and

alone. This theme is related to her personal history. Diane states that she is very different from other members of her family of origin, and had early experiences with disconnection and being silenced:

> They were all fairly concrete people, and here comes along this little, sort of intuitive, abstract, broad-thinking, extremely curious from the time I was a small child ... the reality is that they just didn't know what to do with me, so they silenced me.

Her personal history and experiences within her family of origin are significant factors in her silences as an adult around race and ethnicity. Specifically, when interpersonal relationships are at risk, Diane becomes anxious about giving voice to her beliefs.

This is just one of many factors that contribute to Diane's silence in her previous work setting:

> ... it would be fairly typical in that setting for us to be joking in general, you know, on our coffee breaks, and we could be discussing anything from the weather to what's going in government to sports, whatever. And so it would be fairly typical to be feeling fairly connected with these people, maybe even working on a project together. So you're working very closely, almost elbow to elbow with these people, and needing to trust that there's a camaraderie with them on the project or on a day-to-day basis. And then someone drops, you know, an ethnic joke in the middle of this. I really feel like someone has punched me in the stomach, and all of a sudden, I can feel the shut down part of this, but I think there, um, I think I've played it two different ways. I think in one way I thought I protected the relationship by staying silent.

Diane begins describing this example by identifying an opportunity for voice, which gives some indication of her racial identity development status. She is conscious of racism as an issue and uncomfortable with racist remarks. Then Diane relates a reaction to the ethnic joke so intense that she experiences a sick, physical sensation; the reasons for such a strong reaction become clearer as she

continues by describing the risks involved in voicing her feelings. Her sense of camaraderie, fitting in, and being comfortable in a social group are extremely important to her given her personal history of disconnection and exclusion within her family of origin. She states later that "wanting to be included, the whole dynamic of being outside at the time was a really loaded personal issue for me" and "even today I feel like I'm still struggling with where do I fit, where do I belong rather than be disconnected." The potential for damage to these relationships touches on old wounds for Diane. She relates she believed her silence would preserve relationships with people she needed in her life for many reasons, anticipating risk to her social relationships and productive working relationships.

She continues with another factor involved in her silence: "I don't mean to imply that this was well thought out. I think it was much more an instinctive, sort of automatic response from learning it's inappropriate to discuss." Here Diane describes her silence as in part a conditioned response. She is likely referring to her socialization within her family of origin and as a White woman that racism, let alone any subject matter that could cause tension, is "inappropriate to discuss." Her indoctrination into the unspoken rules of White culture is implied rather than explicitly stated here, something common among White participants in this study. Diane then talks about how speaking in this situation might endanger her working relationships and career:

> Diane: Um, I think there was also a fear in me that it would jeopardize my ability to work on whatever it was we were working on. I can tell you that there were in that setting, as well as the one I mentioned with my boss with hiring a non-White person the threat to my career felt so present because in that environment the culture was that White men had the power. And that was relevant in so many ways. As a White woman that

I'm not automatically included in the club, the network - I was not privy to the information that would help me get promoted. And so any additional ways, over and above me just walking in with breasts and a vagina really put all of that at risk for me. At times, this isn't about race and ethnicity, but within the same group, there were times when extremely sexist things went on and I would try to say, you know, that's a little offensive to me. I would get ganged up on. "You're just such a (inaudible). Get a sense of humor." They were just like, you know, "we're just joking. For heaven's sake, what's the big deal?" And I would just be really berated and put down and sort of pushed into silence. So I think all of those things came into play when hearing some kind of a joke, and it's almost like I freezed up, because I don't know, I'm too afraid or something. In some ways it almost feels like a survival issue. I just didn't feel comfortable to lose a job or to lose a chance of bettering a job in order to stand up for my convictions. What would happen – I don't feel ok about this, but it feels like the risk to me is pretty great if I challenge. And there were other times when I did find myself saying, you know, that isn't ok, and I did find that people tended to ... cause I think I'm old enough now where I can see there are periods in my life where I've been a little braver, saying things were really not ok. I really think there were times when people tended to not include me. So people would, like in that environment, maybe go off for coffee and sort of forget to tell me they're going. So there's sort of a professional and interpersonal exclusion.

AH: And not feeling included – is there a personal history to that being uncomfortable?

Diane: Yeah, I think so.

Diane describes already being on the margins as a woman in a male-dominated work environment, identifying issues of power and privilege that are very real and present for her. She is not a part of the old-boy network and feels the need to silence herself in order to keep her job and ensure that she will not be identified as a troublemaker or overlooked for promotion. Additionally, her previous experiences with drawing attention to sexist comments have been met with the response she fears in this situation: minimization of her feelings, her coworkers' denial of the emotional impact of their words, silencing, and exclusion from the relational network that is so important to her both personally and professionally.

Her expectation of a similar response if she challenges a racist remark is based on these experiences.

The situation Diane relates above is a rich example of the complex way in which many factors come together with the end result of her silence on race and ethnicity. Several themes around silence emerge in the situation that Diane describes, including racial identity development status, personal history, preserving relationships, previous experiences in similar situations, power and privilege, risk of losing her job, and socialization into cultural norms. These factors are intricately entwined and reinforce her perception that voicing her thoughts is too great a risk.

Many of the same themes appear in the next situation she identifies, as she describes her silence around race and ethnicity with her longtime friend, whom she identified as a Black woman. The two are talking about relationships with men, and her friend has just made a statement that Diane thinks reflects sexism in the Black community. She struggles with whether to say something for many reasons:

> I know there've been times when I know we've talked about dynamics between the sexes and I'll find her saying, that's just a Black, that's just how Black men and women interact. And, you know I remember one instance where I pretty much inside myself went, I don't think so. And I didn't say that out loud because I remember thinking, I have no clue what the dynamics are between Black men and Black women and I don't think I have any authority to speak to that. What she was saying just didn't seem right on the human level, and it felt like a very sexist thing... I would find myself going, I think maybe he should take responsibility for his behavior, this just is not about you, or the woman involved. And, I remember in that situation falling silent, cause I was just like, how would I know? How would I know?

Here Diane begins questioning whether she, as a White woman, can identify a source of oppression in another culture, something another participant calls legitimacy. If she has not walked in her friend's shoes, if she has not been a Black woman in the United States, is it legitimate for her to name sexism in her friend's experience? Would she hesitate if her friend had been White? Closely tied to Diane's questions about the legitimacy of her observations is her dominant identity as a White woman:

> I think one of the things that happened was I actually knew better. There was a part of me that did know, that was certain that not all Black male-female relationships work that way, that it may have been her family experience or her experience with her group of friends, or whatever ... that's what she was socialized to. I think that was all there intuitively and I think it was like somehow I couldn't find the (inaudible) to invoke my authority that I would challenge that. And I remember being worried that I would insult her, that I would overstep my bounds. I'm not sure how to describe that ... actually, I hadn't really thought about it, I'm sort of feeling it as I'm talking. Like, um perhaps I was sticking my nose into something that I just didn't know anything about. How dare I. Almost like I was invoking the dominant White thing where if I say that couldn't be true then somehow it was a power play more than a discussion between friends.

She states later:

> Diane: I hadn't thought of it this way, but I wonder if there was some White guilt. Like somehow I was a part of the group that inflicted that (racism) and on a personal level I was afraid of inflicting something additional. I'm not sure if that's valid but those are the words that are starting to come to me as I think about it.
>
> AH: Can you say a little bit more about what you might have felt guilty about?
>
> Diane: I think for me personally I would have had a pretty good sense that I wasn't a part of constructing racism in our country. It's just one level of guilt that would have come into play but I don't think that is true, but more maybe, um, that I had things and could do things that she couldn't. And, um, I had no power to change that on a cultural level. So I think there was that kind of guilt that I was just handed something on a cultural level that she wasn't and there wasn't anything I could do about it. And, I don't

> know, maybe, just as I'm grabbing at words and air here, but maybe I was also thinking that ... it's slipping away ... but that maybe it had something to do with infliction of additional ... you know, sort of taking on that White privilege that unawareness of what I'm participating in that's culturally constructed. Like there's a system out there that's constructed. I know I've really struggled a lot with the invisibility of my privilege...

Diane wonders if she calls attention to the sexism her friend has described whether she will be unwittingly committing a racist act by using her lens as a White woman in the United States to view relationships in her friend's racial group. She worries that if she does speak she will be pushing her values and beliefs on her friend, and that this may reflect the power and privilege she has had due to her dominant identity as a White woman. She also seems to not want to say something that will hurt her friend or cause her added distress, attempting to protect her by making the decision that it is hard enough to be a Black woman in this country without having a friend point out sexism in the Black community.

In this situation with her friend, Diane also reflects on the influence of a personal area of anxiety for her – the fear of saying something that exposes ignorance of her friend's experience and the anticipated consequences of such exposure (risk to the relationship and facing her friend's anger):

> Diane: And maybe interpersonally what I'm talking about is the fear that ... um ... actually, the words that start coming to me are the fear of being stupid. Fear of um, just out of ignorance ... it may be that just literally the fear of looking ignorant was by itself part of the motivation for the silence. But then, additionally, out of that ignorance comes something that is offensive to my friend, who I like, with sort of a second layer of that, but even just the potential shame of doing something stupid just because I didn't know (inaudible). You know the other piece that I'll throw in because I just started to think about it ... there were a number of times that I could tell that [she] was really angry about something that was racist, and I think there was a piece of me that was afraid of her getting angry at me because of all that. So the stupid thing I was afraid I might do might invoke, like her being really angry at me.

AH: Have you had past experiences with anger that might have come into play there? Anticipating that there might be that response.

Diane: Well, literally, I had the experience of seeing her angry – that's just sort of a concrete one. But going back to the family, sure, anger in my family meant discipline, so not just an interpersonal danger, but there was a real physical danger in invoking some kind of anger, so that, um, ... Plus again the discipline action in my family when that anger occurred I was abandoned, you know, not in the sense that my parents left home, but in the sense that, you know, they wouldn't talk to me when they were angry with me, so you know, it's sort of multi-layered.

Diane anticipates that her friend will respond with anger due to her previous experiences, and feels interpersonal danger rooted in her personal history. Again, in this example of her silence she feels the threat of disconnection and abandonment. Other important elements of the context of her silence include not wanting to hurt her friend, racial identity development, fear of anger, fear that her ignorance will be exposed, and previous experience/anticipated consequences of voice.

Diane reflects on aspects of her racial identity development after discussing this example. While not specifically attached to a situation, her thoughts provide some more indication of the context within which she makes decisions regarding voice and silence. When asked about her experience of her friend's anger related to racism, Diane states:

I think on an intellectual level, I always understood it, and on that level, it wasn't uncomfortable. And I think in fact I could use my experiences with sexism to meet her there. I don't know what it means to be the subordinate group in a racist culture, but I certainly know what it means to be a member of a subordinate group in a sexist culture. So I could sort of tap into that intellectually, I could meet the current of her anger there. There was another piece of her anger, it just seems so clear to me that I didn't know how to respond, you know, I didn't know what to do with it. I couldn't connect with, um, ... I'm just thinking back trying to sort out some

> of these pieces. I just couldn't connect with having to live like that and, you know I never thought of this until just now, there was a kind of feeling of ,,, helplessness that was invoked. And I think that made me uncomfortable. (pause). Yeah, I can feel that sort of helplessness. Where my mind just started to go, like, um feeling that connection to my group, my White group, and, um, sort of the conflict of knowing that my group is involved in creating this problem that is hurting my friend, and not just my friend, but her group, sort of her community. And I think there was a lot of anxiety. The anger would create anxiety all by itself that in a way I could feel it with her, but I wouldn't have known what to do about it.

Diane's discomfort with her sense of helplessness pushes her to seek more activism and change. However, increased awareness and involvement in antiracism is laden with internal conflict and loss for her:

> ... that's (racism) a pretty big problem, and I'm one little person, and I know some of the dangers of speaking out. You know it also makes me automatically then, throws me back to, although I wouldn't have been conscious of it, conflict with my family. Because the more I am aware of her enduring her pain, then I'd go visit my parents and they would use nigger and faggot kinds of language, and whatever, so the more I became connected with the personal side of racism, the more it made me distant from my family. Because I have less than a tolerant family. In the living room [one] afternoon and listening to this... And in fact I recall one time where I actually stood up and said, you know, this is just so offensive to me and I can't, I don't know what to do, and I left. So, now I'm disconnected from my family. So it almost feels like one of the threats was that if ... there's the potential of throwing me into this no man's land.

The more Diane speaks, the more she allows herself to become emotionally connected to the experiences of racial and ethnic minorities in the United States, the greater the risk of disconnection from her family. Diane has to prepare to accept the losses associated with movement in terms of racial identity development. She also has to endure the pain associated with challenges to her identity as an empathic person:

> And the more I keep talking about this, the more the word empathy keeps coming to mind. Almost like a threat to how I know myself. I think about myself as a person who cares about the feelings and situation of the other

> person, and so somehow, it was like threatening my self-identity as an empathic person. Like I just got faced with a very obvious situation where I wasn't thinking about the other person at all, had blinders on of a sort, and personally, I just don't like coming face to face with that side of me that's unempathic.

The risk of seeing parts of herself that she does not like and the risk of loss are always present when Diane makes choices regarding voice and silence on matters of race and ethnicity. Commitment to voice, opening herself up to the experiences of people of Color and to the privileges she experiences as a result of her dominant White identity is painful. At times her silence may be related to avoidance and denial that protect her from these emotions, or about taking the time to process and understand them. These struggles are all a part of the racial identity development process.

Diane also discusses a more recent example of her silence. She attended the working conference on centralizing feminism and multiculturalism in counseling psychology. She notes the problems that surfaced in the conference as a whole had not become issues in her working group. She is surprised by the dissatisfaction and disconnection experienced by women of Color and hopes to talk about it with other women from her doctoral program who had attended. Despite her dominant identity as White, she notes that power is an issue for her as some of the other women are faculty members. She is wary of saying something that might jeopardize her relationships with faculty.

One of the women of Color is "extremely upset that she was being held ... that women of Color were being held accountable for helping the White people understand what had happened." Here Diane identifies a problem that has

plagued relationships between White women and women of Color for some time. She relates that she "understood her anger at not wanting to have one more event where she had to take care of people from the dominant group" and that she knows she will "take responsibility for going off to do some reading and talking where I could talk, for my own learning." However, she also believes strongly that

> ...when there's a disconnect, the only place you can take that disconnection is back into the relationship with whom it happened. And it's the responsibility for both parties to tell their stories so that more understanding can take place, and some resolution and some change and some growth can take place. But I was finding myself getting really irritated with this person because she was saying, "You White women got a problem, you go off and fix your problem, and then maybe we'll talk to you again, but I'm not concerned at this time to educate you. There's enough of a burden on a subordinate group without taking on the responsibility of teaching you." Which I understand, I can feel that, and yet I don't know how to deal, I don't know how to go away and heal a relational problem by myself without the other half of the relationship there. That somehow feels disempowering, feels like it's silencing the other person, and it's somehow reducing my responsibility to really listen to what happened to the other person in the discussion.

Diane feels silenced in this situation, stating that in any dialogue "my ability in the relationship to have a voice and my ability to get a response" are critical for her.

She attempts to voice the dilemma she feels, and the conversation stops; her effort at dialogue ends the conversation. She feels frustration, anger, and anxiety at not being heard, using the words "disenfranchised" and "disempowered" to relate her sense of ineffectiveness and powerlessness to continue the dialogue. Her personal history of anxiety and discomfort with disconnection also emerge in this situation:

> ... a person just told me that I did something wrong. They're not going to tell me what I did wrong, they're not going to tell me ... they're not going

> to have a dialogue with me about the... So there's a sense of abandonment.

She later reiterates:

> So in my experience it was like I did something wrong and I have no chance to repair it. I'm just like because I did something wrong I'm isolated and abandoned.

Diane's learned behavior of silence when faced with the threat of abandonment becomes a factor in this silence as well. Diane leaves the interaction feeling sadness and disappointment that "such an opportunity for dialogue" passed with an unsatisfactory outcome for her. In contrast, she expresses a great appreciation for her current work setting, where:

> ... [if] I need to bring something up, I still feel that tension coming up in a public forum, but I know I'm among people who even if they get upset will somehow take a deep breath and figure out how to work with the issue.

Diane alludes to the fact that in this context, no matter how tense the dialogue becomes, she is able to trust that she will be heard. Her colleagues will not leave her abandoned and alone to deal with what she considers to be a relational problem. Essentially, Diane feels safe to speak in this setting.

Diane brings personal attributes, strengths, and vulnerabilities to every encounter. These personal factors interact with environmental factors, creating the unique context within which she makes decisions to speak or remain silent on race and ethnicity.

Ruby

Ruby is an African American woman in her early forties who identifies as lesbian, overweight, and having a hidden disability. She is a faculty member in a Counseling psychology program at the time of interview. Ruby discusses only

work-based scenarios in her interview and also makes some global statements about her silences (e.g., "I think one of the issues for me is about power. If I'm in the position of power in that organization, that influences when I give up and when I continue"). She easily identifies examples of her silences, indicating her awareness of the racism she encounters in the professional realm and its impact on her well-being. This also provides some indication of her racial identity development status as a woman who has embraced her identity as an African American woman and for whom dealing with racism is a daily struggle.

Ruby relates that one of the silences on race and ethnicity she still regrets took place in a previous work setting. The staff meets for peer supervision, and a White woman presents some of her problems working with an African American female client:

> So this clinician would talk about the struggle they were having and I'm sitting there thinking this is not about anything you're discussing, this is about the fact that you haven't discussed with this client what it means for her to see this little White woman when she's dealing with all her issues. And I felt like if I bring this up I'm going to get trashed, I'm just going to get trashed.

What Ruby means by "trashed" is that her voice will be dismissed as just another time when she makes something about "her" issue. "There you go bringing up race again" is the message conveyed on more than one occasion, clearly communicating the sentiment that her observations are not to be taken seriously. Her expectations for their response to her voice in this situation are based on her previous experiences with her colleagues.

Ruby remains silent in this situation despite feeling like part of her

had an obligation to that woman as a client and as a Black woman to say to her therapist, "You know, you're not talking about the elephant in the room, and until you talk about the elephant in the room, you're going to continue to have trouble with her." Ruby is disappointed in herself for not speaking, but her description of the broader context provides more explanation for her silence.

As the only person of Color on the professional staff in her department, Ruby finds that if race and ethnicity are ever to be considered, she is the one to introduce the subjects. The constant pressure to address race and ethnicity takes persistence and a level of energy that is difficult to maintain in addition to other responsibilities, particularly when others remain silent and minimize or actively deny the impact of their behavior. Although she does not elaborate on her personal history and family of origin, Ruby states:

> Ruby: ... I grew up in a family where you couldn't tell the truth, at least I couldn't.
>
> AH: About sexual orientation, or just in general?
>
> Ruby: Anything. Couldn't tell the truth. Without going into details, it was just lots of things... there was like a big pile of shit in the living room, like what are you talking about, there's no shit in the living room, but it's stinking up the place, but you're not smelling anything.

Being the sole voice for her experience of reality is not new for her and evokes familiar emotions. Within her family of origin, no one was naming the obvious, just as no one in this case conference was speaking about race and ethnicity, the "elephant in the room."

Ruby's experience with being the only person of Color on staff helps her identify the importance of supportive allies. Allies are more valuable to her when they are willing to take risks publicly:

> ... it's like you're of really limited use to me as an ally if the only time you're supportive is in the safety of our little conversations. I need you to challenge her or whoever else is not dealing with these things. That's a good ally, when you could put yourself out there.

Unfortunately, she does not have allies she can rely on during that case conference:

> AH: You were labeled as the one who was going to bring this up and troublemaker type of ...?
>
> Ruby: I think she was me as a troublemaker, I think other people saw me as ... it was a relief that it was going to get brought up. But I started feeling resentful of them because then they were relying on me to bring it up and they wanted it brought up just as much as I did.

Even after Ruby talks with the staff about her resentment, "they acknowledged it and still didn't bring it [race and ethnicity] up." She has previous experience with their resistance to change, and becomes increasingly exhausted by being the only person to put forth efforts to discuss race and ethnicity. She begins to withdraw and make choices about the best use of her time and energy, deciding that to speak in the case conference will not meet with results worth the expenditure of effort. For her at that moment, not speaking is an act of self-preservation and possibly resistance; she may be refusing to participate in a system that relies on her to address issues of race and ethnicity, only to minimize and devalue her observations.

Ruby eventually leaves that position for one in which she now has tenure and supportive colleagues, and where she finds there are fewer risks to speaking:

> It's hard to tease out which was more influential in my speaking up, the tenure or having amassed with people who would also speak up, who thought the same thing so it wasn't just up to me. Probably a combination of the two. It helps to know ... I can not say anything at a staff meeting and the issues will still come up, it doesn't have to be me all the time to bring it up at the faculty meeting, that's a relief.

She notes that tenure provides some measure of safety and security, reducing the risk that she might lose her job by being more outspoken and challenging. She also has allies she can count on to back her up when she speaks or who will risk being the first voice on race and ethnicity.

During the interview, I observe one way that Ruby feels more comfortable asserting herself now that she is tenured faculty. A student knocks on the door, interrupting our meeting. Ruby tells the student that she will address her questions during the academic year:

> I see myself being much more clear with students. That student who came in here ... my first or second year I would have talked to her, because my fear would have been that I would get perceived as not being available to students, even though none of us are on contract in the summer. So I'm much more assertive in protecting myself.

Before tenure, things were different:

> I think one of the places where ironically I've been silent is in the classroom. Even though I'm in the position of power in that situation, I'm the one who gives the grades out... In the societal context I don't have that much power. I can be the only person of Color in that room. Most of the people I teach are White females who are my age or older, and I've often been silenced by them. Here the student evaluations are taken into consideration in evaluating you for reappointment and tenure.

Ruby feels that despite their lower status in the institutional hierarchy, students hold some power at her university. She "let people get away with a lot of stuff that I don't let them get away with now." While some of the challenges to students she silences may not be directly related to race and ethnicity, her identity as an African American woman is clearly a factor in these silences. She describes racial stereotypes being at play:

> There are two things that happen. People either perceive I'm not competent because I'm Black and I must have gotten here on some type of Affirmative Action, which automatically means I'm not competent... or they'll sort of have this mammy relationship with me where I need to take care of them and not hold them to a high standard... That's where I feel my weight is an issue, because that image of the overweight Black woman who is the caretaker of White kids and White families, purely unconscious that people act out.

The hidden, unconscious nature of these stereotypes makes them incredibly difficult to talk about and easy to deny. Ruby fears that being more assertive and setting limits with White students will result in negative evaluations based on the fact that her behavior does not match their expectations. She silences herself with these students because she perceives risk to her position and tenure, and cannot trust that student evaluations will be interpreted with these considerations.

Ruby also notes that she has been silent with students about another aspect of her identity:

> ... for me there are other ways in which I get silenced, not about race and gender, sexual orientation is a big one... There are times where I noticed the big absence of this part of who I am, and I struggle with ... sort of making them [students] deal with another identity of people that they have trouble with, because then they have to wrestle with what they think about me... I particularly struggle with Black students around this issue, because when we get to that topic in diversity class, they're usually the most vocal ones against it...

Here Ruby's silence is about her sexual orientation, but also about race. She chooses not to challenge the Black students' homophobia by revealing her identity as a lesbian. She relates that in part this is an effort to protect her privacy and preserve her relationships with students by establishing boundaries around her personal life.

However, this is also an effort to protect the Black students in her class. She intimates that these students have enough to deal when it comes to the sexism and racism they experience. Ruby knows that they struggle with the impact of racial stereotypes in her classes already:

> ... a couple of them [Black students] had been told when they were working with White students on projects or whatever, and students get together and talk about their concerns about being able to do the work and so forth, and having been told by several people "You don't have to worry about it because you're a Black woman and she's going to take it easy on you." And these students know very clearly there's no way in the world Dr. ___ is going to do that. There might be some other professors who will do that, but this is not the one, and sort of feeling like for them that they had to really prove themselves ... had to prove that they earned their high grade, as opposed to it was given to them by another Black person. But also wanting to protect me, not wanting me to be seen as someone who is discriminatory like that.

She can empathize with the pressure on Black students to work even harder to prove that they have earned their grades and admission to the university. Ruby feels it herself in her internalization of the stereotypes of Black women, people who are overweight, and people who have a hidden disability that affects their energy level. She must cope with the assumption that she is lazy and not intelligent:

> I never can work hard enough, if I sit down to watch television for a couple of hours, then I'm being lazy and not working. That's a constant internalized thing that I struggle with, that somehow if I'm not working 24/7

> then I'm not pulling my weight or I'm not doing what I'm supposed to do. I think that's having also recognized that in order to get just as much recognition, I have to work twice as hard, and having difficulty letting go of that for my own sake, because that kind of thinking, while it can serve you, it can also work against you, particularly when you get older and you may need to rest more. And like, I have [medical condition] so there are days where I can't work either because of pain or fatigue, and I need to rest, but it's that thinking that well you should just be able to just work through it, and if you don't work through it, it's going to get perceived that you're not working hard enough and then they'll be right, you didn't deserve this.

Ruby describes both the insidious way that the internalized stereotypes affect her thoughts and behavior, as well as the way that the behavior of others around her reinforces her internalization. She works hard not to become validation for the stereotypes, but recognizes that rather than changing the frame of others, she becomes the exception to their rigidly held stereotypes. She describes this situation with a colleague:

> Her big thing was every time we talked about how we needed to hire people of Color, she'd automatically assume that we'd be hiring somebody who was less competent. My question to her was, "What did you think when I came aboard, did you automatically decide I was less competent simply because I was a person of Color?" And sometimes she wanted to say I was different. I'm like, "No, I'm actually typical."

Ruby finds herself in a no-win situation. She makes her daily choices about voice and silence within a context of subtle, pervasive racism.

Ruby relates that in order to exercise some measure of power and control in this environment, she at times uses silence strategically. She conserves energy by letting her allies speak first. She will approach her department chair after a meeting rather than have her behavior be interpreted by others as attacking him publicly. Ruby also describes learning that being silent in meetings until close to the end helps her voice be heard:

> Sometimes I'm very strategic about it, particularly when I see resistance, like when I'm sitting in on a meeting and every time I said something the White males would just talk over me and I thought, "okay, I get this." So I just sat there and started taking notes and relating it to my peers and at a point in time I just made all my comments. The White males who were shutting me down, all of a sudden had all this respect for me when all I said was the same thing I was trying to say a half hour ago, but I had to be strategic about it.

In a way, Ruby is talking about silencing herself to work around the racism she encounters. She is not directly challenging the way that her White male colleagues ignore and dismiss her comments, but adapting her behavior to accommodate them because she knows that "[I] have to realize that if I piss off the wrong person, I don't have tenure, I'm looking for another job." She describes strategic silences as "a way of taking back power and control over the situation."

Ruby's final example of her silence involves the same working conference that Diane and I attended. She talks about her experience being silenced within her workgroup. She relates that initially,

> I thought I hadn't experienced the silence the way other women of Color had, and I realize I did. The problem was I was being silenced by people that I knew and respected, and so I had a hard time walking out of there feeling that they had silenced me.

Here Ruby talks about what it is like for her to be with other professionals she admires and have her voice silenced. The situation feels so unreal to her that she almost does not recognize what is happening as her workgroup first celebrates her contributions, then seems to reconsider to protect another member. She later states:

> ... I had a hard time believing it was happening, because the people who had done it were people I knew and respected, and at least talked about valuing diversity and valuing social justice and the need to speak up and the need to hear all voices, but my voice had just been silenced in favor of

> process, and it didn't feel like it was about process. What I wanted to say was this isn't about process, I think there's competition going on between me and her, and I think that's what people reacted to, and that felt petty, and I didn't say anything about that.

Ruby worries that the colleagues she respects and admires will interpret her voice as petty, and silences herself in order to preserve her relationships with them. In our field of counseling psychology, connections with other professionals are extremely important to success and recognition, and Ruby knows this well.

Like Diane and all the participants in this study, Ruby brings personal attributes, strengths, and vulnerabilities to the context of her silences on race and ethnicity. These aspects of her person interact with the environment to create the unique context within which she makes decisions about voice and silence on race and ethnicity. In the following section, participants' observations of what is taking place in the field of counseling psychology are presented, followed by a section on the personal and environmental factors that emerged as significant to the context within which participants are silent on race and ethnicity.

Participants' Observations of Silence and Dialogue in the Field of Counseling Psychology

The purpose of this section is to paint a rough picture of what participants observe about silences in dialogue on race and ethnicity in the field of counseling psychology. Training is identified as having a key role in the ability of counseling psychologists to see the relevance of a mulitcultural perspective to theory and practice, as well as in their competence to dialogue. The silence of Whites on matters of race and ethnicity is identified as a barrier to dialogue and is also one

of many silencing behaviors. These behaviors are discussed in addition to the costs of silence identified by participants. Finally, some women address the importance of dialogue on race and ethnicity.

Training

An important factor in ability to see the relevance of and converse about race and ethnicity is training. As one African American woman notes,

> ... we're not competent. Americans don't have the competence to have discussions. It's only new that it's [differences] being brought up in professional training. I think for psychology, what in the last five to ten years, I think, that [we] should have some courses in multiculturalism...

She observes later in her interview that counseling psychologists trained more recently seem to be more fluent in the language of multiculturalism than those who have been in the field longer.

A White woman just beginning her career as a counseling psychologist makes a similar observation. She relates an experience in a case conference that highlights differences in her training compared with other staff members who earned their degrees decades ago. It seems obvious to her that the client's cultural background is a factor in the pressure he feels to succeed, yet her comments are dismissed by the woman presenting the case. She states: "It makes me feel like there is such a split between people who are being trained now and people who were trained 25 years ago."

An African American woman working in a college counseling center describes colleagues that have been on the staff for a number of years, who

> ... would just as well not deal with it [racial and ethnic differences] at all and feel perfectly comfortable not dealing with it, who don't think it's very important, and actually would not care if they never saw any person from a

> marginal population. That's just real, and it's not just at [college], I've worked in other places that it's been true, too. And then there are people who definitely, but they've been trained more recently, see the value of it, want to learn about it, are trying to do the best they can to function in a culturally competent way.

She identifies training as the main factor in the differences she notices between colleagues who see the relevance of multiculturalism and want to do the work, and those who do not.

The differences between what women are learning in their training programs about cultural competence and what they actually experience in the field make translating their knowledge into practice difficult, however. A White woman comments: "we do it in our seminar, but when it comes time to actually talk about our cases, we don't really talk about it all that much." She also describes the confusing, mixed messages she receives:

> ... it feels like, OK, I've got this sort of one group of people telling me that this is really important and really valuable sort of in the academic ... on the academic piece I'm being told "this is important, you need to understand something about this. This is a huge issue. We need to be talking about this." And then I go out into the field and it feels like people are sort of saying "well, it's sort of not practical to really ... it's too hard to bring this stuff really in. To really integrate it." And so it feels like, how are we going to change if we're not willing to do this, if we're not willing to do things that are hard.

In addition to confusion, she expresses frustration and anger about the resistance to change she encounters in the field. The idea that some professionals just do not want to take the time and energy to do the difficult work of learning about themselves and others in terms of ethnic culture and race is evident in both her words and those of the African American woman quoted before her. Their comments highlight one of the limitations of training: it is

dependent on the willingness of counseling psychologists to see the relevance of training and to fully participate in the sometimes uncomfortable process of change.

Whites at a Loss for Words

While some of Whites' silences on race and ethnicity may be about lack of multicultural training or resistance to change, a few participants observe that some just do not know what to say. They may understand the importance of race and ethnicity to their interpersonal interactions, but have been socialized not to mention them. An African American woman states that

> it's not considered polite to notice differences, and we have this myth that there aren't differences... So it doesn't surprise me that we find ourselves [silent in our] professional discussions. That's just one competence we don't have, in my opinion.

In her interview, this participant also notes the socialization process, particularly of Whites in the United States, not to speak about differences. She observes that children are shushed when they notice differences in appearance or behavior based on race and ethnicity, and that they learn they should pretend there are no differences – in essence that they should be "colorblind." This presents a conundrum for Whites; when faced with an obvious difference and an opportunity for dialogue, they may be acutely aware of the difference and it's importance, but have learned that it should not be acknowledged – leaving them at a loss for words.

Their silence typically ends the conversation, as is the case for this African American woman, who tells a colleague a story about her summer vacation that brings up her past experiences with racism:

> ... it was clear he didn't know what to say. He just said, like, "wow," and that was it. That was the end. Maybe there wasn't more to say, but it was not an opening. And this is a wonderful colleague that I just really care ... you know, it's not a personal attribute at all. I think it just goes back to that lack of competence that I was talking about earlier.

Having a conversation end because of another's silence is not an isolated experience for this participant. She relates that she has a good friend, a White male, who seems to be lacking what she calls competence as well:

> I don't recall his continuing in the conversation. Even to say "as a White person I haven't had that experience" or "I don't know about that." Typically it gets dropped.

Again, this silence effectively ends the conversation.

A White woman relates her experience on the opposite end of the dialogue. She and an African American male client are talking about his experience on a mostly White campus. She wonders what influence their obvious race and gender differences have on their relationship:

> And sort of talking about "what is it like for you? What is it like for you to come in here and sit with me, who's a White woman and what does that mean and what is that like?" And we didn't talk about it ... or the way he talked about it was "oh, it's really OK. It's not a problem for me. It's a problem for me in my class and stuff, but it's not a problem at all in here." And I don't buy that, but I didn't know how to talk about it.

Despite her awareness that their differences are probably affecting the counseling relationship and her desire to understand how, this participant finds herself without the words to effectively open the dialogue with her client.

Silencing Behaviors

Silence may at times be about not knowing how to respond or what to say, but at others may be used to purposely shut down dialogue. Responding with silence to another's attempt to open dialogue is one of many effective ways to

end conversation. It is part of this package of silencing behaviors described by an African American woman:

> ... people from the dominant culture often just shut down automatically, even when certain words are stated, without even knowing what the full idea is yet, and that's visible in the things that make me feel invisible, like dismissing what I have to say, or talking over me, or interrupting before I've finished my statement, or silence and then moving on to something else without responding verbally to what I have to say.

She identifies dismissing, interruption, and changing the subject as silencing behaviors. While describing some of the silencing techniques she observes, she also mentions the personal costs of feeling unseen and unheard.

Other behaviors used to silence dialogue identified by women in the study include outright challenge to their voices, denial, and minimization. For example, an Asian woman relates: "So, I was upset by that and I just stopped talking because it was clear that he was being dismissive and curt, and that he wasn't being responsive." Her administrator's verbal and nonverbal behaviors communicate how unimportant her complaint is to him; he dismisses her and minimizes the concerns she raises. It is apparent to her that he is not going to participate in dialogue, as it is for this White woman:

> It just didn't seem like there was any point in continuing. If somebody's not going to dialogue, if they take the perspective that they're not taking a perspective but that they're just right and that any disagreement means that you are absolutely crazy, and they convey that in their tone of voice and body language ...

The non-verbal behavior of tone and body language she describes above can be a powerful way to silence dialogue or to encourage others to speak. A White woman who had invested a lot of time an energy in a multicultural

curriculum that her director chose not to incorporate notes how she was silenced by non-verbal behavior in a meeting where the decision was announced:

> She clearly didn't give me a voice there, she didn't look at me, she didn't ask me when she knew this was important to me, she didn't ask for my opinion or my response to this at all, and she very quickly moved to the next topic that needed to be addressed on the agenda, so there wasn't room for me to get in there naturally...

She identifies the lack of eye contact, no invitation to speak, and change of subject as silencing behaviors, as does an African American woman:

> It's very often people who have been here longer, or people who are obviously liked more for various reasons, or people feel comfortable with maybe for a variety of reasons, it may just be that they've known them longer, and I think that's what it is in a lot of cases, they are invited to speak more. Or if two people start speaking at the same time, the person in charge will look at the other person. I'm trying to put into words, I think, a dynamic which is often expressed nonverbally, but is expressed. When you're on this side of the coin, that becomes very, very clear to you, because it happens not only here. I might have more trouble saying that if this was the first time in my life it had happened or I had not seen it happen to other people like me, or just a variety of other possibilities. So sometimes in staff meetings other people are invited to speak verbally or non-verbally, and you may sort of be pushed aside until last and then invited to speak, or there's no response verbally to what I might say. I'm thinking as I go because I haven't thought a lot about this. What else. There's a smile perhaps or a friendly invitation to say something, or some sort of nonverbal invitation to speak that lets you know that you have been heard, there's a nod maybe, some sort of maybe one-word affirmation, and that's very different than when you hear nothing afterward.

While an isolated incident of nonverbal silencing may have lead this woman to question herself, her repeated experiences make what once seemed ambiguous now clear. Her words about her own experiences and observations of similar silencing techniques used on others give some indication of the pervasiveness of silence in dialogue on race and ethnicity. She also notes how nonverbal

behaviors can have the opposite effect of inviting and supporting voice, and intimates how affirming this can be.

Costs of Silence

Regardless of its innocence or purposefulness, whether it is one's own or another's silence, the lack of dialogue on race and ethnicity is costly. More than half of participants give some indication of the personal emotional costs of silence. The two emotions most named by participants are anger and sadness. The following are few brief quotes about silence's emotional consequences:

> I just felt very bad inside, just bottled it inside.
>
> ... you feel sad, you feel a sense of loss.
>
> I was feeling a mixture of mad and sad.
>
> [People] would argue with me and it would make me very angry and upset. I mean, sad in another way. I felt disqualified, unappreciated, unvalued...

Anger is often expressed in relation to frustration with the circumstances surrounding silence, but at times is directed inward. Four women mention being angry with themselves for not speaking. The comments of three participants follow:

> I think it's also I don't like the feeling of carelessness that I experience when I think about it [my silence]. I get angry with myself for letting it get like that.
>
> I'm kicking myself that I'm staying silent.
>
> I'm still angry with myself that I haven't spoken up.

Additionally, two women describe being angry with themselves specifically when they know that their silences have implications for others:

> ... it's one of the times when I felt like my silence, not so much what it did to me, but the potential for what it did for someone else.
>
> ... so that silence bugs me more because it has bigger ramifications.

These women relate the guilt and regret they feel about their silences on matters of race and ethnicity when they had broader implications for clients, colleagues, or trainees.

In addition to emotional costs, an African American woman notes health consequences of silence. She observes burnout in herself and other women, as well as stress-related illness:

> ... it really takes a toll on your health. For instance, that [woman of Color] that was here ...she just kind of gave all, then her body shut down. She got really, really sick... I've had shingles since I've been here, last year this time... That really, since it was so painful, I started to wonder what I was doing with all the stress. You know you're under stress, but your body screams every once in a while. The other thing that I've developed since I've been here is high blood pressure.

While this woman notices her body shutting down, a White woman working in an oppressive environment becomes aware that she is beginning to shut down parts of her mind and memory:

> You know, I have to wonder about myself sometimes, because I don't remember. I don't feel like I have a very good memory, obviously I have to have some kind of memory, I have a Ph.D., but maybe it's all these incidents that are so painful I just don't want to remember the details of them.

In order to continue working in an environment that silences her in many aspects of her identity, it seems this participant must "forget" the awful feelings engendered by her experiences. She continues by asking: "I mean, are there other people that can remember these kinds of details?"

The answer to her question, at least within this group of participants, is yes. One of the other costs of silence that emerged is that some incidents of silence are so powerful for women that they have a difficult time forgetting or not noticing them:

> All I know is that I never should have let it go. I think that's sort of what pushes me now, knowing that I let those two major incidents go, that I still remember so vividly to this day. Twenty years ago. The one was 20 years ago and I still remember it so clearly.
>
> I notice them [silences]. They are noteworthy to me. I work with my gut a lot, I work with my intuition a lot, and I'm intuitive when I'm sensing someone else being silent, and so I'm also intuitive when I'm sensing myself be silent, and they're very noticeable and I guess I wonder how everybody else can't see them, but I guess they're always so noticeable to me that they always cause me to reflect or to question myself or to wonder why. Some of them are just easier to just put away and ... not worth it for me to be vocal on, whereas others will stay and bug me a little bit more.

Silences for these women do not go away or disappear. Rather, they are haunted by their silences and their thoughts and behaviors are profoundly affected for some time afterward.

Another cost of silence is also related to its' effects on participants' thoughts and behaviors. The subtlety and pervasiveness of racism, evident in silences of and silencing by others, leads some women of Color in this study to question themselves and their experience of reality:

> I feel like sometimes maybe I'm just the complainer and I'm the problem...
>
> And then I end up feeling like, am I being oversensitive, overreacting because I'm a woman of Color...
>
> It makes you think like your comments are out in Mars somewhere or you're talking a different language.

Being the sole voice on the subject of race and ethnicity, or a voice that is ignored and unheard, can lead to self-doubt as well as disconnection from colleagues: "That really makes me frustrated and I shut down more and I feel more distance from people."

Silence and silencing behaviors have another cost – the learned behavior of not speaking. As an African American woman states:

> I think not to respond is a really effective way of shaping, not eventually getting that response and not getting input from people that you may fear input from...

She notes how silence begins to become the learned response: "I've gotten used to not saying what I'm thinking." A White woman identifies this form of classical conditioning in her work environment as well:

> And I'm a pretty assertive, outspoken, extroverted person... It's just that I speak and I've been in a lot of settings where I've been put down for that... I was told that junior faculty should be seen and not heard. It's true! ... So I get a lot of negative reinforcement for my behavior.

Silence can become a conditioned response with the consequence that individual women suffer the personal costs.

The Importance of Dialogue

After consideration of the costs of silence that participants identify, the importance of dialogue becomes clear. Women in the study relate that dialogue increases understanding, initiates change, and fosters connection – all of which are often absent in silence. According to one Latina,

> the good part [about dialogue] is that you can grow into different things because otherwise you're in a forum where you don't change anything. You need that kind of diversity. Change.

She relates that her experiences within her department, which is very focused on multicultural competence, have expanded her self-awareness as well as her understanding of others.

A White woman relates how much closer she and her African American woman friend became after they had a difficult conversation about race, power, and religious privilege:

> ... the whole discussion really did upset her and when I left that discussion, bless her heart, she said, "Sometimes I really like talking to you because you just really force me to think differently." So ... that was such an act of kindness and connection.

Additionally, an Asian woman clearly identifies empowerment, connection, and understanding as benefits of dialogue:

> ... in the sense of interpersonal issues, dynamics, silence is just disempowering and disconnecting and people end up feeling bad about the other and themselves and this is essentially closing the door from opportunities for connection and learning through connection. Speaking up breaks down stereotypes, I think, and I found that when people speak up and are willing to take risks, and speak across difference and even across daggers and bullets, they find out that they can gain knowledge, access to a different perspective and therefore empathy and realize that their reaction is really based on blinders and misinformation.

Three women also note that at times, their voices in dialogue on race and ethnicity are met with relief:

> ... I was able to say to this person, do you think some of your struggle with this parent is about race? And it was almost ... it was almost this big sigh of relief ... yes. To be able to introduce that topic.
>
> I think she saw me as a troublemaker. I think other people saw me as ... it was a relief that it was going to get brought up.
>
> My sense from them [younger staff and students] has been that they're open and they're relieved and they feel like they're getting some ways to think about it, or some questions to ask and find out what it means for the client, for example... [The coordinator] looks scared, she looks like she

> doesn't know how to deal with these things when they come, so relief from her mostly that I'm stepping in and helping out because they were looking at her for help, but she doesn't know what to do with this kind of thing.

These women highlight what can happen when the "elephant in the room" is named. Introducing the subjects of race and ethnicity is the first step in opening the dialogue and has the potential to be well-received. Through their willingness to raise anxiety-provoking subjects, these women model taking and surviving risks, for the benefit of their colleagues and their clients.

Despite acknowledgement of these benefits of dialogue on race and ethnicity, each participant is able to identify personal and environmental factors that contribute to her silences. These elements of the context are reviewed in the next section.

Personal and Environmental Factors Involved in Silence

Participants identify several personal and environmental factors as relevant to their silences in dialogue on race and ethnicity. These factors come together in a unique way for each participant, creating the context of her silence. Personal factors are what participants bring of themselves to their silences on race and ethnicity, and include personal history, racial identity development status, ethnic culture, salience of racial/ethnic identity, and professional and personal development.

Personal Factors

Personal History

Participants' family of origin, peer relationships, and lifetime experiences with voice and silence consistently emerge as influential in their silences on race

and ethnicity. Experiences range from those that are conducive to and encourage voice, to those that time and again discourage voice and reinforce silence. Diane is a good example; her experiences with silencing, anger, and abandonment in her family of origin play a significant role in the silences in dialogue on race and ethnicity she discusses. Tension in her interpersonal relationships elicits painful, old feelings, bringing her back to coping mechanisms of silencing herself and withdrawing emotionally.

Like Diane, there are other women who identify their personal histories as inhibiting them from speaking. Another White woman states:

> ... maybe if I'd had a childhood where I wasn't silenced, when I got silenced as an adult I would have the strength to say, "Hey, that's not right," or not to let it bother me, but maybe it's because I had the experiences as a child of feeling like an outsider that those are so hurtful now.

She, too, describes being thrown back into painful feelings from her past that hold her back from speaking. The risks of voice may be different for her than for someone else, as is the case for this White woman:

> I grew up in a family where we don't have conflict. It is not acceptable. And as an adult in adult relationships, that's something I've really struggled with, which is conflict is inevitable, conflict is OK, you just have to figure out how to do it in a way that's healthier and not destructive. But I think in situations where I perceive risk, I perceive a lot of risk where other people might not necessarily perceive that kind of risk. And that feels very much about, you know, this is just my family stuff that comes out, this isn't necessarily reality.

For her, dialogue on race and ethnicity often involves the need to negotiate conflict. Her initial reaction may be to avoid the conflict through silence, regardless of the actual risk involved. She uses her awareness of personal

history to actively challenge herself to assess the present circumstances and remain present to participate in dialogue.

A Latina notes that her history within her country of origin makes it difficult at times to even identify opportunities for dialogue on race and ethnicity, in part explaining her silence. She relates that discrimination in her country of origin was based on socioeconomic status, not on race or skin color:

> The discrimination in [country] is about social class, not about race or the racism dynamic. And so to me I never feel like I have a ton of racial discrimination in myself. So for that reason, the racial tension you are talking about, it is sometimes hard to have lived it firsthand. That it may be different for me.

She further explains her silences by relating that other aspects of her identity as a "nerd" and someone with weight problems have affected how others have responded to her since she was a child. She was rejected by her classmates, and felt

> ... inadequate. So, obviously if you're inadequate, you don't dare to speak up and you're never confident about yourself. So, first you need to know, as you say, who you are, what you stand for. This has been ... as I say, I'm OK [now]. It's been a hard thing to learn.

She describes herself as having learned to be "very conciliatory and very meek and unassertive." These aspects of her self, as well as her personal history within her country of origin, make it difficult for her to first see opportunities for dialogue on race and ethnicity, then feel empowered to speak.

Other women tell about experiences in their families of origin that have supported the development of their voices in dialogue on race and ethnicity. A White woman who describes herself as being "outspoken by nature" relates that within her family of origin, she has always "had some kind of leverage, I was

outspoken, I was allowed that space." She explains that within her family it was safe for her to express herself; in fact, it came to be expected that she would.

This woman believes that other aspects of her personal history have made it possible to find her voice on race and ethnicity as well. First, she attended a bilingual school and was always surrounded by diversity. Her friends represented different racial and ethnic groups, so when she encountered racist remarks or jokes, she had experiences that contradicted them. She also remembers being "horribly bullied" as a child, to the point where she was beaten up at least twice. Another time, she was surrounded by a group of girls of a different race who were starting to beat her up, and one girl she hardly knew stood up for her, allowing her to get away. She distinctly remembers the power that one voice had in that situation, and it still drives her today:

> ... that young woman, [name], who jumped in and fought for me, even though she didn't know me that well, taught me I was worth fighting for as well. That was a horrific scene, but even the minor violent messages or jokes that come across, it's worth sticking up for, it's worth fighting for. When you asked about personal experience, that comes to mind right away, that sensitized me early on it's not fair to dislike somebody, or whatever you decide about them, and if you see somebody else doing it, it's worth sticking up for.

Other women also relate personal histories that supported voice. An African American woman describes her father as an advocate for civil rights, politically active and viewed as enough of a threat to the status quo that a cross was burned on her parents' lawn before she was born. Despite the potential for serious repercussions,

> ... he stayed active in the town and associated with other people who were politically active and in terms of voting, in terms of going to town meetings, all that kind of stuff. So that's what I always knew and that's...

> the people that came to our home. My father would tell lots of stories and really would support people in advocating for themselves and all that. It's interesting that you raise ... that you say that, I mean that you ask about that and therefore the impact on me, so as I grow up, you know, that this becomes an interest. An area of professional interest as well as personal interest.

As the conversation continues, this woman begins to articulate the influence that her family of origin has had on her professional and personal development. She recognizes that her father's activism may have fostered her own interest in working with diverse populations, and may also play a role in her ability to identify opportunities for dialogue on race and ethnicity. She is quite conscious of silences, and actively weighs the risks and benefits of speaking.

Another African American woman also talks about her father: "My dad very much gave me direct messages to be assertive, aggressive if I needed to, to be able to take care of myself." She also identifies herself as someone who is very aware of her silences on race and ethnicity. Like the two women quoted before her, she finds that her silences have more to do with environmental factors than an internal struggle with family of origin or other issues related to personal history.

Racial Identity Development Status

For these women, racial identity development status at the time of silence plays a key role in their ability to identify opportunities for dialogue and their decision-making process about speaking. Diane's comments about her encounters with racism, her struggles with White guilt, and challenges to her identity as an empathic person are good examples of how her racial identity

development status impacts her voice and silence. This trend is evident for other women in the study, as well.

Three women hypothesize that Whites' silence is in part related to a fear of admitting their own racism and acknowledging White privilege – both pieces of the racial identity development process. The beliefs, behaviors, and benefits of being White challenge their self-image as empathic, caring individuals. An African American woman who is faculty in a training program observes:

> In psychology, in this profession, I'm just astounded how some people ... on the one hand, I understand it, I understand that to do the kind of exploration we're both talking about, it means you have to face the possibility that you have some prejudices and biases, and nobody wants to be called racist, nobody wants to be called sexist, and their image of who is racist and who is sexist is the Klan member and the rapist, and you don't see yourself as that, you're probably not that, but there's no room for any other way to have thoughts and behaviors that have the same impact on people.

Another African American woman working in a college counseling center echoes these thoughts:

> I think it has to do with anxiety about hearing that maybe there's something that is worth doing differently or that you don't know about, and I think there's fear that people don't know whether they are racist and they're really afraid that they may hear that at some level or that they may be prejudiced and they're afraid of hearing that...

One White woman would likely agree that some of her silences are related to fear of admitting her own racism. As she describes the "arrogance as clinicians that we can be multiculturally competent," she talks about her own journey:

> P: [We think that] somehow we are exempt from all of the bias and the racism that exists in our ... in the culture that we are embedded in. And I don't know that I buy that. I don't buy it for myself, certainly. And that's a really painful thing to look at.
>
> AH: What's the painful part?

> P: Your own racism and the idea that that is going to come in and just our biases in general.

Fully acknowledging racism and biases may lead to deconstruction of White women's identity in the profession of psychology as empathic and caring. To admit racism can challenge one's self-image, as it does for Diane:

> And the more I keep talking about this, the more the word empathy keeps coming to my mind. Almost like a threat to how I know myself. I think about myself as a person who cares about the feelings and situation of the other person, and so somehow, it was like threatening my self-identity as an empathic person.

The situation she refers to creates dissonance between how she sees herself, her thoughts, and her behaviors. In this situation, the anxiety she experiences in disconnection motivates her to open dialogue; however, at other times she describes being silent because of a sense of helplessness, not knowing what to do or say to change the situation.

Like Diane, a White woman identifies past silences related to guilt and shame associated with being part of the dominant group. She is not mired in this stage of racial identity development, however:

> Everything I read about, about White people who have guilt and shame related to racism, that it needs to get accepted, we have to move beyond that, we can't be afraid to feel it. Otherwise we'll never take the risk to learn, to go past... So my answer to the question [about identity] is, yes there was a time when I felt that, but even very soon after that I felt like that wasn't the right way, I needed to not feel ashamed to learn, I needed to not feel anxious about it to learn. So my attitude now is I'm going to make mistakes, if I can keep knowing myself and know where I come from and know where my biases are, I can hear them when I say them and them I can hopefully correct them soon after they come out, if they come out. Or if I'm still not too sure where I stand on that, I can dialogue with the other person.

This woman feels the guilt and shame common to Whites as they become more aware of the history of racism and systemic privileges of being White. While these feelings may have silenced her in the past, now she is more confident in herself and her ability to negotiate mistakes, both internally and through dialogue with others. Dialogue on race and ethnicity does not carry the risk of shattering her identity, because, as she states, "... I expect myself to be biased, I know that it's there and I'm not afraid of that anymore." She accepts herself as a product of the context of power and privilege within which she exists; exposure of her biases through dialogue no longer surprises her, and no longer silences her.

Anger about racism is a part of racial identity development for women of Color. An Asian woman relates she often silenced her anger because she had been socialized within her ethnic culture and as a woman not to express it. She notes that she has moved through this stage of racial identity development to being more willing to open dialogue:

> I would just want to say F.U. to him or her, whereas now I'm at a place where I'm just like "you know what, you're ignorant, not my problem, but here's how I can help you by sharing what I'm experiencing of you" if the person is receptive or responsive to it.

Like the White woman described before her, she is less likely to be mired in negative emotions and therefore less likely to be silent on race and ethnicity. She is better able to move on to dialogue that might bring about some change.

Another Asian woman describes her observations of her racial identity development and how her voice has increased over time. She relates that college was the time when she first began to advocate for civil rights and put words to her own experience:

> That kind of goes back to college in terms of my personal identity development, but I didn't put a name to it until I took these classes at [university], but I recognized there was a change in me when I first started college. Because I grew up, as a transracial adoptee, I grew up in a very White area and I knew very few Asian people, and when I got to college I realized no one knew who I was. They assumed my history was very different than I knew it was. They assumed me to be from immigrant parents or something like, speak [language], to do all these things that weren't true of me. A good friend of mine, my best friend and I, became very interested in people's civil rights and equality, and I became involved in minority student affairs as a freshman, started doing these different protests. We were young and idealistic, but we did all kinds of protests. Amnesty International, nuclear arms, and all this stuff.

As a transracial adoptee, her racial identity development was complicated. She did not have the same grounding in her Asian culture as many other students:

> I was very much in that immersion stage. I didn't know how to immerse myself in [Asian] culture, but I was immersing myself in being a minority person and understanding the experience of other minority people. I tried to do some [Asian] culture stuff, but when I went to some of these organizations with other [Asian] students, they were so insanely different and I felt so different from them. I felt much more comfortable with Black American people than I did with the [Asian] American people, because there's a whole different atmosphere in the way they [Asians] relate to each other, the way they view their families and the roles of their families, and what they expected of me, the hierarchies that were built up in the social system – really different. So I didn't feel very comfortable in the [Asian] American student associations, because they spoke [language] a lot, too. But I did hang out with a lot of other people of Color. So one of the things I always realized about myself was that I was going to be somebody who would be identified as a minority, but maybe not ever know as much about [Asian] culture as someone who was raised by [Asian] parents, but I'm going to know a lot about what it's like to be non-White in America. Because I knew it already, I just had to put words to it.

This woman is able to identify herself in the immersion stage of racial identity development: spending time with other people of Color, learning about the history of racism and bias in the United States, and advocating for civil rights. The last sentence of this quote is critical to silence on race and ethnicity – a significant part of being able to dialogue is learning the language of oppression and racism.

Mentorship and racial identity development. An African American woman describes a mentor as being instrumental in this piece of the racial identity development process. She tells of early silences on race and ethnicity, and increased voice as she learned through reading, self-examination, and dialogue:

> Certainly earlier in my career I probably ... not probably, I was more inclined to be silent on the issue of race. Maybe not gender because White women would talk about gender and so it would be [inaudible], but my world is mainly a White world that I've lived in and yeah, sort of like out in public there, early in my career I was certainly silent. And then I got interested in working with racism and sexism as issues in groups and organizations and I had a mentor – this wonderful woman who has done training and consultation in the area of race and gender in the corporate world. And I did some work with her, but as my mentor she was also able to point out my own ... this was a Black woman ... I got very clear feedback about how I wasn't as fluent, if you will, around the issues. So I had to do some personal work in therapy myself and in reading and education and having conversations of more depth with other Black people about the issues of racism and how it's being played out, and internalized racism as well.

Her encounter with a mentor helped propel her into the immersion stage, where she became more fluent in the language of racism and better able to put words to her experiences.

A White woman also describes the importance of a mentor to her racial identity development and voice on race and ethnicity. In response to my comment regarding her willingness to accept her own humanity and confidence that she could negotiate the terrain of inevitable mistakes, she states:

> I've been mentored in that. That's a piece if you're asking about personal experiences. There's a woman in [state, name], I've gotten to communicate with her through several things, and I remember one of the things she said – I don't remember if it was in the group or not – it was "the minute you start thinking you're good at this, you're on the wrong thing. The minute you're confident, you've lost it." I remember that, that hit me, that was such a permission, gave me permission not to be confident all the time, to say "I don't have to be confident all the time." It's why I'm

> not confident, why I'm on those growth edges that "yeah, there's tension there and I'm anxious, but I need to go there if I'm going to learn, so let's go." I have no problem with that, go for it. I've been mentored in that, that's something I didn't know necessarily then.

For both of these women, mentors played a significant role in their racial identity development. Mentors challenged them to think differently, behave differently, and learn about themselves as products of and participants in their contexts. Both participants were moving through the stages of racial identity development, becoming more aware of their silences and making choices about silences on race and ethnicity.

Whites and legitimacy. Another aspect of racial identity development related to silence emerges as a concern for four out of the five White participants in this study. These women struggle with what one participant calls legitimacy. Again, Diane's silence in dialogue with her African American friend regarding relationships between Black men and women is a good example. She wonders whether she, as a White woman with all the privileges her skin color affords her, can legitimately identify sexism in her friend's experiences. Another participant echoes her struggle, particularly around the possibility that in speaking she may be playing out her dominant role:

> ... It's really interesting to me how much I feel like I silence myself in cross-cultural dialogues, or talking with people who are culturally different from me about multicultural issues. How much I feel like, okay, the color of my skin takes away my right to contribute to the discussion. I don't have any right to say anything because I'm the one who's been silencing ... not me, well maybe not me personally, but you know, my color has been silencing people, so I shouldn't be talking.

She also questions her ability to truly understand the experiences of people of Color in the same way that she can speak to the sexism she personally experiences:

> I think for me it's like where's my legitimacy in speaking, particularly about questions about race and ethnicity. I feel like I've done a lot of studying about feminism and I'm a woman and have had certain experiences that I feel like, give me a moral authority to speak about it. But there is that question of how much do I really get about the issue of race, given that I have the skin color that's in power. Am I sort of being a liberal poser if I speak about issues about race and ethnicity and racism. Do I have legitimacy to enter into this dialogue or do I just need to be listening and learning.

She faces the question of what she can really know about the experiences of people of Color in an example of her silence. She describes co-teaching a supervision class in which a student of Color presents a case that touches on issues of power, socioeconomic status, race, and ethnicity. She notices her silence despite having

> ... things to say, too. So why am I not saying them? Why am I not putting them out there? Because she [the student] intimidates me and because it feels like, well, she's a Black woman, so she must know what it's like for these people at this clinic. Except that she came from some incredibly wealthy suburb of [city] and had no idea what it was like to be poor. And again, not like I have any idea what it's like to be really poor or to grow up poor, but that I was so willing to give her authority was really interesting. I talked a lot about it with this guy I was co-leading with, you know, about how that just fed into ... for me, that whole, "oh of course, I don't really know anything and you really do know."

Another White woman makes a similar observation of her own silence during team meetings:

> And I notice that sometimes if we're discussing a child of Color ... and often acknowledging race or cultural background ... if one of our support team members who is a person of Color sort of makes a proclamation, as a White person, I may be less likely to challenge that. If ... even if I disagree. And ... because I feel like well maybe, you know, if this person

> has this racial and cultural background in common, maybe they know something that I don't.

These women both wonder whether they can legitimately understand, comment on, or question the experiences of people of Color. Additionally, they are acutely aware of the privileges of being White, and fear that speaking will somehow be an act of dominance. They are silenced by what they perceive as a lack of legitimacy on matters of race and ethnicity.

Ethnic Culture

Participants also speak of silence as learned behavior, reinforced by social norms of ethnic culture. The same learned norms for behavior that inhibit them from speaking about any subject matter that might cause tension or conflict inhibit them from speaking about race and ethnicity. For example, an Asian woman relates that she was raised to respect hierarchy and be non-confrontational. When asked whether she still struggles with internal conflict around asserting her own voice, she responds:

> I think there is because it's that piece that I was brought up with in my own upbringing, not to be disrespectful, and to be courteous and share your opinion, but not at the expense of hurting someone.

She also comments:

> I think that's the main thing with my cultural upbringing, where it was your needs are secondary and taking care of other people and being courteous to them and being hostess, that kind of thing, is primary...

These statements imply that if raising issues related to race and ethnicity may be perceived as harmful by someone else, this woman will struggle with aspects of her ethnic culture.

A Latina describes a similar situation. Raised to respect hierarchy, she finds it difficult to bring up issues with her superiors in the workplace: "One other thing is very cultural. It's a very hierarchical situation and it's very difficult not to feel equal to someone else. That's very cultural."

Although not named as a part of ethnic culture, a White woman describes gender role socialization as instrumental in her silences:

> I think some of it feels to me more sort of gender stuff. About being ... not being confrontational. Not being assertive. Not speaking up to say "wait a minute, this doesn't make sense" or "wait a minute, I don't agree."

Her identification of gender role socialization as playing a part in her silences on race and ethnicity without naming the complexity of identity – gender role socialization as a White woman – is not uncommon. Neither White nor African American participants referred to any of their learned behaviors as being related to a cultural norm.

Salience of Racial/Ethnic Identity

All participants in this study have multiple aspects of their identities that reflect both dominant and subordinate groups. Gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, race, age, and physical ability are named by participants as important pieces of their identities. An African American woman notes that while her race represents a subordinate group, she is conscious of the power and privilege she has when it comes to other aspects of her identity, including age, sexual orientation, and Christian beliefs. She states, "... there are some areas where I'm part of the dominant group in this culture. I don't even think about it, I don't talk about it." Later she reflects that her silence

around her dominant identities and privilege are intimately related. She does not question or talk about her dominant identities and how they developed "... because I don't have to."

While she notices her silences around dominant aspects of identity, most participants are more aware of their silences around subordinate aspects of their identities. Two women of Color relate silences about their lesbian sexual orientation in their professional lives. A Latina states that to be out would jeopardize her professional stature, particularly with the Latino population she serves in her clinical work. She relates that it is cultural for Latinos to ask personal questions of their therapists, but she silences herself when it comes to sexual orientation because of homophobia in the Latino community and the risk to her career:

> Some people will ask, "Are you married?" And I say no. You know, but that's one of those things that I have to skirt the issue altogether because number one, it's not appropriate [to share] even if they're not in therapy, they're just doing an assessment. It is just something that is ... just will diminish your stature as a professional. So you have to be very guarded.

While her silence is not directly about race and ethnicity, it is embedded within the context of what is acceptable to a distinct racial group and the perceived risk of exposing an integral part of her identity. In fact, for this particular woman, identifying silences in dialogue on race and ethnicity is difficult, as she experiences other aspects of her identity as subordinate within her country of origin:

> To me the oppression [that] happened to me was [about] being a lesbian, not being another race. So that, it makes it very hard cause you asked me about oppression and where I couldn't speak, and I could tell you many situations where sexual orientation came up, but not necessarily the race.

She also identifies being overweight as a significant issue for her, stating that she can easily name incidents of silence and discrimination related to sizeism.

Ruby faces similar challenges to being open about her sexual orientation in the African American community:

> I think that when you have multiple identities, we all have multiple identities, but when you have multiple oppressed identities, there's these ways you're always strategizing around silence with any of those identities, and so conversations just around gender within an all Black group get really crazy for me because it's always in a heterosexual framework, and usually I opt not to deal with it.

In this passage she speaks to the dominance of heterosexual orientation within the African American community. She later refers to her silence in this realm as protective from heterosexism and homophobia in a community she needs to preserve an affiliation with in order to find support for her identity as a Black woman. While these women's silences are not directly about race and ethnicity, they reflect the complex interweaving of identity and silences that are related to race and ethnic culture.

Diane describes a similar experience with a long-time woman of Color friend that involves her silence regarding her subordinate religious status. Again, while the conversation is about religious privilege rather than racism, race plays a significant role in her hesitance to raise this subject matter with her friend. She wonders whether a privileged White woman can ask her Black friend for empathy and acknowledgement of her privileged religious affiliation. She also aptly describes her observations of dialogue on power and oppression:

> I think people in the dominant group are sort of emotionally feeling where they're not privileged and so to sort of suspend their own stuff to talk about what the other group is feeling like becomes extremely difficult.

She identifies salience of subordinate identity as key in silences about dominant aspects of identity. When race and ethnicity are not experienced as subordinate, issues related to racism and bias are more difficult to identify and talk about.

Professional and Personal Development

Three participants identify professional and personal development as significant factors in voice and silence on race and ethnicity. A young White woman who recently earned her doctorate refers to her experiences as a trainee and developmental aspects of becoming a psychologist when she describes her silences in dialogue on race and ethnicity. Because of her more recent training and her program's emphasis on multiculturalism, it seems to her that she knows more than many staff members at a training site about these issues. Her silences involve questioning herself and what she really can know given her relative inexperience in the field:

> P: ... part of it I think is feeling like there is so much that I don't know that I'm hesitant to make any claims of knowledge at all. That I'm hesitant to actually say "this is something that could be really relevant that you might want to think about" to somebody that has more experience...
>
> AH: Is that developmental for you then, do you think?
>
> P: It might be part developmental. I'm sure part of it is personal for me. Historically I have a lot of difficulty making ... feeling authentic and feeling knowledgeable and feeling ... what's the word, it's the like feeling like a fraud thing.

Here the personal and professional are intricately entwined and cannot be considered independent aspects of identity.

Diane also notices changes in herself over time. She finds herself more willing to take risks, to "face fears and say what's important" as she grows with age and experience.

An African American woman describes her development:

AH: It has changed with you with age?

P: I think so. Being more assertive.

AH: And why do you think...

P: I've been here before. I know things. Maybe I trust myself more... I certainly feel more secure in my own identity, in my own self. So I don't feel as vulnerable as I did younger in my career... So it might be more of a security. Feeling more secure in myself and more centered. I don't get rocked as easily.

Again, the personal and professional aspects of identity are closely linked, with confidence and voice increasing over time.

These observations of personal and professional development as conducive to voice are specific to these participants, who relate these aspects of their identities to their silences on race and ethnicity. Increased awareness and confidence in voicing issues related to race and ethnicity may not always increase with age and experience. In previous sections, participants note that training and racial identity development are significant factors in voice and silence on race and ethnicity. They observe that some older, well-established professionals are less competent to dialogue on race and ethnicity because their training and experience have not included a multicultural emphasis.

Environmental Factors

The personal factors that participants identify as significant interact with aspects of the environment, creating the unique context of their silences. Environmental factors include characteristics of the general work environment, power, racism, stereotypes, allies, and support outside of the workplace.

General Work Environment

Characteristics of the general work environment are a significant part of the context of participants' silences in the professional realm. Regardless of whether the topic of conversation is race and ethnicity, women quickly learn whether the workplace milieu can tolerate voice and interpersonal tension. Simply put, an egalitarian, open environment is more conducive to voice, and a closed, hierarchical setting is often experienced as silencing.

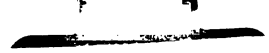
Like Diane, another White woman acknowledges the tension that dialogue on race and ethnicity can elicit, but trusts that her colleagues will be able to negotiate strong feelings:

> One of the things I like about working in this district is that I think there's a lot of support to talk about these issues and although it's complicated and it raises feelings for people, overall I find it a comfortable place to talk about issues of race and culture...

She finds it easier to speak knowing that any problems that arise will be worked through, and the general environment is supportive.

Another White woman contrasts a previous work setting, where all voices were valued, with the hierarchical structure at her current job:

> It didn't matter if you were there for 13 years or one year, it was important what you had to say... And so I would bring this with me [to current work setting] – "I have something to say, I have knowledge in me, too." And I



> would bring it to these meetings sometimes and it wasn't always well received because people in those contexts went by chain of command and I was just the bitty person on the totem pole, so I wasn't supposed to talk.

The following two excerpts are from women working in training programs. A White woman notes the absence of a comprehensive multicultural curriculum as reflective of the program's lack of commitment to diversity issues:

> They claim to infuse multiculturalism throughout the curriculum, which, actually, they do with ethics, they don't have a course on ethics, they claim to infuse it. And my recollection, or my understanding of how that sort of thing usually happens is that one or two articles are assigned, have one week devoted to it, and that's it.

She offered to teach a multicultural course and was told that there was no need. She finds the culture of her program generally unwelcoming when it comes to diversity, contributing to her silence.

An Asian psychologist discusses the silencing nature of hierarchy in academia:

> In academia I feel like they have you in a way like you have to play the game. You'll get blackballed, you'll burn your bridges, you won't get recommendations, you'll be seen as a problem. All of those things. These are the things they start warning you about as soon as you get into the field of academia, you start worrying all the time about what if I say this, or if I say that? It's hard. And I'm still doing it a little, still a little silenced at work, because I know as an untenured faculty member, there's certain things I just can't say.

Her comments draw attention to systemic silencing in academia. She silences herself in order to preserve relationships and connections in the field of counseling psychology, protecting her current position and future career.

Power

Two of the women quoted in the previous section speak about their positions within the hierarchical structure of their departments as silencing. Their comments imply that those higher in the organization tend to face less risk to their job security and are more likely to speak than women in lower status positions. Ruby clearly articulates this dynamic: "I think for me it's about power, because I notice ways in which I am less silent since I got the letter that says I got tenure." Another African American woman makes a similar comparison between her current leadership position and one in which she had less power:

> ... maybe here the position of having power with that might indeed kick in. Because say if it were a candidate ... someone we needed to make a decision about, then I wouldn't care if [my perspective] wasn't backed up because I'm in charge. I can say what I say... [In another position] I was the race person. Race and culture. And people would supposedly ask me things and if I would identify something as possibly racist, or with racial overtones and so forth, yeah, they would argue with me and it would make me very angry and upset... like, damn it, don't ask me if you don't like what I'm going to say.

A White woman describes feeling silenced by her boss, someone who abuses power by using it to threaten, intimidate, and punish employees who question her directives. When describing one of her silences on race and ethnicity, she states:

> I sat there and I knew this woman is somebody who, when I've fought with [her] before, I've gotten nothing but punishment from her. I had literally been moved into a window office and out the next week because she was mad at me. There's some atrocious stuff going down with this woman.

She makes the point again later in the interview: "... because when she busts a gasket and gets mad, there's a lot of people that pay for that, and I saw that afterwards."

An Asian woman describes having a director who uses similar methods to silence staff members:

> ...I just stopped saying anything because no one was listening, and I was feeling like, even with her, if I said anything, if I took her on in any way, she was going to come after me and it was going to get worse. She would manipulate students against us. It was really very, very bad. So I started just not saying anything and trying to figure out how to get out.

Both of their superiors use power to silence dissent, and create an atmosphere that is not conducive to open dialogue on race and ethnicity.

A White woman feels silenced by her lower-status role as a trainee:

> ... for me, being aware of my own position in the agency and having always been a trainee everywhere I've been, so feeling like I don't have much of a voice, I don't have as much power, because among other things, I need something from these people. I feel like that's really cold, but that's something that I'm often aware of. Like, I want to present myself in a good light because, among other things, I'm gonna need recommendations. I'm getting reviewed, these are my supervisors here.

She is operating within a system that she believes presents considerable risk to her future career if she voices concerns related to race and ethnicity.

However, increased power cannot simply be equated with increased voice. Of note is that one White woman describes feeling silenced at times by her position of power. She is the only person on her team with a doctoral level of education, and finds that "sometimes things that I say as somebody who has a doctorate are interpreted as being more expert than perhaps I mean them to be." She worries that her contributions may be given more weight and viewed as more credible because of her status and education. She will remain silent sometimes, "wanting not to sound like a White person who's convinced of their own importance and wanting to be respectful."

The issue of power is more complex than hierarchical status for some women of Color in this study as well. They must consider their position within their department in addition to their relative position of power as women of Color in the larger societal context. Ruby's words about silencing herself with White students despite being their instructor bear repeating:

> I think one of the places where ironically I've been silent is in the classroom. Even though I'm in the position of power in that situation, I'm the one who gives the grades out... In the societal context I don't have that much power. I can be the only person of Color in that room.

Another African American woman laughs when asked whether she thinks there may be some differences in her silences versus those of other women of Color due to her leadership position. She responds: "Oh, I bet you not. No." Their words highlight the complexity of power in silences in dialogue on race and ethnicity.

Finally, some participants describe using their silences strategically – thereby exerting some measure of power and control over the situation. For example, women may choose silence in some settings in order to conserve their time and energy for more productive work:

> I then stopped trying with the group. I decided, "well, it appears you guys aren't ready, so I'm not going to do this. I can't work against your resistance all the time and still do all of the things I need to do."

Ruby also discusses using silence strategically in meetings. She holds her comments until close to the end of the meeting so she can summarize her observations and make more powerful statement.

Lastly, a White woman describes silencing herself in her lower status positions as a means to an end. She preserves the relationships she needs to further her career because

> P: I think you have to play the game if you want change to happen. I think change is gonna happen within systems. Systems are not going to be dismantled and rebuilt, I don't think. I think we need to work within systems. So figuring out how to make systems work for change.
>
> AH: And how to get yourself ... move yourself into a position of power within the systems so that then you can be heard?
>
> P: So you can subvert the system from within. Yeah.

Some of her silences now are strategic choices that she believes will help her attain positions of power, within which she can more effectively work toward change.

Racism

Racism in the workplace is silencing for women in this study as well. Notable in the professional environments of most participants was their identification of racism as embedded in the fabric of their workplace milieu. Racism today takes a much more subtle form than the physical violence with which it is often associated. The comments of two participants follow:

> So many people have these really narrow ideas about what it means to be a racist. And if it's that racist, it's somebody else. But I know that we've all grown up in a racist society, so of course we've internalized those messages and we need to work on them... And I think the association with being a racist is being really active and doing something that is racist versus the more passive simply going along with the status quo.
>
> I mean, racism is not just ... and I'm thinking of this story about the man in Jasper, Texas, where this Black man was dragged through the street and murdered. And that's typically the association. But it's the day to day within the fabric of the culture of who's in charge, who's privileged, who's

> not; who's smart, who's not; who's healthy, who's not; who's valued, who's not.

These women observe the ways that racism has changed from overt, easily identifiable acts of violence and aggression to more subtle interactions with their basis in power and privilege.

The subtlety of modern racism makes it easy to deny. An African American woman notes:

> It's hard to put a finger on some of it because the stuff is so insidious. It's apparent to me, but I'd probably have to argue with other people who don't see that it's there.

She refers to the literature on

> ... microaggressions, these are the little things like I was describing to you that silence. It could be a look, a nod, nonverbal stuff, but ways in which people kind of show you that you're not valued as much, that could never be proven in court.

Today's racism may be obvious to the women of Color who experience its nuances repeatedly, yet it is incredibly difficult to talk about. This participant continues by asking, "How do you bring up something that somebody never names?" The insidious and subtle nature of racism lends itself to silence. It is intangible, easy for its perpetrators to deny or ignore, and difficult to discuss or articulate.

For example, an African American woman describes what happened to a colleague of Color who was up for tenure review:

> People were getting tenure when they were mediocre. He was just as mediocre as the Whites who were getting tenure, and he was denied tenure, so he sued the university and got tenure. And people focus on how he didn't deserve tenure, but nobody focuses on how all the Whites who got tenure before him probably didn't deserve tenure either. So why the bar was raised for him is the question.

Here, racism is easily denied by claiming that the candidate did not meet criteria for tenure. It provides a distraction from the real issue of choosing to enforce standards that are ignored for Whites. Although not discussed by this participant, even more insidious is the possibility that this woman's colleague is perceived as "playing the race card" – that he was awarded tenure not on merit but because he claimed racism. The silence in this situation lies in the absence of dialogue on a very real issue that is not perceived as legitimate by the majority.

This same participant describes the racism that students of Color encounter in her department. These students tend not to be socialized into academia by their faculty, regardless of their intelligence and skills:

> ... I find that lots of students, even students who are already here and they know they want a Master's degree, I'm the first person that would say to them, "You should consider a doctorate program," and they look at me like, "huh, I'm not smart enough to do that." I'm like, "let me just point out what you've done since you've been in my class that other people are not doing. You read. You talk about the readings intelligently. You critique them, not in a bashing way, but in a higher-order thinking way. That's what people in doctoral programs do. You write." And they're like nobody has ever presented that option to them, when they clearly show the ability to do it.

Not identifying students with the potential to achieve subtly, insidiously reinforces stereotypes of incompetence and lesser intelligence, perpetuating a system of unequal opportunity and sustaining a power structure that favors Whites. It is easy to imagine that White faculty might respond to the idea that their behavior is racist with denial and excuses.

Stereotypes and the Troublemaker Reputation

Five women of Color describe the effects of racism in the form of negative stereotypes and the assumption of incompetence. They note that colleagues may believe they were admitted to programs or hired under less restrictive standards for women of Color. All feel as if they have to work harder to prove their competence. The comments of three women follow:

> I felt a real strong need to prove that I was there because of merit and not because of race, but I never could say that, and that's where I feel my silence has come in.
>
> I felt very inadequate in some ways, you know, I felt I had to prove myself because they'd say well, they let those people through because they needed to fill up quotas. So I was very sensitive to that, but I was very ... I made sure I did what I needed and more...
>
> I wonder sometimes as I sit and think about this and reflect on it, am I working so hard with a strong work ethic because it's within me, or do I feel like I have something to prove?

These women not only find themselves working harder than many of their White peers, but they tend to silence themselves about this aspect of their experience for fear of being labeled a complainer, not up to the demands of the work.

Racial stereotypes are silencing in other ways as well. An Asian woman relates that her director clearly expects her to behave in a manner consistent with an ethnic stereotype. When this participant communicates in a direct and forthright manner, she is perceived as "someone who is out of my place," and her director "does not like it at all and she'll let me know about it." Another good example of the silencing nature of racial stereotypes is Ruby's description of silences with students. She relates fear of negative consequences for behavior that is inconsistent with stereotypes of overweight African American women. She silences herself at times by not setting limits and asserting herself with students.

In addition to stereotypes, three women of Color relate feeling silenced by their colleagues' identification of them as troublemakers or complainers. An Asian woman says,

> I noticed that I didn't feel comfortable saying anything about it because I feel like I am already sometimes considered as a troublemaker or rabblerouser or whatever it is. So I guess I felt silenced by that historical role I had taken on.

And another Asian participant responds in a similar way to this question:

> AH: What kept you from saying anything?
>
> P: I think at some point I started to feel like I was getting perceived as somebody who just complained...

The reputation as troublemaker or complainer allows others to dismiss the observations and comments of these women as unimportant and about "their" issues. During the interview, an African American woman relates that she is "smiling because there can be a lot of nonverbal behavior, like looking down as if the say, 'Oh my god, there she goes again.'" Her comments are often minimized and ignored because she has been identified as a troublemaker.

Despite the reactions of others, one of these women persists in voicing her observations:

> I think the troublemaker is impact rather than intent. Because what I bring out is loaded, it's uncomfortable as you must know, talking about that subject, so there is an element of accurate reality in there. I don't like it, but unless somebody brings it up, things are going to go on the way they do, the way they have been.

She is not satisfied with the status quo, and accepts that the perception of her as troublemaker is about others' defending against the discomfort that talking about race and ethnicity can carry.

Allies

The presence of allies is a significant environmental factor in participants' silences in dialogue on race and ethnicity. Women who are the sole voice on matters of diversity in their professional settings find themselves being "outnumbered, outpowered in a way." Without allies to validate their experiences and support dialogue, they are speaking into a void that often actively silences them with the techniques described in a previous section.

An Asian woman describes how she believes she denied to herself that problems with colleagues were about racism, because without them she would have had no support:

> I think because I was by myself ... when I was the only person of Color [on the staff], it may have been too ... this is the first time I am coming to this ... it may have been too threatening for me to see the dynamics in terms of person of Color. I mean, I certainly saw it in terms of difference, well, no, I did see it in terms of person of Color, but not necessarily in terms of race, per se, or racism.

She goes on to discuss how things are different for her since another woman of Color joined the staff. Now her experiences are validated, she questions her perceptions less, and she is not the only voice on matters of race and ethnicity.

Other women also describe the importance of allies to voice and silence in the workplace:

> I don't feel like I have to hold that stuff back so much in my department meetings.

> When I think about the fact that I have people backing me up, understanding and acknowledging what I'm saying at least, it does make a big difference. I do shut down more if people look at me like I'm crazy when I say things.

> I think certainly knowing that there are others in the room who will support what I'm saying makes it easier to talk about something.
>
> I think I still try to speak my mind about a lot of these things most of the time, but I guess I have to explain it more, or I might be the only voice saying what I'm saying and I might not make my point as strongly because I know I'm the only one.

As Ruby notes, knowing she is not the only voice in staff meetings or classrooms is a relief. She feels her commitment to diversity is reinforced with students in other classes besides hers now that new faculty of Color have been hired. She also describes how she and her allies can share the responsibility of addressing issues related to race and ethnicity in staff meetings – a benefit that actually contributes to her silence because she can count on others to raise concerns.

Two women of Color relate frustration with allies at times when there is support "behind closed doors" but not in the public realm of staff meetings where the risk is greater:

> P1: I would say that I shut down the most at [university], because it was just pointless anymore and because I felt like also the other thing that factored in, besides her, was that my colleagues were afraid of her, too, and they wouldn't back me up, at least in the meetings. Afterwards they would be like "I totally agree," but they wouldn't say anything in the meeting.
>
> P2: I get most bothered by the silence of people who say they are my allies, particularly Whites, because it's like you're now choosing when to deal with this when I often don't have a choice, and if you're really going to be an ally then you need to step out of that comfort zone and deal with it, even when you don't want to. I'm not saying you have to deal with it all the time, because I don't want to deal with it all the time, so I'm not saying you have to deal with it more than I do, but you at least need to deal with it as much as I do if you're really going to put yourself in the position of being an ally.

These women speak to a sense of anger, frustration, and betrayal at their experience of conditional support from allies. One of these women specifies that her White allies tend to disappoint her in this way.

An Asian woman notes another limitation of White allies. She observes a difference between her White ally and a woman of Color ally at work. The other woman of Color can "resonate right away" when she has complaints or concerns, while talking with her White ally often requires explanation and teaching before support is offered. Additionally, she sometimes feels as if her reactions are viewed with skepticism and considered overreactions by her White ally, whereas with her ally of Color there is almost immediate understanding and "the question of believing was not there."

A White woman who takes her role as an ally very seriously states:

> I've heard enough about how it's often the person of Color, how it's the lesbian person who has to stand up when something comes up about that... It's almost like I try to jump in before them so that I can save them that effort and be a person of privilege who does it. It hasn't happened that many times, but I want to be vocal so they don't have to be the ones who are vocal all the time.

She is disappointed in herself for not having raised a concern about diversity in a staff meeting. Her allies are not present, and knowing that she does not have support in the room makes the risk much greater. She relates two important functions of allies in her professional setting – the first to support, and the second to challenge and hold her accountable. She is convinced that had her allies been present in the meeting described above, she would have said something – if only because her allies would have confronted her later about not having stood up for something she believed in.

Support Outside of the Workplace

Environmental factors outside of the professional setting also emerged as influential in the choice of voice or silence in dialogue on race and ethnicity. They include the support of family, friends, and community. A woman of Color states that

> part of what's kept me going has been there have been people in my life, professionally and otherwise, that say "You really have good ideas" or "I like the way you think about that," or "I disagree" – at least I learned I was heard.

Ruby describes a setting in which she had a support network of friends that both validated and challenged her when she "was not really thinking clearly." In her current setting, she has little access to support outside of work:

> ... the kind of support system somebody has I think really influences how they decide when to be silent and sort of the rationale behind that. Part of it for me is I really don't have a support network... I've noticed not having that really makes a difference. I don't have a place where I know people are completely accepting of me and they always are going to be no matter what.

Support systems outside of work are described in a similar manner to allies, serving to validate experience, provide a place for emotional and spiritual rejuvenation, and support for voice.

Other Factors

Other factors that emerge as important to participants' silences on race and ethnicity do not fit neatly into the categories of personal and environmental factors. They involve aspects of person as well as an assessment of the environment, and include relationship, time and energy, anticipated response to voice, and legitimacy.

Relationship

Relationships factor into participants' silences in many ways. In the first case example, Diane describes a previous work setting in which she depends on relationships with colleagues for the completion of projects and for social connection. She believes that some of her silences are an effort to preserve relationships by avoiding potential conflict. She also discusses risk to relationships with family as she becomes less tolerant of their bigotry. Another White woman relates a similar experience: "So why did I silence myself? I mean, it was certainly not to get them to like me but to maintain relationships with the family." She is silent in an effort to preserve relationships.

An Asian woman notes that she is silent with colleagues of Color who make negative comments and attributions about Whites. She depends on them to be her sources of support outside of her mainly White work setting, and is concerned about not "validating a close colleague." She also describes making decisions about voice and silence based on the quality of her relationships:

> There are people that I will interface with once or so, and that silence is not worth it in terms of taking a risk, that it's more beneficial to me to be silent, but if it's someone I know and respect, I would want for them to know how I'm experiencing them and why I was silent.

She identifies which relationships are worth an investment of her time, energy, and trust.

Time and Energy

Six participants describe incidents of silence that are at least in part related to the amount of time and energy they have to devote to dialogue. In each situation, they assess their internal resources as well as whether the

investment of their energy will be worth the effort. Women repeatedly identify situations in which they believe it is pointless for them to attempt dialogue:

> Because I knew if I said anything I going to fight with her or I was going to get angry or something, so I just didn't talk... It was to the point where I knew it wasn't going to change anything.
>
> And for the most part we don't talk politics with them because it's pointless.
>
> Is it worth it to me to get into this? Is it worth it to me to have an emotional argument with this guy that isn't gonna make any kind of difference...
>
> It wouldn't get me anywhere. It's like the conflict wouldn't be productive, either.

These women relate choosing to spend their time and energy with people and on projects that they believe will make a difference, rather than waste precious resources on futile efforts.

At other times, silence is about exhaustion. The daily assault of subtle racism is stressful, and as an African American woman states,

> ...you have those days, as you would with any other challenge, when you just kind of pick your battles and don't say very much because you get tired of fighting all the time.

She also relates, "... sometimes you just don't have the energy to keep talking. You do go inward just to find a place to retreat, a place to just sort of get yourself out of that space."

Anticipated Negative Response

Decisions that women make about their silence on race and ethnicity are based in large part on the anticipated negative consequences of voice. For example, in the second case presented, Ruby silences herself with staff because she knows she's "going to get trashed" – that her perspective will be dismissed

and ignored. A White woman states, "I sat there and I knew, this woman is somebody who, when I've fought with [her] before, I've gotten nothing but punishment from her." Not only did she anticipate a fight in that moment, but also that there would be negative consequences later if she spoke to challenge her boss.

Legitimacy

Two women of Color identify legitimacy as influential in their silences in dialogue on race and ethnicity. Unlike the concept of legitimacy discussed earlier as an internal struggle for White women and a part of their racial identity development process, these women of Color are talking about whether their voices will be perceived as legitimate by others. An Asian woman describes remaining silent about White privilege in a staff meeting because she believes only a White woman would be heard:

> Because it is uncomfortable, and I think something like that needs to be said by a woman who is White, rather than a woman of Color because I think if I said it the same way it would carry a higher risk of having it be received as accusing... I do believe that some things would be much better said by certain people than others.

Another Asian woman states that

> ... as a woman of Color at this university, too, there's also certain things they may not hear. If I said it versus the way you said it. For example, if I had said what you said in your meeting, they probably would have heard it differently because I'm non-White. Just like if you said some of the things I would want to say, I think they would hear it really differently, just because of how we appear. They would take me more seriously about multiculturalism only because I'm a minority, and they might take you more seriously about various other things because you're not of Color.

Both of these women are considering who can be heard and perceived as legitimate as they make decisions about voice and silence on race and ethnicity.

Follow-up Questionnaire and Interview Feedback

A follow-up questionnaire was given to participants at the end of each interview. Participants were asked to describe any thoughts or ideas they had on the subject of silence since the interview, and whether they thought their responses might have differed if I had been a person of their ethnicity (for women of Color) or a person of a different ethnicity (for White women). Four questionnaires were returned (three from women of Color, one from a White woman), and four participants gave feedback during the interview.

Two women indicate that, since the interview, they are thinking more about the ways in which silence on race and ethnicity can be positive and powerful:

> I've been wondering about situations in which silence is useful and/or respectful. Sometimes it is more powerful to listen than to speak.
>
> Sometimes my silence with a particular client of Color seemed unquestionably experienced or readily accepted as an empathic openness and waiting for the client to unfold as the process in the moment evokes. Such silences seemed to have [been] borne out of a shared, not always explicit, understanding of similar experiences as women of Color in a racist society, or as women of cultural backgrounds that emphasize collectivism over individualism.

These two quotes highlight the importance of silence to connection, not only as an empathic response, but also as consistent with ethnic culture. This is a departure from the view of silence as disconnecting and disempowering presented in the fourth section of this chapter.

Three women address the process of the interview and its effect on their thoughts and feelings. Their words demonstrate the power of dialogue. A Latina writes:

> The interview was somewhat cathartic, and allowed me to think about [an] issue I don't normally address. It has opened me to discussing issues that I don't normally discuss. I believe the issue of silence deserves more attention in the literature.

A White woman comments at the end of her interview:

> I'm tired, I can feel some of the emotions and the frustration, but I'm not feeling like I've been knocked off balance. I guess where I am mostly is almost feeling motivated to want to talk more... So I guess I'm feeling connected to it, but it's connected in a way that feels energizing, that I could do something about it. And actually, you know what else I'm feeling? I'm almost feeling, thinking about the notion of silence, and I'm sitting here for almost two hours not silenced. I get to struggle without ... so that actually feels pretty good. I'm glad I did this.

Both of these women note the emotional impact of talking about silence on race and ethnicity, using the words "cathartic" and "energizing" to describe their feelings.

Another White woman describes how participating in the study has helped her identify silences that she might not normally notice:

> [Your questions], they're very thought provoking. Things in a school move like 80 miles an hour all day long, so you know, these are sort of decisions, and little areas of discomfort and noticing that I haven't really stopped to think about...

Later, she states:

> Talking with you has made me aware of the subtle ways more than ... I mean, I don't have the experience of being in a work setting where it's not okay to talk about race. So it's more subtle for me. So it's interesting to just kind of notice some of the more subtle ways that happens.

The comments of these three women highlight the power that voice can have to moving the dialogue forward.

In response to the question about the race and ethnicity of the interviewer and its impact on what participants choose to discuss, three women indicate that

they think any differences might be related to style and openness of the interviewer rather than race and ethnicity. Two White women wonder whether they might have shared less with a woman of Color; one elaborates in her interview that this may be about her struggles with legitimacy in dialogue with people of Color. Finally, an Asian woman notes that she is not sure whether her interview would have been different, while a Latina writes that she was, "... expecting a person of Color. However, it felt actually better to have a person who was neither of Color or my ethnic group. It made it easier to give my perspective." The limited number of responses to the question of race and ethnicity of the interviewer makes interpretation of these varied responses difficult.

Summary

Participants in this study are women working and studying in the field of counseling psychology. They make several observations about silence and dialogue within this discipline. Diversity training is identified as important to the ability of counseling psychologists to see the relevance of multicultural perspectives to theory and practice, as well as to their competence to dialogue. Participants encounter many barriers to dialogue, including the silence of Whites and the silencing behaviors of others. Silences on race and ethnicity are costly for participants; they must cope with painful emotions and health consequences. Participants also relate having difficulty forgetting their silences, questioning their experience of reality in the face of denial, and being conditioned not to speak.

Participants consider dialogue on race and ethnicity to be important. They relate that conversation about these difficult topics may raise tensions, but has

the potential to increase understanding, initiate change, and foster connection. Dialogue leads to a sense of empowerment and understanding that enhances empathy.

For these women, silence is not a passive behavior. Participants describe an active process of self-examination and assessment of environmental factors as they weigh the risks and benefits of speaking. They are thinking and feeling deeply about the opportunities for dialogue that they encounter.

Although the context of each silence is unique, there are some common elements that participants identify as influential in voice and silence. Participants bring aspects of themselves to the dialogue. These personal factors include personal history and family of origin issues, racial identity development status, ethnic culture, salience of racial/cultural identity to their lives, and personal and professional development. These factors interact with aspects of the environment such as characteristics of the general work environment, power, racism, stereotypes, allies, and support outside of the workplace. Together, personal and environmental factors create the unique context of silence.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Conversation on racism, power, and privilege is essential to the preparation of counseling psychologists to serve the needs of an increasingly diverse population. White women and women of Color describe the tensions in and barriers to this dialogue as they discuss feminist and multicultural theories (Miles, 1995; Chambers, 1995; Lee, 1995; hooks, 1984, 1995; Espin & Gawelek, 1992; Greene & Sanchez-Hucles, 1997). Silences impede progress toward development of inclusive psychological theories and competent multicultural practice. The silences of women in counseling psychology on race and ethnicity are explored in this study. Research was conducted with the hope that a better understanding of silence will improve the quality of dialogue. In this chapter, results are considered in the context of existing literature, implications and limitations of the study are discussed, and shifts in my thinking as a result of this research project are presented.

Silence As ...

Consistent with contextual theory (Landrine,1995), participants' silences have multiple meanings. The silences of women in this study are meaningful and functional, like those described by Clair (1998) and Jaworski (1997). Many of participants' examples of silences in dialogue on race and ethnicity can be viewed as reflective of power relations and racial oppression (Reinhartz, 1994).

These women are actively silenced by the behavior of others, by very real risks to their jobs and futures in the field of counseling psychology, and by other negative consequences of voice. Silences of omission (Jaworski, 1993), particularly those of White women, can also be construed as collusion with an oppressive system that benefits members of the dominant culture. Silence and silencing as tools of oppression are the perspectives most often identified by feminists.

However, two very different meanings also emerge from participants' interviews. First, these women are engaging in an active process of weighing the risks and benefits of voice on race and ethnicity, thinking and feeling deeply as they make choices to speak or be silent. In their silences, participants are sorting through the process of racial identity development, cultural norms for behavior, family of origin issues, and past experiences. Another meaning is possible: silence can be an important part of the developmental process of finding the words to describe experience, gaining the self-confidence to speak, and determining when and with whom to dialogue on race and ethnicity.

Second, participants describe some of their silences as strategic. Their comments, as well as those of two women who note the ways in which silences can be powerful means of communication and connection, make it important to consider silence from a perspective other than reflective of oppression. Bell and her colleagues (2003) describe voice and silence as "part of a tool kit, and when possible, women might alternately choose one or the other" (p. 408). Choice of

silence connotes power and action; for participants in this study, silence can be an empowered choice.

For example, at times participants choose not to engage in dialogue that they do not believe will result in change, conserving their energy for more productive endeavors. This choice of silence has been described by Lorde (1984), and advocated for by Hurtado (1996) as a means of challenging a system that wears down subordinates by engaging them in futile tasks. Participants may also remain silent in dialogue on race and ethnicity long enough to attain positions of power and security within organizations, later using their voices to subvert the system from within. Finally, some participants recognize that silences can be empathic and a means of connection. These definitions of silence as choice have received little attention in the literature (Bell et al., 2003).

While it is important to consider the ways that silence can be powerful, the association of silence with oppression must not be understated. Women in this study describe the personal costs of emotional and health consequences, as well as being conditioned not to speak. They are aware that their silences can have negative consequences for their colleagues, clients, students, and supervisees. Silence on race and ethnicity is costly at personal, organizational, and societal levels.

Barriers to Dialogue

Participants note that dialogue promotes growth, change, and connection; voice is empowering and naming experience can be liberating. Unfortunately, women in this study encounter barriers to open dialogue. First, both women of

Color and White women describe the verbal and non-verbal silencing behaviors of others, which include dismissing, interruption, challenging, denial, minimization, changing the subject, and responding to voice with silence. These behaviors have been encountered by women of Color in feminist psychology for some time (Espin & Gawelek, 1992; Palmer, 1983; Greene & Sanchez-Hucles, 1997; Chambers, 1995; hooks, 1984). Some of these behaviors can be considered microaggressions, defined by Solorzano (2000) as subtle visual, verbal, and non-verbal insults that reflect racism and inequity. Modern racism is not typically associated with overt acts of aggression or violence (hooks, 1995; Wright, 1998; Hurtado, 1996); rather, it takes the form of subtle behaviors embedded within the systemic structure of institutions and academia. The very nature of today's racism makes it difficult to name and discuss, creating a barrier to dialogue.

The racism and silencing experienced by women of Color participants is consistent with Bernal's (1994) observations of the barriers faced by minority academicians. They encounter racial and ethnic stereotypes of inferiority, and often find themselves working harder than their White colleagues to prove their competence. At times, women of Color participants question their perceptions of reality and need to seek support to determine whether their experiences of racism are related to internal or external factors.

A second barrier to dialogue is the invisibility of Whiteness as a distinct culture with expectations for behavior that are often considered the norm by Whites rather than a cultural phenomenon (McIntosh, 1989; Davion, 1995; Frye,

1995; Frankenberg, 1993). The absence of reference to the influence of White culture in participants' examples reflects its unseen quality. As with the subtlety of racism, problems with naming White culture act as a barrier to dialogue on race and ethnicity.

Another barrier is the level of risk participants perceive to their current jobs and future careers in counseling psychology. Participants anticipate serious repercussions for voice on race and ethnicity, silencing themselves in order to preserve relationships with supervisors and colleagues in an effort to ensure their survival in a competitive market. This point is made abundantly clear in one woman's decision to withdraw from the study. She feared that she would be identifiable through her examples of silences, and felt that the risk to her career if exposed was too great. In this act of silencing herself, she makes an incredibly powerful statement about the potential repercussions of voice on race and ethnicity. Silencing members of our profession is problematic for a discipline that prides itself on contributions to multicultural theory and research (Sue, 2004).

Person-Environment Interaction

The construction of silence in dialogue on race and ethnicity as a person-environment interaction is consistent with the counseling psychology tradition of focusing on both intrapsychic and external forces on psychological well-being (Sue, 2004; Gelso & Fretz, 1992). Personal and environmental factors come together in a unique way for each participant, defining the context of her silence. Each factor has the potential to foster dialogue or silence participants, yet none operate independently. Silences described by participants are complex, involving

many aspects of identity and the environment. Additionally, the context of silences described by participants is constantly changing, as their behavior of silence becomes a part of the circumstances that influence dialogue on race and ethnicity.

The personal factor of personal history involves family of origin experiences. Some participants describe early experiences with silencing and negative responses to voice; the tension that dialogue on race and ethnicity engenders can trigger old emotions and the learned response of silence. These participants relate an internal struggle with voice and silence, while women who were encouraged to speak within their families report making decisions based mostly on environmental factors.

Racial identity development status is another personal factor that bears further discussion. In Helms' (1995) racial identity development models (White and People of Color Racial Identity Ego Statuses and Information-Processing Strategies), individuals move through a sequence of statuses, from a general lack of awareness of racism as an issue to integration of a positive racial identity and flexibility in information processing strategies. Briefly, for Whites the statuses include contact (obliviousness to racism), disintegration (encounters with racial dilemmas that produce ambivalence), reintegration (idealization of own group), pseudoindependence (tolerance and intellectualized commitment), immersion/emersion (identifying benefits and privileges of Whiteness; possible racial activism), and autonomy (flexible, appreciative of complexity). For people of Color, the statuses include conformity (obliviousness to racism, value White

standards of merit), dissonance (encounters with racism that produce anxiety and ambivalence), immersion/emersion (idealization of own group), internalization (flexible, positive commitment to own group), and integrative awareness (flexible, appreciative of complexity, able to value multiple identities). Helms (1995) states that "the general developmental issue for Whites is abandonment of entitlement, whereas the general developmental issue for people of Color is surmounting internalized racism in its various manifestations" (p. 184). Although not formally assessed using objective measures, it is clear that racial identity development status is involved in these participants' silences on race and ethnicity.

Participants describe encounters with racism that raised their awareness of racism, power, and privilege, sensitizing them to silences in dialogue on race and ethnicity. Some report losing their voices in uncomfortable emotions or speaking out in anger as they began to more fully understand the history of racism and their current positions of privilege or disadvantage in existing systems of oppression. Similar to personal history, participants who have attained a certain level of self-acceptance and are committed to change seem to grapple less with the intrapsychic factors related to racial identity development, and are more likely to identify environmental factors as involved in their silences.

White women's struggles with legitimacy appear in the racial identity development section as a personal factor involved in silence, despite the fact that legitimacy is not clearly articulated in Helms' White Racial Identity Ego Statuses (1995) or in Rowe and his colleagues' (Rowe, Bennett, & Atkinson, 1994) types

of White racial consciousness. Participants relate questioning whether they can genuinely empathize with the experiences of people of Color, and wondering whether speaking on race and ethnicity is an act of domination. Their internal struggles with legitimacy and voice on race and ethnicity imply some depth to the process of Whites' racial identity development that has yet to be explored. They are finding words to describe their own White culture, as well as shifting from simply learning about and appreciating other cultures to applying and sharing their knowledge. Counseling psychologists' positions in the helping profession require that they not only be knowledgeable about other cultures, but able to identify aspects of these cultures that have the potential to be harmful to the psychological well-being of their clients.

Another important personal factor that participants identify as involved in their silences in dialogue on race and ethnicity is salience of racial/ethnic identity. In general, women more easily name silences related to subordinate identities; when race is experienced as subordinate, silences are evident to them. Additionally, other aspects of identity, such as gender, sexual orientation, religion, and physical ability, influence silences on race and ethnicity. Green (1995), Curry-Johnson (1995), and Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2003) describe ways in which women of Color have silenced integral parts of their identities to maintain relationships with other members of their racial/ethnic groups. Participants' examples of these silences demonstrate the complexity and embeddedness of identity. Silences on race and ethnicity cannot be fully

understood without attending to the influence of other aspects of identity on voice and silence.

Like personal factors, environmental factors can either foster dialogue or silence participants. For example, no matter what the topic of conversation, the general work environment can either tolerate voice and interpersonal tension, or be closed to the conflict and discord elicited by dialogue on sensitive subjects.

The environmental factor of power is complex. Regardless of their positions within the organizational hierarchy, from students to tenured faculty and a counseling center director, all participants are able to identify examples of their silences. Voice and silence on race and ethnicity cannot simply be associated with power accrued by rank. Power is multifaceted, with other dominant and subordinate identities involved in silences. Relative position of each identity in the general structure of society must also be considered (Steward & Phelps, in press).

Also significant to the context of women's silences is the presence or absence of allies. Participants describe the multifaceted role of allies: they validate experience, support one another, and share the responsibility of addressing issues related to race and ethnicity. Two women of Color describe frustration with allies who are supportive in private conversations, but do not take risks by speaking out in the public realm. Additionally, some women relate the importance of allies to provide challenge as well as support.

Similarities and Differences in the Silences of White Women and Women of Color

Due to the relatively small sample size, it is difficult to draw conclusions about similarities and differences in the silences of White women and women of Color. The following observations are made about this particular group of participants, and require further exploration to determine their generalizability.

One obvious difference is in participants' experience of racism. Women of Color are coping with racist attitudes and behaviors in ways that White women are not. Similarly, White women are grappling with the invisibility of privilege and culture in ways that women of Color are not. Based on this difference, it may seem that subtleties and silences related to race and ethnicity may be more obvious to women of Color than to White women. However, other factors are involved, again highlighting the complexity of silence. For example, racial identity development status affects awareness of racism and silences, in addition to the race and ethnicity of participants. Women of Color in early stages of racial identity development may not notice silences that are apparent to White women in later stages, with the reverse also being true.

Another difference is in participants' description of legitimacy. For White women, legitimacy is described as an internal struggle with finding voice on race and ethnicity. In contrast, two women of Color describe silences in situations where they believe their voices will not be perceived as legitimate or heard by others. For them legitimacy is about environmental factors rather than an intrapsychic process. The experiences of women of Color raise the possibility

that there are also times when legitimacy for White women is related to the response they get from others when they do attempt dialogue on race and ethnicity.

Implications and Directions for Future Research

This study of women's silences in dialogue on race and ethnicity has many implications for addressing silences in the field of counseling psychology. Participants' descriptions of their silences reveal that racism and silencing are alive and well in academic programs, at training sites, and in other professional settings. These women's experiences are disturbing, for they occur within a discipline of psychology that purports to value multiculturalism and is highly regarded within the American Psychological Association for contributions to multicultural competencies and research (Sue, 2004).

Participants' descriptions of silencing behaviors and the ways in which racial stereotypes affect their experiences can help focus our efforts toward change within counseling psychology. We have an opportunity to address inequities and to dialogue about race and ethnicity within our discipline, modeling and practicing the principles of social justice that counseling psychologists are being called upon to execute (Vera & Speight, 2003; Goodman et al., 2004).

The construction of silence in dialogue on race and ethnicity as a person-environment interaction provides a framework for addressing barriers to dialogue. Naming of personal factors brings them into awareness, allowing individuals to focus on doing the personal work necessary to fully participate in dialogue. It is important that we identify family of origin and developmental issues that affect

our tolerance for the tension and uncomfortable emotions that accompany dialogue on race and ethnicity. Racial identity development status of White women and women of Color also affects ability to identify opportunities for dialogue and perception of the risks and benefits of silence and voice. Participants note that mentorship and support can facilitate the racial identity development process; more efforts can be made within academic programs and at training sites to provide the support and challenge necessary for growth in this area.

Similarly, identification of environmental factors can direct efforts to break down barriers to dialogue. Power and racism can be enacted in subtle ways that are difficult to articulate, yet these women are well aware of how such environmental factors influence their choices of voice and silence. Naming the subtleties and validating the experiences of women and people of Color can help dismantle these environmental factors.

Participants identify training as a critical component of competence to participate in dialogue on race and ethnicity. The message that multicultural awareness is essential to competent, ethical practice seems to be communicated clearly to participants and their colleagues with more recent training. However, participants identify a gap between their knowledge and that of many counseling psychologists who have been in the field for some time. Efforts can be made to reach counseling psychologists who earned their degrees more that 10-15 years ago through continuing education. Training efforts may also be focused on

supporting counseling psychologists in their efforts to negotiate conflict and tolerate the tension inherent in dialogue on race and ethnicity.

Participants' support systems are critical to decisions they make about voice and silence. In particular, their descriptions of allies and mentors provide some indication of the behaviors that can support voice and foster dialogue on race and ethnicity. We can strive to be better allies by supporting others' voices with verbal and non-verbal behaviors, and, especially for Whites, by taking risks ourselves to demonstrate our commitment to dialogue.

Participants describe silences around other aspects of identity that are related to race and ethnicity. The embeddedness of identity is a reminder of the complexity and uniqueness of individuals, as the silences around subordinate identities are a reminder that silences on race and ethnicity take place within a context of multiple forms of oppression. Race and ethnicity cannot be considered independently of gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, etc. All forms of oppression and their implications for psychological well-being need to be addressed in our personal development, training programs, and clinical work if counseling psychologists are to be truly multiculturally competent.

Notable is the absence of direct reference to gender role socialization as influential in silences on race and ethnicity. With few exceptions, participants speak very little about being women. Traditional associations with "female" include selflessness, caring for others, and a collective focus, yet participants' descriptions of the factors involved in their silences at times suggest an egocentric focus. For example, some participants describe being silent even

when there are potential negative repercussions for others; participants in this study relate feeling particularly troubled by these silences.

When a woman demonstrates the capacity to distance herself from egocentrism and belief that she possesses the qualities of a model female, she encounters dissonance between her self-perceptions and behavior. For example, White women who identify their privileges and participation in the oppression of people of color are confronted with the fact that their behavior is not benevolent, good, or morally right as they have been socialized to believe. The very core of their identities as women and members of the helping profession are challenged. This begs the question of who we really are as women, and whether the image we have created of ourselves is an accurate representation of reality.

This study raises this and many other questions about women's silences that may be addressed in future research endeavors and theoretical papers. Any future research on silence should take into consideration some of the methodological problems encountered in this study. Recruitment via email by an unknown doctoral candidate on a subject matter that poses some risk to participants did not result in an influx of responses from women of Color clamoring to be a part of the study. Alternate methods were necessary to connect with women of Color participants; use of personal connections likely helped to establish trustworthiness. Additionally, a relationship and rapport needed to be built during interviews before delving into the research questions. This took time; future research may benefit from longer or additional face-face contacts than were possible in this study.

One direction for future research is exploration and elaboration of the conceptualization of silence. Silence is often conceptualized as reflective of oppression, with dominant members having voice and subordinate members silenced (Reinhartz, 1994). However, this study and recent research by Bell et al. (2003) suggest that silence may be an empowered choice. Additionally, this study focuses on participants' verbal silences. These auditory silences may not be silences at all, but filled with non-verbal behaviors that communicate clearly and speak loudly in ways that shape the context within which they occur. The messages communicated by verbal silences and non-verbal behaviors would be interesting to examine further.

Second, women in this study articulate the important role of allies as sources of support as well as challenge. Research on the responsibilities of and expectations for "good" allies would give direction to those of us who hope to take on this role.

A third focus for future endeavors is to develop a better understanding of the ways in which racial identity development status is involved in silences in dialogue on race and ethnicity. As a theory about women's silences was developed throughout data collection and analysis, racial identity development status clearly emerged as a critical factor in the context of women's silences. Unfortunately, the importance of this factor did not become evident until too late in the process to pursue specifics about how racial identity development status and information-processing strategies interact with other personal and environmental factors to influence awareness of silences and perception of the

risks and benefits associated with voice and silence. Further exploration could enhance understanding of racial identity development and add to the existing body of research and theory.

Another aspect of racial identity development is White participants' descriptions of their struggles with legitimacy. Further articulation of this concept may help Whites move beyond understanding of themselves as racial beings to finding voice for change. Participants' descriptions of legitimacy represent one area of difference in the experiences of women of Color and White women. Further study with larger samples is needed to draw conclusions about similarities and differences. Other directions for research would address the limitations of this study, which are described in the following section.

Limitations

One of the most obvious limitations to this study of silences in dialogue on race and ethnicity is me. I am a White woman with many dominant identities conducting multicultural research. In the section about the researcher in Chapter 4, I discuss details of my personal history and racial identity development process in an effort to describe myself as part of the context of the research. Results are limited by my personal and professional development, the questions I ask, and what I am able to hear in the responses of participants. Given the changes I notice in myself since beginning this project, I would not be surprised if several years from now this study would be much different. I do not believe that this invalidates the results of this research, however; only that results should be interpreted with this limitation in mind.

On a practical level, being White has both advantages and disadvantages. I will never forget the look of confusion on one participant's face when she opened the door to her office to see me – she had expected a woman of Color. Although the women of Color who completed the feedback form indicate that they are not sure whether the interviews would have been different had they been conducted by a woman of their race and ethnicity, it is difficult for me to believe that this would be the case. An Asian participant describes her woman of Color ally as someone with whom she can achieve instant understanding and connection based on shared experience. I am not able to make that connection in the same way, and this may impact what participants of Color share with me and what I am able to hear from them. On the other hand, White women struggling with legitimacy or a woman of Color in the early stages of racial identity development may share less with a woman of Color. The limited number of completed feedback forms makes it difficult to know how much of an impact the race and ethnicity of the researcher has on this study.

Another limitation lies in the diversity of the participant group. While the women share a common professional identity, they differ in terms of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, and level of professional attainment, among other factors. Diversity in this group of participants allows for a broad understanding of silences in dialogue on race and ethnicity, but may be missing depth within groups of students, faculty members, practitioners, African American women, Asian women, etc. Future research can focus on silences in dialogue on race and ethnicity within more defined groups of women.

The participant group is also limiting in terms of generalizability. Participants are women in counseling psychology who were interested in the study and wanted to talk about race and ethnicity. It cannot be assumed that all women in counseling psychology share their interest or that the factors identified by these participants as involved in their silences would apply to all women counseling psychologists. Additionally, the demographics of participants are contextual factors that affect generalizability. These women are professionals and students working mostly in academic settings and who describe their socioeconomic status as middle to upper class. Most are currently working and living in the northeastern United States and Canada, in settings where they have few, if any, colleagues of Color. Whether their experiences with silence in dialogue on race and ethnicity are generalizable to counseling psychologists in other areas of the country or in settings with proportionally more people of Color, to working class women, or even to women in other psychology disciplines or academic fields remains to be seen.

Qualitative Study of Silence as a Transformative Process for the Researcher

As discussed in Chapter 4, I am aware that my own racial identity status and personal development influence this study and its results. At the same time, this research has a significant impact on me. My transformation takes place in three main areas: changes in my original conceptualization of the study as a way to advance feminist theory, struggles with legitimacy and finding my voice as a White woman researching multicultural issues, and changes in thoughts and behaviors related to my own silences.

First, this study originates in my experiences at the Advancing Together: Centralizing Feminism and Multiculturalism in Counseling Psychology conference. Like the White feminists that women of Color have been writing about for years, I wanted to promote dialogue as a means of finding a way to make feminism more inclusive. When I read my literature review now, I feel uncomfortable in a way that is difficult to describe. I am reminded of my proposal hearing, when one of my committee members commented that the proposal sounded like it was written by a White woman. Other members agreed, yet they had trouble articulating what needed to change.

I think this is consistent with the invisibility of Whiteness and privilege; something that is difficult to name pervades the writing in the literature review. Is it my ethnocentrism, my White benevolence and belief that I know what is right (Frye, 1995)? I seem to be saying, "See what we have for you women of Color? These feminist ideals and principles have given you so much already. Come, join us." Maybe I exaggerate a bit here, but I think this is the essence of the unspoken message.

The literature review would look much different if I were to write it today. While it would still be grounded in the writing of feminists and the women who have attempted dialogue on race and ethnicity, I am not sure the goal would be to inform feminist theory with the experiences of women of Color. This carries with it the connotation of using and appropriating experience without complete participation and ownership. I should say that this is what I see in the original intent of my efforts, not necessarily those of other White feminists. I believe that

now I would explore silence as a means of improving dialogue on the strengths of feminist and multicultural theories, with the hope that they could be joined, rather than subsume one theory within the other.

Another shift in my thinking since writing the literature review is evident in the way that White women and women of Color are represented. For the most part, in the first few chapters White women and women of Color are described in holistic, general terms that do not reflect within-group diversity. In the results section, the combination and meaning of each participant's multiple identities speak to the uniqueness of individual women. My appreciation for the embeddedness of identity and complexity of context has grown through this process.

The literature review has not been changed dramatically to reflect my current thought process. I believe it is informative as a means of chronicling the transformative process of this research. I am changed, and while the possibility terrifies me, I hope that when I read these words five years from now I will again be able to see how I have grown from this place.

I notice a second transformation in the process of writing the results of this research. Like many of the White women who participated in this study, I struggle with legitimacy. I wonder whether I can truly understand, let alone write about, the experiences of women of Color. And by doing so through my privileged lens, is it possible that I am somehow participating in systemic oppression?
This struggle delayed writing for some time. I must thank Dr. Steward for encouraging me in this regard. She provides the support and challenge, the

mentorship that is so important to completing this study. I am finally able to accept that this study will not be perfect, and as such it will not be the end of research on silence. What I did hear, what I did ask of participants is a beginning. Writing the results opens the door to connection as readers identify aspects of their own experiences in participants' words. It also invites challenge and criticism that I hope will produce more dialogue on silence.

Finally, there is transformation in the area of my own silences. I notice how my experiences mirror those of participants, and how their words have increased my awareness of silence. I now have a structure with which to examine my silences in the moment. I can more easily identify the personal and environmental factors involved, and consider whether the anticipated risks are real in the current context or if my voice is lost in old fears and anxieties. When the silence is about me, I can do the personal work to grow and change; when it is about the environment, I feel empowered to consider the circumstances and think about my silence as a choice rather than an imposition.

My internal dialogue as I encounter silences is dramatically different. I am able to recognize, label, and sort through the personal and environmental factors to find voice. I trust myself more to hear challenges to my voice without becoming lost in defensiveness, seeing the potential for dialogue as an opportunity even if it results in some discomfort for me. I am more forgiving of myself when I make mistakes, but less so when I sit in silence and let an opportunity to raise issues of race and ethnicity pass. Participants also give me a better idea of what it means

to be an ally. This is an area that I am just beginning to work on, from nonverbal affirmations to being a White woman choosing to take risks.

The transformations I note as a result of this research take place within a larger context of satisfying personal and professional relationships, as well as positive field and academic experiences. This support has been essential as I engage in conversation with other women about their silences on race and ethnicity. However, the dialogue itself is the critical component; for me, this underscores the importance of dialogue to change at the personal level. I also believe in the feminist saying "the personal is political," and that personal transformation as a result of open dialogue on race and ethnicity has the potential to foster change at the institutional and societal levels.

APPENDIX

Recruitment Email

Dear Colleague:

My name is Anna Hope and I am writing to request your participation in my dissertation research on understanding women's silences in dialogue on race and ethnicity. I am a student in Michigan State University's doctoral program in Counseling Psychology, and this research is being supervised by Robbie J. Steward, Ph.D.

I became interested in exploring what becomes spoken or silenced in conversations on race and ethnicity while attending APA's Division 17 Section for the Advancement of Women "Advancing Together" conference in 1998. The purpose of the conference was to bring together a diverse group of students, practitioners, and faculty to begin work on a series of casebooks that would explore the relevance and application of current feminist and multicultural literature to different domains of counseling theory, research, and practice.

Open dialogue within the working groups was essential to the goals of the conference. Unfortunately, tensions and conflicts emerged in many of the working groups, particularly among white women and women of color. Anecdotal reports suggested that some women experienced barriers to their full participation in dialogue at the conference, a reflection of long-standing historical tensions between feminism and multiculturalism, women of color and white women.

The purpose of the present inquiry is to explore women's silences in dialogue on race and ethnicity. It is hoped that a better understanding of what is happening in the silences will help open dialogue among white women and women of color, encouraging women to engage in conversation about race and make progress toward inclusive psychological theories.

I plan to interview women of color and white women about their experiences talking about race and ethnicity in a professional context (from faculty/staff meetings to informal conversations with colleagues in the elevator). The sample will include women members of Division 17 (students, faculty, and/or practitioners) who attended the "Advancing Together" conference or who recall receiving an announcement about the conference and chose not to attend. Semi-structured interviews will be approximately 1½ -2 hours in length. Names will not be connected to tapes, transcriptions, written responses, manuscripts, or publications. Identifying information will be changed in final documents to maintain your privacy and confidentiality.

I would welcome hearing from anyone interested in participating in this study. Please contact me if you would like to participate or if you have any questions. You may also contact Dr. Steward with any questions you may have. Thank you.

Anna C. Hope
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Dr. Robbie J. Steward
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Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE SILENCE IN DIALOGUE ON RACE AND ETHNICITY STUDY

Open and ongoing dialogue among women of color and white women is essential to the future of feminism and the development of inclusive psychological theories. However, these conversations are difficult to have in the context of current and historical tensions among racial and ethnic groups. The purpose of the present study is to explore women's silences in dialogue on race and ethnicity. It is hoped that a better understanding of silence will encourage women to engage in conversation about race and ethnicity, promoting dialogue and increasing curiosity about self and others.

The current study is being conducted by Anna Hope, M.Ed., doctoral candidate in Counseling Psychology at Michigan State University. Robbie J. Steward, Ph.D., is chair of Ms. Hope's dissertation committee and will be supervising the research. As a participant in this study, you will be asked to reflect upon your own silences on the subject of race and ethnicity. Ms. Hope will meet with you for approximately 1½-2 hours to conduct a personal interview. Interviews will be audiotaped and later transcribed for qualitative analysis. You will be provided with a transcript of the interview to review for accuracy. Additionally, you will be asked to respond in writing to a few questions following the interview. These follow-up questions are intended to capture your reflections on the process of the interview and provide you with an opportunity to share any new ideas or thoughts you may have after the interview.

Specifically, you will be asked to reflect upon moments when you have been silent on race and ethnicity in a professional context. The interview will be semi-structured. Your personal history, salient aspects of your identity, and previous experiences as they pertain to specific instances of your silences on race and ethnicity will be explored. Reflections on your affective experience, your consideration of the risks and benefits of remaining silent, and the setting at the time of your silence will also be considered.

Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. Your name will not be connected to tapes, transcriptions, written responses, manuscripts, or publications of study results. Audiotapes will be destroyed at the end of the study; transcriptions will be maintained indefinitely. Identifying information will be changed, when appropriate, to maintain your confidentiality in manuscripts and publications. Foreseeable risks of participation in this study include the possibility that you will experience strong emotions engendered by the subject matter. You may also benefit from exploration and understanding of

your silences on race and ethnicity. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time.

You may contact either investigator at any time with questions or concerns about the research project (Dr. Steward: devine@msu.edu, (517) 432-1524; Ms. Hope: annachope@hotmail.com, (978) 897-0416). If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact – anonymously, if you wish – Ashir Kumar, M.D., Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects: (517) 355-2180, (517) 432-4503 (fax), uchris@msu.edu, 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

Your signature below indicates your voluntary agreement to participate in this study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Witness: _____ Date: _____

Background Information Sheet

PARTICIPANT NUMBER: _____

The following personal information is being gathered to better understand aspects of your identity that may be relevant to your participation in dialogue on race and ethnicity. The information you provide will be altered in final documents to protect your privacy and confidentiality. Please fill in the blanks, and feel free to ask any questions you may have.

Age: _____

Race: _____

Ethnicity: _____

Sexual Orientation: _____

Religious Affiliation (if any): _____

Current Professional Position (if any): _____

Current Professional Affiliations: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

How would you identify your current socioeconomic status?
__ Lower __ Middle __ Upper

How would you identify your socioeconomic status at school age?
__ Lower __ Middle __ Upper

Please identify any other aspects of your identity you think may be relevant to your participation in dialogue on race and ethnicity.

Follow-up Questions

Please describe any thoughts or ideas you have had on the subject of silence since the interview.

(For women of color) Would the interview have been different if Ms. Hope had been a person of your ethnicity? If so, how? Would you have said more/less? If so, what might you have said/held back?

(For white women) Would the interview have been different if Ms. Hope had been a woman of an ethnicity different from yours? If so, how? Would you have said more/less? If so, what might you have said/held back?

Interview Guide

Please describe the context of your silence. Who were you with? What were you discussing? Where were you?

What happened before you stopped talking? Why did you stop?

What were you thinking about in the silence?

How were you feeling?

What might have happened if you had spoken?

What were the risks/benefits of your silence? What might the risks/benefits have been to speaking?

What previous experiences have you had, if any, that influenced your silence?

Later, after the silence, what were you thinking and feeling then?

What happens when someone else stops talking?

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