

## The Minority Experience

The Minority Experience is a pattern of interactions; both systematic and interpersonal that reinforce the idea that by being in the minority you are less valuable.

These discriminatory experiences are harmful to psychological wellbeing, with emotions such as anger, pain, sadness, shame and paranoia. This often causes a minority leader to disengage and withdraw, rendering them ineffective.

Diversity and inclusion aim to enrich perspectives, however, adapting the culture to accommodate differences is a slow and difficult process for most people and organizations.

This is compounded by the issue of privilege and power being auto-ascribed to majority groups within any population. The normative expectations of a majority audience become the default expectations and are assumed to be correct and prescriptive. When an individual falls outside of this convention, they experience social marginalization.

Marginalization occurs through a series of harmful systemic practices and devaluing interpersonal interactions. Within the context of interpersonal interactions, a misguided application of privilege is oppressive to the recipient, intentional or unconscious.

The **Triple A Skillset** promises to diffuse the negative impact of interpersonal interactions associated with the Minority Experience.

"You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete." - Buckminster Fuller

Minority leaders must maintain their agency to facilitate change in a divergent way; however, this process can make them feel alone and exhausted.



"To thy own self be true." - Polonius, Hamlet



## The Triple A Skillset

### ACKNOWLEDGE

Skill to help you identify situations that rob you of your power

Acknowledge the event.

"Against Acquiescence"  
Acknowledgement of the experience and the factors leading to it is critical to using the framework.

### ASSESS

Skill to evaluate the context of privileged behaviors

Then, you must actively slow your emotional and cognitive processes.

Conduct a

- A social analysis.
- An emotional and cognitive analysis
- An impact assessment

### ADDRESS

Skill to choose an informed response that helps you achieve your goals.

Choose the what and how to achieve your goals.

What: you may choose inaction or action. Focus on self, others or system.

How: any combination of skills that demonstrate empathy and preserve dignity

### Did this just happen?

Given that others may be completely ignorant of the impact of the interaction, it is tempting to make yourself believe that it did not happen. Denying the situation, however, maintains the status quo. Minorities are more likely to be subjected to expedited judgement.

What is going on here?

- How is this impacting me
- Do I need to address this and why?

Applying the skillset to a devaluing experience allows you to move from a reactive response to a strategic one. It reduces the feeling of powerlessness against invisible forces and allows the opportunity to choose a response that is aligned with your goals.

The **Triple A Skillset** sharpen the perceptive skills to read into a situation, gather adequate insight and pursue the best course of action.

### DESCRIPTION

Minority leaders must maintain their agency to facilitate change in a divergent way; however, this process can make them feel alone and exhausted. Here, I explore the minority experience, its unique challenges and skills minority healthcare leaders can use to remain transformative change agents for health system redesign.

### AIM

Develop a skillset guided by aligning minority psychological frameworks and cognitive processes to enhance well-being



### ACTIONS TAKEN

Developed the **Triple A Skillset** to identify and diffuse the impact of a devaluing Minority Experience interaction in the moment that it occurs. Steps:

- Outline the Minority Experience
- Explore the contributory factors
- Assess the implications on psychological well-being and leadership
- Outline a skillset to manage the negative impact

### SUMMARY OF RESULTS

I developed these skills through the process of my leadership evolution and have been coaching others with preliminary success. Its use has provided cognitive and emotional relief from the Minority Experience psychological distress. There are a few case studies to demonstrate its utility and I am collecting data for refinement.