

Extended Position Statement – “Anti-racism, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion on the Leeds Doctorate in Clinical Psychology Programme”

Addressing racial injustice and inequality in the UK is a societal, moral, academic, and business issue. Racism affects how systems operate, including within our Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (DClinPsych) programme. We believe it is necessary to use our position of relative power and the individual privileges we may hold to openly discuss problems of racism and discrimination and stand up and be counted in the fight against social injustice.

When thinking about social inequality globally, it is important to think about the marginalisation, brutality, and the inhumane treatment People of the Global Majority (PoGM) face [we use this term purposefully as affirmative language in which individuals have a racial identity outside of Whiteness, thus it de-centres Whiteness]. The murder of George Floyd not only highlighted to the world that there is a common history of violence, hate and abuse against PoGM, but it also demonstrated that conscious effort and deliberate action needs to be taken to promote alliance, challenge oppression and combat the deep rooted structural, social, and systematic issues of racism.

Within the UK, statistics from Victim Support and the charity Stop Hate UK revealed racially motivated hate crimes increased by a shocking 73% in 2021. During this time, (the Covid-19 pandemic), verbal and physical abuse was particularly targeted towards individuals who identified as being from an Eastern or South Asian ethnicity and background. In addition to being victims of hate crime, individuals from racially minoritised groups, were also disproportionately impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic globally. People of the Global majority (PoGM) were faced with barriers and greater social inequalities such as housing difficulties, occupational risk, and had a lack of adequate access to healthcare. PoGM were also more likely to have experienced and still experience financial insecurity, physical health disparities and mental health issues compared to their White counterparts.

The DClinPsych course team at Leeds recognise that individuals from racially minoritised backgrounds are often placed at a disadvantage, particularly when it comes to applying and studying on our programme. With this in mind, we are committed to drawing from our University of Leeds’s wider values of ‘*collaboration, compassion, inclusivity and integrity*’ to work towards a more equitable and just future for all.

In recent years, this has included working alongside local Yorkshire universities to host a mentoring scheme (The Yorkshire and Humber Mentoring Scheme) aimed at supporting aspiring clinical psychologists from racially under-represented backgrounds by providing them with the rare and valuable opportunity to develop supportive and potentially lasting

contacts within the field. In addition to this initiative, we have worked with our partner universities to host a series of targeted open days for individuals who identify as coming from communities of the global majority. These events have provided racially under-represented individuals with a safe space to better understand the programme, explore different aspects of their identity and focus on personal and professional development when navigating their journey into Clinical Psychology.

In the last year (2022), our programme has been keen to maintain momentum with Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity (EDI) work. We have been working closely with our service user and carers panel “Everybody’s voice” and our Inclusion Group to ensure we work collaboratively with people who have lived experience. A recent example of this included consultation on the development of a cultural humility ‘competency’ [acknowledging that cultural humility does not have an end point].

We are also working hard to explore and challenge different aspects of our DClinPsych programme which may inadvertently maintain or perpetuate inequality. There are many strands to this work, current emphasis is aimed at systemically reviewing the curriculum to ensure literature from outside of the Global North is included. We believe lecture content should represent literature from different communities rather than be dominated by Western thinking and that an emphasis is placed on critical appraisal of psychological approaches. To achieve this, an audit of lecture material is underway, and a benchmarking tool is being developed. We have also developed written guidance for contextualising teaching, and we further plan to facilitate workshops for all lecturers to support the adaptation of session material.

While we have these measures in place and continue to work towards increasing equality, tolerance, and diversity within the programme, we also acknowledge and recognise more work needs to be done. As a course team we recognise the racial disparities noted historically within our programme (such as low rates of trainees from marginalised communities) and have been working closely to discuss the introduction of contextual admissions, which you can read more about in the widening access and contextual admissions section.

There are many other initiatives that we are committed to, to name a few, please see below a selection of initiatives we are passionate about protecting:

- One day long protected anti-racism training session for every year group every year
- Shortlisting training session about overcoming implicit biases when interviewing and understanding presentation of people from disenfranchised communities.
- Reverse mentoring scheme pilot in which experts by experience from marginalised communities will mentor trainees for 6 months in a trained capacity
- Ongoing service evaluations in relation to our anti-racism initiatives

- We aim to continue to develop anti-racism specific guidance in module handbooks and within academic coursework guidelines.
- Implementation of positive action at interview stage (if an applicant declared they were from a racially minoritised group, we can use positive action if they tie with another applicant)
- Protected monies to promote research with under-represented groups
- Ongoing anti-racism training for staff
- Facilitated safe spaces for trainees from the global majority.
- Ongoing supervisor workshops to support the supervision of culturally adaptive interventions, anti-oppressive practice and anti-racism.
- Outreach work with local schools, colleges and universities

In summary, at Leeds, we believe that addressing racial injustice is fundamental to ensure equitable access to the profession, a fair training experience for all and ensuring we provide an acceptable service to all communities. Our hope is that our conscious efforts to address inequalities will infuse Trainee Clinical Psychologists with the skills, passion and confidence needed to challenge structural inequalities, reduce harm resulting from marginalisation within our profession and practise in ways which are truly inclusive, collaborative, anti-racist and fair to all.
