

Prejudice, Discrimination and Racism in HE

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Overview

- Purpose.
- Methods.
- Findings.
- Conclusions.

Methods

- Social Dominance Theory
- Mixed methods - survey and semi-structured interviews
- Survey – 84 HE staff participants
- Semi-structured interviews – 18 HE staff participants

The everyday discrimination scale

- The everyday discrimination scale is a nine-item scale.
- Participants rate their agreement on a six-point scale, rated from 0 to 5. Scores ranged from a possible 0 - 45
- Greater scores corresponded to more frequent experiences of discrimination.
- This scale asks about discrimination more generally and doesn't ask about ethnicity specifically.

Workplace Prejudice/ Discrimination (WPDI) Inventory

- The WPDI was developed to assess workplace/organizational experiences of prejudice and discrimination.
- Consists of 15 items, rated on a 7-point scale, from 1 to 7. Scores ranged from 15 – 105.
- Higher scores indicate higher levels of workplace prejudice/discrimination.
- This scale asks specifically about racial discrimination

Quantitative Findings

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Everyday
discrimination
scale
and
WPDI results

- 84 participants completed these scales. Sixty (71%) participants identified as being from a white ethnic background, while 24 (29%) identified as being from a BAME ethnic background.
- The only significant demographic characteristic which predicted increased everyday discrimination ($U = 805.5$, $z = 2.95$, $p = .003$, $r = 0.35$) and WPDI ($U = 824.5$, $z = 2.96$, $p = .003$, $r = .35$) scores was ethnicity, with BAME participants scoring significantly higher.;
- This means BAME participants experienced higher levels of everyday discrimination and within the workplace.

Qualitative Findings

Demographics

	BAME	White
Age		
≤ 30 years	0	2
≤ 40 years	2	5
≤ 50 years	3	3
50+ years	1	2
Gender		
Male	1	7
Female	5	5

Thematic Analysis

**“If I go upwards within the chain,
I’m managed by a white man,
who's managed by a white man,
who's managed by a white
woman, who's managed by a
white man” (White, Male)**

Manifestations of racism



Internalised



Interpersonal



Institutional

Manifestations of racism

“They're the ones that have been benefiting from their advantage and their privilege from the moment they're born” (BAME, female).

“White privilege is very obviously responsible... (White, female).

“People who consistently discriminated internalise some of these discriminatory attitudes and re-enact them towards themselves and towards others” (White female).

**Internalised
racism**

Manifestations of racism

*“The head...kind of said something along the lines of “Oh you **BAME** women keep arguing, why don't you just stop” (White male).*

A “colleague was told that she should be grateful that she even has a job on that level” (White, male).

*“If you highlight your experiences, there's some people that will try to gaslight you....
‘There's no racism here’, blah blah blah when in actual fact there is (**BAME**, female).*

Interpersonal racism

Manifestations of racism

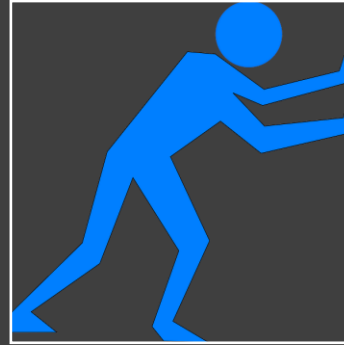
*“I think being white gives me credits, I think that's awful, but I think that's true...I think it does absolutely but in a positive way, which speaks volumes to that privilege”
(White, male).*

*“There's certain colleagues that are sort of chosen to be given the step-up to management training, you know”
(BAME, female).*

“That is an institutional thing really isn't it really kind of structural thing because that's something that my colleague has been experiencing throughout her life”
(White, female)

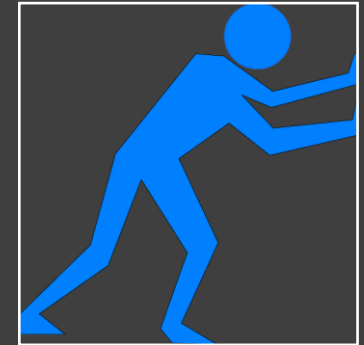
**Institutional
racism**

Witnessing and
challenging
racism

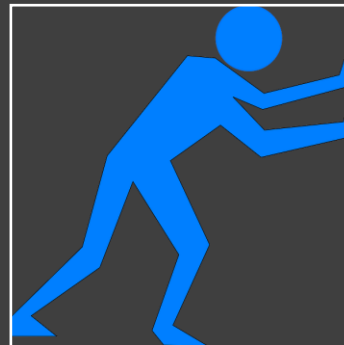


Microaggressions

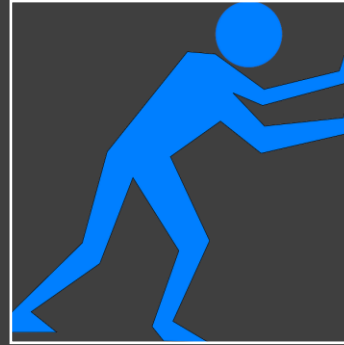
*Uncomfortable
racism*



*The powerful and
the powerless*

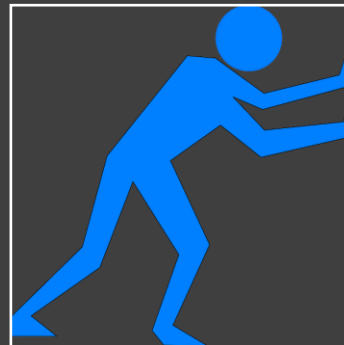
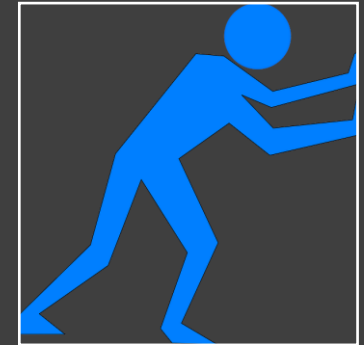


Witnessing and challenging racism



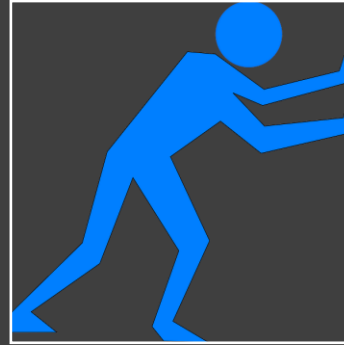
“I've seen non-white colleagues being treated differently, being spoken to differently, often more condescendingly ... people have been spoken to and in ways that kind of assume that they're more as a kind of administrators...even if they're also academics” (White, female).

“There's never been any encouragement about career progression at all. It's just about your timetable...but there was never any kind of long term aspirational side”.
(BAME, female).



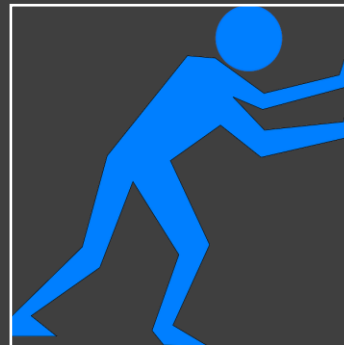
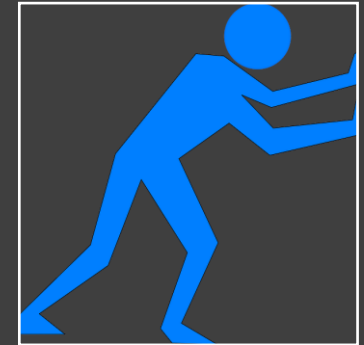
Microaggressions

Witnessing and challenging racism



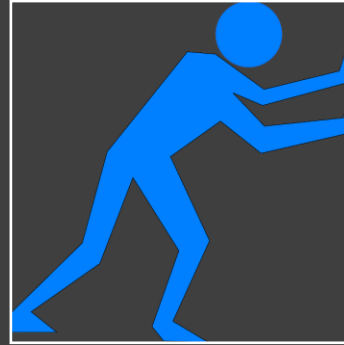
“If I wanted to whistle blow, or you know, I'd have to report it to the university... they said it was inappropriate. It made me feel uncomfortable. “I agree with everything you say but don't mention the racism”. ((White, female).

“I see things I would like to challenge but I don't know how to do that when the power dynamic is the way it is” (White, female).



Uncomfortable racism

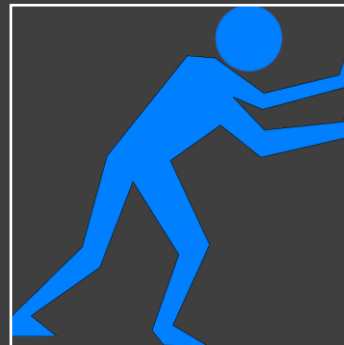
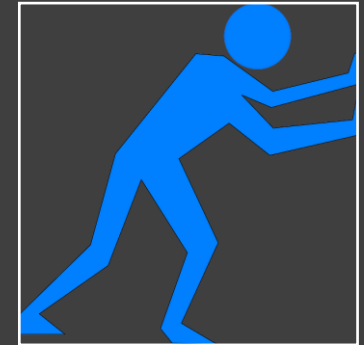
Witnessing and challenging racism



“If I report...then you would have lost the job” (White, male).

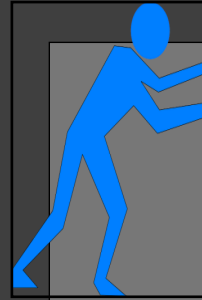
“Because they were in a position of authority, they could cause some damage” (White, female).

“There was a colleague who gave me some good legal advice, [who] was really helpful...so that's when I got the union involved...that little intervention, that conversation ... helped turn things around” (BAME, female).

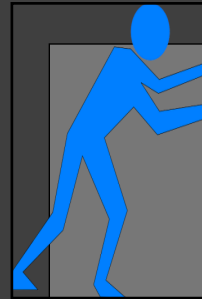


*The powerful and
the powerless*

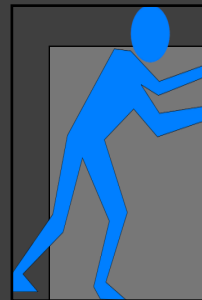
The
consequences
of racism



Working harder



Mental health and
wellbeing



Leaving HE

The consequences of racism

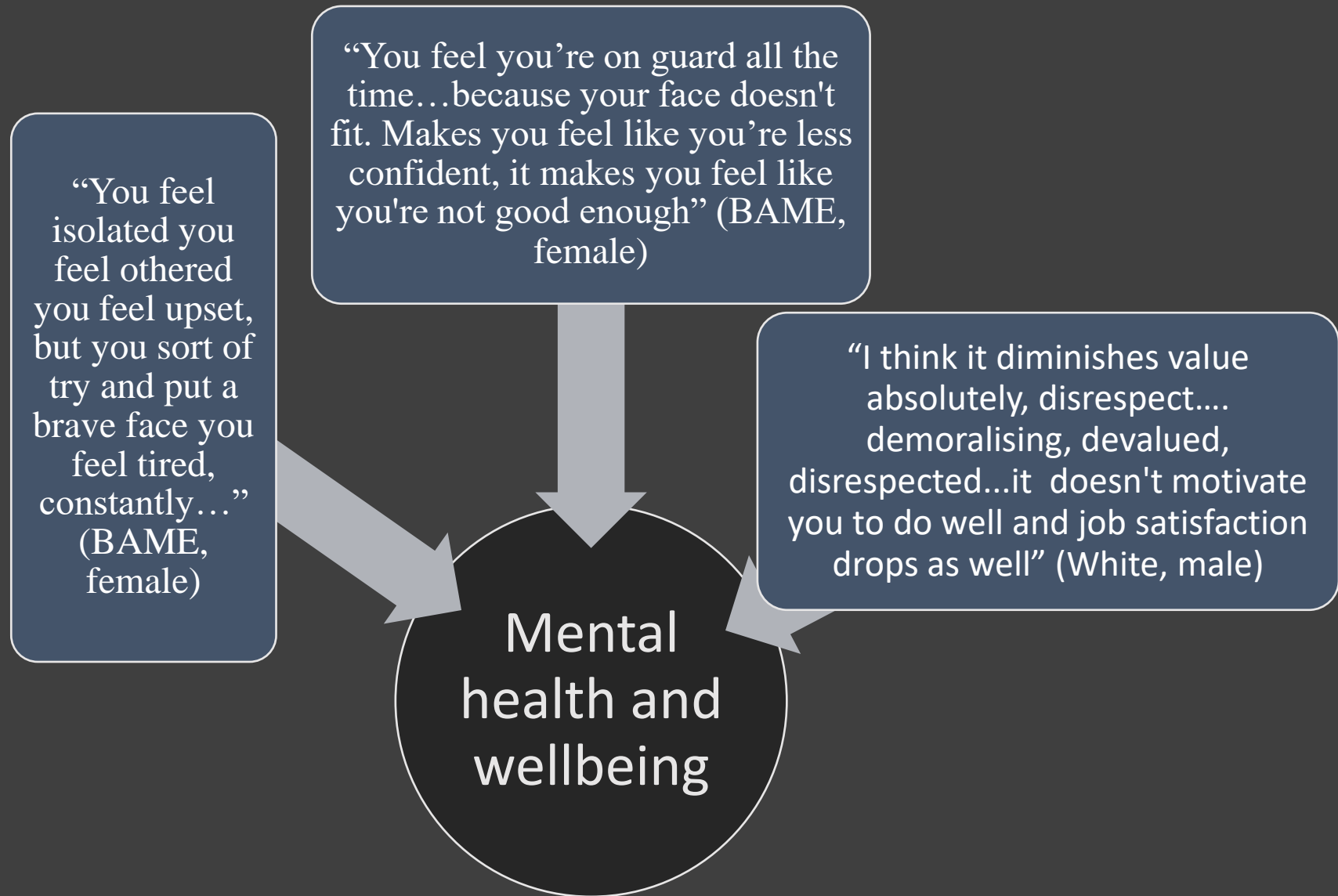
“That level of scrutiny or having to be better than everybody else I mean I had that anyway because you have to be, you know, 10 times better And you're not given any leeway or you're not given any slack” (BAME, female).

“You're constantly feeling that you have to work twice as hard, make sure you're up to standard... over the years have always had more marking than anyone else” (BAME, female).

“Basically, those who are not British...are having to work much harder” (BAME, male).

**Working
harder**

The consequences of racism



The consequences of racism

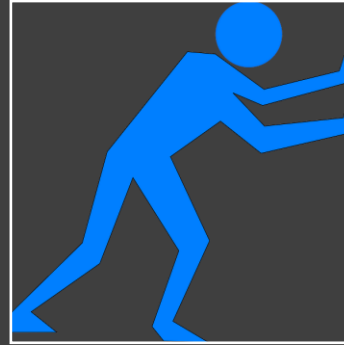
“In the first office that I worked in I think I had issues with my manager. But then I got a job in another office...That was really stressful and I had to leave that role and then move to another role” (BAME, female).

“I'm going to go, because they hurt you, because they don't want to change it, and it is race - ... actions don't match words at this time...I'm choosing not to be as successful as I could be” (White, female).

“I'm not gonna give you that satisfaction, you're gonna have to stick around and see my face ... I will go when I am good and ready” (BAME, female).

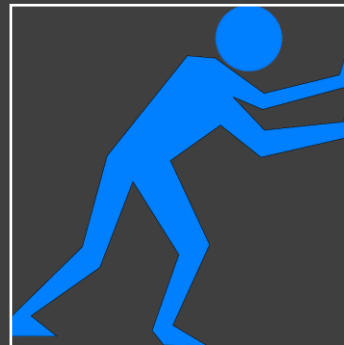
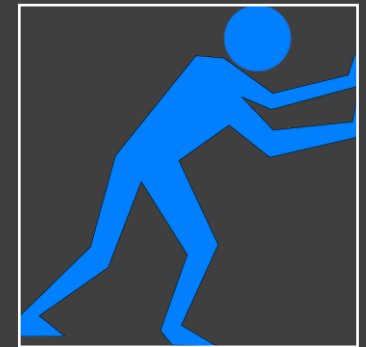
Leaving
HE

Progress in
addressing
racism



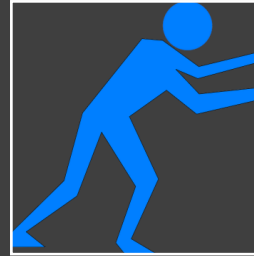
Optimism

AND



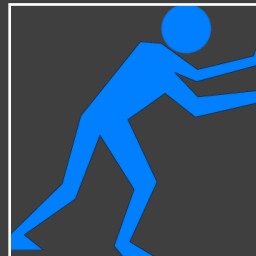
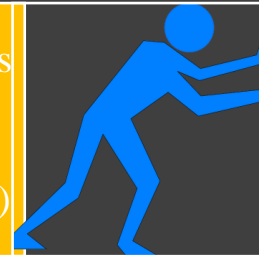
Pessimism

Progress in addressing racism



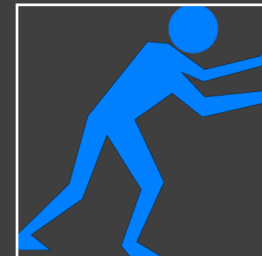
Optimism

“Especially now I can see that there is a drive for change” (White, male).
“I think there’s a momentum... that wasn’t there before” (BAME, female)

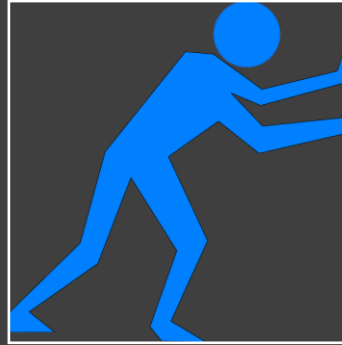


“I don’t think it’s the massive problem that we’re making it out to be... We need to start promoting positive sides to... the minorities... they’re not that much in the minority anyway... they’re quite dominant groups... I think we need to recognise what the current threat is... “

“... I think we’re bandwagon jumping a lot of the time and we’re not interpreting what’s going on in the outside world... So something like the Black Lives Matter movement...” (White, Male).

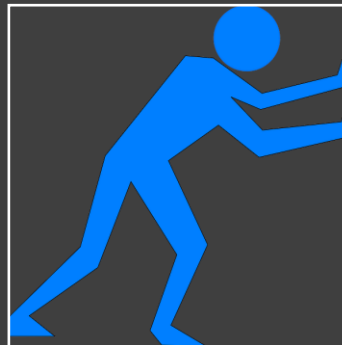
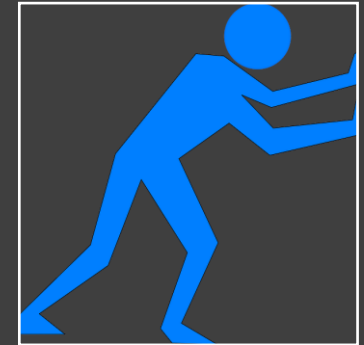


Progress in addressing racism



Pessimism

We still have the same viewpoint of well, this is how I work, and I've been successful in HE, so I will just repeat this pattern... It's for White colleagues to open our eyes and understand that what we think is okay, isn't okay (White, female).

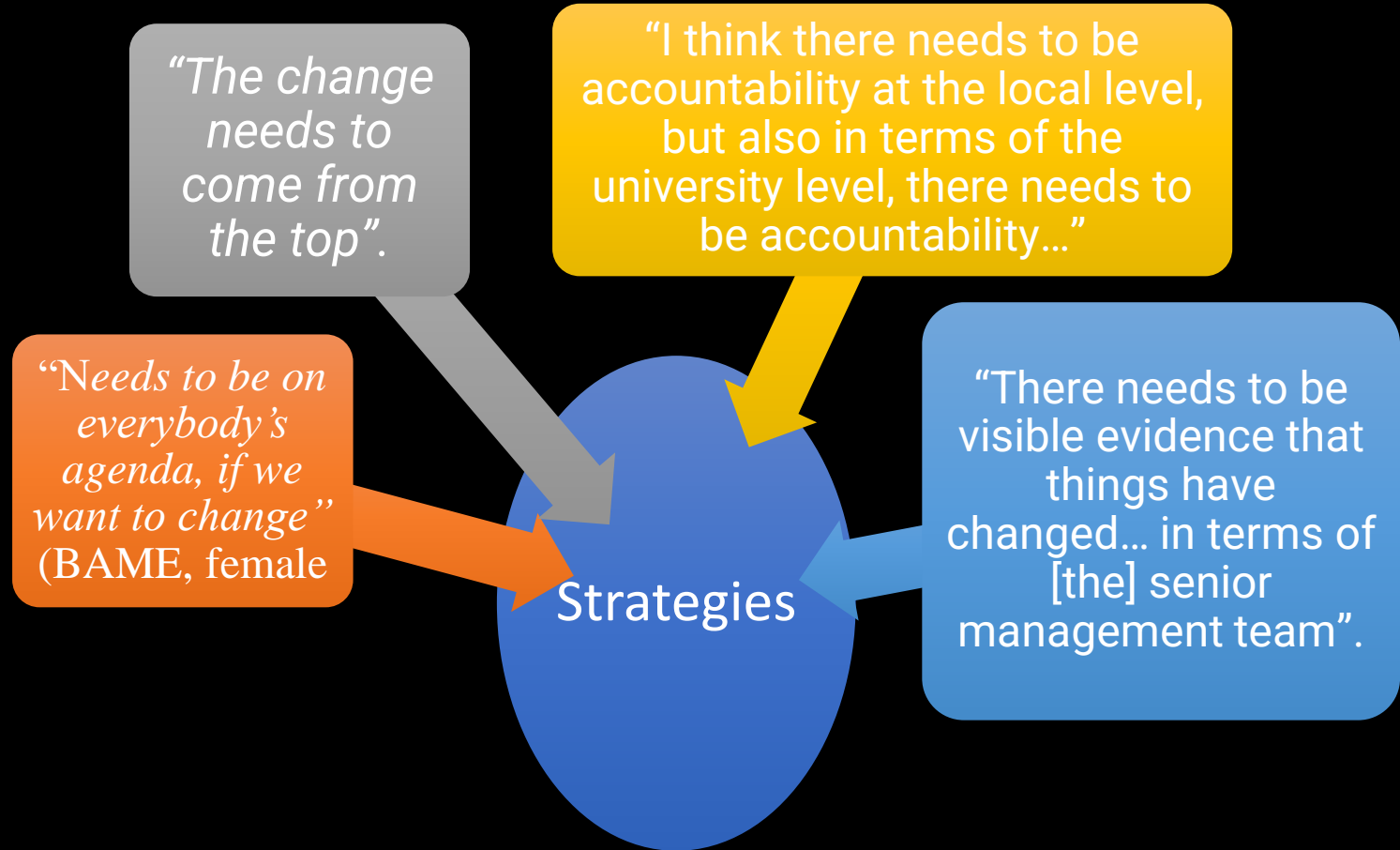


I do feel like Guy Fawkes, I think the only way to fix the faculty is blow it up. Blow it up smash it. And that's the only way we're going to fix academia, smash it (White, female).

Strategies for addressing racism



Strategies for addressing racism



Conclusions:

“I’m managed by a white man, who’s managed by a white man, who’s managed by a white woman, who’s managed by a white man, who’s managed by a white woman, who’s managed by a white man”

“I’m managed by a white man, who’s managed by a white man, who’s managed by a white woman, who’s managed by a white man”

The problem of institutional racism in a UK-based university

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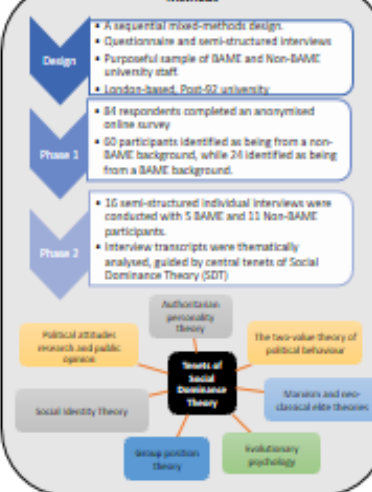
Background

- Following the unlawful killing of George Floyd in the US, many Higher Education (HE) leaders have made...
 - well-meaning proclamations to decolonise curriculum,
 - have espoused to somehow close ethnicity attainment and remuneration gaps, and
 - have targeted equality, diversity and inclusion as a priority once again.
- Recent data shows how UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are becoming more ethnically diverse, yet...
 - ...disproportionately lower numbers of BAME staff (compared to non-BAME staff) have permanent contracts, hold senior leadership positions, and are on higher level pay bands (AdvanceHE, 2021).

Research aims

- To examine the extent to which racism was omnipresent across all levels of a London-based, post-92 university.
- To understand the impact on both BAME and non-BAME staff.

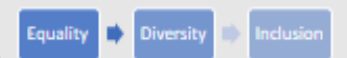
Methods



Conclusions and Recommendations



- BAME staff were primarily affected by institutional racism, yet BAME and non-BAME participants felt the impact, mainly on their mental health and wellbeing.
- The impact of racism was experienced by HE staff at all levels of the university, drawing attention to the systems that produce and maintain racialised hierarchies and inequalities.
- University leaders must take responsibility for creating truly equitable, diverse, and inclusive workplaces.
- The long-standing problem of racism might be better understood, addressed and challenged by listening to the stories of both BAME and non-BAME people.



Indicative references

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