BHM – Black in Academia

SESSION 3

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Microaggressions

“I used to walk round there to go to the vending machine and people asked me if I could vacuum their office or take out their rubbish. On more than one occasion. I have to explain that I work here. Then they either shrug it off or their mortified.”

“She said she “loved my hair” and then literally went to grab it. This was a seminar tutor. A seminar tutor. They’re saying we’re not exoticised here? OK”

“Safe Spaces”

“ There was a big fanfare talking about all the safe spaces and stuff {…} loads of pictures of Black student and other students of Colour about the place. Saying we had safe spaces to go. As soon as they got it (the Race Equality charter) it was all gone.”

“You’d think it would be more widely broadcast. I wouldn’t say they’re something that’s particularly easy to find”

‘Moral Responsibility’

“I don't feel burdened by it, but sometimes I feel like {…} why don't students of colour feel that same ease to approach one of their white lecturers as they might feel to approach me?”

“I really thought for a moment, “does it matter that I’m the first person in my family to come to university? "There's only so much someone can take before they ask; what’s the point? But I feel I need to show Black students, Black boys in particular, that they can make it in this field.”

‘Decolonising the Curriculum’

“ {…} I suppose they’ve not been the most receptive to the idea. When they have been they don’t, ask the people that it effects. How are you supposed to go about changing things from within without involving people the issue effects?”

“ {…} they always ask me, “what should we do?”, what resources shall we use?” They just don’t seem to want to do their own research. That’s not engaging with decolonisation because you’re not trying to understand or to learn.”

“It’s the first time I got to research something that meant so much to me. The response from other Black academics was nothing but supportive. The network that we have, across the country, its like a shared acknowledgment of the experiences we have. I don’t feel like we’re just colleagues, we’re genuinely friends. ”

“To me, it’s amazing. If I hadn’t come to uni, I wouldn’t have met so many other Black people. I’m originally from a really small town. We were the only non-white family when I was at school and that was really hard {…} Through academia, I’ve found people like me. That accept me”