

A Cultural Connections Memo

From: Shari Clarke, VP for Diversity & Chief Diversity Officer
To: The EWU Community
Date: September 1, 2020
Re: Virtual Awareness of Diverse Populations

Race and racial disparities during COVID-19 have become major talking points in the national conversation. COVID-19 disproportionately impacts Black and Brown communities of color further illuminating health care disparities. In addition, homeless populations and students in domestic violence situations, struggling with an abusive partner or parent/s are extremely vulnerable.

According to the Washington Education Association 32% of Latinx households, 26% of Black households, 27% of American Indian households and 26% of rural households in the state are without access to high speed internet.

Suggestions for Inclusive practices:

- Create virtual communities and safe spaces for students of color and underrepresented populations
- Recognize that during the pandemic emotions may be at an all-time high resulting in tense interactions
- Maintain sensitivity to the importance of family and the impact of COVID-19 on diverse communities that regard the essential role of the family and support for family first
- Encourage faculty and staff to be flexible with students, recognizing that family situations may include (illness, loss of a job, lack of home life stability, lack of medical care, general accessibility to services)
- Ensure faculty and staff are striving to build connection with students, especially those who may be adversely impacted by the asynchronous learning environment.
- Do not forget to ask students how they are doing, and how they are being affected by COVID 19. Let them know we are here for them.
- Provide resources for students who are negatively impacted by the move to an online environment to address issues such as lack of access to computers, internet issues, learning style issues, lack of access to a physical space conducive to learning

- Share counseling and other resources available to students in the online environment to process feelings related to traumatic events such as the impacts of COVID 19, the political climate, as well as headlines about violence and brutality toward people of color and underrepresented identities

- Monitor the online environment, and do not allow cyberbullying - Report any bias incidents to:

Dean of Students
509.359.7924
DOS@ewu.edu

OR

The Office of Equal Opportunity / Affirmative Action
509.359.2021
eoaa@ewu.edu

- Maintain sensitivity in speaking with underrepresented populations-do not allow the use of derogatory terms that target a specific population such as using the descriptor 'Chinese Virus'
- Ensure online materials are accessible for students who may be differently-abled, or speak English as a second language
- Use gender-inclusive terms-Good Morning Students or Good Afternoon Class as opposed to gender descriptors

Sources;
Diverseeducation.com
Washington State Education Association