Virtue Interventions and Interracial Interactions

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> *"We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It's easy to say, 'It's not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem.' Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes."*
> —Fred Rogers (as cited in Jackson & Emmanuel, 2016, p. 18).

Abstract Majority group members are important actors for increasing positive interracial interactions in multicultural environments. Research has demonstrated that psychological factors may hinder majority group members from greater engagement in interracial interactions (e.g., emotion dysregulation, race-based stress), so psychological interventions targeting majority group member engagement in interracial interactions are needed. Using a theory-based approach, we will examine how positive psychological interventions, specifically virtue interventions targeting White students in a U.S. context, could increase emotion regulation capabilities in response to race-based stress, alleviate threat, and result in greater engagement in interracial contact. Whereas many current standalone interventions to decrease racial prejudice are often deficit-based and have questionable efficacy (Bezrukova, Jehn, & Spell 11:207–227, 2012), a strengths-based virtue approach might be more effective in decreasing anxiety and increasing self-efficacy in interracial interactions. Drawing from the virtue literature, the chapter will discuss how patience and courage interventions are well suited to address the psychological factors that negatively affect White people in multicultural contexts and hinder overall efforts to increase interra-

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cial interactions. Hypotheses for intervention outcomes and how those outcomes may impact majority group members are described. In sum, we offer an important theoretical grounding for future research on positive psychological interventions that aim to increase White engagement in interracial interactions in multicultural environments.

1 Introduction

Danny is a White college freshman from a small town in Minnesota who has just started school at a prestigious, private university in California. In addition to the coursework and small class sizes, Danny chose to attend this school because of its diverse student population. Coming from a small high school with almost no ethnic diversity, he's eager to meet and learn from people with different backgrounds.

Despite his motivation to meet people from different backgrounds, Danny finds himself connecting most easily with a few other White students who are from the Midwest when he arrives to college. When he does try to engage in conversation with one of his Black classmates, he finds himself feeling awkward and a little bit nervous about saying something offensive. Based on what he has seen on social media, he feels like anything he says could be perceived as racist or intolerant, so he tries to be extra careful. But it feels exhausting because he finds himself monitoring everything he says. He realizes that he never has to worry about those things when he's talking with the White students in his class, and it just seems easier to connect with and build friendships with his White classmates.

2 The Problem: A Lack of Interracial Interactions on College Campuses

Danny's college experience is like those of millions of White students who enroll in colleges and universities across the United States every year. Most White college students will become friends with other White college students. This trend, which was first observed in 2003 (Massey, Charles, Lundy, & Fischer, 2003), is still the case in 2018 (Carter et al., 2018). Although there have been increases in diversity across college campuses in the United States, most are still predominantly White institutions (Harvey, 2001; Hurtado, Clayton-Pedersen, Allen, & Milem, 1998; Massey et al., 2003). As a result, White majority students have many potential friends to choose from within their racial group, and they do not have to engage in interracial interactions (and they may not even try because of how anxiety-inducing interracial interactions can be; Richeson & Shelton, 2007). When majority group students, like

Danny, experience discomfort, nervousness, or stress in interracial interactions, it is easy for them to withdraw and find other White friends with whom it may be easier to form relationships. What might explain this disconnect between Danny's desire for connection with people from different backgrounds, or different racial groups, and the reality of his siloed interactions?

In addition to anxiety, research has also shown that pre-college racial environments and students' prior experiences with either homogeneous or diverse peers can have an impact on with whom students choose to interact in college (Saenz, Ngai, & Hurtado, 2006). Like Danny, many White students enrolling in primarily White institutions will come from homogeneous racial environments (Orfield, Bachmeier, James, & Eitle, 1997; Orfield & Lee, 2006). Without explicit intervention, it is likely that they will continue to engage in similar pre-college patterns (Saenz et al., 2006). In doing so, White students may not have to acknowledge the racially homogeneous environments in which they exist. These choices about with whom to interact can have wide-reaching impact on White students' future attitudes toward outgroups. In several studies, researchers have shown that cross-group contact (e.g., cross-group friendship and interracial interactions) over time results in more positive out-group attitudes and a greater likelihood that majority group members will be able to identify wrongful exclusion (Crystal, Killen, & Ruck, 2008; Feddes, Noack, & Rutland, 2009; Turner, Hewstone, & Voci, 2007; West & Dovidio, 2012).

For Danny, this presents a dilemma. Although he expressed an explicit desire to engage in more intergroup contact in college, barriers like anxiety and limited previous experience engaging with people from different backgrounds abound. And Danny is not alone. Millennial and post-millennial college students often express a desire to learn from others and confront bias and inequality in their communities ("2014 MTV/David Binder Research Study," 2014) but find themselves struggling to develop friendships across racial and ethnic groups.

However, let's consider an alternative trajectory: Danny remains less engaged with his Black classmates, but one day he is reminded by a teacher from home about how excited he was to interact with and learn from with people who are different from him. After the conversation, despite his nervousness, he makes a conscious effort to chat with his Black classmates. Some of these initial conversations turn into study groups and coffee meetings; these lead to invitations to events hosted by the Black Student Union, which Danny accepts. Through this gradual process of building genuine friendships, the stereotypes and anxiety he originally had may begin to diminish. Danny's interracial interactions in college put him on a trajectory towards a future with less racial bias and prejudice. This could lead to his involvement in collective action, confronting bias in a future workplace, and intentional pursuit of diverse friendship networks. Concrete actions like these, which promote equity in social spaces and workplaces, may eventually produce environments of true inclusion for minority group members. But, as Danny's story highlights, there are points where things could have gone differently. There are key junctures during which Danny will be faced with discomfort or anxiety in interracial interactions, and his response to those feelings are pivotal for determining which trajectory Danny's life will take. Will he be courageous and take the first step even though it's uncomfortable? Will he have

patience to continue to pursue interracial interactions even when those interactions are challenging?

Encouraging genuine interracial interactions at these critical junctures is important. Thus, the question becomes how we can create environments where someone like Danny can view college as an opportunity to step outside his comfort zone and engage in interracial interactions. We propose that positive psychology's emphasis on a strengths-based, character building approach through virtue interventions provides the most promising strategy for increasing majority members' engagement in interracial interactions. Although we highlight the experience of Danny, a White male in the United States, many of the principles discussed could translate to other minority-majority group interactions in diverse contexts. From age-old tension between minority-majority groups (e.g., Israelis and Palestinians) to the ongoing adjustment of communities faced with high levels of global migration (e.g., Europeans and refugees), the need for positive intergroup interactions is global and not limited to the United States.

3   Chapter Overview

In the following pages, our goal is to provide a theoretical foundation demonstrating how virtue interventions can provide a pathway for greater engagement in interracial interactions in a U.S. university context. In the first section of the chapter, we broadly explore the challenges White people face regarding interracial interactions. Then, we focus on how virtue interventions may help White people overcome the challenges of interracial interactions. Next, we provide examples of possible virtue interventions, inspired by the existing literature, that could effectively increase interracial interactions in U.S. universities. To conclude, we identify future directions for research on virtue interventions and interracial interactions. Given the dearth of research establishing the efficacy of interventions targeting majority group members to increase interracial interactions, we hope this research will provide a compelling framework for future empirical work.

4   Interracial Interactions Are Difficult for White People

One of the primary obstacles to greater engagement from White people in interracial interactions is anxiety. Anxiety, both during (Goff, Steele, & Davies, 2008; Richeson & Shelton, 2003) and in anticipation of interracial interactions (West & Dovidio, 2012), is a common theme throughout the literature on White experiences of interracial interactions (Blascovich, Mendes, Hunter, Lickel, & Kowai-Bell, 2001; Devine & Vasquez, 1998; Hyers & Swim, 1998; Shelton, 2003; Stephan & Stephan, 1985). Several factors related to anxiety may hinder White people's engagement in interracial interactions. First, interracial interactions can be cognitively and emo-

tionally draining for both White people and minorities (Richeson & Shelton, 2007). Interracial interactions act as stressors that elicit physiological, emotional, and behavioral responses (Blascovich et al., 2001; Page-Gould, Mendoza-Denton, & Tropp, 2008; Stephan & Stephan, 1985; Trawalter, Richeson, & Shelton, 2009). In interracial interactions, researchers have observed that White participants have increased cardiovascular activity (Blascovich et al., 2001) and cortisol reactivity (Page-Gould et al., 2008), so they tend to withdraw from race-related conversations (DiAngelo, 2011). Moreover, the effort to self-monitor verbal and nonverbal behavior is stress-inducing for White people (Richeson & Shelton, 2007).

In addition to these physiological factors, interracial interactions also generate psychological feelings of threat related to racial stereotypes. Researchers have observed that racial stereotyping, or the expectations and beliefs people have about particular social groups, can begin as early as age six (Hamilton & Trolier, 1986; Pauker, Ambady, & Apfelbaum, 2010), Many researchers have highlighted how the salience of racial stereotypes influences a wide range of psychological and behavioral outcomes (Critcher & Risen, 2014; Eberhardt, Goff, Purdie, & Davies, 2004; Kunda & Spencer, 2003; Macrae, Bodenhausen, Milne, & Jetten, 1994; Vorauer, Main, & O'Connell, 1998). White people's concerns about whether they are confirming stereotypes (i.e., concerns about how they are viewed by minority groups) is of particular importance in interracial interactions. For example, Vorauer et al. (1998) demonstrated how White Canadians' perception that they were negatively stereotyped by a lower status group negatively affected their attitudes regarding an intergroup interaction.

Researchers have also found that White people's typical goals in interracial interactions are to be liked and to appear moral (i.e., non-prejudiced, unbiased, open-minded, tolerant; Bergsieker, Shelton, & Richeson, 2010). These goals are made even more salient in threatening situations when a majority group person perceives that they may not be liked or may not appear moral based on stereotypes about White people (Bergsieker et al., 2010; Leary & Kowalski, 1990). In response to prejudice concerns, White people will engage in cognitively taxing self-monitoring that includes suppression of thoughts, emotion, and behaviors (Trawalter & Richeson, 2006), or they engage in behavior that they *think* will make them appear non-prejudiced (e.g., colorblind behavior; Apfelbaum, Sommers, & Norton, 2008). This type of self-monitoring is self-focused and motivated by a desire to avoid moral judgment rather than other-focused and mindful of the needs of the minority partner. Overall, White people's focus on regulating the appearance of prejudice can lead to anxiety and ultimately avoidance of interracial interactions.

White people's avoidance of interracial interactions (or even discussions of race) is an undesirable outcome because interracial interactions are an important catalyst through which White people begin to understand their role in confronting racial bias and prejudice. By avoiding interracial interactions, White people miss out on opportunities to decrease prejudice, increase empathy and perspective-taking, and better manage stress that arises from contact with outgroups (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Without growth in these areas, it is unclear how broader issues of racial conflict and inequities can be effectively resolved. As we know from following Danny's story, it is

difficult to interact with someone from a different race, but interracial interactions are perhaps the most critical starting point for prejudice reduction (Shelton & Richeson, 2005). Furthermore, researchers posit that positive contact over time should promote a buffering effect against perceived threat that White people may experience, which, in turn, might lead to more positive intergroup relations (Craig, Rucker, & Richeson, 2017; Levin, van Laar, & Sidanius, 2003).

5   Ironic Effects of Suppression

Despite these strategies for overcoming the anxiety associated with interracial inter-actions, it is also important to consider what challenges White people may encounter when they choose to engage in interracial interactions and actively try to reduce their own prejudices and bias. Due to strong societal and personal norms against the expression of bias, many work to suppress stereotypes and self-monitor their behav-ior during interracial interactions to avoid appearing biased. Stereotype suppression, or the attempt to decrease bias by avoiding all stereotypic thoughts, is rarely an effec-tive form of self-regulation and can even cause stereotypes to rebound even more strongly and undermine positive intergroup contact (Monteith, Sherman, & Devine, 1998; Wegner, 1994).

In one study, researchers found that White conversation partners who put more effort into self-monitoring to control their racial bias were actually perceived less positively by their partners than those who put in less effort (Shelton, Richeson, Salvatore, & Trawalter, 2005). These "ironic" effects of suppression occurred because White conversation partners, who worked carefully to control their behavior to ensure it aligned with their egalitarian goals, were self-monitoring to such an extent that their behavior seemed unnatural and stilted. Their conversation partners then drew the conclusion that their White partner was uncomfortable in the interracial inter-action *because* they held racial bias against their partner. Other researchers have observed similar results: when people are more aware of their biases, and are eager to change them, they self-monitor in a way that may come across as odd, awkward, or prejudiced (Apfelbaum et al., 2008; Perry, Murphy, & Dovidio, 2015b). This can be further explained by Wegner's (1994) ironic processes of mental control. The self-control of mental states results in dual operating processes: (a) one which pro-motes the desired mental state and (b) another that delivers content inconsistent with the desired mental state. Unfortunately, in situations that decrease cognitive capacity (e.g., stressful situations), the second process often supersedes the first, resulting in easier accessibility to content that supports the opposite of the desired mental state. In other words, White conversation partners who are eager to change their biases may expose themselves to stress and anxiety during an interracial interaction. The stress they experience reduces their cognitive capacity and therefore actually makes them more likely focus on or even endorse the very biases they are trying to reject (Wegner, 1994)!

6 The Goal: Increasing White Engagement in Interracial Interactions

Although stereotypic suppression is not an effective form of self-regulation, there are some successful documented strategies for making people aware of and reducing their own prejudice and bias (Monteith, 1993; Monteith, Arthur, & Flynn, 2010; Son Hing, Li, & Zanna, 2002). Perry, Dovidio, Murphy and van Ryn's (2015a) work also demonstrates that if people can persist through these awkward interactions, things will eventually improve. When White people who want to change their biases consistently engage in intergroup interaction over time they do become more comfortable in their interactions (Levin et al., 2003). It is possible that this interaction even changes people on a physiological level; Blascovich et al. (2001) observed that participants who reported more previous contact with Black people exhibited less physiological activity associated with threat during interracial interactions in the lab.[1]

Overall, because anxiety during interracial interactions is so prevalent for White people, interventions must consider how to help White people reduce their anxiety, employ *effective* self-regulation strategies, and persist in their interactions with non-White people over time.

To increase White engagement in interracial interactions, it is essential to address the anxiety that White people feel and encourage a positive response to interracial interactions. Shelton, Richeson, and Vorauer (2006) note that there are three main responses to interracial interactions: avoidance, outgroup devaluation/derogation, and behavior modulation/regulation. For White students like Danny, this may look like avoiding interactions with Black classmates to escape discomfort, emphasizing negative stereotypes of Black classmates to justify his avoidance, or genuinely attempting to engage and, by doing so, change his own behavior and regulation capacities. Creating and sustaining environments with less prejudice and bias is dependent on White people choosing behavior modulation and regulation over the other two responses. If we understand interracial interactions as initial stress reactions and coping responses (Trawalter et al., 2009), what psychological tools can we provide to White people that can encourage a coping response that embraces behavior modulation and regulation and continued engagement?

7 The Promise of Positive Psychological Interventions

We hypothesize that interventions favoring approach motivations and goals, which focus on "the impulse to go toward" a particular stimulus (Harmon-Jones, Harmon-Jones, & Price, 2013, p. 291), may be particularly effective for White people's

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[1]However, it is also important to note that in this particular study the levels of prior contact with Black people were not experimentally manipulated. More experimental research is necessary to explore whether prior contact with non-White people is the definitive cause for lower levels of physiological levels of reactivity.

engagement in interracial interactions. Positive psychological interventions (PPIs) fit the criteria particularly well because of their emphasis on flourishing rather than malfunction (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Instead of seeking to help people suppress "bad" thoughts or behavior, the goal of a PPI would focus on what people should aim towards, seek, or become in order to flourish in a diverse society.

Approach goals can be best understood as the pursuit of a desired state of being (i.e., moving towards a goal of becoming a tolerant person; Carver & Scheier, 1990; Elliot, 2006). Avoidance goals, on the other hand, involve distancing oneself from an undesirable state (i.e., trying to avoid becoming a racist person; Carver & Scheier, 1990; Elliot, 2006). Researchers have documented that people anticipating interracial contact have higher avoidance motives (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004). Whereas avoidance goals are associated with suppression (i.e., trying to not think racist thoughts; Monteith et al., 1998) and cognitive depletion (Richeson & Shelton, 2007), approach goals may result in the adoption of strategies by which White people could focus on similarities or making a connection with minority interaction partners (Murphy, Richeson, & Molden, 2011). Fostering approach goals (i.e., "I want to be courageous in this interaction") via a positive psychological intervention may be more effective than avoidance goals (i.e., "I do *not* want to appear prejudiced or racist) in facilitating positive interracial interactions. PPIs will not eliminate White people's anxiety entirely from interracial interactions, but PPIs may provide a helpful way to prevent debilitation and reframe anxiety as a way to motivate engagement in interracial interactions (Schultz, Gaither, Urry, & Maddox, 2015).

7.1   What Is a PPI?

PPIs have existed since the 1970s (Fordyce, 1977), but research has grown in this area of study in recent years, especially following Seligman's (1999) call for research in the emerging field of Positive Psychology. From educational (Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich, & Linkins, 2009) to clinical settings (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009), researchers have demonstrated the efficacy of PPIs. Often PPIs aim to increase happiness or life satisfaction (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005), but they can also include any intervention that focuses on positive topics, employs a positive methodology, targets a positive outcome, or promotes flourishing (instead of aiming to fix malfunction; Seligman, 2002). The primary distinction of PPIs in comparison to other psychological interventions is their motivational focus. Rather than focusing on fixing a problem (as is the case for traditional interventions), PPIs focus on building strengths.

Past PPIs have included elements related to strength-building (Proyer, Ruch, & Buschor, 2013; Seligman et al., 2005), gratitude (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Wood, Froh, & Geraghty, 2010), forgiveness (Baskin & Enright, 2004; McCullough, Root, & Cohen, 2006), giving monetarily to others (Dunn, Aknin, & Norton, 2008), compassion (Hofmann, Grossman, & Hinton, 2011), and belonging (Walton

& Cohen, 2007). As this list demonstrates, PPIs use diverse methodology and target myriad positive goals to promote human flourishing.

7.2 Effective Interracial Interaction Interventions in the Literature

Overall, the literature on experimental interventions to increase White people's engagement in interracial interactions is limited. Very few interventions targeting majority group members have been scientifically tested, and no studies have tested the efficacy of virtue interventions in increasing interracial interactions. The paucity of experimental research in this area presents an opportunity for future researchers that must be built on a strong theoretical foundation. It is also critical to empirically test the efficacy of interventions in order to understand the mechanisms involved and to minimize the potential for harm (especially because exposure to interracial interactions has been linked to increased anxiety in White people; Blascovich et al. 2001; Devine & Vasquez, 1998; Hyers & Swim, 1998; Shelton, 2003; Stephan & Stephan, 1985).

Based on the limited research in this area, initial research on interventions targeting White people's engagement in interracial interactions has yielded important insights. For example, achieving a balance between challenging White participants and helping them effectively cope with anxiety is a dominant theme (Avery, Richeson, Hebl, & Ambady, 2009; Murphy et al., 2011; Schultz et al., 2015). The interventions that were most successful at increasing White engagement in interracial interactions adopted a learning-oriented or approach-oriented model (Murphy et al., 2011), which aligns well with the goal of PPIs. Several studies focus on a learning-oriented approach: In one promising study, researchers told White participants that interracial interactions were anxiety-provoking but that choosing to engage may reduce feelings of anxiety in the future (Schultz et al., 2015). Participants in the experimental group were more likely to engage with Black partners over White partners and demonstrated more positive non-verbal engagement in the interaction. In addition to normalizing White people's experiences of anxiety, researchers also introduced a more positive way for White participants to think about the anxiety. Instead of emphasizing an avoidance goal of appearing non-prejudiced, the researchers' emphasized the approach goal of engagement, which yielded positive results. Perry, Dovidio, et al. (2015a) suggest that interventions designed to build self-efficacy in interracial interaction may also prove effective. These successful positive approaches to interracial interactions provide a firm foundation for developing a PPI.

8   Developing a PPI for Interracial Interactions

Considering the threat, anxiety, and discomfort often experienced by White people in interracial interactions, we propose that virtue PPIs (a combination of skills and a higher order meaning system) will yield the most effective results.

8.1   Defining Virtue

In recent years, researchers have experimented with positive psychological interventions that aim to foster virtue (see Proyer et al., 2013; Seligman et al., 2005; Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). The psychological definition of virtue (sometimes also referred to as "character strength") continues to evolve. Fleeson, Furr, Jayawickreme, Meindl, and Helzer (2014) proposed a definition of virtue that focuses on "characteristics that are descriptive of actions, cognitions, emotions, and motivations that are considered to be relevant to right and wrong according to a relevant moral standard" (p. 181). Although this definition identifies some of the key elements of virtue, critics have noted that it lacks an adequate exploration of moral identity, purpose, and contextualized measurement (Nucci, 2016).

Drawing from McAdams and Pals' (2006) personality theory, Schnitker, Houltberg, Dyrness, and Redmond (2017b) address these concerns with a new model of virtue theory that defines virtues as hybrid personality units that are comprised of characteristic adaptations and narrative identity. They contend that virtue must be understood not as what it "is" (i.e., as a trait), but what it "does" (i.e., as a characteristic adaptation; Cantor, 1990). This small, but critical difference, is supported both by the philosophical (MacIntyre, 2007) and psychological literatures (Brown, Spezio, Reimer, Van Slyke, & Peterson, 2013; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2014), which emphasize the "doing" (versus the "having") of virtue.

8.2   Characteristic Adaptations and Expressions of Virtue

What then is a true expression of virtue? The emotion regulation strategy of cognitive reappraisal would be a characteristic adaptation related to patience. Cognitive reappraisal utilized to wait calmly when confronted with frustration, adversity, or suffering would be understood as an expression of patience. In another example, increasing self-efficacy as a way to better equip one to respond to threat would be a characteristic adaptation related to courage. When feelings of self-efficacy are deployed to confront a challenge, save a life, or act on one's conscience in the face of opposition, they would be understood as an expression of courage.

8.3 Narrative Identity

However, a definition of virtue that only includes characteristic adaptations but does not consider moral meaning or the context of enactment is incomplete (McAdams, 2014; Schnitker, Houltberg, et al., 2017b). True virtue must also be accompanied by a narrative identity or self-concept characterized by moral engagement. In other words, virtuous action cannot exist solely for the benefit of the self—instead, virtuous action must be paired with a *transcendent narrative identity*, or an identity that highly values something or someone beyond the self (Brown et al., 2013; Colby & Damon, 1994; Hampson, 2012; Hart & Fegley, 1995; Schnitker, Houltberg, et al., 2017b). Narrative identities connect people's identities with the meaning-making systems that they use to navigate their specific contexts (McAdams & McLean, 2013).

A *transcendent* narrative identity is defined by a narrative identity committed to meaning-making systems that point an individual to something bigger than him or herself and the present circumstances. For example, a college freshman who studies so she can become a lawyer to make as much money as possible in order to live a life of luxury would not be exhibiting the virtue of self-control (though she possesses the characteristic adaptations supporting the virtue). In contrast, another college freshman who studies so she can become a lawyer and work for social justice and the greater good of society would be displaying the virtue of self-control. In both instances, behavior may look similar, but the motivation and meaning behind the actions are starkly different. Some definitions of transcendence also include a responsibility to the "other" (King, Clardy, & Ramos, 2014). Both religious (e.g., faith communities) and secular contexts (e.g., patriotism) can have expressions of transcendence, and can contribute to the development of transcendent narrative identity. It is only through the guiding force of a transcendent narrative identity that characteristic adaptations can be expressed as virtues. Otherwise, characteristic adaptations can be applied to the pursuit of immoral or amoral goals.

Thus, virtue PPIs targeting interracial interactions must not only include skill development but also the development of a transcendent narrative identity. For example, we hypothesize that a PPI targeting only emotion regulation for White people will not necessarily result in virtuous action in interracial interactions. When emotion regulation skills are not connected to a transcendent sense of identity or a larger meaning-making system, why should people be motivated to develop or employ these characteristic adaptations for anything other than their own benefit? A virtue intervention, on the other hand, can (and, arguably, must) provide a framework that connects the development of characteristic adaptations (e.g., emotion regulation or coping with threat) with the development or activation of a transcendent narrative identity.

Virtue development can uniquely target characteristic adaptations *and* address narrative identity, including the moral intentions or moral contexts that shape a person's sense of narrative identity. Instead of a sole focus on teaching skill development strategies, virtue development interventions must also consider the broader context of their participants, create opportunities for narrative identity development, and,

ultimately, help participants develop a sound moral motivation for virtuous action. Figure 1 depicts how both characteristic adaptations and narrative identities might support the formation of courage and patience.

8.4 Why Courage and Patience?

From generosity to gratitude, psychologists have studied, classified, and categorized many different types of virtues (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). For interracial interactions, we contend that two interconnected virtues—courage and patience—are particularly important. Courage and patience can help facilitate the steps that White people need to take to engage and persist in interracial interactions. Furthermore, many of the barriers to interracial interactions involve the regulation of emotions such as fear, anxiety, or anger. Courage and patience are virtues intricately connected to effectively managing negative emotions, and they draw on many of the same characteristic adaptations related to emotion regulation. Although this chapter focuses only on two related virtues (i.e., courage and patience), a variety of virtues (e.g., intellectual humility, interpersonal generosity), could be considered as researchers continue to examine interracial interactions.

8.4.1 Courage

Social psychologists Seligman and Peterson define courage as "emotional strengths that involve the exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition, external or internal" (as cited in Seligman et al., 2005, p. 412). Researchers have also emphasized a moral component of the virtue of courage, which says that courage must include the pursuit of a just or noble goal (Putman, 2001; Woodard, 2004). In this chapter, we will focus specifically on *psychological courage*, which is defined as the ability to confront destructive habits and anxiety, step out of one's comfort zone, or face internal fears (including acknowledging that one has a problem; Pury et al., 2014; Putman, 2004). Developing psychological courage can help White people confront their own bias, prejudice, or racism. Using courage in an intervention would also provide a way to address White people's motivation to engage in interracial interactions as a moral imperative. As discussed at the beginning of the chapter, interracial interactions provoke anxiety, which is rooted in fear. Fostering courage in White people may empower them to confront their fears and take the first step of engaging.

8.4.2 Patience

Schnitker (2012) defines patience as "the propensity of a person to wait calmly in the face of frustration, adversity, or suffering" (p. 263). Patience can be enacted
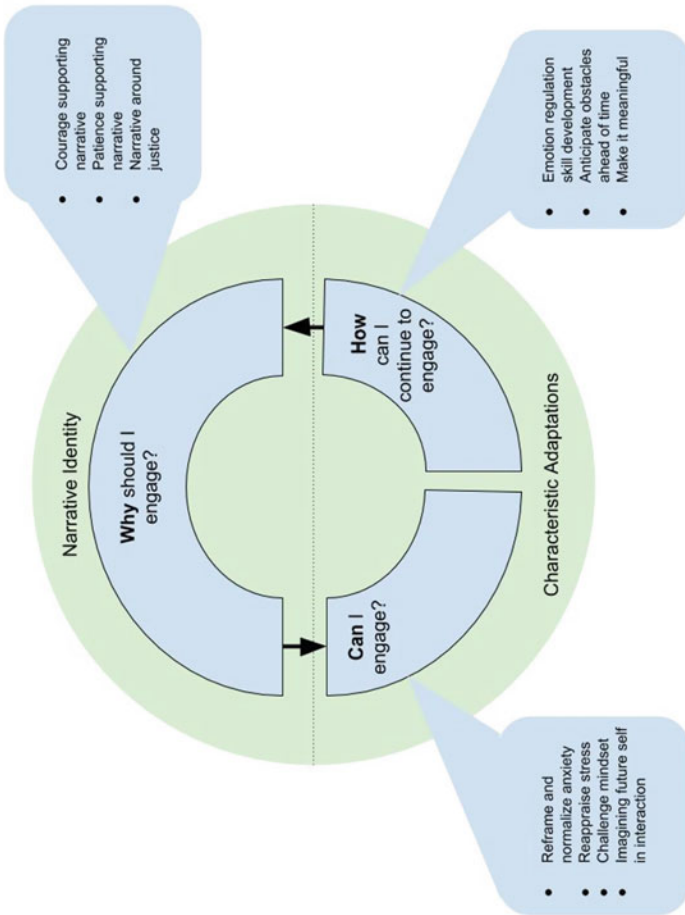
Fig. 1 PPI model for interracial interactions

under mundane, everyday circumstances (i.e., waiting in a long line at the grocery store) or circumstances that are significant and long-term (i.e., enduring chronic pain). The development of patience may be particularly salient when addressing the disengagement of White majority members in interracial interactions. Extrapolating from Schnitker, Felke, Fernandez, Redmond, and Blews' (2017a) work on linking patience and suffering, we propose that applying patience in interracial interactions may be beneficial, especially when White people experience extreme discomfort. Last, patience has been shown to increase persistence in the face of obstacles in regards to goal pursuit (Thomas & Schnitker, 2017).

When White people encounter difficulty, frustration, and obstacles in interracial interactions, patience may enable them to persist towards a goal of greater engagement (especially when engaging in interracial interactions is difficult, uncomfortable, or anxiety-inducing). Repeated, consistent contact (not a single interracial interaction) is necessary to reduce implicit bias and engage in authentic interactions (Blascovich et al., 2001; Page-Gould et al., 2008; West & Dovidio, 2012). By cultivating patience, it is likely that White people will be able to engage in continued interracial interactions without falling prey to recklessness (railroading others when anxious or letting anxiety create a false friendliness) or acedia (psychologically or physically exiting the conversations when anxiety arises; (DiAngelo, 2011; DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2014; Matias & DiAngelo, 2013).

8.4.3   Connecting Courage and Patience

Although many modern readers might see courage and patience as polar opposites, some virtue theorists, who maintain that virtues are the golden mean between two vices, would actually view them as complementary (Pianalto, 2016). Classical conceptualizations of patience have characterized it as the mean between recklessness, a vice of deficiency, and *acedia* (translated as sloth or disengagement), a vice of excess (Schnitker, 2012). Courage is similarly characterized as the mean between the deficiency vice of cowardice and the excess vice recklessness. Thus, the vice of deficiency for patience and the vice of excess for courage are similar—both recklessness. Likewise, cowardice and acedia are very similar in that they both involve disengagement from the goal at hand. Given the reciprocal nature of patience and courage, interventions should strive to cultivate the two in tandem because they balance each other. Figure 2 depicts a flowchart demonstrating the ways courage and patience may change the pathways by which opportunities by which the way White people respond to opportunities for interracial interactions produce more or less inclusive environments.
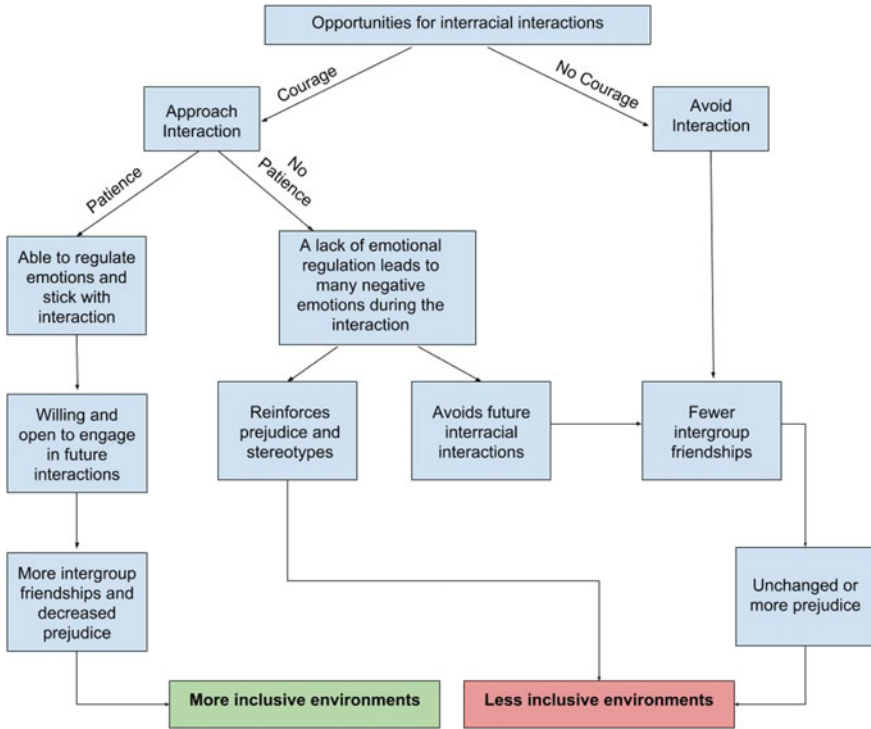
Fig. 2 Flowchart demonstrating courage and patience for inclusivity

9 Opportunities for Courage and Patience Intervention

In terms of characteristic adaptations, the goal of a courage and patience virtue intervention for interracial interactions is simple: increase a White person's capacity to effectively manage anxiety enough (without the expectation of total comfort) to enable engagement in interracial interactions. Existing courage and patience interventions have been linked to increased emotion regulation (Pury, 2008; see reappraisal in Schnitker, 2012), so they are well suited to assist in interracial interactions.

For both virtues, activating and nurturing a transcendent narrative identity alongside skill development will be key. A transcendent narrative will frame action not with an emphasis on the self (i.e., I want to engage in interracial interactions to prove that I'm not a bad person or prove that I'm a good person), but instead will highlight the importance of the other (i.e., I want to engage in interracial interactions because I truly care for others and I want the community that I live in to be a place where everyone can flourish). Virtue interventions uniquely provide the avenue to focus on the "other" (instead of the self), and White students' motivation for engagement in interracial interactions can be addressed and emphasized.

10 Practical Implications: Courage and Patience Interventions

What might courage and patience interventions look like? These interventions may be direct (e.g., modeling successful interracial interactions) or indirect (e.g., meditation to increase patience with no reference to interracial interactions). In terms of practicality, the virtue PPIs should be developed with the goal of addressing the following questions for White participants about interracial interactions:

1. *Why* should I engage?
2. *Can* I engage?
3. *How* do I continue to engage (when it's uncomfortable or when I mess up)?

Table 1 summarizes potential intervention activities based on previous research that would fall under each of these categories.

10.1 Why Should I Engage? Activating a Transcendent Narrative Identity

Why should people put themselves in uncomfortable or anxiety-inducing situations that provide them with no immediate or direct benefits? Unlike many PPIs that aim to increase life satisfaction or happiness (i.e., well-being variables that directly benefit the participant), a PPI encouraging White people's engagement in interracial interactions will require a compelling reason for engagement.

Promoting a transcendent narrative identity for White people will be important both prior to interracial interactions and during interracial interactions. In Pury et al.'s (2014) review of courage interventions, they suggest interventions that enhance the nobility of the goal may be an effective way to target courage development. This can be achieved by activating a transcendent narrative identity that emphasizes a just or courageous mindset by emphasizing a particular aspect of one's identity or a relevant role. In one study (Osswald, Greitemeyer, Fischer, & Frey, 2010), participants placed in an experimental condition emphasizing their identity as a just person were more willing to exercise courage and discuss their views with a potentially hostile audience in comparison to participants in the neutral condition.

Another type of courage intervention described by Pury et al. (2014) that may activate a transcendent narrative identity is encouragement. According to Pury et al. (2014), encouragement "can give a person reason to exercise psychological, physical, or moral courage. For instance, one may subscribe to a certain religion or set of values and be indirectly encouraged to act in the name of one's beliefs" (p. 171). Encouraging people to act in accordance with their stated values (especially those values related to a transcendent narrative identity associated with egalitarianism) may be a powerful motivator to act courageously in situations where it might be easier to deviate from those values. In Danny's case, this may involve an intervention that

Table 1 Potential intervention activities for building patience and courage related to intergroup interaction

Goal	Intervention activity	Intervention participants may say …	Example of transcendent narrative identity activated	Targeted psychological process	Support in the literature for intervention
Why Should I Engage?					
Promote a just or courageous mindset	Have participants write about a moment in the past when they demonstrated courage; have participants focus on courageous aspects of their identity	I am a just and courageous person based on past experiences	<u>Courage</u>: I am motivated to be courageous so I can help others	Increase approach motivation	Osswald, Greitemeyer, Fischer, and Frey (2010)
Provide encouragement to act in a courageous manner	Remind participants of their stated values (i.e., egalitarianism) before a situation in which it might be more comfortable to deviate from those values	I have certain beliefs, I can act courageously in a way true to those beliefs even when it is hard	<u>Courage</u>: I am motivated to engage in courageous behavior because of my beliefs	Introduce cognitive dissonance as a way to connect participants' values to behavior	Pury et al. (2014)
Can I Engage?					
Reframe and normalize feelings of anxiety	Provide an explanation of the challenges of interracial interactions; emphasize that these challenges are both normal and malleable	I am experiencing a challenge, but because I know that I can be patient with myself, I know that I can persist and improve	<u>Patience</u>: I am motivated to pursue patience and persist because having a diverse group of friends is important to me	Address stereotype threat	Carr, Dweck, and Pauker (2012); Frantz, Cuddy, Burnett, Ray, and Hart (2004), Goff et al. (2008), Neel and Shapiro (2012), Yeager et al. (2016)

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Goal	Intervention activity	Intervention participants may say …	Example of transcendent narrative identity activated	Targeted psychological process	Support in the literature for intervention
Reappraise the stress of an interaction as a challenge rather than a threat; increase self-efficacy in interracial interactions	Provide training, education, and opportunities to practice and learn from mistakes in learning-oriented environments	I still may feel afraid of making mistakes in an interracial interaction, but I can be courageous because I have done everything I can to prepare	Courage: I am motivated to be courageous even when I might feel uncomfortable because I want everyone to feel included on-campus	Emotion regulation (via reappraisal)	Jamieson, Peters, Greenwood, and Altose (2016), Schultz et al. (2015)
Practice how one might respond meaningfully in an interracial interaction	Have a participant imagine a future self engaging in a positive, meaningful interracial interaction	I can be courageous in a real-life interracial interaction because I have thought about it before	Courage: I am motivated to be courageous because it connects me with others	Emotion regulation	King (2001)
How Do I Continue to Engage?					
Teach general emotion regulation skills to manage anxiety	Have participants practice a patience meditation daily for two weeks; model effective cognitive reappraisal	I develop patience over time so that when I experience a situation that is stressful or anxiety-inducing, I feel like I can persist	Patience: I am motivated to be patient because I can have a positive impact on the people and world around me	Emotion regulation	Schnitker, Felke, et al. (2017a), Thomas and Schnitker (2017)
Make interracial interactions meaningful	Have participants write about why it is important to them to continue to engage in interracial interactions even when it is difficult	Even though I'm really uncomfortable, I have to be patient because my efforts matter and I am working towards a worthy goal	Patience: I am motivated to be patient in interracial interactions because I believe it will make my school a better place	Emotion regulation; goal pursuit	Schnitker, Felke, et al. (2017a), Thomas and Schnitker (2017)

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Goal	Intervention activity	Intervention participants may say …	Example of transcendent narrative identity activated	Targeted psychological process	Support in the literature for intervention
Anticipate obstacles ahead of time	Have participants think about an interracial interaction and then ask them to write down anticipated obstacles, things about the interaction that may be awkward, and mistakes that they might make; then ask participants to write what they will do if any of the things they noted were to happen	I've thought about things that might be an obstacle to a positive interracial interaction, and I have a good sense of what I would do if I experienced those obstacles	Patience: I am motivated to be patient, even when I encounter obstacles, because I believe pursuing equality and justice are the right things to do	Implementation intentions	Gollwitzer (1999), Gollwitzer and Sheeran (2006)

would help him to identify a transcendent narrative based on his Lutheran religious values of God's justice in the world. By making this transcendent narrative salient at a strategic moment, the intervention would encourage Danny to act in accordance with those values—even when it is difficult to do so.

10.2   Can I Engage? Responding to Threat and Anxiety with Courage and Patience

Establishing a reason to engage by activating a transcendent narrative identity is only the first step towards an interracial interaction. An effective virtue PPI for interracial interactions must also address anxiety and threat that may prevent a White person from engaging in an interracial interaction.

First, an intervention may reframe and normalize feelings of anxiety. Yeager et al. (2016) have examined how the effects of positive psychological belonging interventions have increased positive outcomes for disadvantaged students by addressing social identity threat. Lay theory interventions, like the belonging intervention, provide participants with a way to assign meaning to their experiences, help people to make sense of challenges, and provide access to the tools to overcome obstacles. Providing an alternative lay theory, that emphasizes the challenges of interracial interactions as both normal and improvable, may be able to counter both avoidance and withdrawal behavior among White people faced with negative stereotypes (e.g., Carr et al., 2012; Neel & Shapiro, 2012).

It may also be helpful for White people to reappraise the stress of interracial interactions as a challenge rather than a threat. Jamieson et al. (2016) describe challenge states as scenarios in which people perceive that they have coping resources that exceed the stressful demands of a situation. Threat states are activated when the demands of a stressful situation are perceived as exceeding coping resources. An important part of an interracial interaction intervention for White people will be bolstering coping resources and increasing self-efficacy (see Schultz et al., 2015). Increasing self-efficacy may involve interventions that provide training, education, and opportunities to practice and learn from mistakes in learning-oriented environments. Ultimately, the intervention should positively frame anxiety as a sign that White people are responding to a challenge, marshalling resources, and have the means to respond to a surmountable challenge.

After Danny chooses to engage in interracial interactions, he will likely feel anxiety arise, and interventions can help Danny cope with the stress and anxiety. An intervention at this stage could encourage him to anticipate, normalize, and reframe the anxiety he feels as a challenge that he is equipped to handle. Meaning-making interventions (e.g., King, 2001), in which Danny would imagine his future self engaging in meaningful interracial interactions, may also provide a way to manage stress and anxiety. Another type of intervention may utilize narratives to model acts of

courage in interracial interactions for Danny so that he can emulate and reference them in his real-life interracial interactions when he feels anxiety.

10.3 How Do I Continue to Engage?

The first two questions address how White people might take the first step to engaging in an interracial interaction. However, for lasting change to occur, White people must continue to engage in interracial interactions—especially when it is difficult, when mistakes are made, when engaging is tiring, and when it would be easier to withdraw. Patience interventions may be particularly important in addressing continued engagement in interracial interactions. Schnitker, Felke, et al. (2017a) observed that transcendent meaning-making was an important factor in whether or not people exercised patience when faced with obstacles to their goals. Thomas and Schnitker (2017) observed similar trends: people were more likely to exercise patience and effort on goals that were meaningful to them. They also found that patient people were more likely to pursue meaningful goals (Thomas & Schnitker, 2017). These findings suggest that virtue PPIs intending to foster continued engagement in interracial interactions might be most effective when directly re-activating or reminding participants of a transcendent narrative identity that can meaningfully frame their efforts. At the same time, indirect interventions to build patience, like meditation or teaching general emotion regulation skills (like cognitive reappraisal), may also have an effect (Schnitker, 2012).

Virtue PPIs that prepare White people for potential obstacles may also prove effective. Gollwitzer (1999) worked with people whose goals included weight loss or smoking cessation. By anticipating obstacles ahead of time, people are more likely to be able to automatically respond with a plan to overcome the anticipated obstacle. In a meta-analysis of studies on implementation intentions, Gollwitzer and Sheeran (2006) found that implementation intentions helped people attain their goals and shielded against disengagement in the face of obstacles or failure. By anticipating potential obstacles ahead of time, White people may be better able to stay engaged even when they make mistakes, fail, or encounter obstacles.

For Danny, this might mean reminding him of transcendent narrative, looking at the bigger picture, and re-committing to his goal of engaging interracial interactions. It may be helpful for him to reflect on why he's engaging in interracial interactions and how it aligns with his values. Reflecting on where he has felt anxiety or experienced difficulty may also help him better prepare for future challenges.

11 Preparing for Experimental Studies

In this chapter, we have described a wide range of intervention activities that may be experimentally tested in a U.S. university context. In addition to consideration of which activities will be most relevant and beneficial for a particular sam-

ple, researchers should also thoughtfully examine which measures might be most helpful in determining the effectiveness of the intervention. Key outcome measures may include virtue (e.g., 3-Factor Patience Scale and the revised Courage Measure; Howard & Alipour, 2014; Schnitker, 2012), threat and anxiety (e.g., State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, Stress Appraisal Measure, and Positive and Negative Affect Schedule; Peacock & Wong, 1990; Spielberger, 1983; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988), friendship networks, and interracial interactions (e.g., Interracial Interactions Intentions; Perry, Murphy, et al., 2015b). Researchers should monitor anxiety measures to minimize risk and harm to participants. Mediating or moderating variables like pre-college exposure to diversity or the ethnicity of participants' roommate(s) may also be considered.

Researchers may also want to think carefully about the demographics of student populations from which they are recruiting. For example, to measure the frequency of student interracial interactions, there must be opportunities for White people to engage in interracial interactions. An ideal population would consist mostly of White students with enough non-White students to provide opportunities for interracial interactions to occur. Also, researchers should consider which students might best positioned to yield benefits from the intervention. For example, it is unlikely that a student who has a low interest in reducing his or her prejudice will benefit from the intervention. A pre-survey to screen participants ahead of time for willingness and motivation to decrease prejudice and engage in interracial interactions may be helpful in determining which students will benefit most from the intervention.

12   Future Directions

Looking ahead to the future of employing PPIs to increase intergroup engagement, we propose several paths forward. Experimental research that tests the efficacy of courage and patience PPIs in interracial interactions, both inside and outside the lab, is a critical first step. We have offered many potential PPIs that target interracial interactions, but it will be necessary to determine which courage and patience PPIs have the greatest impact. College campuses, especially freshman populations, may present unique opportunities to observe how PPIs targeting interracial interactions may influence developing friendship networks, collective action, and bias reduction. Also, much of the research on interracial interactions has focused on Black-White interactions, but a diverse college campus may offer increased opportunities to observe how these interventions might work differently for Latinx-White, Asian-White, and Native-White interracial interactions.

Thinking beyond race relations in the United States, it will be important to consider majority and minority groups in other contexts around the world. For example, could patience and courage interventions increase intergroup interactions between other majority and minority groups in multicultural contexts (e.g., Israelis and Palestinians, Christians and Muslims in the U.S., or LGBTQ people and conservatives in Russia)?

Accounting for cultural considerations in each context would be critical to developing effective interventions.

It will also be beneficial to examine at which points it is most effective to employ virtue PPIs to facilitate intergroup engagement. At which developmental phase over the life course will the virtue PPIs yield the most impact? In this chapter, we have chosen to focus on young adults during the transition to college because it's a developmentally sensitive time when people are open to new ideas (Arnett, 2000) and because the college environment offers an opportunity for virtue PPIs to be easily implemented. Moreover, changing interracial interaction patterns early in life has the potential to alter the entire life course trajectory of interactions. There are only a few longitudinal studies that focus specifically on majority group members and interracial interactions, but the results from these studies point to encouraging long-term outcomes when White people engage in interracial interactions. Researchers found that over the course of college, students with more outgroup friendships in their senior year demonstrated less ingroup bias and intergroup anxiety (Levin et al., 2003). Other studies demonstrate how exposure to interracial interactions can alter future thinking, behavior, and outcomes. For example, meta-analysis findings demonstrate that intergroup contact reduces prejudice by increasing knowledge of outgroups, developing empathy and perspective taking, and reducing anxiety (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). Extrapolating from these findings and building on the work of life course researchers (Elder, 1985), it is reasonable to hypothesize that changing interracial patterns at a critical timepoint, like the start of college, can change the way students experience bias and anxiety such that they create more inclusive environments over a lifetime. However, other developmental transition points for virtue PPIs should be considered by researchers as well (e.g., interventions for children and parents that would encourage interracial interactions in the very earliest years).

If virtue PPIs prove effective for increasing positive interracial interactions in laboratory studies, researchers should also consider how they could be implemented at scale and applied more broadly in real-world environments. The College Transition Collaborative (CTC; http://collegetransitioncollaborative.org/), a project started at Stanford University's Project for Education Research that Scales (PERTS; https://www.perts.net/), may provide a compelling model for implementing future psychological interventions in real world environments. With an emphasis on research, collaborative partnerships, and making resources easily accessible to practitioners, the CTC has integrated psychological interventions (that have been shown to boost retention and academic achievement for underrepresented minority and first-generation college students) into the college transition process at 28 colleges and universities. Overall, researchers should consider how peer-reviewed research with the potential for practical implementation might be disseminated and scaled.

Additionally, the focus of this paper has been on the development of interventions targeting majority group members precisely because they are rarely the target of PPIs and have untapped potential to enact change in their environments. However, virtue-focused PPIs may also be advantageous to minority group members who *must* engage in acts of patience and courage daily as they navigate majority-White spaces that may be unjust, anxiety-provoking, frustrating, and emotionally depleting.

Developing interventions focused on minority group members that increase courage and patience may promote more psychological resources that can help to buffer the negative effects of everyday stressors (e.g., microaggressions, anxiety about being a target). We also want to emphasize that we are **not** suggesting that virtue development for minority group members will solve the problem of inequity and inequality present in the United States today. These types of interventions for minority group members may serve as a band-aid, intended to buffer negative psychological effects, but they do not, and cannot, address the root cause. More (arguably, much more) will be required of majority group members at both the individual and systemic levels to address the root causes of inequality and racism to create multicultural environments of true inclusion and equity.

Last, we have argued that virtue PPIs may be an effective way to reduce implicit bias, racism, and prejudice on an individual level for White people through interracial interactions, but this is only the first step. Unfortunately, research has shown that many White people prefer to endorse support for racial equity at an individual level (e.g., "Solving problems of race depends on individuals changing their attitudes"), but are resistant to acknowledging systemic factors that encourage and maintain racial inequality (Adams, Edkins, Lacka, Pickett, & Cheryan, 2008; DiAngelo, 2010; Zamudio & Rios, 2006). It is critical that we acknowledge the many systemic factors in American life (and in multicultural societies everywhere) that promote inequality for minorities and segregation between groups. Our hope is that virtue PPIs would help White people be better positioned to examine and more motivated to change the many system-level factors that contribute to inequality.

13   Conclusion

There are many opportunities for majority group members to shirk responsibility, yield to fear, and act with impatience in favor of a more comfortable, "safer" path. Virtue PPIs offer a compelling alternative trajectory; they emphasize the bigger picture, encourage people to look beyond themselves, and demonstrate how majority group members can act courageously and patiently in interracial interactions. With time, small acts of patience and courage can dramatically shift life trajectories so that people are equipped to create multicultural environments of equity and inclusion.

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