Thriving at the Intersections

Being a Black Woman in Medicine



Chika Stacy Oriuwa

MD/MSc (Systems Leadership & Innovation) Candidate 2020 University of Toronto Faculty of Medicine

Undergraduate Experience

"It was clear what the officer was trying to imply: A Black female Physician? Impossible."

-In my white coat, I am more Black than ever



May 2013



First Year Medicine: One of 259

- 1 of 259 medical students
- Lack of Black professors/ tutors
 - Lack of diversity in medical material
- Fears:
 - Proving myself: pursuit of perfectionism
- Experiences with racism
 - Unsafe spaces in the classroom and beyond

Early

Lessons

• Lack of solidarity



2nd & 3rd Year

1st

Year

BSAP

Poetry &

Advocacy

First Year Medicine: BMSA & Mentors



Black Medical Students Association 2016-2017



Dr. Lisa Robinson (U of T alumna 1991- N of 2)

Early U Lessons

Indergrad at Mac Poetry & Advocacy 1st Year

BSAP

Black Student Application Program Creating Safe Spaces for Applicants & Students

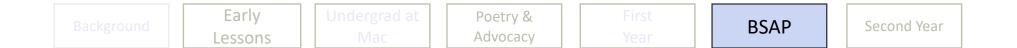
What is it?

• An effort to increase the number of **Black applicants** to the University of Toronto, Faculty of Medicine

What does it entail?

• THE SAME ENTRY CRITERIA: GPA, MCAT, ESSAYS, EXTRACURRICULARS

Creating safe online spaces: ex. Pre-med forums and beyond



Black Student Application Program

- My role: Public BSAP Ambassador
 - Initial hesitancy and warnings
 - "Institutions do not like people that challenge the status quo"
 - Pushing past the negative backlash online





	Early	Undergrad at	Poetry &		BSAP	2 nd & 3 rd Year		
		Lessons	Mac	Advocacy		DJAP		

Second Year Medicine: Thriving & Surviving

IN MY WHITE COAT, I AM MORE BLACK THAN EVER - FLARE MAGAZINE BHM2018



Early

Lessons

Speaking up and speaking out:

• The importance of shared narrative

Poetry &

Advocacv

- Sparking discourse surrounding diversity in medicine
- Dealing with racist vitriol online and how the faculty supported me

Second Year Medicine: Thriving & Surviving

Further platforms for advocacy



Early

Lessons

Speaking up and speaking out:

- Women's College Hospital International Women's Day Keynote Address
- Public speaking engagements
- CBC Radio
- AJ + video
- CP24 Toronto News

Poetry &

Advocacy

• International Conferences on diversity

Third Year Medicine: Thriving & Surviving

Analyzing Safe Spaces on the Wards/Clinic & Coping strategies



Advocacy in Clerkship: Is it sustainable?

	Early	Undergrad at	Poetry &	1 st	DC	
	Lessons	Mac	Advocacy	Year	DO	

Recommendations for Safe & Inclusive Spaces

- 1. Validate the experiences of underrepresented students, especially those at the margins.
- 2. De-stigmatize conversations about racial disparities and issues of diversity in academic environments
- 3. Understand that privilege begets privilege; it is incumbent upon us to leverage opportunities for those who have limited access to resources and social capital
- 4. Look around the table and ask yourself who isn't represented and more importantly- why?
- 5. Be cognizant of the various permutations of safe spaces: online, in the classroom, on the wards etc.



THANK YOU!!