

Introduction:

Keoshia Worthy (host): Hi, I am Dr. Keoshia Worthy, licensed psychologist and your host for “Invisible and On Stage”—a podcast series brought to you by Columbia Health Counseling and Psychological Services. The title, “Invisible and On Stage” is a reflection of my personal experiences and journey in academia as a black person. I grew up in the South, and like many Black people, experienced racism, but definitely felt and saw it more in my town. Like most people do, I found an escape to help combat the race-related stress I experienced. I focused on academics and basketball and used both as an outlet to help manage the anxiety. Thankfully and with hard work, I was awarded a full athletic scholarship.

In college, I experienced both ups and downs (like many students), but definitely felt proud to be attending Winston-Salem State University, an Historically Black College & University (HBCU). Throughout my academic career I was always trying to be accepted. I can't lie, I still feel it, but it is not as intense. I remember not just having the thought in terms of my Blackness, but even in friendships, and my sport. For some reason, I naively thought that the more I achieved the more successful I would be, and that success would lead to acceptance.

I earned both my bachelor's and master's degree at Winston-Salem State University. Worked for a couple of years doing rehabilitation counseling for people with mental and physical disabilities but still felt like I could be doing more. I then decided to return to school and earn my doctorate in counseling psychology. Before starting the program at Seton Hall University, I thought this idea of being accepted had resolved, but it returned again. This time with a new stressor, which was sometimes being the only black person in classes. I felt out of place, like an impostor, and on top of it my anxiety returned. I felt more Black than ever.

What struck me most about both college experiences is that it did not matter how many times I walked across that stage. I was still invisible in the eyes of so many. Even more so, I felt invisible.

Invisible and On Stage is a podcast series. As mentioned, the title is a reflection of my personal experiences and I am hoping to be able to facilitate an open, informative conversation that discusses the Black experience as a student and a professional. My guest and I will address topics on racism-related stress, identity, community, and the impact on mental health. I will invite Black professionals who will share their experiences, as well as how they cope with being treated like an outcast from the white majority, even with similar accomplishments. Additionally, there will be conversations on the within group Black experience, addressing connection and the changes that occur due to status and achievement. Lastly, listeners will be provided resources and mental health tips at the closing of each podcast.

Thus, the podcast is intended to provide much needed support and encouragement to the many Black students who struggle against stereotype threat, alienation, imposter

syndrome, and for whom microaggressions and more overt forms of systemic racism take a toll on their emotional wellbeing.

Please remember, that although the podcast is intended to provide support, it is not a replacement for psychotherapy. If you are interested in counseling services and are a Columbia University student on Morningside campus, please contact CPS at 212-854-2878 and thank you for your time.