

The role of self-disclosure in improving workplace cross-race mentoring outcomes

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Abstract

While the racial diversity of the workforce is increasing, minority employees still do not appear to be advancing professionally at the same rates as White employees. There are many explanations for why minority employees do not experience the same rates of advancement as White employees. One key developmental relationship that can aid in increasing the opportunities for minority employees to advance and grow in an organization is the mentoring relationship. However, given the lack of diversity in the upper levels of organizational hierarchies, minorities are more likely to have a White mentor than they are to have a minority mentor. As a result, the subsequent cross-race mentoring relationship faces some interpersonal challenges that need to be overcome in order for that relationship to be successful. The current research examines how higher levels of mutual self-disclosure between mentors and mentees may lead to greater psychosocial and career support for minority mentees from White mentors and how this relationship is mediated by interpersonal closeness and interpersonal comfort.