

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Three Organisational Bystander Anti-Racism Strategies

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What is bystander anti-racism?

- ▶ Action taken by 'ordinary' people in response to incidents of interpersonal or systemic racism.
- ▶ Includes: challenging or distracting the perpetrator, comforting the target, reporting the incident to authorities, and many more actions.
- ▶ Benefits of bystander action:
 - ▶ Target's sense of belonging and community is reinforced
 - ▶ Lack of action can cause targets to feel marginalised
 - ▶ Establishes and reinforces broader social norms of racial justice

Research Question

- ▶ *Does participation in organisational bystander anti-racism activities increase knowledge about responding to racism and confidence to undertake bystander anti-racism at the University of Western Sydney (UWS)?*
- ▶ Three organisational bystander anti-racism strategies were tested:
 1. Bystander anti-racism training workshops
 2. Social marketing and communications campaign
 3. Attendance at culturally and linguistically diverse community dinners

Bystander anti-racism training

- ▶ Eight three-hour UWS bystander anti-racism workshops held across five UWS campuses, for staff and students of UWS.
- ▶ Utilised a transformative learning pedagogy designed to bring about a change in awareness and promote subsequent social justice action, through cognitive dissonance and critical reflection.
- ▶ Workshop content included: critical reflection of personal attitudes/values and white privilege, increasing racial literacy and developing bystander antiracism skills.

Communications Campaign

- ▶ Whole of organisation communications campaign aimed at changing attitudes and behaviours at an individual level.
- ▶ Range of platforms including postcards, posters, online articles and feeds in internal and external social media sites.

Communications Campaign

racism affects productivity @UWS

DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT

Do Something About Racism

uws.edu.au/dosomethingaboutracism

University of Western Sydney

racism affects us all @UWS

DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT

Do Something About Racism

University of Western Sydney

You have noticed that recently most of your new team members are of the same cultural background

What can I do about systemic racism?

Do something about racism by trying the suggested actions

Always consider your safety first!

SPEAK UP

Raise your concerns about recruitment practices that result in little racial diversity with human resources or Equity and Diversity

BAND TOGETHER

Talk to your friends/colleagues about systemic racism and consider action that you can all take to acknowledge and dismantle racism

CREATE CHANGE

Work with others at UWS to create an environment that is free of systemic racism

Go to uws.edu.au/dosomethingaboutracism for more ideas on how to do something about racism

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Community Dinners

- ▶ Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) community dinners to promote cultural exchange between Vietnamese, Chinese and Indian communities and the University of Western Sydney.
- ▶ Based on research indicating that inter-group contact can reduce race-based discrimination under certain conditions.
- ▶ However, effectiveness of the dinners is questionable given they did not operate under these conditions as identified by Paradies (2009) and Fozdar (2008).

Research Methods

- ▶ Survey questionnaires were used to test attitudes towards race and racism, self-reporting of bystander action and confidence to act, and reflections on the effectiveness of the strategies.
- ▶ Tested at three points: beginning of the workshops (pre-intervention), after all three strategies had been completed after the final community dinner (post-intervention) and 6 months after the post-intervention questionnaire was distributed (follow up).
 - ▶ Pre-intervention=116, post-intervention n=51, follow up n=29

Findings: overall

- ▶ Positive impact on participants' understanding and awareness of racism, their attitudes towards racism and their confidence to respond to racism.
- ▶ Self-reporting from participants rated training workshops as the most effective strategy in increasing participants' racism literacy and confidence to act, with community dinners being the least effective.
- ▶ The findings of the follow-up survey indicate that there was a noticeable change in attitudes and confidence immediately following the strategies.

Findings: Attitudes toward Racism, Anti-Racism and Cultural Diversity

| Survey Question | A g r e e (pre) | A g r e e (post) | A g r e e (follow up) |
|--|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| It is a good thing for society to be made up of different cultures. | 87% | 95.6% | 96.4% |
| There is racism in Australia. | 81.9% | 93.3% | 89.3% |
| I am prejudiced against other cultures. | 8.8% | 8.9% | 7.1% |
| Australia is weakened by people of different ethnic origins maintaining their cultural traditions | 3.5% | 2.2% | 7.1% |
| All races of people ARE equal. | 93.1% | 93.4% | 89.3% |
| Something should be done to fight or minimise racism in Australia. | 94.8% | 91.1% | 92.9% |

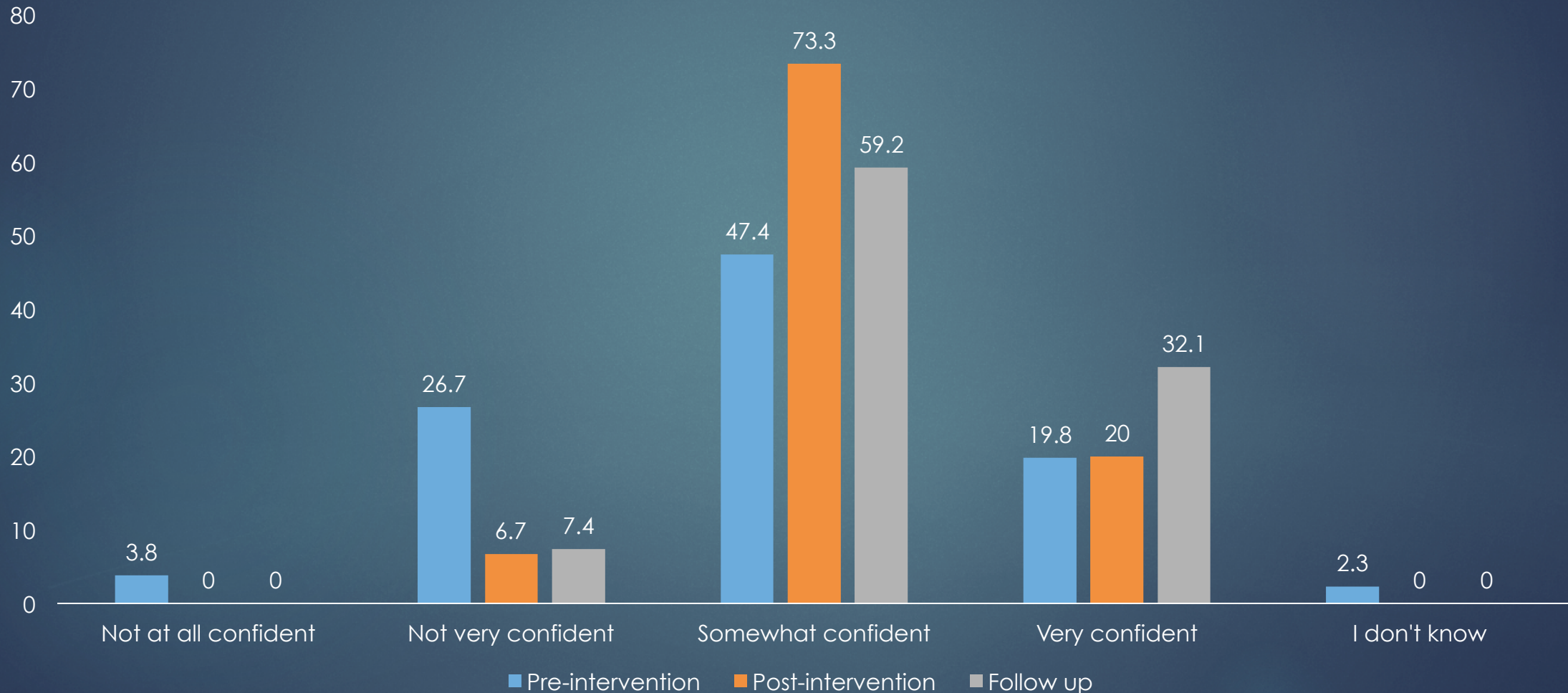
Findings: Confidence and Action

Table 2. Percentages of people who **would say or do something** if they witnessed racism.

| | Pre-test (%) n=116 | Post-test (%) n=51 | Follow up (%) n=29 |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Racial slur from a friend or colleague | 68.1% | 83% | 82.7% |
| Racial slur from a stranger | 44.8% | 67.4% | 65.5% |
| Racial stereotype from a friend or colleague | 64.3% | 78.8% | 79.3% |
| Racial stereotype from a stranger | 45.6% | 64.4% | 62.1% |

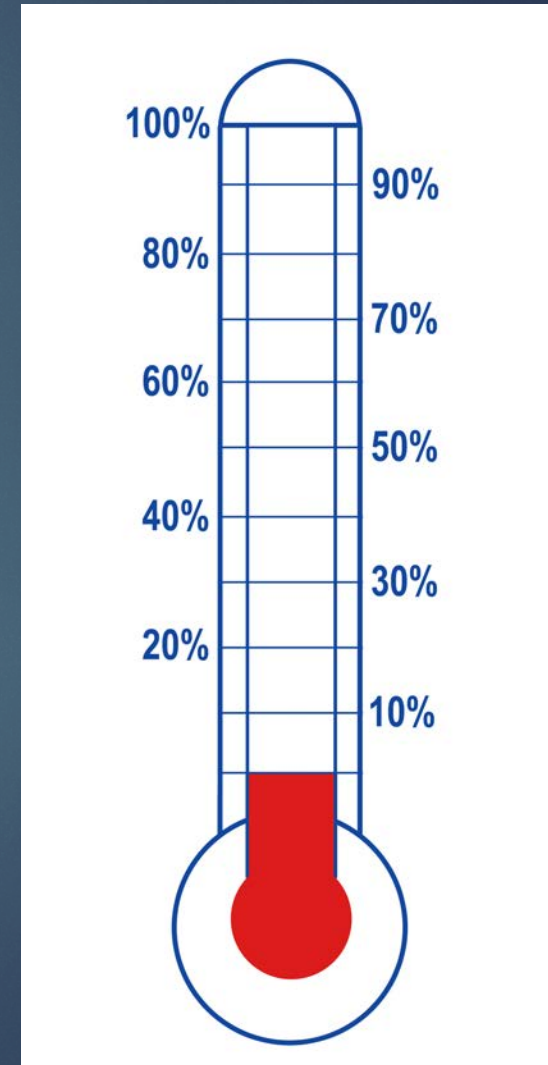
Findings: Confidence and Action

How confident are you to respond to racism that you witness at UWS?



Findings: Reflections on Project and Individual Strategies

- ▶ Participants were asked to rate each strategy from 0-100, with workshops achieving a mean score of 77, the communications campaign a mean of 47.19, and the community dinners a mean of 52.2.



Findings: Reflections on Project and Individual Strategies

| Survey Question | Agree | Disagree |
|--|-------|----------|
| I am more aware of racist talk and actions that take place around me. | 86.7% | 4.4% |
| I am more willing to intervene when I witness racism. | 84.5% | 4.4% |
| I learnt new strategies/ways to help when I witness racism. | 84.5% | 8.9% |
| The project did not have any impact on my knowledge of or perspective on racism. | 11.1% | 71.1% |

Findings: Qualitative feedback

- ▶ “It has had a huge impact. I feel more empowered to stand up and do/say something about racism. I feel more confident in myself. I am also more aware that I may not be able to say anything to the agresor [sic] sometimes. In these situations I have learnt that asisting [sic] the victim of racism by asking if they are ok can be just as powerful as standing up to the aggressor.”

Findings: Qualitative feedback

- ▶ “I think it would be useful to run such a program again, if not for the research aspect of it, then for the fact that people need to be educated about racism and be prepared to take a stand.”
- ▶ “This training should be compulsory to all staff (would also benefit students) to give a better understanding and tolerance towards each other. “
- ▶ “None. Content of workshop was unsophisticated and preached to converted. Workshops failed to recognise complexity of racism [sic] and policies of multiculturalism.”

Limitations

- ▶ Limited sample size, particularly for the post-test and follow-up survey.
- ▶ Inability to test participants after each strategy made it difficult to adequately evaluate individual strategies beyond participants' self-reporting of effectiveness.

Conclusion

- ▶ UWS bystander anti-racism strategies had a largely positive impact on participants' understanding and awareness of racism, their attitudes towards racism and their confidence to respond to racism.
- ▶ Participants felt that the workshops were most effective, as it gave them the chance to explore the concepts of racism and anti-racism in more depth in a safe and open setting, and also gave them opportunities to practice their newly learned skills through the coaching exercises.
- ▶ The benefits of this training are hoped to affect the UWS community and broader Australian society at large.