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BECOMING A PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENTIST: A SERIES TO SUCCESSFULLY APPLY TO GRAD SCHOOL AND HELP DIVERSIFY THE FIELD:

SESSION 4: GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS OF COLOR (LIVE Q&A,
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TRANSCRIPT

Shandol Hoover: Hello everyone, and welcome. I'm Shandol Hoover, Science Programs Officer at the American Psychological Association. Thank you for joining us today. Please let us know where you're from by saying hello in the chat. Today's program is the third in the series of becoming a psychological scientist, a six-part webinar series about navigating the application process for doctoral programs and psychological science. Applying to graduate school can be challenging and deeply personal, but it's worth the effort. We hope our time together brings you closer to success.

Today's session is guidance for students of color. Before we get started, I want to share a few quick announcements. First, many thanks to those who submitted questions for today's program. We'll try to get to as many of those questions as possible. You can also ask questions during the program using the Q and A feature on your dashboard. We'll add them to our list. Also, this program is being recorded. Everyone who registered will receive an email with a link to the recording in about two weeks. Without further ado, I'll turn things over to Dr. Mia Smith-Bynum, Senior Director for Science, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at the American Psychological Association.

Dr. Mia Smith-Bynum: Hello, everybody. Thank you so much, Shandol. My name is Mia Smith-Bynum. I'm the Senior Director for Science, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at the Association. I am pleased to welcome four guests who will be answering your questions and sharing their experiences about applying for graduate programs in the psychological sciences. We will now have everyone turn their cameras on. Shandol, did you want to do a brief introduction, or did you want me to take it? What's the best way to proceed?

Shandol Hoover: I think you go for it.

Dr. Mia Smith-Bynum: All right. What I'm going to do is let each panelist introduce themselves as we get into the discussion, we're localizing the focus on students of color, but as we know the experience of marginalization in higher ed is intersectional. I invite you as members of our panel to bring in any intersectional experiences that they'd like to discuss as today's hour moves forward.

I'm going to start with the upper left-hand corner of my screen and I'm going to ask each panelist, tell me what your position is, the program you're affiliated with. I'd like each panelist to share one to two bits of experience about their own admissions journey because

we have faculty and doctoral students here today. I'd first like to introduce our future Dr. Hana-May Eadeh.

Hana-May Eadeh: Hi, everyone. Excited to be here today. I'm Hana-May, I use they/them pronouns. I am originally from Richmond, Virginia, where I completed my undergraduate degree at Virginia Commonwealth University. I'm a Palestinian American, also a queer individual in terms of my gender and sexual orientation. I had to apply to graduate school twice in terms of little tidbits about me. First time, didn't work out at all, got no interviews, so happy to talk through that as necessary and related. Second time was very successful. I'm currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Iowa and completing my doctoral internship in the child and adolescent track at Hennepin Healthcare.

Dr. Mia Smith-Bynum: Awesome. Next, we have Dr. Makeba Wilbourn.

Dr. Makeba Wilbourn: Hello, I am Dr. Makeba Wilbourn, and I am associate professor of the practice at Duke University. I have been at Duke since 2008, and I got my PhD at Cornell. I am a first-generation college grad and grew up with a single mom and a lower to working-class income background. I went to Cal State Fullerton for my undergrad and my master's. Then went to Cornell, which was a huge culture shock. Also, did not know that Cornell was located in upstate New York. I actually thought I was going to get a trip to see the Statue of Liberty. I had only been on a plane once before I had gone to my grad school interviews. It was quite a journey for me and one small tidbit. You want tidbits about grad school?

Dr. Mia Smith-Bynum: Just about like your application experience.

Dr. Makeba Wilbourn: One of the things is that I was lucky to have great mentors at my master's program. I applied and I had already I was on a book chapter, and I had lots of conference presentations. A particular school, I'm a developmental psychologist, so I was applying to some of the top schools in developmental, this school at the time was ranked number five. The PI that I was interested in working with asked me to submit writing samples. At first, I was confused because a statement of purpose is a writing sample, but she asked me to send her couple papers that I had written in classes and then proceeded to call my letter writers because she was not convinced that my writing skills were as good as my statement. She wanted my letter writers to confirm that they had not written my statement of purpose for me.

I will say, one of my letter writers and my mentor at the time called me and said, "I'm not going to tell you where you can and can't go, but I want you to know that this is a horrible professional ethical violation." He said, "I wrote a two-page letter about you." For her to somehow infer that I was misleading her or lying and that she needed to hear my voice and the fact that she made me go through multiple rounds. Well, needless to say, the number six school in my area at the time, made me an offer.

At first, this PI at the number five school had said, "I'll let you in, but you'll have to work on a project with me on African American female athletes and academic achievement." I study infants and word learning, so not even close. She's like, "I don't want that to make

you feel like a second-class citizen." The number six school not only admitted me, but gave me a two-year fellowship, and then all of a sudden, the number five school had a fellowship for me. All of a sudden, I was now one of her top choices. Needless to say, I went to number six, but I like to tell that story because I had already a master really impressive resume for a master's student.

I won master's student of the year, statistics student of the year. I had all these things that you would think were the metrics. Even then because my name is Makeba and because I come from a non-traditional background, there was this vetting of my oral language and written language skills that she felt necessary because I was an unsafe candidate. I'm now at Duke, I am fortunate enough to have won an award from Barack Obama. Please know that you can persist. To this day, every time I run past her in a conference, I've been very gracious because she did me an actual favor.

Dr. Mia Smith-Bynum: Thank you for that, Dr. Wilbourn. I think you have answered a number of questions that we have pre-submitted and planned by our team. Thank you for that. The next person, bottom right-hand corner of my screen is Dr. Andres De Los Reyes. Please share your academic affiliation and a little about your admission story.

Dr. Andres De Los Reyes: Thank you, Mia. Hi, everyone. I'm a professor of psychology at the University of Maryland at College Park where I've been for the last 15 years. About myself, I grew up in South Florida, my first language is Spanish, and my parents immigrated from Cuba in the early '60s following the revolution.

I always enjoyed speaking about these kinds of things in relation to my own application process because a lot of those elements of growing up in South Florida and also attending a commuter university in South Florida, the Florida International University, that was founded in the 1970s on what used to be a really small airport field. I really did feel like a fish out of water at all the places that I applied to. Not just because of the histories of the universities where I applied, but also knowing full well that wherever I was admitted to, if I was to get admission, I'd wind up being one of the few of only people in that program that shared any of my identities. It turns out that where I wound up attending, not only was I the only person of color in my cohort, I was the only person who identified as male in all the cohorts in the clinical program at least for the first year.

The application process was interesting on a few levels, one of which for myself was that I thought like a lot of my family members that I would live my entire life in South Florida. It just was a rarity in my family to leave the area, and all these years later, I think I can count on one hand the number of family members who don't live in South Florida right now. Thinking about where I would wind up geographically played a role so far as I knew I wouldn't be living in South Florida where I was attending, but at the end of the day actually getting there and seeing how different life was like. For instance, first language is Spanish, I wind up in New Haven for graduate school. The first thing I notice as I'm walking around is saying to myself, I took for granted the fact that I no longer have an environment where part of navigating it involves speaking my language. Trying to find places my first couple of years, creating excuses to speak the language was something that wound up being really important to me.

Dr. Mia Smith-Bynum: Oh, wow. These are great stories. Next, last, but not least, we have the future doctor, Ajua Duker.

Ajua Duker: I'm really excited to be here and to talk with all of you today. My name is Ajua Duker and I'm a PhD candidate in social psychology at Yale. I think a lot of what folks have been saying resonates a lot with me but in a different way, just because I think on paper people might just assume that I was just successful and didn't have a lot of struggles, didn't deal with imposter syndrome, didn't deal with all of the implicit and explicit racism from peers and higher-ups. I actually did go to Yale for my undergrad, and it was a culture shock because I grew up in Virginia like Hana-May.

I really thought that going to this fancy school in Connecticut would be an opportunity to be around super intellectual high-minded people who weren't racist, but that was certainly not my experience at all. I had some pretty terrible undergrad experiences where professors just assumed-- I'd ask them questions about courses, they wouldn't even look at my test score and assume that I didn't do well in the course. Someone told me that the major that I was thinking about choosing was hard and that I should do something a little easier.

That was first semester, freshman year, just taking a class, doing well in the class, and thinking I was going to have a connection with a professor.

All of those things they've shattered my confidence really. I'm bringing these experiences up just to say that when I actually applied to graduate school, I didn't have a lot of confidence in my abilities, so I wasn't navigating my environment the way that I do now, and just there's a lot of shame around sharing my process and having conversations with people because that internalization of imposter syndrome was very much what I was dealing with.

I'm looking forward to get into the discussion of you're putting yourself out there to talk to people because there are a lot of people in a lot of environments who do want to help. Things worked out for me for graduate school. I got into a program that was great. I applied to way more programs than I got into for the very reason that I wasn't having people look at my statements or practicing as much as I could have been. For me, I think feeling more comfortable with yourself and leaning into your networks is super important. I think of this as an opportunity to tell people to not really be like me and to not internalize all the negative stuff that you might have to deal with on your day-to-day and find the people who could support you.

Dr. Mia Smith-Bynum: Awesome, and imposter syndrome was a topic that came up in multiple spreads, multiple opportunities we were securing questions for the session, and so I want us to keep talking about that. For folks who have general questions about how does admissions work? This topic is just one in a full series on becoming a psychological scientist, and I'm going to do make a request at Shandol if you could go ahead and drop some of those links from our prior sessions in the chat. It's everything from selecting a program to writing a personal statement to interviewing. We've got live sessions and pre-recorded sessions that address those, and today is not the last one, we are going to continue.

Related to this issue, there's a universality in how all of you have talked about this. We've got two students who are training here in the 2020s, and we've got folks like myself who train in the '90s and the-- for me, the '90s, but the 2000 is probably for everybody else. Can you talk to us about, to the panelists, how can you tell you found a program or set of programs that will be a place where you can go intellectually thrive and feel safe as a human being? How do you store through that process? What are some of the telltale signs?

Ajua Duker: I can-- Oh, go for it.

Dr. Makeba Wilbourn: One of the things that I often do I have an internship program for underrepresented students, and my whole focus in my role is to help usher students into the next phase of a program, and one of the things that's really important is having a lens to make sure that you are picking an environment that-- Succeeding in an environment is one thing, thriving in an environment is another. I often tell my students, even though you might be able to go toe to toe with the best intellectually, the cost to your soul and also who you fundamentally are, and if you are a collaborative learner and you're in an environment that's very competitive, then you can succeed but at what cost?

One of the things I always give my students when they're interviewing the number one question I have them ask current grad students is, if you had to do all over, would you pick the same lab and the same school? Most of them are going to give you a yes, but it's how they yes like "yeah". You pick up on those subtle. If they, yes, but, or some of them, oh, without question. That's one really important piece of information. The other is, do they know anything about each other? Sit and listen to how they communicate with each other. Do they know each other's dogs' names? Do they talk about, "Oh, when we do trivia night on Tuesdays?" That gives you some idea of the type of environment.

The other good question that I often coach my students is to ask about how collaborations are not only allowed, which I always think that's an interesting question but how are they facilitated and encouraged? The questions of how often do you see advisor, but how often are students collaborating together? Do we see a third year with a first year in labs? How often is their departmental encouragement of collaboration? You can ask questions like, do you have any other projects? Are you interested in doing any other projects with any other of your cohort or people who are in your lab? How easy is it to work with other faculty outside of your committee or on your committee?

Those questions give you some insight into the environment, the culture. Is it supportive? Is it one where people are going to shun you if you go above and beyond because they think you're trying to take or jockey for position as opposed to, we're all in this and I want to make everyone's project better? Those are the questions that I often encourage because I think they give you some really important insights into the inner workings of a research environment.

Dr. Mia Smith-Bynum: Ajua because I saw her hand first. I want you to add to that and then we've got some more good questions I want to get to before we wrap this out. Ajua, why don't you weigh in from the student perspective, and then I've got some other juicy ones for everyone.

Ajua Duker: I feel Dr. Wilbourn did a fabulous job of answering that question. I think the only thing I would add was just that I also ask people what they're in or I would encourage prospective students to ask current students what their interests are and things that they get into outside of academia just to see if they're involved in communities. I feel like for me it was a big deal that Yale had a lot of black graduate students here, across all the different schools. There's a black grad student GroupMe, so like we have a sense of when things happen, we're on the GroupMe there are like events that happen because I think it's also so important just to have connections to people outside of the program. Echoing everything Dr. Wilbourn said.

Dr. Mia Smith-Bynum: Yes. Not to mention, is there a place to get your hair done? Is there a place of worship? Like all of the things that once you leave the research lab, can you have a personal life there? Dr. De Los Reyes, can you talk to us about, funding your graduate career and options besides loans? Let's start there. How about that?

Dr. Andres De Los Reyes: Yes. The funding landscape is a challenging one, and more challenging now than usual because a few weeks ago, the Ford Foundation announced that they were going to dismantle their graduate fellowship. If you look through the history of that fellowship, the scores of individuals who identify with 100% backgrounds received some of the formative, resources for beginning their careers. It's a huge loss for all of us.

One thing I can say with regards to funding is that there are obviously some places outside of the context of your own program that can provide support. The National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship program, the National Research Service Award program at the NIH, each of these kinds of programs provide a support across stipends, across research infrastructure.

I highlight those with some trepidation for a couple of reasons. One is that I think oftentimes students feel like if it doesn't work out in those two places, game over, and that isn't necessarily the case. There are a host of different kinds of mechanisms that are smaller in scope but can be combined to provide comparable experiences. Like the mechanisms that the American Psychological Foundation, there are a bunch of different kinds of pilot and other kinds of scholarship mechanisms within that space. It's also useful to look at other kinds of pride foundations.

Sometimes there are pride foundations that are state bound. There are some kinds of foundations that are connected to providing philanthropic contributions within a given geographic region. I think that in the grand scheme of things, I always look at some of these challenges and try to figure out what the strength in them actually is. One of the key strengths is that this element of training, the idea that funding is sometimes very hard to come by has a reference later on in one's career, so whether it's seeking out support, this type of practice, seeking out support for your laboratories work.

I think the more practice that students get in this kind of scenario in the doctoral training environment practice in seeking out resources in places that appear outside the box or outside of the norms has a way of strengthening your approach later on. When you're going

to be asked to seek out or tasked to seek out funding in other ways. I don't know if that helps address the question.

Dr. Mia Smith-Bynum: Yes, it does. Hana-May, I'm going to come to you. Can you talk to us, which question do I want to-- because you shared some of your struggles with your journey, I think this will be a good question. What is one thing that you wish you had known before you completed your application and selected your school? It's probably more than one thing, but let's try at least one.

Hana-May Eadeh: Yes, definitely there's many different things. I think really something that immediately comes to mind is really understanding that for one, you can have multiple mentors throughout graduate school. In fact, I think it is beneficial to have multiple different types of mentors. Your primary advisor or mentor in graduate school does not have to fill all roles in other words. Like they aren't going to necessarily be the person that helps you both achieve maybe work-life balance and give you great edits on your papers and help you figure out your career path and help you with all these different areas. In fact, that's a lot to put on one person.

It's great if you find that one-star mentor who can fill all the different roles, but likely that person also isn't going to understand, in a room full of people of color and having concerns about our experiences in graduate school that person might not also understand that part of your experience in graduate school and how that's impacting your experience moving through that space and trying to apply to jobs, apply to grants, all the feedbacks you get in those spaces.

Again, if you happen to find that person, that's great. It's probably like one in a million. I think that can be really hard, and so seeking out multiple avenues for mentorship, finding other types of mentors, other support spaces and groups that can help give you feedback about like the application process for jobs, career mentorship, things like that. Particularly from like other people of color or people that share other parts of your identity, who can really understand what it's going to be like for you specifically in that space or at that internship at that graduate program. I think is really important. I wish I had understood that earlier on, and really thought more carefully about what it would be like, for instance, to work with a white mentor versus working with a mentor of color or a queer mentor or something like that. Really thought through where to get those different aspects of mentorship.

Dr. Mia Smith-Bynum: That's really awesome. Anyone else want to add to that? Okay, moving on. I've got two questions. They deal with different components of the application. The first one addresses this issue of including your diversity perspective in your personal statement. Then some programs, as I understand it, are now having a section in the application portal to write a separate diversity statement. Any tips on how to actually address that? This certainly wasn't a thing when I was in school in the '90s. This is something new. Start with the faculty, is there any comment that you'd like to make about that? Makeba.

Dr. Makeba Wilbourn: This is also another area that about four years ago, I started really helping coaching my graduate students as well as some of the other faculties graduate students in how to prepare these sorts of statements for job market. Now we're starting to see these statements being looked at the grad school entry level.

One of the things I want to highlight for folks who check off the other boxes is that simply being an other is not enough for a diversity statement. Saying, I'm diverse and I've lived my life with a diverse lens is not enough. One of the things is, how do you view diversity? In particular, if you are a student of other, thinking about allies and working with allies and ways to foster relationships in which the goal is to increase representation and inclusion, and diversity at all levels and utilizing the resources and allies to help support that. Also working in student groups that are specific to the categories you check, that is always positive.

Also, how does diversity show up in your research interests? Just because you're an other does not mean that you inherently have to study the boxes you check, although that's more common for folks who are underrepresented in fields. If you want to study creativity, for example, it doesn't have to be that you only study creativity in African Americans. On the other hand, it's important to highlight that this weird problem that our field all is struggling with the rich, well, white or western educated, industrialized rich, and democratic. I always say white and western, because internationally it's western, but here it's white. How are you infusing diversity, inclusion, and representation in your research interest?

If you want to study a particular population, what types of outreach, what types of dissemination, what types of programs will you also be part of? What things, when you enter graduate school, are you also motivated to do? For example, my white PhD student was on the diversity committee for the North Carolina School of psychology. She also would go to a local HBCU that is a historically black, university or college down the road, and she always participated yearly in how to get into graduate school panels. Being able to say that you want to come in and not only do research but that you want to help make the university, the program, the department better those are sort of nuts and bolts that I look at when I'm looking at a diversity statement more than just simply, this is my childhood of being a diverse kid.

Dr. Mia Smith-Bynum: Very good. Anyone else want to add to that?

Ajua Duker: Yes. I just wanted to-- Do you want to go?

Dr. Mia Smith-Bynum: Go ahead, Ajua. Go ahead.

Ajua Duker: I just wanted to quickly add that, I think in writing a lot of those statements I reflected on how those experiences as a child and growing up shaped my perspective and shaped my value system. I think it's okay to talk about your personal experiences as long as you can thread the needle so that there's this connection to maybe the discrimination that you experienced, or just your sensitivity to injustice more broadly that then led you to engage in service work, join panels, share your experiences to be generative for the next generation and to even be generative within your community. I think you can include your

experiences, but just make sure that they're there for a reason and that they're showcasing maybe your purpose or values that you're bringing to whatever institution you apply to.

Dr. Makeba Wilbourn: I want to just add empowering your struggle, how your struggle has made you see things differently and has helped to your motivation. I always teach students, you can talk about your struggle, but make sure it's the growth and where it has put you and embrace it and be empowered by the fact that you came from a low-income community as opposed to the notion of a sob story because those often look as if you are trying to exploit or use your marginalized status as a benefit for you. I want to strongly encourage you to make sure that you channel it in in motivation for the future of how you're going to make things slightly better for students who check off similar boxes to you.

Dr. Mia Smith-Bynum: Andres, can you add to that?

Dr. Andres De Los Reyes: Yes. I think these are wonderful points and I really like the last point that Makeba made, and Ajua made as well with regards to this notion of articulating experiences and where it could give off the impression that they're performative or checking off boxes. One of the ways to think about diversity statements is in the context of really articulating an intentional framework, a philosophy for how you think about all of these important issues.

When you come at this question of posing one of these statements from a place of this is my value system, this is my mission, this is my framework for understanding these concepts and then this is how I either have applied this philosophy before in previous careers or have a vision for how that philosophy would manifest. If I were to come to this program, I would interface with these offices. I would enjoy collaboration with these scholars. I would enjoy collaborating with students who share these kinds of interests.

If you articulate a vision, a framework, people who read the statement know where you're coming from, and there is no uncertainty as to what the mechanisms that underlying the actions you've taken or planned to take come from and it's part and parcel of all the issues that we're talking about. All of us have seen examples in our own lives of times where somebody has given off the impression from some positive action, but they might be meaning well but underlying that action might be no philosophical foundation at all.

In that respect, there are lots of places where you can see examples of how people are giving guidance for creating these kinds of statements. This is just one of them. This is not the only place to do it but Cornell has a page that lists off a way of either composing these statements in the context of, in their case, submitting application for faculty, but also how they evaluate them. Again, it's only one metric. It's only one set, a set of interpretive guides but it might give you an idea of at least how one institution has approached both composing the statements and importantly looking at pieces of information that could give an idea about what separates a relatively strong statement from a relatively not so strong statement.

Dr. Mia Smith-Bynum: Awesome. That really great. It's 12:36 here on the East Coast where this webinar is being hosted. Let's talk a little about GREs, which is a very fraught

issue and the policies around GREs are changing. I'm going to go to each of our doctoral students just to ask quickly if you all came through because it's changed and I've not done admissions for a while at this point, but do you all have mandatory GREs? I'm guessing the football, math, and the written and then the subject GRE, did you all have to complete those Hana-May? I'll start with you.

Hana-May Eadeh: Yes. I had to complete the standard GRE. I did not have to do the psychology subject one, though.

Dr. Mia Smith-Bynum: All right. Ajua.

Ajua Duker: I completed the GRE. I didn't do the psychology subject one.

Dr. Mia Smith-Bynum: Okay. To my knowledge, that is changing. It really depends on the university if the GREs are mandatory. I'm going to start with Dr. Andres if you could talk about your knowledge of it, and I'll go to Dr. Makeba to address where the field stands as far as that, and should you do it? Should you complete it if it's optional? Should you not? Pros and cons.

Dr. Andres De Los Reyes: If people were to do a brief Google Scholar search, you'd see where I stand on the GREs. I can speak to how programs in the US have been grappling with the GRE in the context of clinical programs. Many of my colleagues at many programs have started to either not require the GRE or required it as optional. My own personal stance is that I think this should be a discreet decision, either you include it or not. When you make it optional, people don't think it's optional, they think it's required. I say think because I think if they make it optional, if I were a student now, I just wouldn't submit the test.

The data behind the test in my own view of interpreting the research is-- Just to give you very brief backstory, GRE was designed to predict first-year performance in graduate classes. Dr. Wilbourn, do we care about first-year performance in grad courses? The correlation between the score and the grades it's 0.3. It doesn't even do a good job at the thing it was designed to do, which none of us care about. My hope is that the continuing trend is to start de-emphasizing these scores and emphasizing more holistic processes to review, which by the way, there's a really great paper published last year by Barcelo and colleagues in the context of admissions to medical residency, which historically have large racial ethnic disparities.

They demonstrated that a holistic process of de-emphasizes standardized scores and emphasizes lived experiences and disclosure of personal challenges in the context of medical school training, increased the number of students from underrepresented backgrounds who were invited to interviews and produced no demonstrable change in the likelihood of receiving an interview from folks who identify with historically majority groups.

It can be done and the great thing is that all of our respective programs every year get all this data coming in from applications, and all of our colleagues in other spaces were encountering similar issues. These are all challenges that can be addressed with the

obvious caveat that if you de-emphasize standardized scores and emphasize holistic processes, it's just going to make the process more intentional and time intensive. But shouldn't it be? Because these are all big decisions.

Dr. Mia Smith-Bynum: Andres, I'm very glad that you had the thumbnail overview for that because it's a high-button issue. It's an issue of great sensitivity for our audience. I've got a few comments here in the chat that's directly to us as the host and panelists, and I just want to weave in. Then I'd like to hear from Dr. Makeba before we move on. One of our attendees says, "We've made it optional and explained that it will not hurt an applicant if they do poorly and will only be used to boost an application if they believe they need it. Since doing that with our second cohort, we've had less than half of our applicants take it."

Another I believe this is a prospective student says, "Hi, discussion about diversity statements are very inspiring. I just finished my application submission the other day and wondering if disclosing my diversity and thoughts to the professor that I'm applying to work with, would that be appropriate?" Just to quickly respond to those. My own sense I've taught for approximately 20 years in higher ed, what our first panelists, our first participant said, is that it's optional. That it should be a case-by-case basis. If you happen to be a wonderful test taker, you might be the person to go ahead and decide and say, I'm going to take that standardized test and send it in.

Then in terms of do you go back after the fact and share it, I would advise no on that because hopefully the things that we really look for and for all of you, if you have it, please go back and review the other parts of our series. People are really looking as faculty members for match or research match between what they're doing in their research lab, the content expertise they have, and your research experience. You can have a magnificent diversity statement, but if you have not done any research to speak of, that is not going to be the thing that moves the needle. Is that typically in programs that emphasize psychological science, they want folks who can come in and do research at the first-year doctoral level and moving on from there.

Dr. Makeba, before we move on, would you have any other comments about the GRE or the admissions process? Then we've got some specific issues to address but nonetheless important.

Dr. Makeba Wilbourn: I will be brief. What's happening? Our area, our department is no longer requiring the GRE and what I will say is what we see is that the people who submit them have very high scores, so it's skewing. If you do not feel that you can score even higher than five years ago when they were mandatory, I would say it's probably more potentially detrimental. The reason why is there are some schools that use the GRE, none of the ways in which my colleague has said that the test was designed for, in fact, they use it as a makeshift proxy for intellectual IQ and cognitive ability, which is absolutely ridiculous, but it's nonetheless this old guard metric of are you enough?

I know that certain areas, clinical has so many applicants, often those scores were used as a cutoff because they had so many, but many areas we might get 60 applications in developmental as opposed to 200. What I will say is that if you have any issues in your

transcript or any issues, have a letter writer address that for you. Instead of adding a GRE score and taking all this time to study for that, I would much rather have you go out into the community, go out and do things, work on in a different lab volunteer. Instead of spending money on a course and studying and trying to get a score, I would much rather have you throw yourself into an additional project in a lab you're working in or go work in a community center. Because that is what you can write about that gives you an added piece that makes your fit and your potential much more feasible about where you're going to be in the next five years as opposed to some score that frankly, every university has very different ways and from faculty to faculty, the way they weight those is very different.

I typically advise students to try to stay away from it unless they are those who are really good at taking tests. It can be used as another metric to say, look, I'm qualified, but if you don't test well and I did not test well, please do not see that at all as a hindrance. The schools that care about holistic are going to be better fits for you. They're more collaborative, they're going to see you. The schools that care about metrics, it's like cattle. They just want to move you through. They don't want to mentor you much. They want you to come in already at the PhD level, no needing help in writing. They want you to do their research for them and then take credit for you. That's what I find with schools who really put a lot of weight on those scores.

Dr. Mia Smith-Bynum: I couldn't say it better myself and I think people really needed to hear that. We've got roughly 13 minutes left. I'm going to throw out a series of questions. I'm meshing them together. They have to deal with intersectionality beyond race. I've asked Shandol to have our attendees put some of these things in the chat. A couple of questions about non-traditionally aged students. In the pre-submitted questions, we had an applicant in her 40s that's saying, what should I be thinking about? Can I do this and another potential applicant in their 60s that say, am I an underrepresented group?

Yes, and yes, you can do this and yes, you're underrepresented. We need lived experiences that you have are relevant to asking good questions about psychological science. I'm just going to open it to the panelists to talk about that and we're going to throw a few other things in the mix. We have questions about handling and international accent. We have questions about DACA and non-DACA potential applicants. These are very specific. I got my ganders of a guest, but that's why I have the four of you here. Please let me go to you Andres please weigh in on any of those.

Dr. Andres De Los Reyes: I love the age question. You know where the proof of concept is that there's a resounding yes that you should continue doing work, social work, any culture in our scholar discourse where a key component of graduate training is to end at some artificial determination point, like getting your master's degree, doing work in the field. For many people who do work in the field at the master's level, particularly in social work that day-to-day work experience is enough. It meets your mission as a human and as an employee and you do that for the rest of your career.

Then for a subset of individuals, it's valuable. It's useful. You clearly want to do work in that space with a range of career, but there's something, there's something missing. There's

a piece of, in my experience, is that provoking curiosity, and really the only way to satisfy it or one of the only ways to satisfy is to go back and receive your doctoral training.

What I would suggest is look the disciplines and fields for which one of the key components of a doctoral work is that lived experience that you then return for doctoral training and get a sense of whether it's informational interviews or seeing copies of applications, seeing copies of statements instead of ask the question. They have a similar challenge as me. How are they solving it there? That doesn't mean it's going to be your answer but seeing examples could provide some useful food for thought.

Dr. Mia Smith-Bynum: I love that. Also, other pieces of the intersectionality discussion that I want to bring in, we have questions about closing one's disability or lived experience of a psychiatric illness on one's application. I think there was one other here that I want to make sure I don't miss, I think those were the two. I'll comment quickly on that. I think in terms of if you do, you want to be thinking there is the law the Americans with Disabilities Act, so all institutions of higher ed that receive federal funding are accountable to providing accommodations for that.

One of the things that can be a concern for any practice-based aspect of psychological science, you're going to be learning to see clients. You want to make sure that you are good and healthy because we know that when one is healthy, they're able to provide better care. Let me hear from our students. Would Hana-May or Ajua want to weigh in on any of these issues? We've got questions about international diversity as well. All of these things if you have the fit, I've not found them to be a concern. Let me hear from the students who are out there in our programs right now.

Hana-May Eadeh: I guess I can speak a little bit to some of the experiences at my school in terms of related to disclosing mental health problems. I know that's been a hot button topic recently. I feel like there's been a big movement, especially, I don't know how active people are on Twitter in this group, but I know that's been a big thing on Twitter in terms of people being able to talk about the experiences that they have and that a lot of the times, people get into this field because they have lived experiences with mental health problems and that can really enrich the work we do with patients as well as the types of questions we're able to ask about psychological research. Especially then when you start getting into the differences that people of color might experience with mental health disorders and barriers to accessing care versus what someone with more privilege might be able to access, I think those are really important conversations.

Being able or wanting to talk about that on interviews or putting it in an application can make sense. I think at the same time, people you're talking to are humans, and may have prejudice, and may have questions then about-- Unfortunately, about what it would be like to work with you or seeing what it may be like if you were seeing patients. Of course, that's not right and that shouldn't be the way it is. I think that has been something that has happened certainly in my program. I don't want to speak for anyone else. I think that is a very real issue.

I think it's a really personal decision if you want to disclose some concern or diagnosis that you have. I wouldn't say it's for anyone else to say for you whether or not you should or shouldn't do that, it's really up to you to consider the risks and benefits of doing that and certainly can depend on what kinds of current impairments or problems or kinds of accommodations you might need for that diagnosis in order to be successful in grad school. I would definitely encourage people to just talk with the very trusted folks they have in their life to help decide when or if that would be important to do.

Dr. Mia Smith-Bynum: Excellent. Here's a question that I'll also put out because I've got a lot of cool things to get to. We've got roughly five minutes left. One perspective applicant asks, how do we deal when people laugh at our accent in an academic setting?

Ajua Duker: Oh, go for it. I was just going to quickly say-- I going to speak to some experiences that I've had which I think have a little bit to do with some of the questions about being an international student that were raised. I think especially in seminars like small group graduate school settings, there might be that element of laughter, there may also be this element of instructors or other students holding different people's comments in different regards, so whether or not a professor chooses to engage with someone's comment versus just say yes or no, and then move on to another student. Whether or not those responses fall on country of origin, racial gender lines.

I think I definitely had a lot of experiences, especially during my first year where-- just noticing that certain professors would just not really respond to comments that certain students would make. I think I remember in a particular seminar that I had, there was a point in time when I just pulled one of my friends aside. I had another Black woman in the class and there was another woman she was an international student and she had a pretty thick accent, and we just all spoke to one another and came up with our own little strategy of like, "Okay, if he does this to you, we're going to engaged with the other person's point and lifted up by saying like, blah, blah, blah, just said, X, Y, Z," to just bring those back into the conversation.

I guess the point I'm trying to make is that you also have your peers there and hopefully, you're in an environment where at least you have peers who are like-minded. I think a lot of the times when you're based with some BS in these settings, I think an effective way to deal with it is by organizing and just having a little huddle and talking about, how are we going to do this? How are we going to handle this so that we can get more of what we need to get out of this class? Just lifting each other up and amplifying the voices of other people, I think is extremely important.

Dr. Mia Smith-Bynum: What that question was getting at are microaggression. One piece of advice I would have is if you are an international student, there's a lot of things you're going to have to be dealing with when you select a program, but if you are going to a program where there's a critical mass of students who are bringing that particular form of diversity because then some folks are going to have some shared lived experience of what it means to study in the United States, the faculty are going to be accustomed to it.

There's a dialogue in faculty who are sensitive to these issues about how to manage that kind of thing behind the scenes and how to support those students. Reading the tea leaves in some indirect ways I think is very important there.

Then there's one question that I thought I did not want to leave today without addressing directly, the specific question has to do with fellowships that you may know of that cater to undocumented or DACA candidates applying for a PhD. When I think about this, it's almost like you want to find the school first and then think about the funding because I think universities and colleges, they should have a policy in place for this. Then some are ahead of the curve in terms of thinking about those student needs because the graduate directors in those programs will have knowledge of what resources are.

I'm not personally aware of any or ones that rule students out because they are DACA, but it's such a specific issue that really doing some legwork on that before you select a program. Anyone else want to weigh in on that one? That's a very important one but it's very specific. I don't have a lot. I think I'll throw in it for sure. Oh, thank you, Ajua. Yes, finger snaps. [laughs]

Ajua Duker: I just wanted to say quickly that the Soros Fellowship is available to folks who are undocumented. Even if you're not part of DACA, you can apply to it.

Dr. Mia Smith-Bynum: I love that. That's awesome. Awesome. Anything else? Anyone want to do-- We are at two minutes of the hour. Anything else anyone want to weigh in on? Hana-May take us home. Any last-minute thoughts?

Hana-May Eadeh: I think one other thing I've just been thinking about is just as you are applying and considering schools, thinking about where to go is just, I think it's also just really important to notice, observe what you're not seeing at that school. I feel like this has come up in what people have been mentioning, but which faculty aren't there? Is it a bunch of white faculty, a bunch of white students? I know this is what Ajua mentioned as well.

Are there any groups for people of color, for queer people, for Black students, whatever it may be, that is important to you in terms of identity, in terms of missions, advocacy? Is any of that there? Is it not there? Do they have scholarships? Do they have awards specific to diversity research even just the regular awards that they give out every year for graduate student of the year, whatever? If there is, if there are Black students, there are people of color, is it always going to the white students? Is it ever going to the Black students, to the students of color?

Look at those things and notice what is missing and who is missing. I think that can really be very telling for not just what they say, but are they really, whatever that phrase is, putting their money where their mouth is or something. I've messed up that phrase, whatever it is though. Are they showing up essentially?

Dr. Mia Smith-Bynum: Awesome. Because we're at the top of the hour, we're going to close this out, but please, we're getting a lot of great questions in the chat. I hate we can't answer them. Watch the full series. Watch the full series. I'm going to hand it back to Shandol.

Shandol Hoover: Thank you so much, Dr. Smith-Bynum, and all panelists. We just really appreciate your willingness to engage and share. Thanks, everyone, for such thoughtful questions. What a wonderful discussion. This is recorded. We will send this recording out as well as links to all of our previous sessions in about two or three weeks, so be on the lookout for that. We'll also put more information in our Science Spotlight, so make sure you're subscribed. We have a few more in the series. This will wrap us up for December, we'll pick back up in January.

Also, I want to let you know that you will be getting a one-minute survey after this broadcast. We value your feedback, so let us know how we're doing. Feel free to let us know what you'd like to cover in the future. Email us at sscience@apa.org with your recommendations. We do, APA just sponsored a brand new program called SUPER which is offering faculty team-mentored research grants for students of underrepresented populations. Please stay tuned for that and we'll put more information about that when we send out the link. All the best as you wrap up the semester and thank you so much.