1. While having a discussion, the topic of disparities in access to healthcare in the US comes up. One student mentions how she read an article recently that claimed that hospitals are more racially segregated today than they were in the late 1960s. Another student stated, “This is crazy! Race is just a social construct. We’re all humans and should stop dividing up by racial groups. We are more alike than different.” The student who mentioned the article didn’t respond verbally but rolled her eyes and avoided eye contact with anyone.
2. Students in your course are discussing pain management and techniques to minimize pain, including medication. Keisha, a Black student, raises their hand and says, “I've been reading about bias in the assessment and treatment of pain among people of color. Can we address that?" Before you can respond, Annemarie, a White student, interrupts by saying, "But Keisha, that's not the real issue here - none of us is going to be biased like that as a doctor. I'm more worried about someone faking pain to get drugs, because opioids are a huge problem."
3. Over the past several days, protesters have blocked many local roadways to call attention to state-sponsored violence against Black communities. As class begins, you overhear a group of students complaining about the disruption to their commute to campus that day. “Come on, people should be civil,” one student says. “I mean, I’m on their side, but they’re just going to alienate good people if they keep being so disruptive.”
4. A small group of students dominates classroom discussion in your course. You notice that racially minoritized students in particular are not raising their hands. This dynamic only seems to get worse over time, with fewer and fewer students actively participating in class discussion.
5. During a group discussion on health disparities in the United States, an international student from a largely ethnically homogeneous country states that she can’t relate to the topic because “we don’t have racism at home. Everyone is treated the same.”
6. In your Advanced Topic in Reproductive Care seminar, you are discussing racial disparities in maternal mortality. You emphasize the role that social determinants of health play in reproductive health, especially in outcomes for communities of color. One student raises their hand and notes that Hispanic people fare similarly to their White counterparts on many measures of maternal and infant health, despite experiencing increased challenges typically associated with poorer health outcomes. This “Hispanic or Latino health paradox,” with better outcomes particularly for recent immigrants to the U.S better outcomes, should be included in these discussions. “It may not be ‘woke,’” they conclude, "but maybe we need to address that race isn’t health destiny. People still have choices.”
7. A Black student begins to cry as she recalls her humiliating experience being stopped by campus police and asked for her ID while she was walking to the library with friends. Some students shift uncomfortably in their seats, and there is silence after the student shares her experience.
8. During rounds one morning, you observe Jane, a white woman, interrupting Kyrie, a Black man, several times. You decide to share your observation with Jane, who responds, “Oh, that’s just how I am! Being a woman, I know it feels to be discriminated against. I would never do that to someone else.”