

If I could bring awareness to any issue, it would be about racism from people of color to people of color being ignored and dismissed within the POC community. My race has countless terrible stereotypes. I am black, so apparently I'm poor, dad-less, uneducated, ghetto, loud, and ratchet. When I moved to Texas, I realised that none of my neighbours were black, but every household in my neighbourhood were immigrants and people of color, just like my family. I assumed that as people of color, we would be unified. Even though we are different races, we are all together under this "people of color" umbrella, right? Wrong. The amount of racism I've faced in my own neighbourhood is immense and disgusting. The amount of racism I've faced in my own school, by my "people of color," is unbelievable. We need to stop grouping colored races' experiences under this one-size-fits-all label. Doing so diminishes so much racism. Racism from other people of color is still racism.

The Asian stereotype is a smart and hard-working person with tiger parents. That is not comparable to the immensely negative black stereotype. When I was about eight, I was playing in front of my house with my neighbours. There was this young Palestinian boy who hugged everyone, yet he always skipped me. I was a child. I didn't know about racism because I wasn't taught hate or stereotypes. The kids he would hug were Indian, Asian, and Middle Eastern, but I didn't think the reason that he wouldn't hug me had to do with my skin color. I went up to him and asked, "why do you keep not hugging me?" And this little boy, who was at most 5 years old, said to me, "I can't hug you, you're black, you're too dark." That was the first time I recall experiencing racism. My tiny heart sank, and I ran home crying. I was shocked that at such a young age this boy already knew how to discriminate, but then it hit me. It was taught. My opinions about his family shifted. I now knew that they were not a house of love or acceptance. I could go on about my stories of racism from other races of color. Like being called the n-word by my Asian and middle-eastern classmates. Being told by my Asian neighbour that I couldn't get a ride to school with him because his dad hates black people. And a middle-eastern classmate screaming, "ew, I would never date her, she's black!" when asked if he had a crush on me. Our experiences are not the same. Ignoring discrimination and intolerance won't make it go away. We have to shine a light on

ignorance, and address the problems within the POC community if we truly want unity. “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that.” (MLK)