



## STUDENT CASE STUDY #2

# Based on Experiences Shared During the AOTA 2020 Be Heard, We're Listening Sessions

### BACKGROUND

Demographic information: Sudanese man, Master's of OT entry-level student at a Historically Black College & University (HBCU)

Themes: Parental pressure to work twice as hard; Applied to local OT school, rejected; told looking for the "right fit"

### PRIMARY SCENARIO

Ibrahim's parents always told him that he would have to work twice as hard as others to succeed. In preparation to apply to OT school, he performed 150 observation hours-three times the required 50 hours. Ibrahim also had a 3.5 GPA and graduated cum laude from his undergraduate program.

Ibrahim was involved in many community service initiatives resulting in wonderful letters of recommendations for his application.

Ibrahim applied to all three OT programs in his state and was rejected. When inquiring why, he was told "We're trying to look for people who will fit in with our faculty and our students." Ibrahim finally got accepted to an HBCU where he felt at home. It was the first time he saw another Muslim OT!

### CONNECTIONS

#### Themes Presented in Case Study

- Lack of diversity and representation
- Experience of racialized trauma, stress, and fatigue
- Anti-racism in admission policies and procedures

### AT A GLANCE

#### Recommended Actions

##### University Admissions:

- Provide faculty bias training.
- Evaluate bias and racial discrimination during the admissions process (e.g., socioeconomic status bias-volunteer hour requirement).
- Develop pipeline programs-start early from elementary to middle school; high school is too late.
- Look to exemplar programs that are doing this successfully.
- Prioritize racial/ethnic diversity among faculty, staff, and administration to provide examples of what is possible.
- Facilitate collaborations between schools with exemplar equity practices.
- Promote collaboration between Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HCBU) & predominantly white institutions (PWI).
- Consider compensating an internal staff subject matter expert (SME) or student for DEI issues and training.

##### Students/Applicants:

- Seek academic institutions who use a holistic process when reviewing applicants.
- Write letters of appeal for additional review of application.
- Request specific criteria for admission requirements and applicant review.

#### Analysis and Strategies

Now that you have reviewed the case, review the AOTA DEI Toolkit evidence-based resources and address the following questions:

- How was the person impacted?
- How does this case impact the field of occupational therapy?
- What are the implications for clients and stakeholders as a result of these experiences?
- What strategies would you employ?