Title/name of teaching tool | “Caught In-between”: Racism and being East-Asian

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We both share the same social location of being ethnically Chinese raised in Canada, not white, not black, middle class, educated immigrant parents.

Learning objective(s) | To illustrate some of our learning about our relationship to racism as Chinese Canadian women and why this matters for physiotherapy, including the myth of ‘Model Minority’.

To understand how the Coin Model of Privilege and Critical Allyship can be used to demonstrate the unique position East Asians are in regarding racism.

To share reflection questions that helped us along the journey.

Audience | Our audience includes PT students and clinicians who are in a similar social location as us: part of the East-Asian community, raised in Canada by immigrant parents.

How the teaching resource is to be used | This teaching resource was originally created to be an Instagram post, which can be easily shared by individuals on social media. For the purpose of posting on the University of Toronto Department of Physical Therapy website, we have slightly adapted the resource to improve ease of viewing on a website.

One way we’ve learned about systems of inequality is through the Coin Model of Privilege and Critical Allyship (Nixon, 2019). The coin itself is the system of inequality which produces and maintains inequality, in essence, any “-ism” (ie. racism, ableism, ageism). The people on the top of the coin are those with privilege, meaning they have unearned advantage while the people on bottom are those who face oppression and have unearned disadvantages. In either situation, people find themselves in their position based on “who they happen to be”. Being on the top or the bottom of the coin is not based on merit or a person’s character, rather it is unearned. The
A coin we are focusing on for this post is racism, those on the top of the coin are white, and those on the bottom are racialized.

East Asians are uniquely positioned, we are on the bottom of the racial coin, and we are near the top of the racialized gradient. We benefit from Anti-Black and Anti-Indigenous racism because of our proximity to whiteness.

Lastly, we wanted to share our experience of talking with our parents about racism. We found it important to remember their experience with discrimination is drastically different than ours, so listen to where they are coming from before condemning their view. They may have been convinced by the white-dominant society to take pride in being model minorities, that’s okay, be forgiving as we share our experience and our view. They patiently taught us how to eat and how to walk, so we owe it to them to be patient as we learn to unlearn our internalized biases together. Remember it’s not us versus them, it’s the system of oppression that we are up against together.

Anyone can use this teaching resource as an educational post that individuals can share on social media platforms. Additionally, it may be helpful for individuals that share a similar social position as us (Chinese Canadians with educated parents) to use this resource to open up a conversation with parents and/or grandparents.

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**Additional Resources:**

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