Softening Resistance Toward Diversity Initiatives: The Role of Mindfulness in Mitigating Emotional White Fragility

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Softening Resistance Toward Diversity Initiatives: The Role of Mindfulness in Mitigating Emotional White Fragility

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Industrial-Organizational Psychology

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Dedication

I dedicate this work first and foremost to my late mother Patrice Caldwell. Without her, none of this would have been possible. Secondly, I dedicate this work to all my friends and family who have supported me on this arduous journey of graduate school. Last but not least, this work is dedicated to all the Black women who have paved the way for me and to all the young Black girls out there as reminder that we are Black Girl Magic.
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Table of Contents

Dedication ................................................................................................................................. ii
Acknowledgements .................................................................................................................. iii
List of Figures .............................................................................................................................. v
List of Tables .............................................................................................................................. vi
List of Appendices ..................................................................................................................... vii
Abstract .................................................................................................................................... viii

CHAPTER I .................................................................................................................................... 1
   Introduction ............................................................................................................................. 1
   Literature Review ................................................................................................................... 3

CHAPTER II ................................................................................................................................. 25
   Method ..................................................................................................................................... 25
   Participants ............................................................................................................................. 25
   Procedure ............................................................................................................................... 27
   Manipulation and Measures ................................................................................................. 28

CHAPTER III ................................................................................................................................. 35
   Overview of Analyses ........................................................................................................... 35
   Results ..................................................................................................................................... 36

CHAPTER IV .................................................................................................................................... 43
   Discussion ............................................................................................................................... 43
   Future Research Directions ................................................................................................. 55
   Conclusion .............................................................................................................................. 57
References .................................................................................................................................... 58

APPENDIX A: Figures .................................................................................................................. 81
APPENDIX B: Tables .................................................................................................................... 84
APPENDIX C: Measures ............................................................................................................ 92
List of Figures

Figure 1: Variables in the current study

Figure 2: Model of hypothesized relationships

Figure 3: Experimental flow
List of Tables

Table 1: Research Design

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Participants Across All Study Conditions

Table 3: Means, Standard Deviations, Internal Consistencies, and Correlations

Table 4: Preliminary: ANCOVA Results and Descriptive Statistics for White Fragility by Intervention Type Controlling for Tendency to Engage in Self-Reflection

Table 5: Preliminary: ANCOVA Results and Descriptive Statistics for White Fragility for Time 1 and Time 2 Controlling for Tendency to Engage in Self-Reflection

Table 6: Primary: Regression Analysis for Mindfulness Predicting White Fragility Controlling for Tendency to Engage in Self-Reflection

Table 7: Primary: Regression Analysis for Mindfulness Predicting Self-Awareness of White Fragility & Self-Efficacy for Emotional Regulation (SEER)
List of Appendices

APPENDIX A: Figures .................................................................................................................81
APPENDIX B: Tables ....................................................................................................................84
APPENDIX C: Measures .............................................................................................................92
Abstract

When examining racial equity within organizations, a common theme is the failure of many organizations to address whiteness in their organizations (i.e., White supremacy, White privilege, White dominant culture). Decentering whiteness is key in racial equity work (Grimes, 2002). However, the process of decentering whiteness often results in backlash from Whites also known as White fragility (DiAngelo, 2011). This backlash impedes the organization from moving towards racial equity by upholding the racial status quo. The purpose of the current study is to further explore the role mindfulness plays in racial-equity work within organizations. Specifically, a mindfulness intervention was tested for its effectiveness in increasing White employees’ capability to manage emotional discomfort related to confronting their racial privilege (i.e., White fragility) against a control group. The intervention utilizes practices based on mindfulness principles stemming from DBT (Dialectical Behavior Therapy; Linehan, 1993a; Linehan, 1993b) and RO-DBT (Radically Open – Dialectical Behavior Therapy; Lynch, 2018a; Lynch, 2018b). Participants were recruited using the crowdsourcing platform Prolific and had to identify as White, work at least part time, and live in the United States. The sample included 130 participants. It was hypothesized that the mindfulness intervention would decrease participants’ emotional White fragility, increase self-awareness of one’s White fragility, and increase one’s self-efficacy for emotional regulation surrounding race based stress. The results indicated that mindfulness did not decrease emotional White fragility ($B = -.004, p = .94$), but did increase self-awareness of White fragility ($B = 1.30, p < .001$), and increased self-efficacy for emotional regulation surrounding race based stress ($B = 0.67, p = .02$). The results of the study provide practical implications for how
mindfulness practices can be utilized within an organization to aid in their racial equity goals. Additionally, limitations of the current study are addressed along with a presentation of future research directions.

*Keywords:* White fragility, mindfulness, self-awareness, self-efficacy for emotional regulation
CHAPTER I

Introduction

“First, I must confess that over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the White moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro’s great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen’s Council-er or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the White moderate, who is more devoted to “order” than to justice…”

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (1994)

History has shown that any significant movement toward racial justice in the United States (perceived or real) is met with backlash from White people (Lopez, 2010; Omi & Winant, 2015). Social movements in the 1960s that attempted to dismantle covert racist policies were counteracted with reactionary politics (Lopez, 2010). To preserve White supremacy, code words were used to create fear and a sense of loss. Desegregation was framed as an attack on the White family and community (Omi & Winant, 2015). This form of racism has not disappeared but adapted. Although the perceived racial progress of Barack Obama becoming president has supported the notion of a post-racial society (Lopez, 2010), this paradigm reinforces colorblind ideology allowing individuals to defend the racial status quo under the false guise of equality (Jayakumar & Admian, 2017).

In the U.S., racial inequity is the norm and organizations continue to reproduce this inequity throughout society (Amis et al., 2020). As a result, organizations need to be equipped to combat the many ways that racism manifests itself within them. Many organizations have begun utilizing racial awareness or unconscious bias trainings as part
of their diversity efforts (Noon, 2018). Although increasing racial awareness is a step in the right direction, it is not enough. Often, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practices and initiatives primarily focus on the racial groups that have been oppressed or marginalized in an effort to help them assimilate to dominant culture and cope with their oppression (Al Ariss et al., 2014; Grimes, 2002). Often left out of the conversation in DEI practices is whiteness and the role that it plays in upholding systems of inequity. In the context of organizations, the goal of racial equity is to make the workplace fairer for racial minorities by equalizing power across all organizational systems and practices. In this way, the organization should aim to create a culture in which all employees can compete on a level playing field by addressing the organizational culture and systems that privilege some racial groups over others (Blitz & Kohl, 2012). There are a growing number of scholars examining racial equity within organizations from a scientific perspective (see Amis et al., 2020; Grimes, 2001; Grimes, 2002; Janssens & Steyaert, 2019; Nkomo, 1992; Nkomo & Ariss, 2014; Ray, 2019). A common theme throughout all these works is the failure of many organizations to address whiteness in their organizations (i.e., White supremacy, White privilege, White dominant culture). Therefore, decentering whiteness is key in racial equity work (Grimes, 2002). However, the process of decentering whiteness often results in backlash from Whites also known as White fragility (DiAngelo, 2011). This backlash impedes the organization from moving towards racial equity by upholding the racial status quo.

In the study of race and ethnicity, Al Ariss et al. (2014) identified three different levels of analysis: micro-individual, meso-organizational, and macro-contextual. The first level deals with individuals and their experiences, behaviors, racial attitudes, prejudice,
and implicit bias. The second accounts for organizational practices (both conscious and unconscious) that reinforce racial inequity. The third accounts for racial inequity in the broader social context in the form of institutional racism. Although all levels are important to address, the current study focuses on the meso and micro levels of analysis by identifying strategies for DEI professionals who are working to increase racial equity by shaping individual employee attitudes. It should be noted that softening resistance is an insufficient but necessary step in the pursuit towards racial equity.

In summary, the purpose of the current investigation is to further explore the role mindfulness plays in racial-equity work within organizations. Specifically, I tested the effectiveness of a mindfulness intervention in increasing White employees’ capability to manage emotional discomfort related to confronting their racial privilege (i.e., White fragility). The intervention utilizes practices based on mindfulness principles stemming from DBT (Dialectical Behavior Therapy; Linehan, 1993a; Linehan; 1993b) and RO-DBT (Radically Open – Dialectical Behavior Therapy; Lynch, 2018a; Lynch, 2018b) and was tested against a control group. Results of this study provide evidence for mindfulness to be used as a tool for diversity, inclusion, and racial equity practices.

**Literature Review**

In the following sections, I review relevant literature that forms the theoretical foundation for the current study. Although the literature provides evidence for the positive effects of mindfulness in the workplace (Glomb et al., 2011; Good et al., 2016), there is limited research on the impact of mindfulness on reducing White fragility. To begin, the role of race in organizations will be described. Next, an overview of the approaches to racial equity within organizations will be outlined. Then, I will
conceptualize White fragility and identify its implications for negative racial attitudes and interpersonal interactions in the workplace context. Finally, I will build a case for teaching the skill of mindfulness, so it can be used to soften resistance toward DEI initiatives by decreasing White fragility, increasing self-awareness, and increasing self-efficacy for emotional regulation (SEER).

The Role of Race in Organizations

Those in the most powerful positions in institutions across the US including law, entertainment, education and research, government, banking, and finance are predominantly held by White, straight males over the age of 50. However, only 7% of the US population falls into that category (DiAngelo, 2011). Organizational culture is created and upheld by those who hold power in the organization. These individuals have a strong influence over the ideologies, values, and assumptions of the organization's culture. Moreover, they use ego- and ethnocentric perspectives to define and develop criteria for successful performance. Because most powerholders in America are European-American men, their experience is held to be the standard by which performance is evaluated and rewarded. Consequently, individuals who share common physical characteristics or values with those in power are more likely to gain access to powerful positions than those who do not, subsequently reinforcing a cycle of exclusionary power relationships among groups within organizations (Ragins, 1995). Practically, this can be seen in organizational practices including hiring, role allocation, promotion, compensation, and organizational structuring. For example, many organizations use “cultural similarity” as an evaluative shortcut in their hiring practices. As a result, if White men are the “cultural norm” and consequently, the decision makers, then it is likely that they will hire people similar to
them. In sum, racial inequity is often reproduced in organizations through everyday practices (Amis et al., 2020).

In the past couple of decades, scholars have argued that organizational research has a representation problem. Specifically, much of the scholarly work has been assumed to be race-neutral, yet White people (primarily White males) have comprised a disproportionate number of participants in that research; and the findings have been universally generalized across all types of workers (Nkomo, 1992; Ray, 2019). Due to the narratives and norms propagated by White dominant culture, White people are considered raceless and the term “race” refers to non-White people or people of color (DiAngelo, 2018; McLaren, 2002; Sensoy & Diangelo, 2017). As a result, a double standard has emerged in how research is conducted and how inferences stemming from the work have been applied in organizational practices. Specifically, research conducted on people of color is considered only valid within that group and not acceptable for generalization or advancing organizational science whereas inferences stemming from investigations conducted on White people are considered acceptable to apply across all races (Nkomo, 1992). In sum, there is a burgeoning body of theoretical and empirical work devoted to exposing how the foundation of organizational research has been guided by White values, norms, and beliefs resulting in faulty assumptions and issues with construct validity (Nkomo, 1992; Nkomo & Ariss, 2014; Nkomo & Hoobler, 2014; Ray, 2019).

Consequently, racial dynamics in U.S history and its impact on organizations and the people of color within them has been significantly underrepresented (Nkomo, 1992; Ray, 2019). Thus, there is a need for racial equity in organizations, highlighting the impact that race has on organizations and the employees within them.
Racial Equity in Organizations

There are several theoretical approaches that an organization may have towards racial equity. Carter (2000) identifies four perspectives that frame a continuum of organizational responses to racial equity: universal, ubiquitous, traditional, and race-based.

The universal perspective highlights human similarities while de-emphasizing human differences. This perspective ignores historical context related to cultural differences. As a result, the organization may reinforce racial inequity by not examining the way policies and organizational processes reinforce and uphold Eurocentric cultural standards.

The ubiquitous perspective values diverse social groups and their contributions, but within a dominant culture. The overall influence of the dominant culture is de-emphasized or even ignored. Under this perspective, little consideration is given to the shared cultural patterns of White people regardless of gender, sexual preference, religion, or ethnicity. Consequently, there is limited inclusiveness and representation at all levels of the organization. Quite often, there is an overrepresentation of women and people of color in lower level positions that do not hold power.

The traditional perspective ties culture to employees’ country of origin. In this view, there is an emphasis on language, customs, and food with an acknowledgement of differences in worldview and cultural practices. Concerns regarding cultural issues would be focused on values, assumptions, customs, and languages rather than within country bias and discrimination.
The race-based approach emphasizes the significance of racism and racial identity development in shaping the structure and performance of organizations. In this perspective, historical and cultural differences are acknowledged and there is dedicated effort to address racial inequities within the organization. Specifically, employees are challenged to examine their racial socialization and recognize the implications of that in their workplace.

A key component of racial equity is understanding whiteness and its role in upholding racial inequities (Al Ariss et al., 2014). Through a review of diversity management literature, Grimes (2001) identified three perspectives on whiteness within organizations: (a) interrogating whiteness, (b) re-centering whiteness, and (c) masking whiteness. Interrogating whiteness involves unmasking, naming, and de-centering whiteness. This approach highlights the importance of the perspectives of people of color while addressing the implications of whiteness within the organization. Re-centering whiteness appears progressive on the surface; however, White people are still implicitly regarded as the “norm” and therefore more important. Masking whiteness emphasizes colorblind principles and ideology, thus protecting the invisibility of whiteness. In this perspective, differences are denied, and people of color are deemed culturally inferior. These organizational approaches towards racial equity and perspectives on whiteness demonstrate numerous stances that organizations may take as they grapple with issues of DEI.

**Current Organizational Approaches to Racial Equity**

Of the four approaches organizations may take toward racial equity, the universal one is most common in organizations because it promotes unity and colorblind ideology
which results in fewer instances of backlash from Whites (Holladay & Quinones, 2008; Nkomo & Hoobler, 2014; Stevens et al., 2008). Evidence has shown that Whites support colorblindness more strongly than minorities (Markus et al., 2000; Ryan et al., 2007). Additionally, there is evidence that White people feel more connected to an organization that supports colorblindness (Vos et al., 2014). However, Swartz et al. (2014) argue that this type of approach does nothing to address the impact that years of oppression and power inequities have had on marginalized groups and only gives the appearance of equity. In general, organizations tend to avoid initiatives and organizational changes that generate conflict (Mannix & Neale, 2005; Nybell & Sims Gray, 2004). Initiatives that seek to challenge those with control and influence over organizational resources and processes are difficult to implement; but, without them, racial inequity will remain (Abramovitz & Blitz, 2015).

Typically, organizations try to use an all-inclusive approach to equity with the responsibility of change “equally” distributed. Unfortunately, this approach is likely to be ineffective. This is because it ignores the imbalance of power and privilege and assumes everyone is equal. White dominant culture centers whiteness as the standard and norm for what is “right.” This forces people of color to assimilate to White dominant culture, thus maintaining White supremacy. As a result, diversity programs and initiatives tend to focus on how to help people of color and other marginalized groups assimilate to White dominant culture, as well as give them tools to “cope” with discrimination and racism (Grimes, 2001). Hiring more people of color is yet another tactic used by organizations to increase diversity (Kossek et al., 2003). However, simply increasing the numbers of people of color within an organization, without addressing the climate produced by
whiteness, reinforces White privilege and racial inequity (Schroeder & DiAngelo, 2010). A negative racial climate can lead to increased turnover intentions for people of color (Chrobot-Mason et al., 2013; Jones et al., 2016). Ultimately, this does not help to level the playing field and instead reinforces the imbalance of power and privilege.

**Challenges to Achieving Racial Equity in Organizations**

If racial equity work is not conducted effectively, there is the risk of adhering to the other two perspectives (masking whiteness or re-centering whiteness) which encourage a White savior complex (i.e. helping people of color in a self-serving way that places White people in the position of ‘savior’ and people of color in the role of a ‘helpless victim’) and ultimately does not lead to the desired progression toward racial equity. Thus, organizations that want to increase racial equity need to take a race-based approach (Carter, 2000) that interrogates whiteness (Grimes, 2001). In other words, they need to prioritize anti-racism – seeking to confront and eradicate racism (Bonnett, 2000; Came & Griffith, 2018). In this way, people of color can liberate themselves with White people acting as allies (defined as “members of the advantaged group who act against the oppression(s) from which they derive power, privilege, and acceptance”; Bell, 2007, p. 32) rather than saviors. However, this approach to racial equity in organizations does not come easily due to many barriers including insufficient resources, lack of support from upper management, and organizational reluctance to change their structure (Abramovitz & Blitz, 2015). Addressing racial inequity requires addressing power imbalances and replacing existing organizational culture practices and structures with a new organizational paradigm (Martín-Alcázar et al., 2012). Moreover, because White dominant culture’s values and assumptions have been the default for so long, people have
become accustomed to it such that the majority of White people have not developed the stamina and language to address their whiteness (DiAngelo, 2011). Consequently, many organizations are reluctant to incorporate racial equity into their diversity efforts because of the anticipated backlash (also known as White fragility; De Meuse & Hostager, 2001; Kidder et al., 2004). The following section discusses this concept in more detail.

**White Fragility**

Most White people in the United States exist in a social environment that shelters them from experiencing racial stress (DiAngelo, 2011). Therefore, it can be difficult for White people to confront their power, privilege, and racist beliefs. Often confronting their privilege results in strong affective, cognitive, and behavioral reactions (Pinterits, 2009). These reactions are known as White fragility and serve to uphold White supremacy. White fragility is “a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves” (DiAngelo, 2011, p. 54). Affective reactions may include fear, anger, and guilt (Diaz-Rico, 1998; Goodman, 2001; Kivel, 2002). Fear may be connected to loss of material benefits, loss of power, rejection from family and friends, and rejection by racial minorities (Goodman, 2001; Neville et al., 2001). Guilt may occur due to self-blame for illegitimate racial advantages (Powell et al., 2005). Anger may occur from feeling threatened or personally attacked. Cognitive reactions include denial (Ancis & Szymanski, 2001), minimization of racial injustice (Neville et al., 2001), rationalization, and justification based on theories of social Darwinism or social dominance (Diaz-Rico, 1998; Pratto et al., 1994). Behavioral reactions include avoidance or unwillingness to engage in conversations about race.
Social identity theory posits that social groups are a significant component of self-definition (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The theory suggests that individuals automatically sort themselves into categories. Tajfel (1978) argues that this categorization automatically triggers a motivational need to view one’s own group in a positive light. This motivation leads to behaviors in which the members of the in-group are deemed favorable over members of the out-group. It was found that when privileged group members thought about their unearned group-based advantages, their group identity was threatened (Branscombe, 1998). When confronted with White privilege, White people may experience two psychological threats: (a) meritocratic threat and (b) group image threat (Knowles et al., 2014). Meritocratic threat refers to the possibility that life accomplishments were not fully earned based on merit. Group image threat refers to being associated with a group that benefits from unfair social advantages. The perception of illegitimate ingroup privilege suggests that the ingroup will lose status or power if intergroup relations become more equitable, thus threatening the security of the ingroup’s high status position. When the status relations between groups are insecure, dominant groups may become particularly oppressive in their effort to preserve their high-status position (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner & Brown, 1978). Arguably, confronting one’s privilege or racism may threaten one’s self-concept. When this happens, stress hormones elicit a fight or flight response (Berila, 2016). DiAngelo outlines various triggers or threats for White people that tend to elicit White fragility. Examples of triggers include “Suggesting that a White person’s viewpoint comes from a racialized frame of reference
THE ROLE OF MINDFULNESS IN MITIGATING EMOTIONAL WHITE FRAGILITY

(challenge to objectivity); a fellow White not providing agreement with one’s interpretations (challenge to White solidarity); an acknowledgment that access is unequal between racial groups (challenge to meritocracy), and being presented with a person of color in a position of leadership (challenge to White authority)” (2011, p.57). White fragility is an umbrella term for the negative, affective, behavioral, cognitive responses that White people may have in response to topics or conversations regarding race and privilege. The current study focuses on the affective component of White fragility called emotional White fragility. Emotional White fragility is defined as “the experience and/or expression of emotion that results from White fragility that makes it more difficult for one to have constructive, meaningful thoughts and conversations about race” (Liebow & Glazer, 2019, p. 3). Now that White fragility has been defined, it is important to acknowledge the implications of not addressing White fragility within organizations.

Costs of White Fragility to Organizations

White fragility has many negative implications for both organizations and the individuals within them. In general, White fragility functions to maintain White racial comfort and obscure racism (DiAngelo, 2011, 2018). The silencing of racism is a common theme across most displays of White fragility. Each time systems, institutions, or people silence the discussion of racism, whiteness is allowed to remain as neutral, preserving White supremacy. Examples include White organizational leaders taking precautions to ensure that White employees feel comfortable with any racial equity efforts (i.e., requesting the term “White” not be used in diversity or racial equity trainings) and feeling entitled to this comfort (Erksine & Bilimoria, 2017), feeling extreme anger or hurt at the suggestion that one’s behavior might have racial impact and
instead blaming “the person or event that triggered their discomfort (usually a person of color)” (DiAngelo, 2011, p. 60), and tone-policing when any feedback is given (DiAngelo, 2018).

Moreover, White fragility behaviors and failing to address White privilege can reinforce the norms of discriminating against people of color (Branscombe et al., 2007; Egan Brad et al., 2019; Sue et al., 2019). People of color’s experiences of discrimination can predict the extent to which they feel excluded at work (Otten & Jansen, 2015). Moreover, they may feel disengaged from their work tasks, unvalued, unsafe, or that they cannot be their authentic selves in their work environment (Ferdman et al., 2010; Sabharwal, 2014). Consequently, White fragility can serve to entrench forms of discrimination which can inhibit the development of cross-racial relationships in the workplace. There is evidence suggesting that undesirable organizational-level outcomes of racial discrimination include lower job satisfaction, lower satisfaction with one’s coworkers and supervisors, increased turnover intentions, and decreased organizational citizenship behaviors for people of color (Traina et al., 2015). Furthermore, White fragility is not only harmful to people of color but to White people as well. The costs of failing to process and address privilege for dominant groups include a loss of connection to one’s ethnicity and cultural heritage, deep racial biases even when one does not want to have them, a sense of expectation and entitlement that can result in despair when it is not granted, isolation from community, and a participation in power dynamics that produce vast inequalities (Case, 2013; Wise, 2011). Overall, White fragility has negative implications for organizations, people of color, and White people.

White Fragility is a Primary Barrier to DEI Effectiveness
Many organizations are taking steps to become more equitable through DEI initiatives (Noon, 2018) but White resistance may nullify any potential for good impact. Evidence has shown that when organizations promote pro-diversity messages, Whites reported more concerns about anti-White discrimination and being treated unfairly (Dover et al., 2020). These messages may serve as a cue to White people that members from their racial group are not valued or not welcome, arguably making them resistant to pro-diversity initiatives (Dover et al., 2020). Additionally, many organizations are attempting to implement racial equity training and initiatives, many of which involve exercises designed to facilitate White people’s awareness of how whiteness shapes their experiences (Egan Brad et al., 2019). Diversity and racial equity trainings can influence the perceptions, attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors of employees. De Meuse and Hostager (2001) outline dimensions that represent the reactions to workplace diversity including emotional and behavioral reactions, judgments, personal consequences, and organizational outcomes. These reactions can be either positive or negative. However, negative reactions such as White fragility can impede the effectiveness of the DEI initiatives. White fragility in the workplace typically tends to be elicited when organizations take steps to be more diverse and inclusive, particularly when they highlight racial inequities and the impact of race on lived experience.

Diversity and racial equity trainings often provide White people with information on racial equity without addressing the strong, negative emotional reactions that often result. This backlash often stems from one’s own perceptions of whiteness, which can impact their ability to embrace, dismiss, or resist racial equity practices (Evans-Winters & Hines, 2019). This means that organizations that do not work to mitigate this backlash
from Whites may risk their initiatives failing (De Muese & Hostager, 2001; Evans-Winters & Hines, 2019). Evidence has shown that although White people may understand the importance of moving through negative feelings, they often struggle to do so (Linder, 2015). In sum, White fragility is a significant issue for organizations. Thus, the goal of the current study is to help White people manage the emotions that result from White fragility so that they can be more receptive to racial equity initiatives. Therefore, I propose the use of mindfulness as a tool to mitigate White fragility within organizations.

**Mindfulness**

Mindfulness has been conceptualized multiple ways in current literature; however, all conceptualizations align regarding its fundamental nature (Brown et al., 2007). Mindfulness, at its core, is the awareness and observation of the present without reactivity or judgment (Glomb et al., 2011; Kabat-Zinn, 1990). Rooted in Buddhist philosophy, the aim of mindfulness is to heighten conscious awareness of the present moment. Buddhist philosophy seeks to cultivate wisdom and compassion (Nyanaponika, 1998). Mindfulness is characterized by curiosity, acceptance, and openness (Bishop et al., 2004). It involves experiential processing which includes attention to both internal (e.g. feelings, thoughts, emotions) and external stimuli (Brown et al., 2007). It also refers to a set of contemplative practices aimed at increasing one’s awareness of the present, thoughts, experiences, and broader reality (Berila, 2016; Bishop et al., 2004; Magee, 2016; Walsh et al., 2009). For the purposes of this study, mindfulness will be defined as contemplative practices focused on critical self-reflection of one’s thoughts, emotions, behaviors and experiences.
Public awareness of mindfulness has grown due to its therapeutic use by psychologists and medical practitioners. Over the past thirty years, researchers have frequently examined the role of mindfulness, in both clinical and nonclinical populations. It has shown to be effective for alleviating symptoms due to physical and psychological disorders and as a stress reduction technique (Chiesa & Serretti, 2010; Delmonte, 1990). Much of the interest in the clinical application of mindfulness stemmed from the introduction of a well-known mindfulness-based intervention called Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR; Kabat-Zinn, 1990). MBSR has been shown to mitigate stress and enhance emotional well-being (Astin, 1997; Shapiro et al., 1998; Williams et al., 2001). In general, mindfulness and mindfulness-based practices have been linked to many mental health benefits. These include decreased depression (Foley et al., 2010), anxiety (Biegel et al., 2009), stress (Branstrom et al., 2010), and overall psychological distress (Foley et al., 2010). Additionally, it has been linked to increased psychological well-being (Branstrom et al., 2010; Carmody & Baer, 2008), sleep quality (Biegel et al., 2009; Roth & Robbins, 2004), social connectedness (Hutcherson et al., 2008), and overall quality of life.

**Mindfulness at Work**

Mindfulness has also been studied in the context of organizations. There is substantial evidence to show the role that mindfulness plays in work-related outcomes. Research has provided several theoretical outcomes for mindfulness. Mindfulness-based practices can improve self-regulation of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, which are linked to both performance and employee well-being in the workplace (Glomb et al., 2011). More specifically, Glomb et al. (2011) provide a summary of cognitive and
emotional processes related to mindfulness and their theoretically proposed work-related outcomes. Benefits of mindfulness may include response flexibility, decreased rumination, empathy, affective regulation, increased self-determination and persistence, increased working memory, and increased affective forecasting. Potential work-related outcomes may include improved social relationships (Hutcherson et al., 2008), improved decision making, improved coping with stressful events, better problem solving, increased performance, reduced negative affective and less biased decision making (Glomb et al., 2011).

There are also several evidence-based outcomes of mindfulness. Research suggests that mindfulness practice can be used as an effective means of reducing negative emotions and behaviors at work (Hill & Updegraff, 2012; Krishnakumar & Robinson, 2015). Good et al. (2016) provide a summary for further evidence for workplace outcomes linked to mindfulness including performance, relationships and well-being. Mindfulness can be linked to varying types of work performance such as deviance, job performance, task performance, organizational citizenship behaviors, and safety performance. Relationship outcomes linked to mindfulness include conflict management, empathy and compassion, leadership, and teamwork. Well-being outcomes include reduced levels of reported burnout, perceived stress work-family conflict and negative moods. Furthermore, evidence suggests that individuals with a higher degree of mindfulness are less likely to exhibit hostile feelings and behaviors (Krishnakumar & Robinson, 2015).

Mindfulness as a Tool for Mitigating White Fragility
Due to the effectiveness of mindfulness in helping individuals regulate very strong emotions, combined with the evidence suggesting that White fragility invokes overwhelming feelings, mindfulness may be an effective tool for mitigating White fragility. Therefore, I wish to investigate if the benefits of mindfulness extrapolate to White people experiencing strong emotions related to race based stress. Mindfulness can provide the emotional space and stamina for White people to not shut down in the face of very strong emotions that may result from an organization’s racial equity practices. While the connections between mindfulness and anti-racism are new, researchers have begun to explore the use of mindfulness in facing discrimination (Brown-Iannuzzi et al., 2014), reducing bias, and confronting racism (Hick & Furlotte, 2009; Lillis & Hayes, 2007; Lueke & Gibson, 2015; Magee, 2016). Most of the research on mindfulness and anti-racism has occurred in educational literature (Berila, 2014, 2016; Magee, 2016; Orr, 2002). Berila (2016) argues that courses that deal with diversity and racism can significantly benefit from contemplative practices because they can help individuals unlearn the conditioned responses that uphold systems of racism and oppression. In this way, individuals can investigate what their role might be in systems of racism and how that may affect them personally. Additionally, contemplative practices can help individuals learn to sit with negative emotions, develop emotional intelligence and become more intentional in how they respond in any given situation (Berila, 2016). Due to the use of mindfulness in the educational context for topics on diversity and privilege, it is arguable that it can also be used in organizational settings that are attempting to accomplish similar outcomes of increased racial awareness and racial equity.
Emotional White fragility typically involves a failure of emotion regulation (Liebow & Glazer, 2019). Given that mindfulness is linked to better emotional self-regulation (Hülsheger, et al. 2013), it could help with the White fragility that often accompanies racial equity efforts. I argue that, for White people, the path to racial equity is not simply learned through increased racial awareness or political consciousness but additionally through personal inner work — a commitment to engaging in critical self-enquiry regarding one’s biases and assumptions about race and working through negative emotions. Thus, for the current study, I propose the use of mindfulness as a means for addressing emotional White fragility. The intervention used in this study incorporates mindfulness-related principles stemming from RO-DBT (Radically Open – Dialectical Behavior Therapy) — a form of mindfulness-based therapy that is a variation of traditional DBT (Dialectical Behavior Therapy; Linehan, 1993a). RO-DBT is used primarily in clinical settings to treat clinical disorders such as obsessive compulsive personality disorder, eating disorders, and other disorders involving obsessive control, cognitive rigidity and inflexibility (Lynch, 2018a). Additionally, RO-DBT encourages leaning into discomfort, decreasing rigidity in thinking, and becoming more open-minded. Although White fragility is not classified as a diagnosable psychological disorder, for White people, thinking about racial matters and confronting their whiteness may illicit a trauma-like response because their self-concept is being threatened (Berila, 2016). The concept of Whiteness is so deeply ingrained that White people can become inflexible and rigid in their thinking around their own White identity. Therefore, it is argued that clinical techniques used to treat diagnoses characterized by rigidity and
inflexibility will be directly applicable. Accordingly, it is hypothesized that mindfulness practices can reduce White fragility.

**Hypothesis 1:** Participants who complete the mindfulness exercises will exhibit lower levels of White fragility (negative affect) when asked to reflect on their privileged position in the social structure than those who complete an exercise unrelated to mindfulness.

The three core philosophical principles in RO-DBT are dialectics, radical openness, and self-enquiry. Dialectics refers to the integration or synthesis of opposites (Linehan & Schmidt, 1995). This means taking a *both-and* approach to thinking. For example, one can be angry at someone *and* still love and respect that same individual, thereby combating black and white thinking. In the context of anti-racist work, this can help individuals expand out of the *good-bad binary* of what it means to be a racist (DiAngelo, 2018). Specifically, someone can be a *good* person with pure intentions and at the same time, manifest racially harmful attitudes and behaviors.

Radical openness involves the intention to deeply explore areas in one’s life that are difficult, painful, or disturbing. It means being open to the learning process by absorbing new information and responding appropriately to disconfirming feedback. Moreover, it is characterized by a willingness to acknowledge one’s fallibility with an intention to change if need be.

Finally, self-enquiry, also known as self-reflection, is the investigation and evaluation of one's thoughts, feelings and behavior (Grant et al., 2002). For the purposes of this study, self-enquiry and self-reflection will be used interchangeably. Self-enquiry is a metacognitive factor necessary for purposeful, directed change (Carver & Scheier,
1998). Purposeful progress through the cycle of self-regulation towards a specific goal depends on one’s ability to monitor and evaluate their progress and subsequently use that feedback to improve their performance (Grant et al., 2002). Of these three principles, self-enquiry is the one of focus in the current study. However, the other two principles could also be helpful in reducing White fragility and should be explored in future investigations.

Self-enquiry involves a willingness to challenge one’s core beliefs. It acknowledges that, on some level, we are responsible for our perceptions and actions. Additionally, it involves a willingness to question oneself when feeling threatened or challenged rather than automatically becoming defensive. Arguably, self-enquiry can be a powerful tool used in racial equity to help individuals investigate their racial attitudes and how they function to either reinforce or dismantle White supremacy. In summary, racial equity requires intentional effort on the behalf of the organization and the individual to look within themselves to unlearn beliefs and behaviors that they have been taught and socialized with since birth.

**The Theoretical Relationship Between Self-Reflection and Self-Awareness**

Social cognitive theory posits that individuals are active agents of behavioral, cognitive, and emotional change using self-regulatory processes. These self-regulation processes operate through three subfunctions: self-monitoring of one’s behavior, its causes, and its effects; judgment of one’s behavior in relation to environmental circumstance and personal standards; and affective regulation (Bandura, 1991). Self-regulation refers to the “processes involved in attaining and maintaining (i.e., keeping regular) goals, where goals are internally represented (i.e., within the self) desired states”
THE ROLE OF MINDFULNESS IN MITIGATING EMOTIONAL WHITE FRAGILITY

(Vancouver & Day, 2005, p. 158). Across most theories of self-regulation are the ideas that individuals set goals, compare their progress against the goals, and then modify their cognitions or behaviors if there is an inconsistency between a goal and the current state (Karoly, 1993).

In social cognitive theory, self-reflection is considered an important motivational force for self-regulation (Bandura, 1997), adaptation, and self-development (Dewey, 1993). Self-reflection can provide individuals with important self-diagnostic information. By reflecting on habitual thought patterns, individuals can better understand how their thoughts influence their emotional states and behaviors providing direction for self-regulation, (Bandura, 1991; Morin, 2011). Research suggests that individuals who reflect regularly are better able to reevaluate a situation and then cognitively reappraise the situation in a way that changes the emotional impact of the situation (Gross & John, 2003). Through systematic critical self-reflection, individuals can improve their self-awareness, which in turn, improves self-monitoring, self-correction, and ultimately self-regulation (Bandura, 1991; Kirschenbaum, 1997).

Self-awareness is defined as the extent to which an individual has conscious awareness of their internal states and their relationships or interactions with others (Sutton, 2016). In the context of racial equity, increased self-awareness of personally held biases is a critical step in reducing one’s prejudice and discrimination (Perry et al., 2015). Evidence has found that focused attention on the affective dimensions of racism (e.g., guilt, negation, and shame) can help individuals not only to understand what feelings are associated with discrimination, prejudice and microaggressions, but also to better understand and criticize the many diverse forms of racism (Ahmed, 2004; Grzanka et al.,
THE ROLE OF MINDFULNESS IN MITIGATING EMOTIONAL WHITE FRAGILITY

2019; Ioanide, 2015). Research has demonstrated that making people aware of discrepancies between their racially biased attitudes and their core value of equality resulted in less prejudice and lower levels of discrimination immediately and for several weeks after an intervention (Grube et al., 1994). Other work has shown that when White individuals become salient of their racial biases (Monteith, 1993; Monteith et al., 2010) or are made aware of their goals to be non-prejudiced (Moskowitz & Li, 2011), they often modify their attitudes and behavior to become more egalitarian; and they work harder to compensate for prejudiced behavior. Conversely, when individuals are not aware of their biases, they are unlikely to change their negative racial attitudes and likely to continue their biased behaviors. Thus, the practice of self-enquiry can help White individuals cope with some of the affective and cognitive reactions of White fragility by bringing them into awareness so they can effectively be addressed. Accordingly, it is hypothesized that reflecting on an exercise intended to evoke White fragility will make individuals more self-aware of their emotions surrounding race and privilege.

**Hypothesis 2:** Participants who engage in the mindfulness exercise will exhibit more self-awareness of their own feelings of White fragility than those who engage in an exercise unrelated to mindfulness.

**Self-Efficacy for Emotional Regulation (SEER)**

Becoming more self-aware of one’s emotions can help one regulate their emotions (Bishop et al., 2004; Brown et al., 2007; Glomb et al., 2011; Hülsheger et al., 2013). Emotional regulation refers to the process by which individuals modify their emotional responses (i.e., which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express them; Gross, 1998). Gross (1998) developed several processes of
emotion regulation, including attention deployment, cognitive change and response modulation. Building upon social cognitive theories of self-regulation (e.g., Mischel et al., 1996), Tamir and Mauss (2011) identified three key social cognitive factors necessary for self-regulation: (a) beliefs about control (self-efficacy), (b) values and goals, and (c) strategies and competencies (Mischel et al., 1996; Mischel & Shoda, 1995). Because emotional regulation is a subset of the broader concept of self-regulation, it is reasonable to infer that these same factors that influence overall self-regulation may also influence emotional regulation (Tamir & Mauss, 2011). An individual’s belief about their capacity to control an attribute is also known as self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). A pre-requisite for an individual to attempt to regulate their emotions, is a baseline level of confidence that they personally can control them. People engage in self-regulation to acquire outcomes that they deem to be valuable (Bandura, 1977). In the context of emotional regulation, most individuals view positive emotions as valuable; whereas the opposite is true for negative emotions because most individuals tend to avoid pain (Larsen, 2000). Strategies and competencies refer to the potential behaviors, plans, and strategies used to self-regulate. To regulate emotions, individuals need access to strategies for how to do so. I propose that helping White people with their emotional regulation skills can help mitigate emotional White fragility. Thus, in the current study, a mindfulness practice will be used to help participants learn how to regulate their emotions and increase both their self-awareness and their confidence to regulate their emotions in the future.

Effective diversity trainings have been shown to increase White people’s self-efficacy to deal with racial equity issues (Erskine & Bilimoria, 2019). Consequently, it is argued that increasing one’s ability to regulate their emotions, will in turn increase their
confidence to regulate their emotions in the future. Prior findings suggest that in emotionally induced situations, people who believe in their emotional regulating abilities may be better at modifying negative emotions and adjusting their perception of any negative situation (Wang et al., 2011). Individuals who have higher SEER (i.e., one’s confidence in their ability to successfully regulate negative emotions; Wang et al., 2011) are more likely to control their emotions and thus, over time, learn to use more adaptive emotional regulation strategies (Tamir & Mauss, 2011). Moreover, people with higher SEER are more likely to recover from a stressful situation and less likely to carry over the negative emotions to another situation (Harms & Crede, 2010; Salovey & Grewal, 2005), because they use better coping strategies to deal with elicited negative emotions (Gross & John, 2003; Lazarus, 1993). This increased SEER may make White individuals feel more inclined to engage in allyship behaviors such as engaging in conversations on race and privilege and encouraging their White counterparts to also address their own privilege (Detert & Bruno, 2017; Erskine & Bilimoria, 2019). Thus, it is hypothesized that training White people in ways that focus on reducing fragility through emotional regulation will increase a participant’s SEER for race-based stress.

**Hypothesis 3:** Participants who complete the mindfulness exercise will report greater SEER to deal with race-based stress than those who complete an exercise unrelated to mindfulness.

CHAPTER II

Method

Participants

*Inclusion Criteria*
To be included in the study, participants needed to be White, 18+ years of age and live within the United States. Additionally, participants were also employed part- or full-time within an organization. For the purposes of this study, the term “White” refers to the skin color used to racially classify European and, more broadly Western Eurasian descent. Participants who self-identified as White were included in the study. Participants that did not meet these criteria were excluded from the study.

The final sample was all White, reported an average age of 33.44 years, and the gender breakdown was 58.5% males and 40.8% females. Most of the participants identified as Democrat (46.2%). The next highest political affiliations were Republican (26.9%) and Independent (22.3%). Most participants had a bachelor’s degree (30.8%) or master’s degree (33.1%).

**Sample Size and Power**

The suggested sample size by G*Power Version 3.1 (Faul et al., 2009) when specifying a fixed effects, main effects, and interactions ANCOVA and effect size ($f^2$) of .25, alpha = .15, 1- $\beta$ = .85, with 2 groups and 2 covariates is 100 participants. Given this recommendation, a total sample of 130 participants was collected this study to account for potential missingness. Each condition was randomly assigned 65 participants, which improves power and the stability of the standard error estimates.

**Recruitment**

The data was collected using the online survey platform Prolific. Prolific is an online marketplace in which registered participants are recruited based on criteria outlined by the researchers and compensated for completing surveys. For the current
study, each participant was compensated $5.00 to meet a living wage of $15.00 (US) per hour.

Procedure

After the participants accepted the invitation to the study, they were directed to the survey located on Qualtrics. The completion of the survey required an average of 20 minutes for participants to complete. After agreeing to the requirements outlined in the informed consent, participants were asked a series of demographic questions (see Appendix C). Next, participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions – (control and mindfulness) using a Qualtrics randomizer function. Then all participants answered negative affect questions and subsequently completed a brief task intended to evoke White fragility. The control group was assigned to complete a control exercise that is unrelated to mindfulness. Participants in the mindfulness condition completed a brief self-reflection exercise and a brief guided mindfulness exercise designed to help regulate negative emotions. Each exercise was timed to ensure consistency across all participants. Participants took a negative affect measure to assess their White fragility at three different timepoints: (a) at the beginning of the survey as a baseline assessment, (b) after the White privilege exercise as a check that the exercise evoked White fragility and (c) after the mindfulness/control exercise to assess differences in negative affect across groups. Next participants responded to the other two outcome measures of self-efficacy related to race-based stress and self-awareness of White fragility. Finally, they reported their tendency to engage in self-reflection and their racial awareness. At the completion of the study, participants were thanked and provided a unique verification code for compensation.
Research Design
For this investigation, I used a two-group pretest, multiple post-test design. The predictor for this experiment had two conditions: control and mindfulness. Both conditions completed the White privilege exercise described below. After completing the White privilege task, participants in the mindfulness condition completed a brief self-reflection exercise and a brief guided mindfulness exercise designed to help regulate negative emotions. The control condition completed an exercise that asked them to describe the room they are in. See Appendix C for the exercises and measures as they were presented to participants.

Table 1 outlines the research design for the study. The pre-test ($O_1$) served as the baseline measurement for participants’ White fragility (negative affect). The first post-test ($O_2$) served as a check to demonstrate that the White privilege exercise served its intended purpose, namely to evoke White fragility in participants. The final post-test ($O_3$) was used to examine the effects of the mindfulness interventions on all three outcomes: White fragility (negative affect), self-awareness, and SEER. See Figure 3 for the experimental flow.

Manipulation and Measures
See Figure 1 for an overview of all of the variables included in this study. See Figure 2 for the model of the hypothesized relationships.

White Privilege Exercise to Invoke White Fragility
This study examined the role mindfulness plays in reducing White fragility (negative affect). To elicit White fragility in participants, they were asked to consider and write about the ways they have received privileges or advantages due to being White. White privilege is defined as “a set of unearned advantages due to being White and
characterized as an expression of institutional power” (Neville et al., 2001). Evidence has shown that mere exposure to topics related to race, race conversations, race salience, and viewpoints that decenter whiteness can lead to White fragility (Jayakumar & Adamian, 2017). Moreover, in general, White people do not readily perceive their benefits because of their privilege (McIntosh, 1992). Thus, encouraging White people to think about their privilege should evoke White fragility. To ensure that the exercise evokes feelings of White fragility in the participant, a check was administered right after the exercise. Participants were expected to show an increase in negative affect directly after the White privilege exercise, indicating that the exercise had its intended effect.

**Mindfulness Manipulation**

The goal of the mindfulness exercise is to help participants regulate their negative emotions, increase their self-awareness, and self-efficacy for emotional regulation. This was accomplished using two techniques: self-reflection and the STOP technique. Both are designed to increase a person’s capacity to regulate negative emotions. This intervention is intended to help participants reduce their White fragility (negative affect).

A major component of mindfulness is self-reflection which leads to increased self-awareness and insight (Grant et al., 2002; Shapiro, et al., 2006). The insight attained through mindfulness-based practices provides individuals with awareness that their thoughts and emotions are subjective and temporary in nature (Safran & Segal, 1990), consequently facilitating non-attachment and subsequently improving emotional regulation (Sahdra et al., 2010). In this study participants are asked to reflect on their experience completing the White privilege exercise to make them more aware of their thoughts and emotional reactions to the exercise.
The STOP technique was developed by Kabat-Zinn (1990) as part of a mindfulness-based stress reduction program to help individuals regulate negative emotions. This technique involves four steps. The first step is to briefly stop what is being done or thought about in the moment. Second, is to take a deep breath and step back from the situation, temporarily focusing on the breath; inhaling and exhaling. Third, is to observe any body sensations, emotions, thoughts or feelings without reacting. The fourth and final step is to determine the next steps to proceed mindfully.

This technique was designed to help people regulate strong negative moments in the moment, by helping them build awareness of their emotions through several processes including focused attention and decentering. Focused attention involves sustained attention on a specific sensory or mental object (Vago & David, 2012). In the STOP technique, there is focused attention on the breath. The goal of practicing focused attention on the breath is to stabilize the mind and bring the individual back into the present moment (Vago & David, 2012). Safran and Segal (1990) define decentering as the ability to “step outside of one’s immediate experience, thereby changing the very nature of that experience” (p.117). This process allows for space between the event and the individual’s reaction to that event. Through the process of mindfulness, an individual is able to intentionally observe the contents of consciousness (e.g. one’s thoughts or emotions) and view their moment-by-moment experience with greater objectivity and clarity, increasing their self-awareness (Shapiro et al., 2006).

In sum, the self-reflection exercise was intended to help participants become more self-aware of their emotions and thoughts surrounding race and privilege, and the mindfulness exercise was intended to help regulate those negative emotions and increase
their SEER. Participants answered a manipulation check question after both the self-reflection and STOP exercises to ensure participants completed both tasks.

**Proposed Outcomes of Engaging in Mindfulness**

**Emotional White Fragility.** In accordance with Liebow and Glazer’s (2019) definition of emotional White fragility, negative affect was used as a proxy to capture White fragility. The affective component of White fragility was measured using the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson et al., 1988). The PANAS is used to assess changes in the state affect of participants at baseline and after the experimental manipulations to ensure that the manipulations had the intended effect. The original scale consists of two 10-item subscales to measure both positive and negative affect. For the purposes of this study, only the negative affect items were used as they align with the construct of emotional White fragility (DiAngelo, 2011; Liebow & Glazer, 2019). Negative affect items include “Afraid,” “Distressed,” “Guilty,” and “Scared.” The scale was slightly adapted to change “irritable” to “irritated” to better assess the emotion in the current moment. Participants provided ratings on ten negative affect items that represent how they were feeling “in the current moment” using a 5-point scale from 1 (not at all or very slightly) to 5 (very much). The PANAS has shown good test-retest reliability and convergent validity among university students (Mackinnon et al., 1999; Watson et al., 1988). An average Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of .90 was reported within the current study across all three timepoints. For analysis, the items were combined and the mean was used to create a composite negative affect score.

**Self-Awareness of White Fragility.** Self-awareness is the extent to which an individual is consciously aware of their internal states (Morin, 2011). While there are
many scales that measure general self-awareness (e.g. the Self Consciousness Scale, the Situational Awareness Scale; Fenigstein et al., 1975; Govern & Marsch, 2001), there are none that specifically measure one’s self-awareness of white fragility. Thus, a three-item measure was developed to assess participants’ self-awareness of their own fragility. This measure was developed by adapting self-awareness items from an existing self-awareness measure (e.g. see insight subscale in Grant et al., 2002) to assess self-awareness in regards to one’s own white fragility. An example item is “As a result of participating in the exercise, I feel more aware of the emotions that influence my thoughts about the topics of race and privilege.” Participants were asked to rate their responses on a seven-point Likert scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Within the current study, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was .96. For analysis, the items were combined and the mean was used to create a composite self-awareness score.

**Self-Efficacy for Emotional-Regulation (SEER) for Race-Based Stress.** Self-efficacy for emotional regulation (SEER), refers to one’s belief in their ability to successfully regulate negative emotions (Wang et al., 2011). Currently, there are no measures for self-efficacy for emotional regulation surrounding race-based stress. Thus, a three-item measure was developed to assess participants’ confidence to regulate their emotions surrounding race-based stress. This measure was developed by significantly adapting a few items from a general emotional regulation scale (Skutch et al., 2019). An example item is “I feel confident in my ability to remain calm and in control of my emotions when engaging in conversations about race and privilege.” Participants were asked to rate their responses on a seven-point Likert scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). In the current study, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was .96. For
analysis, the items were combined and the mean was calculated and used as the composite SEER score.

**Covariates**

The following covariates described below were intentionally chosen to be included in the study to reduce within-group variance (Field, 2013) and to rule them out as potential moderators of the effect of mindfulness on the dependent variables.

**Tendency to Engage in Self Reflection.** Given that the mindfulness-based intervention used in this study is focused on self-reflection and utilizes a self-reflection exercise, it is important to control for the degree that participants already engage in and feel the need for self-reflection practices. This was assessed with the *self-reflection and insight* scale (Grant et al., 2002). The *self-reflection and insight* scale contains 20 items and captures two factors: self-reflection and insight. The self-reflection subscale has 12 items that assess a respondent’s need for and engagement in self-reflection. Example items include: “I frequently examine my feelings” and “It is important for me to evaluate the things that I do.” The insight factor has eight items that assess the clarity of experience and self-knowledge; examples include “I usually know why I feel the way I do” and “I’m usually aware of my thoughts.” Participants responded to each item on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). In developing this measure, Grant et al. (2002) used a principal components analysis with varimax rotation to eliminate items that did not load on the expected two factors. Test–retest reliabilities were in the high .70s for both subscales. Convergent validity was demonstrated by the positive correlation of the self-reflection subscale measures of anxiety and stress. Additionally, the insight subscale showed the expected negative
correlations with stress, depression, and anxiety. Discriminant validity was demonstrated in that the subscales showed an anticipated near-zero correlation with each other ($r = -0.03$). In the current study, the overall Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was .90. For analysis, the items were combined into the mean to form a composite.

**Racial Awareness.** Given that White fragility stems from not being regularly exposed to racial issues (DiAngelo, 2011), it is important to control for racial awareness. Racial awareness has been conceptualized as an awareness of the existence of racism (Neville et al., 2000). Those that are more racially aware tend to know more about racial issues and have higher racial salience (Quaye et al., 2015). Therefore, they may naturally be less fragile across both conditions than those who are less racially aware. Additionally, those who are less racially aware may realize more benefits of the mindfulness exercise than those who are more aware.

Racial awareness was measured with the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS; Neville et al., 2000). The scale was based on Frankenburg’s (1993) notion of colorblind racial attitudes that stem from color-evasion — the belief that all races are the same, and power-evasion — the belief that institutional racism does not exist. The CoBRAS is comprised of 20 items and uses a 6-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*) to assess an individual’s colorblind racial ideology. Example items include: “White people in the U.S. are discriminated against because of the color of their skin” and “It is important that people begin to think of themselves as American and not African American, Mexican American or Italian American.” Initial factor analysis of 1,120 observations across five studies uncovered 45% of variance in the data residing within Colorblindness toward Racial Privilege (31%), Institutional
THE ROLE OF MINDFULNESS IN MITIGATING EMOTIONAL WHITE FRAGILITY

Discrimination (8%) and Blatant Racial Issues (6%). Confirmatory factor analysis suggested acceptable reliability and validity of the factor structure (Neville et al., 2000). Within the current study, Cronbach's alpha for the total score was .93. For analysis, the items were combined and the mean was used to create a composite colorblindness score.

CHAPTER III

Overview of Analyses

After successfully collecting a dataset of 130 cases using the Prolific platform, I prepared the dataset for analysis through a structured data cleaning process. All data analysis was conducted in SPSS. These preparation steps are detailed in the following section.

The next step was to test the statistical assumptions for both the ANCOVA and regression analyses. I then generated demographic information (Table 2) and descriptive statistics (Table 3) to report variable means, standard deviations, correlations, and internal consistencies for reliability estimates. Next, I used criteria outlined by Berneth and Aguinis (2016) to test if the proposed covariates (racial awareness and tendency to engage in self-reflection) were appropriate to include in the study. Next, I tested the three primary hypotheses in the study. For the first hypothesis, I used an ANCOVA to determine the mean differences in emotional White fragility between the experimental conditions controlling for tendency to engage in self-reflection. To test hypotheses two and three, I ran regressions for each outcome (i.e., self-awareness of White fragility and self-efficacy for emotional regulation) to determine whether there are differences between the mindfulness and the control groups. In these analyses, the mindfulness condition represented the independent variable (IV) and White fragility, self-awareness
of White fragility, and self-efficacy for emotional regulation, represented the dependent variables (DVs).

**Results**

**Data Preparation**

Upon completion of the data collection process on Prolific, I began the data cleaning process by screening for duplicate cases removing the automated system outputs (e.g., IP addresses, unique response identifiers). No duplicate cases were identified, resulting in a sample of 130 cases, featuring 65 cases in both the mindfulness and control conditions. Next, I reverse-coded the appropriate items and transformed the focal study variables into composite scores.

**Missingness**

To assess for missingness, I began with a visual assessment of the dataset to screen for missing values, followed by a frequency analysis to determine item-level missingness for each variable. Following the guidelines provided by Olinsky et al. (2003) for determining acceptable missingness levels, I determined that none of the cases had more than 24% missing data at the case level. Therefore, all cases and variables met the threshold for inclusion in both preliminary and primary analyses for this study. Parent (2013) suggests using the available item analysis (AIA) for handling item-level missingness. This is an older method that involves using the available data for analysis and excluding missing data items only for the analyses in which the missing data would be involved. Accordingly, AIA was used to create mean composite scores for each scale without substituting or imputing values.

**Outliers**
The data was assessed for outliers using procedures outlined by Field (2013) and Orr, Sackett, and Dubois (1991). Using the SPSS frequency analyses and histogram graphics for each variable, I performed a visual inspection of boxplots for outliers within the dataset. In the boxplot visual, outliers or extreme cases are marked with a star. After completing this analysis, three cases were identified as having extreme high outliers on all three timepoints of the negative affect (emotional white fragility) measure. As suggested by Field (2013), these responses were winsorized by replacing the outliers with the next highest score on each measure that was not an outlier.

**Testing Statistical Assumptions**

The following assumptions were tested for both a mixed ANCOVA: (a) linearity, (b) normality of residuals, (c) independence of treatment effect and covariate, (d) homogeneity of variance, (e) homogeneity of regression slopes, and regression: (a) linearity, (b) normality or residuals and (c) homoscedasticity (Field, 2013). Linearity and normality were checked by visually inspecting scatterplots for each predictor and DV and running the KS test. The normality assumption was violated, and it has been long thought that this could potentially lead to a type I error, especially if there are extreme outliers. However, F-tests have been shown to be robust to this particular violation and outliers have been winsorized. Therefore, resulting inferences are not overly prone to Type I errors, even in the case of non-normal data (Blanca et al., 2017).

The assumption of independence of the experimental group and the covariate was tested by running t-tests between the independent variable (mindfulness) and the covariates (i.e., racial awareness and tendency to engage in self-reflection). Both tests for racial awareness, $t(128) = -0.05, p = .96, d = 1.06$ and tendency to engage in self-
reflection, \( t(128) = -0.44, p = .66 \), \( d = .75 \) were non-significant, indicating this assumption was not violated. The homogeneity of regression slopes assumption was tested by creating interaction terms between the covariates and the outcome variables and including them in the ANCOVA model. Both interaction terms for the DV (i.e., negative affect) with racial awareness, \( F(1,124) = 2.80, p = .10 \), and tendency to engage in self-reflection, \( F(1,124) = .74, p = .39 \), were non-significant, indicating that this assumption was also not violated.

The homogeneity of variance (sphericity) assumption was assessed using Mauchly’s test of sphericity for the main preliminary repeated measures ANCOVA analysis, \( \chi^2(2) = .98, p = .20 \). Sphericity is the condition where the variances of the differences between all combinations of within subject conditions (levels) are equal. The test was non-significant, verifying that this assumption was not violated. The homoscedasticity assumption was tested for the analyses for the three official hypotheses by visually inspecting scatterplots of the unstandardized residuals to ensure they were equally distributed with no apparent pattern in the residual plot. Observations confirmed that the variability in the response was not fluctuating with increases in the predicted values, indicating that the use of a regression model is appropriate. The risk of violating this assumption was reduced due to equal n sizes in the mindfulness and control groups.

**Preliminary Analyses**

I began the preliminary analyses by generating both descriptive statistics for the demographic variables (see Table 2) and running bivariate correlations for the focal study variables in SPSS (see Table 3). Additionally, I calculated the Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for each scale used and have provided the results for each variable. All scales
included in the study met the ideal alpha threshold of >.80 (Cortina, 1993; Gliem & Gliem, 2003). Next, I checked to see whether the random assignment of participants into vignette scenarios was truly random by running a series of independent t-tests for demographic variables age, \( t(124) = -.56, p = .56, d = 9.44 \), and sex, \( t(127) = .11, p = .92, d = .50 \), to ascertain if there were any statistical associations between those variables and the assigned scenario. There were no significant differences between the two conditions.

There are several criteria that covariates need to meet before being included in the model. According to Berneth and Aguinis (2016) covariates should not be used unless there is guiding theory, and they are related with the DV. Additionally, including covariates is not appropriate if they interact with other predictor variables. If they do, the covariate becomes a moderator and is used in all analyses as such. Thus, the two proposed covariates: racial awareness and tendency to engage in self-reflection were tested to determine if they met these criteria. The theoretical argument for their inclusion was provided in the methods and literature review section, thus that criterion was met. An inspection of the bivariate correlation revealed that racial awareness was not statistically correlated with: (a) negative affect time 2 \((r = -.01, p = .96)\), (b) negative affect time 3 \((r = .12, p = .19)\), (c) self-awareness of White fragility \((r = .01, p = .89)\), and (d) self-efficacy for emotional regulation (SEER) for race based stress \((r = .01, p = .88)\). Therefore, racial awareness was ruled out as a covariate in this study.

However, the second covariate, tendency to engage in self-reflection, was statistically correlated with negative affect time 2 \((r = -.35, p < .001)\) and negative affect time 3 \((r = -.38, p < .001)\) but not with self-awareness of White fragility, \((r = -.12, p\)
= .17) or SEER, \((r = -.08, p = .36)\). Thus, self-awareness of White fragility was tested as moderator for the relationship between negative affect time 1 and negative affect time 2, \(B_{negative\text{ affect time 1}*self\text{-}awareness} = -.04, p = .59\). Additionally, it was tested as a moderator for the relationship proposed in Hypothesis 1 (i.e., self-awareness moderates the effect of mindfulness on negative affect at time 3). Results revealed the interaction term was not significant \(B_{mindfulness*self\text{-}awareness} = .58, p = .14\). Because the tendency to engage in self-reflection was not a moderator of any of the relationships, it was designated as a covariate in the primary analyses.

Next, the full model was tested across all three timepoints of negative affect. A repeated-measures ANCOVA was run to assess the differences in negative affect across all three timepoints between the mindfulness and control groups holding tendency to engage in self-reflection constant. The covariate, self-reflection was statistically significant, \(F(1,127) = 22.81, p < .001\); however, there were no significant differences observed in negative affect across all three timepoints between the mindfulness group and the control group, \(F(1,127) = 3.63, p = .06\). See Table 4 for full results. This is an early indication that the White privilege exercise did not have its intended effect.

As one more check to see if the White privilege exercise worked as intended, an ANCOVA was run to assess mean differences of negative affect (emotional White fragility) between time 1 and time 2 across all participants, controlling for tendency to engage in self-reflection. A nonsignificant result was found, \(F(1,128) = .04, p = .84\), indicating that the White privilege exercise did not increase participants’ negative affect. See Table 5 for full results.
In summary, preliminary analyses included running descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations. Next, covariates were tested for their appropriateness to be included in the study based on criteria outlined by Berneth and Aguinis (2016). Analyses indicated that racial awareness should be excluded from the study and tendency to engage in self-reflection should be included as a covariate. Subsequently, an ANCOVA was run to assess negative affect across all three timepoints. Finally, the effectiveness of White privilege was tested, and results indicated that it did not increase participants’ negative affect (emotional white fragility) which may impact results. These preliminary analyses were conducted to prepare the data for the primary analyses. In the next section, an overview of the primary analyses for all hypotheses will be provided.

**Primary Analyses**

**Hypothesis One**

In hypothesis one, I proposed that participants who complete the mindfulness exercises would exhibit lower levels of White fragility (negative affect) when asked to reflect on their privileged position in the social structure compared to those who complete an exercise unrelated to mindfulness. To test this hypothesis, negative affect time 3 was regressed onto the mindfulness predictor controlling for negative affect time 2 and tendency to engage in self-reflection. Predictors were entered in two steps. In step 1, negative affect time 3 was the dependent variable and negative affect time 2 and tendency to engage in self-reflection were the covariate variables. In step 2, the mindfulness predictor was entered. Final results indicated that step 2 was significant, \( F(3,126) = 82.60, p < .001, \Delta R^2 = .00 \). Tendency to engage in self-reflection was a statistically significant covariate \( B = -.07, p = .04 \). However, there was not a significant difference
between the mindfulness and control groups, $B = -.004, p = .94$. This indicates that mindfulness did not add any variance above and beyond self-reflection and negative affect time 2. Thus, hypothesis one was not supported. See Table 6 for the full results.

**Hypothesis Two**

In hypothesis two, I proposed that participants who engage in the mindfulness exercise would exhibit more self-awareness of their own feelings of White fragility than those who engage in an exercise unrelated to mindfulness. To test this hypothesis, a regression was run in which self-awareness was regressed on mindfulness, and results indicated those in the mindfulness group reported significantly higher awareness than the control group ($B = 1.30, p < .001$). Practically, this means that compared to the control group, the expected self-awareness score for those in the mindfulness group was 1.3 points higher on a 7-point scale. Moreover, mindfulness explained 13% of the variance in self-awareness. These results indicate that hypothesis two was supported. See Table 7 for the full results.

**Hypothesis Three**

In the final hypothesis, I proposed that participants who complete the mindfulness exercise would report greater self-efficacy for emotional regulation (SEER) to deal with race-based stress than those who complete an exercise unrelated to mindfulness. To test this hypothesis, a regression was run in which SEER was regressed on mindfulness, and results indicated those in the mindfulness group reported significantly higher SEER than the control group ($B = 0.67, p = .02$). Practically, this means that compared to the control group, the expected SEER score for those in the mindfulness group was .67 points higher.
THE ROLE OF MINDFULNESS IN MITIGATING EMOTIONAL WHITE FRAGILITY

on a 7-point scale. Moreover, mindfulness explained 4% of the variance in SEER. Consequently, hypothesis three was supported. See Table 7 for the full results.

CHAPTER IV

Discussion

Although there has been extensive research on the effects of mindfulness in general (Biegel et al., 2009; Branstrom et al., 2010; Chiesa & Serretti, 2010; Delmonte, 1990; Foley et al., 2010), and the effects of mindfulness in the workplace (Glomb et al., 2011; Good et al., 2016; Hill & Updegraff, 2012; Hutcherson et al., 2008; Krishnakumar & Robinson, 2015), there has been limited research on the effects of mindfulness in the realm of diversity, equity, and inclusion and more specifically anti-racism (Berila, 2016; Hick & Furlotte, 2009; Lillis & Hayes, 2007; Lueke & Gibson, 2015; Magee, 2016). In the current study, the use of mindfulness was explored as an aiding mechanism for anti-racist work within organizations. It was proposed that mindfulness would decrease one’s emotional White fragility, increase one’s self-awareness of White fragility, and increase one’s self-efficacy for emotional regulation for race-based stress. This section provides the summary of the results, implications for theory and practice, limitations of the study, future research directions, and overall conclusions.

Summary of Results

Broadly, the results of the study suggest that mindfulness is a practice that can be beneficial for helping White individuals in their anti-racist journeys. The first hypothesis was not supported and failed to provide evidence that mindfulness decreases emotional White fragility. However, this does not mean that effects of mindfulness on emotional White fragility do not exist. Instead, these findings may indicate that the White fragility
manipulation simply did not induce sufficient variability in participant responses on emotional White fragility. Additionally, it has been shown that to see the most impact from mindfulness, it needs to be practiced consistently over time (Carmody & Baer, 2008). The current study only utilized one brief mindfulness practice (approximately 3 minutes long) at one point in time. This may be why the intervention provided mixed results for subsequent hypotheses. However, the results suggest significant effects of mindfulness even when the mindfulness exercise is relatively brief. This aligns with research that provides evidence for the short-term effects of mindfulness including increased psychological well-being and decreased perceived stress (Carmody & Baer, 2008). The second and third hypotheses were supported, suggesting that mindfulness can increase one’s awareness of their own White fragility and increase their confidence in their ability to regulate their emotions in racially charged conversations or situations. As outlined in the results section, racial awareness was ruled out as a covariate or a moderator; therefore, the findings suggest mindfulness does increase self-awareness of white fragility and SEER regardless of participants’ racial awareness. However, it is possible that racial awareness was having an effect in reality, but was simply not discovered due to potential range restriction. Moreover, the White fragility manipulation was ineffective in this study. These matters will be explored further in the limitations section. But first, the theoretical and practical implications of the findings are outlined below.

**Implications for Theory and Practice**

Broadly, the findings of the current study suggest that organizations should employ mindfulness as a tool in their racial equity initiatives and trainings as they work towards
their racial equity goals. White individuals face many challenges in their efforts to address racism in themselves, others, and society (Malott et al., 2019). As noted, White individuals may have strong affective, cognitive, and behavioral reactions as they become more aware of their privilege (Pinterits et al., 2009). This is often a result of the perceived costs they associate with confronting their privilege. Examples of those costs include loss of relationships, loss of race-based privileges, and backlash. Backlash can lead to burnout and demotivation to continue to engage in social justice change efforts (Ford & Orlandella, 2015; Malott et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2017; Smith & Redington, 2010).

Additionally, because of these obstacles, White individuals often resort to unconstructive and oftentimes harmful automatic responses or behaviors that can have negative outcomes for people of color. Therefore, self-awareness and self-efficacy for emotional regulation is important, so White individuals can better manage and respond to other’s negative reactions (Linder, 2015; Smith et al., 2017; Smith & Redington, 2010). In general, mindfulness may have significant implications for anti-racism work in organizations, particularly in areas of White identity development, allyship, anti-racist educators and trainers, and employee resource groups.

**White Identity Development**

A key component of anti-racism is White identity development. The current study builds upon existing White identity development models. These models describe the process by which White individuals progress through their racial identity development (Hardiman, 1982; Helms, 1984; Scott & Robinson, 2001; Sue & Sue, 2008). A common theme across these models is that the progression is characterized by moving from an identity characterized by a lack of awareness of their race to an identity with a deep
The role of mindfulness in mitigating emotional white fragility

understanding of what being White means (Kirkpatrick, 2017). One of the most prominent models of White identity is Helm’s (1984) model. This model outlines five stages through which White Americans may develop racial identity or consciousness: (a) contact, (b) disintegration, (c) reintegration, (d) pseudo-independence, and (e) autonomy. The contact stage is characterized by an unawareness of oneself as a racial being, and a tendency to disregard racial differences as important. In the disintegration state, the individual is aware of their whiteness and the reality of racism. However, that awareness is accompanied by guilt and feelings of cognitive dissonance. The reintegration stage is characterized by being covertly or overtly anti-Black and having strong positive biases towards Whites. During the pseudo-independence stage, there is a curiosity about interracial relationships and an enhanced intellectual understanding about racial differences. In the final stage, autonomy, there is not only an enhanced intellectual understanding of racial differences and similarities but also a genuine acceptance of them. Additionally, there is a desire to engage in cross-racial interactions.

Most of the models describe a preliminary stage that involves a lack of awareness of being White (Hardiman, 1982; Helms, 1984; Scott & Robinson, 2001; Sue & Sue, 2008). This lack of awareness of race leads Whites to remain ignorant and impartial to race consequently maintaining the status quo (Rowe et al., 1994; Scott & Robinson, 2001). The results of the current study indicate that mindfulness increases self-awareness of one’s White fragility. Arguably, White individuals can use mindfulness practices to increase their self-awareness surrounding their racial identity and help them progress through the stages of White identity development.
In addition to a lack of awareness, Helms (1984) and Sue and Sue (2008) theorize that Whites experience negative emotions such as depression, guilt, anger, and shame as they become more aware of their privilege, discrepancies in their belief system, and the extent to which they have potentially “denied the humanity of Blacks” (Helms, 1984, p. 156). This emotional white fragility may inhibit their racial identity development due to White individuals’ inability to manage their emotional reactions (Kirkpatrick, 2017). Consequently, they may retreat to a position of comfort often avoiding issues surrounding race and ultimately maintain the status quo (Helms, 1984). Therefore, mindfulness is a tool that White individuals can use to manage the difficult emotions that may arise as they progress in their White identity development. Arguably, the critical self-reflection component of mindfulness is a prerequisite for behavior change due to the need for someone to be able to monitor and track their own development as they progress through the different stages of White identity development (Bandura, 1991). Helms (2015, 2017) argues that developing a healthy White identity involves focusing initially on changing oneself, then changing other White people, with the ultimate goal of eradicating all forms of racism (Thompson & Carter, 1997), dismantling racism, and becoming a White ally (Chrobot-Mason et al., 2020).

**Allyship**

To cultivate an inclusive work environment, it is essential that White-dominated organizations promote and foster White allies. Mindfulness practices can also have implications for allyship. Spanierman and Smith’s (2017) definition of White allyship includes six important characteristics: (a) a nuanced understanding of White privilege and institutional racism, (b) engagement in continual critical self-reflection of one’s own
THE ROLE OF MINDFULNESS IN MITIGATING EMOTIONAL WHITE FRAGILITY

racism and prejudice, (c) a commitment to using racial privilege to promote equity, (d) engagement in actions that interrupt and challenge racism on the individual and systemic level, (e) active participation in building coalition and solidarity with people of color, and (f) overcoming resistance from other White individuals. As noted in the definition and additionally supported by Helm’s work, a key component of being an effective ally involves developing an awareness of White identity and White privilege and overcoming the numerous obstacles that hinder social justice and social advocacy behaviors (Sue, 2017). Recognizing White privilege is a necessary but insufficient step for Whites who aim to become allies. Becoming a White ally also requires questioning meritocracy in addition to collaborating with employees and organizational leaders to implement lasting systemic change (Chrobot-Mason et al., 2020). Erskine and Bilmoria (2019) outline several potential motivators and detractors for White allyship that are directly relevant to the current study. One potential detractor of allyship is White fragility. DiAngelo (2011, 2018) recommends that White allies need to learn to respond to racism in more constructive ways to minimize their defensiveness and develop the emotional stamina that would allow for constructive engagement across racial divides. One potential motivator is self-efficacy. Whites’ lack of confidence around racial issues may account for some of their resistance and hesitancy to remain in dialogue about racism (Calme, 2020). As such, increasing one’s self-efficacy for emotional regulation, and their self-awareness are important skills for White individuals who are working to increase their racial stamina and allyship behaviors. Engaging in mindfulness practice can increase one’s self-awareness and self-efficacy to regulate their emotions (SEER) when experiencing race-based stress. Additionally, this increased SEER may make White
individuals feel more likely to engage in allyship behaviors such as engaging in conversations on race, power, and privilege and encouraging other White people to confront their own privilege (Detert & Bruno, 2017; Erskine & Bilimoria, 2019).

Allyship is also a form of bystander anti-racism. Bystander anti-racism is defined as “action taken by a person or persons (not directly involved as a target or perpetrator) to speak out about or to seek to engage others in responding (either directly or indirectly, immediately or at a later time) against interpersonal or systemic racism” (Nelson et al., 2011, p. 265). Nelson et al. (2011) has outlined several potential enablers of this bystander action that may be impacted by mindfulness practices. These enablers of bystander action include an individual’s awareness of harm caused by racism, perceived ability to intervene – skills (optimism, self/collective efficacy), and affective responses to racism (anger, empathy, disapproval, etc.). The current findings suggest that mindfulness may lead to these enablers by increasing of one’s self-awareness and self-efficacy for emotional regulation, therefore increasing the likelihood of engaging in anti-racist behaviors.

**Implications for Antiracist Educators**

The findings of this study also suggest potential implications for anti-racist educators. Specifically, because the current sample demonstrated a moderately high level of racial awareness, findings may extrapolate readily to anti-racist educators given that they are typically more racially aware (Smith et al., 2017). Although White anti-racist educators and trainers may have received training and guidance that has prepared them to analyze and comprehend concepts of race and racism (Smith et al., 2017), many of them are often poorly prepared to initiate dialogue and teach others about it. A qualitative study
conducted by Sue et al. (2009) focused on White professors’ perceptions of race-related discussions in their classrooms. Participants in the study described feelings of uncertainty, guilt, and defensiveness. They also expressed difficulty envisioning themselves as effective allies as a White person. The most common fears expressed by White educators were being perceived incompetent and on the verge of losing control of their students (Sue et al., 2009). Additionally, White educators often can feel like imposters leading to anxiety and self-doubt (Smith et al., 2017). Encouraging anti-racist educators to engage in mindfulness practices can increase their own self-awareness and self-confidence in their emotional regulation. Consequently, this may help them address their fears and become more effective anti-racist educators.

**Employee Resource Groups**

Additionally, mindfulness can have potential implications for employee resource groups. Employee resource groups were formed in the 1960s as a response to the racial conflict that was happening at that time during the civil rights movement (Douglas, 2008). These groups are also known as affinity groups, employee networks, employee councils, and employee forums, but the most commonly used term is employee resource groups (Welbourne et al., 2015). Employee resource groups are comprised of individuals or employees who share a common trait, characteristic or interest (Segal, 2013). Employee resource groups can either be homogenous or heterogenous. Homogenous groups consist of individuals sharing the same shared identity characteristic such as an African-American employee resource group. Heterogeneous groups include individuals sharing the same identity characteristic and their allies who do not share the unique characteristic of the group.
THE ROLE OF MINDFULNESS IN MITIGATING EMOTIONAL WHITE FRAGILITY

Usually, however, employee resource groups are built around EEO-protected characteristics, such as race, gender and sexual orientation, and are supported financially by the organization. Employee resource groups can serve two different purposes: emotional and instrumental (Lambertz-Berndt, 2016). The emotional purpose allows for an expressive outlet for individuals to discuss highly sensitive topics. The instrumental purpose moves beyond an emotional outlet into considering and implementing actions needed to accomplish specific goals.

In pursuit of racial equity, some organizations have utilized White employee resource groups (Blitz & Kohl, 2012). Employee resource groups can be effective in anti-oppression work because they allow individuals to understand power, privilege, and systems of oppression, explore their lived experience with oppression, heal from the harms of oppression, and work to dismantle systems of oppression. Employee resource groups in particular can be a resource for White individuals who want to further their knowledge about race, or desire a space in which they can process their feelings and thoughts around race (Blitz & Kohl, 2012). It can also help White individuals on their path to becoming an anti-racist ally (Michael & Conger, 2009). Given the potential for White fragility to occur in these groups, mindfulness practices can be incorporated into White employee resource groups to help facilitate conversations around race, power, and privilege.

Practical Recommendations

The present findings lead to several, broad practical recommendations. Organizations, especially those that are taking a race-based approach towards racial equity, should incorporate mindfulness practice throughout their diversity, equity, and
inclusion initiatives. This may potentially help mitigate backlash from White employees and support them in their White identity development. Organizational mindfulness programs are still in their infancy, so there is no current unified approach (Hyland, 2015). However, there are a few options for organizations aiming to implement a mindfulness program. The time demands of typical mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) programs are impractical for implementation in organizations and thus, have been adapted for work environments. MBSR programs in organizations are designed to have shorter courses so that employees take less time away from work related tasks (Hyland, 2015). These courses can vary in length, form, and expected commitment to daily practice. For instance, some MBSR programs are one off, multi-day retreats, while others are 60-90 minute courses run over 5-12 week periods. Additionally, some programs are even available online so employees can participate from their desks. This online format mimics the design of the mindfulness intervention in the current study.

Developing a ‘mindful’ organization requires sufficient internal communication for employees to adopt mindfulness practice. The organization should make sure to educate employees on the benefits of mindfulness as well as how to practice it. This may involve providing employees with educational resources and tools (Dhanik, 2017). In addition, the organization may provide workshops for employees or dedicate a physical or remote room to be used for meditation practices. In general, mindfulness programs should be voluntary in nature to be the most effective (Dhanik, 2017). Mindfulness can be incorporated into already existing wellness and training programs. Moreover, organizations that are new to incorporating mindfulness practices should bring in an expert mindfulness consultant to help them get started.
For individual diversity, equity, and inclusion practitioners, mindfulness practices can be used in their own personal identity journey as well as in trainings to help participants regulate their emotions as they work through training content and progress through their own development. For individual educators and trainers some strategies include setting ground rules, integrating mindfulness practices into the daily workplace interactions, acknowledging emotional discomfort of trainees, and allowing space for debrief, reflection, and processing of emotions (Berila, 2016). Additionally, trainers can provide trainees with mindfulness strategies to deal with strong emotions that may arise or use guided mindfulness practice throughout trainings (e.g. the STOP technique, deep breathing, movement and stretching, etc.).

In summary, there are several practical ways that organizations can implement mindfulness into their organizational practices. However, these recommendations should be a part of larger organizational strategic DEI initiatives because change happens and affects organizational outcomes at multiple levels (Klein & Koslowski, 2000). In order for these recommendations to be successful, there needs to be dedicated commitment and support from senior leadership along with sufficient resources to implement these initiatives (Abramovitz & Blitz, 2015). Organizations that are serious about racial equity should take a race-based approach that highlight the significance of racism and racial identity development in shaping the structure and performance of their organization (Carter, 2000).

**Limitations**

There are a few limitations that should be taken into consideration when interpreting the results of the current study. One central limitation is that both the White
privilege exercise intended to evoke White fragility and the mindfulness intervention were not piloted to test their effectiveness. The results showed that there was not a significant difference in emotional White fragility in participants before and after the White privilege exercise. It’s possible that in reality there was an effect but the measure of White fragility did not pick it up. Another possibility is that the exercise was not novel enough. Participants may already be saturated with thinking about privilege from the recent events and therefore were not as moved by it.

Additionally, this study used a low fidelity simulation. There are two main types of fidelity: psychological and physical (Kozlowski & DeShon, 2004). Psychological fidelity refers to the extent to which the training environment induces the underlying psychological responses relevant to core performance behaviors in the real-world environment. Physical fidelity refers to the extent that the training replicates the performance environment (Kozlowski & Deshon, 2004). Evidence shows that low fidelity simulations like the one used in the study are not as effective as high fidelity simulations (Brydges et al., 2010; Kozlowski & DeShon, 2004). While the intervention was intended to simulate a situation in an organization’s racial equity training, participants completed the study as an individual, online exercise. The motivation of participants may be different in an individual, online environment, compared to a work environment with other coworkers present physically or remotely. A higher fidelity simulation would have been done in person with more engaging mindfulness practices (e.g., education on how to effectively practice mindfulness, in person facilitated mindfulness practice, opportunities to journal, etc.). It is speculated that utilizing a high fidelity simulation in an in-person environment with more engaging and sustained
mindfulness practice, would produce magnified effects. However, it’s important to note that the brief mindfulness exercise still produced significant effects.

Lastly, another potential limitation includes recent historical events. During the time of the study (August 2020), there was a resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement due to the recent murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery and other injustices faced by Black Americans. This led to a massive racial awakening across the United States. This may have potentially raised participants’ racial awareness which could have impacted how participants in the study responded to the interventions. It’s possible that the White fragility exercise would have caused an effect if the study had been conducted before the racial protest events. Participants may already have been exposed to these issues and therefore not as reactive as they might have been otherwise. This may have led to a downward estimate of a real effect, in which if these environmental circumstances were not at play, there might have been a significant decrease in emotional White fragility and even higher self-awareness of White fragility and self-efficacy for emotional regulation for participants who engaged in the mindfulness practice. If these environmental incidents raised everyone’s awareness, this puts a boundary condition on external validity, meaning results may not extrapolate.

**Future Research Directions**

Given that there is limited research on mitigating White fragility, there are many opportunities for future research. The current study focuses on the emotional component of White fragility (Liebow & Glazer, 2019), but more research should be done on how mindfulness can be used to mitigate the cognitive and behavioral components of White fragility (DiAngelo, 2018; Pinterits et al., 2009). Specifically, future research should
explore how mindfulness can be used to increase allyship behaviors. Mindfulness practice may play a key role in changing attitudes toward racism as well as how individuals behave (Grube et al., 1994; Monteith, 1993; Monteith et al., 2010; Moskowitz & Li, 2011).

The current study focused on emotional White fragility as it relates to race and racism. There is evidence to show there may be similar types of emotional reactions for other privileged groups and identities such as men, heteronormative individuals, and Christians (Case et al., 2014; Schlosser, 2003; Simoni & Walters, 2001; Farough, 2003). Additionally, future research should explore if mindfulness could be effective in dealing with these other types of fragility. Given that the emotional reactions may be similar in those contexts, it is likely that mindfulness can help regulate those emotions as well. Furthermore, the concept of white fragility is difficult to measure. The current study only examined emotional white fragility as negative affect and not positive affect. However, White fragility could also be measured by not only negative affect increasing but positive affect decreasing. Future research should explore this and other potential operationalizations of white fragility.

Additionally, this sample on average was relatively racially aware. It’s likely that the White privilege activity did not invoke White fragility in participants because they were already racial aware. Future research should examine whether the hypothesized relationships still hold in samples that are less racially aware and more prone to White fragility. This can provide further insight into how the findings extrapolate to individuals in different stages of their White identity development. Organizations may be able to prioritize resources and use mindfulness at certain stages to promote more progressive
White identity development. Moreover, future research should explore if engaging in mindfulness practice helps White individuals progress more quickly through the stages of White identity development. It’s possible that practicing mindfulness can increase one’s daily self-awareness surrounding racial issues, making it easier to progress through the stages.

**Conclusion**

This study aims to provide support for the effect of mindfulness on individual and organizational outcomes related to racial equity. More specifically, mindfulness was shown to increase White individuals’ self-awareness of their own White fragility and increase their self-efficacy to emotionally regulate when faced with race-based stress. However, mindfulness is a necessary but insufficient condition for social and organizational change. Mindfulness can help with individual level outcomes but will not on its own address systemic and organizational issues around racial equity. A heavy focus on individual difference and characteristics rather than addressing systemic issues and power differentials may lead to limited impact on racial equity goals (Abramovitz & Blitz, 2015; Amis et al., 2020, Cocchiara et al., 2010; Curry-Stevens & Nissen, 2011; Nybell and Sims Gray 2004). These practices need to be implemented simultaneously with changes at the systemic level for organizations to reach their racial equity goals.
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THE ROLE OF MINDFULNESS IN MITIGATING EMOTIONAL WHITE 
FRAGILITY


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THE ROLE OF MINDFULNESS IN MITIGATING EMOTIONAL WHITE FRAGILITY


THE ROLE OF MINDFULNESS IN MITIGATING EMOTIONAL WHITE FRAGILITY


APPENDIX A: Figures

Figure 1

Variables in the current study

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Screening</th>
<th>Covariates</th>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
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<tr>
<td>• 18+</td>
<td>• Racial Awareness</td>
<td>• Mindfulness</td>
<td>• White Fragility</td>
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<tr>
<td>• White</td>
<td>• Tendency to Engage in Self-</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Self-Awareness of White Fragility</td>
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<tr>
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<td>reflection</td>
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<td>• Self-Efficacy for Emotional Regulation</td>
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Figure 2

*Model of hypothesized relationships*
Figure 3

Experimental Flow
APPENDIX B: Tables

Table 1

*Research Design*

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<td>X₁</td>
<td>O₂</td>
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*Note. X₁ = White Privilege Exercise to elicit fragility, X₂ = Mindfulness exercise, the focal IV*
Table 2
Demographic Characteristics of Participants Across All Study Conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
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<td>Independent</td>
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<td>22.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Libertarian</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
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<td>1.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>0.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
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<td>0.8</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Political Orientation</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Extremely Conservative</td>
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<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
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<td>Conservative</td>
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<td>Somewhat Conservative</td>
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<td>Moderate</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16.9</td>
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<td>10.0</td>
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<td>Liberal</td>
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<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Liberal</td>
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<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Industry</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
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<td>Banking/Finance/Account</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance/Regal Estate/Legal</td>
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<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical/Dental/Healthcare</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation/Utilities</td>
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<td>3.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction/Architecture/Engineering</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
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</table>
THE ROLE OF MINDFULNESS IN MITIGATING EMOTIONAL WHITE FRAGILITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing/Process Industries</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Retailer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale/Retail/Distribution</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research/Development Lab</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing/Advertising/Entertainment</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Services/Consultant</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/Not Listed</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.2</td>
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</table>

**Education Level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School or equivalent</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Associates Degree/Two-year Technical Degree/Vocational School</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>33.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Degree or higher</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Income**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Range</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$0-$29,999</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000-$59,999</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,000-$79,999</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80,000-$99,999</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000-$149,999</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150,000+</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3
**Means, Standard Deviations, Internal Consistencies, and Correlations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Age</td>
<td>33.44</td>
<td>9.42</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sex&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Condition&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Negative Affect T1</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>-1.13</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>(0.90)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Negative Affect T2</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-0.18*</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.85**</td>
<td>(0.89)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Negative Affect T3</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>-0.18*</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.77**</td>
<td>0.81**</td>
<td>(0.91)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Self-Awareness</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.36**</td>
<td>0.25**</td>
<td>0.26**</td>
<td>0.18*</td>
<td>(0.96)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. SEER</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>0.21*</td>
<td>0.19*</td>
<td>0.24**</td>
<td>0.17*</td>
<td>0.80**</td>
<td>(0.96)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Racial Awareness</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>0.25**</td>
<td>-0.39**</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>(0.93)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Tendency to Engage in Self Reflection</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
<td>0.22*</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>-0.37**</td>
<td>-0.35**</td>
<td>-0.38**</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.18*</td>
<td>(0.90)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N = 130. <sup>1</sup>Sex is coded 0 = Male, 1 = Female. One participant did not indicate their sex. <sup>2</sup>Condition is coded 0 = Control, 1 = Mindfulness. *p < .05 level (2-tailed). **p < .01 level (2-tailed). SEER – Self-efficacy for emotional regulation for race-based stress.
Table 4

Preliminary: ANCOVA Results and Descriptive Statistics for White Fragility (Negative Affect) by Intervention Type Controlling for Tendency to Engage in Self-Reflection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Time 1</th>
<th>Time 2</th>
<th>Time 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Affect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindfulness</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SS</strong></td>
<td>16.76</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>93.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>df</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MS</strong></td>
<td>16.76</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>F</strong></td>
<td>22.81**</td>
<td>0.34</td>
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</table>

Note. N = 130. Homogeneity of regression slopes tested and not significant: F = 0.74, p > .05

* p < .05 level (2-tailed). ** p < .01 level (2-tailed). SR = Tendency to engage in self reflection
Table 5  
*Preliminary: ANCOVA Result and Descriptive Statistics for Negative Affect Time 1 and Time 2 Controlling for Tendency to Engage in Self-Reflection*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negative Affect Time 1</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Affect Time 2</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>SS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Affect</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negative Affect * SR</td>
<td>.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Error</td>
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</table>

*Note. N = 130. *p < .05 level (2-tailed). **p < .01 level (2-tailed). SR = Tendency to engage in self-reflection*
Table 6

Primary: Regression Analysis for Mindfulness Predicting White Fragility (Negative Affect) Controlling for Tendency to Engage in Self-Reflection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model &amp; Predictors</th>
<th>( B )</th>
<th>( SE )</th>
<th>( t )</th>
<th>( p )</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
<th>( \Delta R^2 )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-2.06</td>
<td>.04*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Affect Time 2</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>13.98</td>
<td>.00**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>SR</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-2.04</td>
<td>.04*</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Negative Affect Time 2</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>12.90</td>
<td>.00**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindfulness</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall ( F )</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>82.60**</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. \( N = 130 \). \( SE \) = standard error. \( * p < .05 \) level (2-tailed). \( ** p < .01 \) level (2-tailed). \(^1\)Mindfulness is coded 0 = Control, 1 = Mindfulness. SR = Tendency to engage in self-reflection
Table 7  
*Primary: Regression Analysis for Mindfulness Predicting Self-Awareness of White Fragility & Self-Efficacy for Emotional Regulation (SEER)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Self-Awareness of White Fragility</th>
<th>SEER</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>SE</td>
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<td>Model Summary</td>
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<td>.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall F</td>
<td>19.60**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N = 130. SE = standard error. * p < .05 level (2-tailed). ** p < .01 level (2-tailed). ¹Mindfulness is coded 0 = Control, 1 = Mindfulness. SEER = Self-efficacy for emotional regulation related for race-based stress*
APPENDIX C: Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Measurement/Questionnaire Name</th>
<th>Citation for Measure</th>
<th># of Items in the Measure</th>
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<td>White Fragility</td>
<td>PANAS</td>
<td>Watson et al. (1998)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Awareness of White Fragility</td>
<td>Self-Awareness of White Fragility</td>
<td>Developed for this study</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Efficacy for Emotional Regulation</td>
<td>Self-Efficacy for Emotional Regulation</td>
<td>Developed for this study</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Awareness</td>
<td>COBRAS</td>
<td>Neville et al. (2000)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tendency to Engage in Self-Reflection</td>
<td>Self-Reflection &amp; Insight Scale</td>
<td>Grant et al. (2002)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulation Check</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Developed for this study</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention Check</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demographics

What is your age?
What is your sex?
  - Male
  - Female
  - Prefer not to answer
To which gender identity do you most identify?
  - Male
  - Female
  - Transgender Male
  - Transgender Female
  - Gender Variant/Non-Conforming
  - Other, please specify ________
  - Prefer not to answer
What best represents your racial or ethnic heritage?
  - American Indian or Alaska Native
  - Asian
  - Black / African American
  - Hispanic or Latino/a
  - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - White or Caucasian
  - Multi-Racial
THE ROLE OF MINDFULNESS IN MITIGATING EMOTIONAL WHITE FRAGILITY

- Other, please specify________

What is your political affiliation?
- Democrat
- Independent
- Republican
- Independent
- Libertarian
- Green
- I don’t follow politics
- Other____
- Don’t know/Prefer Not to say

Please indicate your political orientation: (Haidt & Graham, 2007)
- Extremely Conservative
- Conservative
- Somewhat Conservative
- Moderate
- Somewhat Liberal
- Liberal
- Extremely Liberal

What is the principal industry of your organization?
- Education
- Banking/Finance/Accounting
- Insurance/Real Estate/Legal
- Federal Government (including military)
- State/Local Government
- Medical/Dental/Healthcare
- Transportation/Utilities
- Construction/Architecture/Engineering
- Manufacturing/Process Industries
- Online Retailer
- Aerospace
- Wholesale/Retail/Distribution
- Research/Development Lab
- Marketing/Advertising/Entertainment
- Business Services/Consultant
- Other, please specify ________

What is your highest level of education?
- High School or equivalent
- Some College
- Associates Degree/Two-year Technical Degree/Vocational School
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
• Doctoral Degree or higher
• Other, please specify __________

Approximately what is your household income?
• $0 - $9,999
• $10,000 - $19,999
• $20,000 - $29,999
• $30,000 - $39,999
• $40,000 - $49,999
• $50,000 - $59,999
• $60,000 - $69,999
• $70,000 - $79,999
• $80,000 - $89,999
• $90,000 - $99,999
• $100,000 - $149,999
• $150,000 or more
• Prefer not to say
Scales

**PANAS, Negative Affect Subscale (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988)**

This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then mark the appropriate answer in the space next to that word. Indicate to what extent you feel this way **in the current moment**.

Use the following scale to record your answers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Slightly or not at all</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Quite a Bit</th>
<th>Extremely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distressed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upset</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilty</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scared</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostile</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Afraid</td>
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**Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS; Neville et al., 2000)**

Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the following statements.

White people in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not.
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree
Race plays an important role in who gets sent to prison.
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Race plays a major role in the type of social services (such as the type of health or day care) that people receive in the U.S.
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Racial and ethnic minorities do not have the same opportunities as White people in the U.S.
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become rich.
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

White people are more to blame for racial discrimination than racial and ethnic minorities.
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Social policies, such as affirmative action, discriminate unfairly against White people.
White people in the U.S. are discriminated against because of the color of their skin.
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

English should be the only official language in the U.S.
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Due to racial discrimination, programs such as affirmative action are necessary to help create equality.
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

It is important that people begin to think of themselves as American and not African American, Mexican American or Italian American.
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
Immigrants should try to fit into the culture and values of the U.S.
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Racial problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations.
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension.
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Racism is a major problem in the U.S.
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

It is important for public schools to teach about the history and contributions of racial and ethnic minorities.
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree
It is important for political leaders to talk about racism to help work through or solve society’s problems.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Racism may have been a problem in the past, but it is not an important problem today.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

**Self-Awareness of White Fragility (Developed for the study)**

As a result of participating in the exercise, I feel more aware of the emotions that influence my thoughts about the topics of race and privilege.

1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree)

As a result of participating in the exercise, it is easier for me to identify the way I feel about the topics of race and privilege.

1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree)

As a result of participating in the exercise, I feel like I have more clarity about my feelings regarding the topics of race and privilege.

1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree)

**Self-Efficacy for Emotional-Regulation Related to Race-Based Stress (Developed for the study)**

As a result of participating in the exercise, I feel more confident in my ability to remain calm when engaging in conversations about race and privilege.

1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree)

As a result of participating in the exercise, I feel more confident in my ability to manage strong negative emotions that may arise during conversations about race and privilege.

1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree)
As a result of participating in the exercise, if strong negative emotions arise during conversations about race and privilege, I feel more confident that I can calm down quickly.

1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree)

The Self Reflection & Insight Scale (Grant, Franklin & Langford, 2002)

1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree)

Engagement in self-reflection
- I don’t often think about my thoughts (R)
- I rarely spend time in self-reflection (R)
- I frequently examine my feelings
- I don’t really think about why I behave in the way that I do (R)
- I frequently take time to reflect on my thoughts
- I often think about the way I feel about things

Need for self-reflection
- I am not really interested in analyzing my behavior (R)
- It is important for me to evaluate the things that I do
- I am very interested in examining what I think about
- It is important to me to try to understand what my feelings mean
- I have a definite need to understand the way that my mind works
- It is important to me to be able to understand how my thoughts arise

Insight
- I am usually aware of thoughts
- I’m often confused about the way I’ve behaved in a certain way
- I usually have a very clear idea about why I’ve behaved in certain way
- I’m often aware that I’m having a feeling, but I often don’t quite know what it is (R)
- My behavior often puzzles me (R)
- Thinking about my thoughts make me more confused (R)
- Often I find it difficult to make sense of the way I feel about things (R)
- I usually know why I feel the way I do

Exercises

White Privilege Exercise

Imagine you are asked to participate in a required racial equity training within your workplace. As part of the training you are asked to engage in the following thought exercise:
The role of mindfulness in mitigating emotional white fragility

The recent murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and the countless Black people who have lost their lives or been impacted by racism in America, are only the latest in a centuries-long trend of violence directed toward Black individuals going about their everyday lives. These acts of violence are a manifestation of historical and systemic oppression of Black Americans in the United States. The recent protests in support of Black lives are not just a result of the death of George Floyd, but also a result of the hundreds of years of oppression, from 1619 to present, towards Black people — from slavery, to Jim Crow, to red lining, and mass incarceration, to name a few. This is not an issue of politics, but an issue of human rights. We cannot remain silent in the face of injustice. It is not enough to be a person who is “not racist”. Instead, we must be anti-racist by intentionally confronting and destroying racism in our everyday lives. Racism is a public health issue that should concern everyone, so it is time for all people to stand in solidarity against injustice.

As a White person, an important step toward this goal is to consider how your White privilege affects how you function in your daily life. White privilege is defined as a set of unearned rights and advantages that benefit White people over non-White people.

Please take at least 1 minute each to answer the 3 questions on the following pages.

Please identify and list least 2 advantages you received due to White privilege (e.g. Generally having positive interactions with the police)

Please identify and list at least 2 times you intentionally or unintentionally upheld racism. (e.g. laughing along to a friend’s racist joke)

Please identify and list at least 2 ways you are actively dismantling racism (e.g. calling out racism when you see it).

Control Group Exercise

Please take 3 minutes and describe the room you are sitting in with as much detail as possible below.

Self-Reflection Exercise

Please take at least 3 minutes to reflect and write on the previous exercise you completed. Use the questions below for guidance.

Please list the emotions, thoughts, or feelings that arose during the exercise. Was there anything that caused personal discomfort? If so, what do I think caused that discomfort? Are my existing beliefs about race influencing my initial thoughts or feelings? How do I feel about that realization?

To what extent did you reflect on your experience of the previous task.

- Not at all
THE ROLE OF MINDFULNESS IN MITIGATING EMOTIONAL WHITE FRAGILITY

- To a small extent
- To some extent
- To a moderate extent
- To a great extent
- To a very great extent

Mindfulness Exercise

Adapted from (Linehan, 2014) and (Ciarrochi & Bailey, 2008, p. 164)

[Participants listened to this guided mindfulness exercise]

It’s possible that some negative emotions may have come up during the exercise. Sometimes it can be difficult to manage negative emotions.

One strategy that can help you in the heat of the moment if you are dealing with intense emotions is the STOP technique. This four-step technique can help to effectively address and manage your emotional response to emotionally uncomfortable situations.

Let’s take a few moments to use the STOP technique to process any negative emotions that may have come up during the exercise. (Press play to start the STOP technique)

STOP stands for:

1) **Stop** and take a mental step back. Don’t get swept along in the sea of emotion. Instead, stop your immediate impulse, notice what your mind is saying to you. Experiencing emotions does not mean that you have to respond. You may just need to sit with the emotion. Often, reacting can intensify and prolong the emotion.
2) **Take** a breath. Breathe in and out. Notice your breath as you inhale and exhale. Sense the chest rising and falling.
3) **Observe** your experience. Give yourself the gift of brief reflection. What emotions are you feeling? What are you thinking? Where in your body you are feeling emotional sensations? Don’t try to suppress, block, or get rid of your emotions. Let them wash over you like a wave coming and going. Observe the thoughts or the story going through your mind and remember, they are just thoughts to be noticed, not facts. Be willing to experience them without judgment. Let emotions, feelings, and thoughts come into your mind and slip right out again.
4) **Proceed** mindfully. Now that you have some distance and perspective, you can decide the best way to move forward. Consider the consequences of how you choose to react. Is this emotion useful in this situation? Which of your emotions do you need to challenge or confront? How can you look at this situation differently? What is the best thing to do right now? For you? For others? For the situation? What can you do that fits with my values? Choose what you feel is the best way to move forward. Repeat this exercise as many times as needed.
Congratulations! You’ve just completed the STOP technique. We all experience challenging emotions. Learning how to pause in between an intense emotional reaction and your ensuing actions is a valuable and often life-changing skill. Take a moment to compare how you feel now versus how you felt before the STOP exercise. The STOP technique is a simple and easy to use practice that can be helpful in ensuring that you are living out your values and being the best version of yourself. Feel free to give the STOP technique a try in the future when you find yourself in an emotionally-charged situation.

To what extent were you able to successfully detach from any negative emotions that arose using the STOP technique.

- Not at all
- To a small extent
- To some extent
- To a moderate extent
- To a great extent
- To a very great extent