

Experiences of Racism Scale

What does this SSW measure address?

The Experiences of Racism Scale has four items that capture students' reports of being treated badly because of their race or experiencing racism at school. School treat all students fairly, regardless of their race. The Experiences of Racism Scale is a subscale of a School Climate Survey. Another subscale of the Survey that also focus on racial climate is included in the measures database: the Racial Fairness Scale.

For use with:

Middle school students



Experiences of Racism:

Experiences of racism as defined by items in the scale include being treated badly by a teacher or other student because of race, and a more general perception of experiencing racism at school. The wording of these items allows students to consider their own definitions of racism.

Why is it important?

Experiences of racism can erode students' sense of school belonging and academic ability, and their perceptions of teacher support and racial trust. These elements of racial climate at the school are critical components of school climate more generally. Positive school climate is essential for students to feel respected, safe, and ready to learn.

Scoring:

Scores on the four items are summed to create a total score for experiences of racism. The total score will range from 4 to 20 with higher scores meaning more negative perceptions of racism. You can also look at scores on individual items to get more specific information about issues of racial fairness that can be addressed with interventions. For example, are teachers, other students, or both treating the student badly because of their race.

What do researchers say about the quality of the scale?

The researchers report that the scale has good statistical qualities. The scale was tested with African American and White middle school students. About 30% received free or reduced school lunches.

Source: Watkins, N. D., & Aber, M. S. (2009). Exploring the Relationships Among Race, Class, Gender, and Middle School Students' Perceptions of School Racial Climate [Article]. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 42(4), 395-411. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10665680903260218>

If you have questions about how to use these scales, contact Natasha K. Bowen at bowen.355@osu.edu

MEASURES FOR PRACTICE

Experiences of Racism Scale

Circle the number that best describes you.

Question	Never	A Few Times	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
1. How often has a teacher treated you badly because of your race?	1	2	3	4	5
2. How often has another student treated you badly because of your race?	1	2	3	4	5
3. How often have you experienced racism at your school?	1	2	3	4	5
Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral/ Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Disagree
1. I have felt uncomfortable in school because of my race.	1	2	3	4	5