

Yale *Center for Emotional Intelligence*

Dear RULER community,

Recently, Dr. Dena Simmons, our colleague and assistant director at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence (YCEI), announced her resignation. Dena was a highly respected and valued leader at our Center who made important contributions to all aspects of RULER over a number of years. We will miss her contributions to the Center.

Prior to her resignation, Dena was on leave for seven months following a horrific, racist Zoom bombing during a university town hall on antiracism where she was speaking. At Yale, the safety of all our employees is our highest priority. Since that time, we have taken steps to minimize the vulnerabilities in our virtual workspaces.

At the same time, we are deeply disheartened by recent allegations of our colleagues' hurtful experiences at Yale. We take them very seriously. While Yale policy prohibits us from responding to any inquiries in order to protect the privacy of both current and past employees, we want to stress that we do not tolerate discrimination or bias in any form. Racism and sexism are antithetical to the core principles of our mission. In our Center, we care deeply about our team's well-being and safety, and we continuously strive to create a workplace that fosters a sense of belonging where all people feel valued and connected.

The Child Study Center (CSC) where YCEI is housed is committed to being an antiracist organization. Over the last year, the CSC has offered workshops on cultural sensitivity, unconscious bias, and antiracism. In addition, we have rigorously evaluated our research methods, enhanced our recruitment strategy to build a more diverse faculty and staff, and we are planning other initiatives to ensure all employees feel safe and welcome so we can support each other in our common humanity. Importantly, knowing that there is always room for growth, the CSC hired a chief diversity officer to help coordinate these ongoing efforts.

With regard to RULER, we continue to scrutinize our approach to ensure it is equitable and inclusive. For example, RULER addresses the Teaching Tolerance Social Justice standards with lessons focused on appreciation of similarities and differences in race, gender identity, cultural background, and experiences, underscoring the need for solutions to challenges within unique school communities and classrooms.

Also, in 2019, we launched RULER for All, a systematic evaluation of our approach (training, tools, and curriculum) through the lenses of Universal Design for Learning and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. This work identifies barriers and access points for intersectional student identity representations and will inform a process and end product to support full inclusion and representation of all learners from all backgrounds in RULER.

Still, we recognize there is much more work to do. We will be taking immediate action steps, including additional training in restorative practices, to continue to deepen our commitment to creating and sustaining an antiracist workplace that is built on trust and mutual respect.

As always, we welcome your comments and feedback. We're available to schedule a call to address any of your questions. Please know that we are fully committed to learning from you and one another and to holding ourselves and each other accountable to create real change, both within the Center and in our school communities.

With respect and gratitude,
The YCEI Leadership Team