Twitter Thread by Dr. Sealy-Jefferson



Dr. Sealy-Jefferson
@Dr_S_Jefferson



My mentor/dear friend told me that I speak up AND speak out, and how this is rare.

Today, I want to talk what it's like when I see, sense & feel that a more senior Black woman is attempting to sabatoge me and assassinate my character. A■ ■

It all started here. I joined @PublicHealth in 2018 and was elected chair in 2019. As can be seen, I was SO excited that the members of this section believed in my leadership enough to elect me to this position! https://t.co/9aItVsUtcP

> So, apparently I'm Chair-Elect of the Epidemiology Section of APHA! I'm speechless right now! Thank y'all so much!! pic.twitter.com/SiEHj2OTva
>
> — Dr. Sealy-Jefferson (@Dr_S_Jefferson) October 7, 2019

Since I cross paths with very few other Black women epidemiologists in these academic streets, I was looking forward to working with the Black women leaders in this section. https://t.co/wpQ69nJ9kk

> 1st mtg as chair-elect of the Epidemiology section of APHA and I'm *stunned* that I was elected b/c I just joined APHA last yr. & people usually work their way up the ranks for 10+ years before taking this role. And our section has 3k people. I'm HONORED!\u2764 pic.twitter.com/GvXtfaXaHv
>
> — Dr. Sealy-Jefferson (@Dr_S_Jefferson) December 6, 2019

I started observing that the communication to me was minimal, there was little documentation on processes & procedures, and I was (and felt like) an outsider here. I also felt bad vibes, and tried to set up a mtg to check in on communication & leadership styles. It never happened

Then, our annual meeting happened, & I had been struggling with what I experienced as condescending communication and unwelcoming culture. I was like this can't be right, let me contact @PublicHealth staff for some support.

And then, a couple days after the annual meeting my daddy got covid and was in the hospital for two months before he died. I had a lot of shit going on & was trying to avoid more section drama, and I kept trying to reach out to @publichealth staff for

support

After our leadership meeting 1/21/21, I was asked what my plans are for when I take the chair? Specifically what am I going to do if everyone who has been volunteering in the section quits because nobody knows me? I was shocked. This felt hostile.

I said I would try to engage the new members and those who want to get involved but haven't engaged. I was told this was not a good plan. This meeting motivated my tweet later that afternoon. I also got the attention of other @PublicHealth elected members.
https://t.co/O1MgJbGZR4

> I have *seriously* considered resigning my position as chair-elect of the epidemiology section of @PublicHealth b/c my experience as a new leader & member has been < great. But, when I take the chair in Oct. 2021, my intention is to blaze trails & do my underdog thing, per usual
>
> — Dr. Sealy-Jefferson (@Dr_S_Jefferson) January 22, 2021

The current chair was furious about my tweet. She emailed me and @PublicHealth staff. I'm supposed to talk to them, and NOT post on social media. I heard: Grin and bear it. Stay in my place. Pay my dues. Work my way up. Who do you think you are?

Yesterday morning I got this official letter from @PublicHealth

I spoke up about my experiences and spoke out publicly and there was retaliation. They lied on me. Maligned my character. Conspired to keep the status quo, and dishonored the votes of members of one of the largest sections of APHA, and @PublicHealth allowed it.

I could barely function yesterday. I have a clear commitment to uplifting, mentoring, and supporting Black women. I have never experienced what feels like sabatoge and hate from another Black woman. Sharing b/c I suspect others have felt this pain.