

[An Editor's Invitation: Being in the Minority](#)

Category: Being in the Minority
written by Paul Gross | May 1, 2021

Dear *Pulse* readers,

In this country one associates the word “minority” with a skin color that’s different from some shade of pale.

Recent events and the Black Lives Matter movement have underscored the fact that being a Black, brown or Asian person in the US entails more risk, more hurdles, and more daily affronts and assaults than had been previously acknowledged.

There are many different ways of being in the minority—and there are pains associated with each one. How can we recognize that, while also acknowledging that some minority statuses are transient, while others are carried from cradle to grave? Some can hurt; others can be fatal. Some can be concealed; others are always in plain sight.

One hopes that our individual experiences of being in the minority can teach us compassion for one other—that a seventh grader who is bullied and slurred for being gay can feel some kinship with the elderly Asian woman who is knocked to the ground and cursed with a different slur.

In the medical setting, being in the minority can mean being a nurse sitting at a table of doctors. It can mean being a female surgery intern rounding with an otherwise all-male surgical team. It can mean being a patient of color looking up from their bed at an all-white medical team. It can mean being the solitary Black medical student in my discussion group last year. In my own life, I’ve worked side by side with gay professionals who led closeted lives—something that may now seem quaint or outdated, but at the time served as a necessary form of self-protection.

Most of my recent experiences as a minority have arisen in group settings, when my opinions, beliefs or attitudes differed from those held by everyone around me. In those situations, I have the luxury of being able to hide my minority status by keeping my mouth shut. When I voice my thoughts and am immediately contradicted or met with loud silence, my minority status is revealed—and brings all its attendant discomforts. I feel rejected by this community. I feel alone.

For all that, I am fortunate. When I walk out my front door, no one hassles me because of my skin color, my gender or my sexual orientation.

No one threatens me because of what I might be thinking.

What about you? When have you been in the minority—or watched as someone has faced torment for being in the minority?

May’s *More Voices* theme is [Being in the Minority](#). Send us your lived experience. And while you’re at it, take a look at last month’s theme, [Behind Closed Doors](#).

For more details, visit [More Voices FAQs](#)—or go directly to the [More Voices Submission Form](#). Remember, your healthcare-related story should be 40-400 words. And no poetry, please.

Stay safe, please think about getting vaccinated if you haven't already, and take good care.

With my best regards,

Paul Gross

Editor