Racial Battle Fatigue in the Workplace

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The cumulative emotional, psychological, physiological, and behavioral effects that racial micro-level aggressions and macro-level aggressions (microaggressions and macroaggressions) have on People of Color.

“Quite simply it’s the psychological, emotional, behavioral, and physiological responses to dealing with the stress of racism on a day-to-day basis.” - Dr. William A. Smith

DEFINING RACIAL BATTLE FATIGUE (RBF)
CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO RACIAL BATTLE FATIGUE:

• Internalizing Microaggressions & Macroaggressions
• Code Switching
• Emotional Management
• Intersectionality
• Existing in toxic anti-people of color organizations
**WARNING SIGNS**

- Reduced work performance
- Lack of motivation
- Lack of resilience
- Bad interactions with others
- Inability to make decisions
- Increased work stress
- Being cynical

- Exhaustion
- Lack of satisfaction from achievements
- Using vices to cope (food, alcohol, cigarettes)
- A change in sleep habits
- Lack of creativity
- Physiological issues (headaches, stomach, GI issues)
- A feeling of dread when you think about work
THE IMPACT OF RACIAL BATTLE FATIGUE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physiological</th>
<th>Psychological</th>
<th>Emotional</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Shorter life span</td>
<td>• Trauma</td>
<td>• Anger</td>
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<tr>
<td>• High blood pressure</td>
<td>• Anxiety</td>
<td>• Sadness</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Headaches</td>
<td>• Depression</td>
<td>• Fear</td>
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<td>• Fatigue</td>
<td>• Insomnia</td>
<td>• Shock</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ulcers</td>
<td>• PTSD</td>
<td>• Frustration</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Increased heart rate/breathing</td>
<td>• Intrusive Thoughts</td>
<td>• Disappointment</td>
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<td>• Muscle tension</td>
<td>• Avoidance</td>
<td>• Resentment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Stress</td>
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<td>• Indecisive</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Nightmares</td>
<td>• Low self-worth</td>
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<td>• Apathy</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Irritability</td>
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<td>• Feeling Disposable</td>
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“I CAN HURT YOU AND GET AWAY WITH IT!”

-MICHELLE OBAMA
HOW CAN THE WORKPLACE HANDLE RBF?

• **Empathy & Compassion**: Respectfully check in & offer support.

• **Make room for people to process.**
  → Offer therapy referrals
  → Supervision check ins
  → Create learning forums in your organizations around DEI topics

• **Address racism and injustice directly.** Verbalize a clear stance on where the company stands. Do not use colorblind language.
  → Individual investigations
  → Company wide: create policies AND procedures that create safety. What statements are evident AND visible to show inclusion & diversity (mission/vision/DEI)?

• **Analyze the leadership in the company.** Who is represented? How can there be more inclusion and representation in the company?

• **Do your own work!** Do you have toxic traits? Can you hear others’ perspectives and opinions (who don’t look like you) without having an ethnocentric attitude? In what ways are you supportive?
ADVOCACY & ALLYSHIP

1. Don’t remain silent.
2. Use “I” statements.
3. If you see something, say something!
4. Be open minded.
5. Engage in active listening.
REFERENCES


