

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)

A decorative graphic in the bottom-left corner consisting of several overlapping, curved, red ribbon-like shapes that create a sense of movement and depth.

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

Physiological

- Shorter life span
- High blood pressure
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Ulcers
- Increased heart rate/breathing
- Muscle tension

Psychological

- Trauma
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Insomnia
- PTSD
- Intrusive Thoughts
- Avoidance
- Stress
- Indecisive
- Nightmares

Emotional

- Anger
- Sadness
- Fear
- Shock
- Frustration
- Disappointment
- Resentment
- Withdrawal
- Helplessness
- Low self-worth
- Apathy
- Irritability
- Feeling Disposable

“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.

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