

RACIAL TRAUMA AT WORK





RECOGNISING BIAS, MICROAGGRESSIONS, AND THE PATH TO INCLUSION

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EXPERINCES THAT CAN LEAD TO TRAUMA AND RE-TRAUMATISATION IN THE WORKPLACE

Microaggressions

- Subtle, indirect, or unintentional acts of discrimination that reinforce stereotypes or marginalise individuals.

Why They Hurt:

- It makes the people experiencing the aggression feel different, weird, someone to be suspicious of, or even feared.
- Often dismissed as "just a joke" or "a compliment."
- Over time, they compound into significant emotional and psychological harm.

- **Microaggressions Aren't Always Obvious:**
- **Examples:**
 - **Assuming someone's role is less senior because of their ethnicity.**
 - **Asking invasive questions about cultural identity.**
 - **"Can I shorten your name because it is hard to pronounce for me"**
 - **"Where are you really from?"**
 - **Exclusion:**
 - **Being left out of key projects or opportunities.**
 - **Tokenism:**
 - **Being the only person of a specific group and expected to represent all others.**

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Bias

- What is Bias?
 - Unconscious attitudes or stereotypes that affect how we perceive and interact with others.
 - It often operates without intent but still causes harm.
- How It Shows Up:
 - Preferential treatment of certain employees.
 - Assuming someone's abilities or limitations based on their identity.
 - Disproportionate scrutiny of individuals from marginalised groups.

The Impact of Workplace Racial Trauma

On Individuals:

- Increased stress, anxiety, and depression.
- Feeling devalued or invisible.
- Reduced productivity and engagement.

On Teams:

- Lack of trust and collaboration.
- High turnover among marginalized employees.
- Missed opportunities for innovation due to lack of diverse perspectives.

How Can We Address Racial Trauma at Work?

- **Step 1: Acknowledge It**
 - Validate that racial trauma exists in the workplace.
 - Listen to the experiences of marginalised employees without defensiveness.
- **Step 2: Educate and Reflect**
 - Provide training on unconscious bias and microaggressions.
 - Encourage self-reflection on individual behaviours and assumptions.
- **Step 3: Create Safe Spaces**
 - Designate areas or forums for open discussions without judgment or fear of retaliation.
 - Ensure these spaces are facilitated by trained professionals.
- **Step 4: Commit to Change**
 - Develop policies to address discrimination and bias.
 - Measure and track progress toward diversity and inclusion goals.



Empathy in Action

- **Listen with Intent:**
 - **Seek to understand rather than defend or explain.**
- **Speak Up:**
 - **Call out microaggressions and bias when you see them.**
- **Amplify Marginalised Voices:**
 - **Ensure everyone has a seat at the table and an opportunity to contribute.**

Reflection and Call to Action

- **Reflective Questions:**
 - What biases might I be carrying without realizing it?
 - How can I contribute to creating an inclusive and supportive workplace?
- **Action Steps:**
 - Start small: Commit to recognizing one unconscious bias this week.
 - Build momentum: Join or advocate for a workplace inclusion initiative.

