



ALTERNATIVES

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Anti-Racism as Workplace Wellness: What does it mean to cultivate a culture of belonging?

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WORKPLACE WELLNESS OVERVIEW

What is Workplace Wellness?

Standard workplace wellness:

- PTO
- 40hr work week
- Sick days
- Self care workshops

Workplace Wellness is important in Behavioral Health and Recovery Agencies because there is such a **high risk for burnout**.

If a work environment is unhealthy, toxic or harmful it will impact staff's ability to do their job well.



Harmful Work Environments

One factor that creates a harmful work environment is racism in the workplace.

Racism via microaggressions

- They can show up in various ways in the workplace (casual conversations, nonverbal communication, assumptions about qualifications)
- Microaggressions (intentional or not) create a hostile work environment for POC
 - Thus POC are unable to experience workplace wellness



Impact of Microaggressions on POC Staff

Mental Health:

Stress, Anxiety,
Depression, Self
Doubt, Isolation

Job Performance:

Emotional and social
functioning, energy
levels

Physical Health:

Blood pressure,
Insomnia, Heart
Disease

Trauma Response:

Fight, Flight,
Freeze

A study done in 2016 on microaggressions and physical health showed that frequent repeated instances of microaggressions and subtle racism is just as detrimental to physical health as explicitly hostile racist encounters.

Creating a Culture of Anti-Racism

Most standard practices perpetuate racism:

- Salary Negotiations
- Merit Based Increases
- Affinity Roles

Common strategies to address anti-racism are often performative:

- Diversity Equity and Inclusion
- Statements

To achieve true workplace wellness that is beneficial for all staff, it must be rooted in anti-racism and imbedded into the policies and practices of the agency or organization.



Anti-Racist Wellness

- Power sharing,
- Time off as needed,
- Sense of belonging,
- References known and understood,
- Not having to code switch,
- Internal anti-racism policies,
- Joy & authenticity

Basic Needs

- Paycheck,
- Job descriptions

Basic Wellness

- PTO,
- Mindfulness practices,
- merit based pay/increases

“Woke” Wellness

- “Validation” with no action steps
- Emotional burden still on POC
- DEI office
- Team building
- Advocacy for money for intervention programs that don’t address historic/systemic racism,
- Company statements in response.