



The Educational
Institute of Scotland

Racial Trauma

Understanding and Addressing Racial Trauma in
the Workplace

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Working Together Agreement

- Be mindful of your power and airspace
- Seek to understand not agree
- Sharing is for celebrating
- One person speak at a time
- We all have different knowledge and lived experience - we all have something to learn and to teach
- Look after yourself
- Confidentiality and case handling protocol

Fair Work

- ▶ The importance of voice - Fair Work - listening to people's individual experiences.
- ▶ Respect - respecting every part of who we are rather than just one bit.
- ▶ Fulfilment - how can you feel fulfilled if your whole self cannot be recognised?
- ▶ Opportunity - where there are barriers, for example racial barrier, an opportunity offered specifically to women may still disadvantage BAME women.
- ▶ Security - being safe at work and not discriminated against or experience harassment.

Poetry- Nadine Aisha Jassat



Welcome

Tell us...

- ▶ Your name
- ▶ What does your name mean? Why was it chosen for you?

Racial Trauma

Mentimeter:

- ▶ Have you heard the term racial trauma?
- ▶ What words do you associate with the term?
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZUvjAJGFkM>

The True Impact of Racism

People of colour are survivors of trauma, there are many ways this could manifest

- Hypervigilance
- Difficulty in emotional regulation
- Dissociation
- Denial
- Repression
- Low self-esteem
- Depression
- Self-harming behaviour



No Ending

The difference is for most survivors of trauma, they are no longer in danger, but for people of colour it is every day of their lives.

It is not something people can escape from, as due to the institutional nature of racism means people of colour are more likely to be living in poverty, to not get the support they need at school, to not get that promotion at work.

And because it can be invisible it is very hard sometimes to identify, which can lead to people of colour feeling like they can not trust themselves.

Think about how much resilience people of colour have in order to exist

Manifestations at work

Factors to be considered:

- ▶ Unconscious bias
- ▶ Institutional gaslighting
- ▶ Hierarchical system
- ▶ Preserving ongoing working relationships

Impact:

- ▶ Leaving the profession in high numbers at every career stage
- ▶ Internalising projected beliefs or assumptions
- ▶ Needing to be the 'good' immigrant/worker, work harder than others
- ▶ Not building close relationships with colleagues
- ▶ Lack of career progression

White Fragility

- ▶ Defensiveness
- ▶ Fear
- ▶ Discomfort
- ▶ Policing BPOC expression
- ▶ Offended
- ▶ Prioritising own emotions
- ▶ Rationalisation
- ▶ Avoidance
- ▶ Taking umbrage
- ▶ Guilt
- ▶ Shame

Case Study 1

All the teachers in my school are on a what's app chat together. People share funny videos and silly pictures, its meant to be an informal and social group, but the things that people sometimes share are based on racial stereotypes. I don't think they are explicitly racist, but they make me feel really uncomfortable. I have told some of my colleagues how it makes me feel, but they just said that it's a joke and everyone knows its not real. It makes me not want to engage with the group, and it's having an effect on my friendships with colleagues. I don't feel like I can trust them as no one else seems to have a problem with this, I feel really alone and upset.



- ▶ What is your initial reactions to this situation?
- ▶ How would you respond to a union member telling you this?
- ▶ What might you do to support them ongoingly?

Case Study 2

There are a few pupils who always walk into class whispering to each other, looking at me, and I think one time they pointed at me. I know they are making fun of me, but I don't know why. I can't hear exactly what they are saying about me, but I think it is something racist. I have brought it up with my headteacher and have been told that I need to not let it bother me, that kids are always going to behave like this. The headteachers said I need to separate them and not let them sit together, but ever since I started doing that they have started asking me questions out loud in front of the whole class, that make me feel really uncomfortable. They ask me where I get my clothes from, and where I get my hair done. It's making me feel really aware of how differently I dress and look to the white teachers in the school.

- ▶ What is your initial reactions to this situation?
- ▶ How would you respond to a union member telling you this?
- ▶ What might you do to support them ongoingly?



Case Study 3

After Black Lives Matter was in the news so much last year, my school decided that they wanted to do something about it. They got me and the only other person of colour teacher in for meeting with the PTA and senior teachers to discuss what needed to change, but whenever we made suggestions, they got quite defensive and kept over-explaining why our suggestions were not possible. They also expected us to come to them with evidence and research to back up our suggestions on top of all the usual work we have to do. My colleague has now left, so I am the only one doing this work and I am totally exhausted. I am struggling to sleep, and my classes are not behaving which is causing me even more stress. I don't know what to do because if I don't do this work, no one else will.

- ▶ What is your initial reactions to this situation?
- ▶ How would you respond to a union member telling you this?
- ▶ What might you do to support them ongoingly?



What can support BAME folk?

- ▶ Create or join spaces for BAME folk to meet up with each other and share their experiences- this can be social or formal spaces (BAME Network)
- ▶ Ensuring race and racism is an ongoing conversation, not just at Black History Month, but that it is embedded in the core union work and negotiation agenda
- ▶ Embed Intersectionality into all union practice and consultation processes
- ▶ Building coalition between groups with varying marginality to support anti-oppression changes
- ▶ Seek out training opportunities
- ▶ Amplifying the voices of folk with lived experience

Feedback and next steps

Mentimeter:

- ▶ How has this session been for you?
- ▶ What more support or resources do you need?

Resources

- ▶ Specialised Counselling: Black and Asian Therapist Network (BAATN)
- ▶ Podcast: Anti-Racist Educator
- ▶ Books: What White People Can Do Next- Emma Dabiri
- ▶ Mobilising for Anti-Racist Work (EIS)
- ▶ EIS BAME Network

Next Workshops

- ▶ Mobilising for anti-racism at work
- ▶ Anti-Muslim Prejudice
- ▶ Autism appropriate workplaces
- ▶ Disability equality
- ▶ Gender equality