

Invisible Wounds: Testimony of Microaggressions From the Experiences of Clinicians of Color in Training

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Clinicians of color encountered various forms of microaggressions in clinical training contexts that targeted their ethnic and cultural identities. These microaggressions impacted their well-being and training experience.

Results

Examples

General Experience

Misnaming, Proximity to Whiteness, failure or success to fit stereotypes

Discrimination in Clinical Practice

From colleagues, supervisors, and clients; rude comments, assumptions about competence

Response to Microaggression

Doing nothing; minimal response; appeasing/reassuring; seeking support (delayed)

Negative Personal Impact

Emotional (isolation, self-doubt, anxiety); behavioral (preparing for next microaggression)

Growth at a Cost

Growth: Increased resilience, increased desire to advocate, skills acquisition; Cost: exhaustion, increased task demand

DISCUSSION

“It impacted my mental health tremendously...I started dreading coming into the middle school. Each night before my practicum day, I had nightmares about being in the school. I felt burnout and isolated as well...my sanity, joy for this work, and wellbeing took a big hit during this time..” – Mary *

“After I got out of the school, I just sat in my car and wanted to scream in frustration – both at myself for not saying something, and at the aid who... didn’t interrupt them (after a microinsult). I didn’t talk to any of my supervisors about it.” – Jac’lyn *

*Quotes have been shortened.

Suggestions

- Create trainings for all clinicians on microinterventions
- Policies/procedures on how to address microaggressions
 - E.g., who should clinicians reach out to if they experience a microaggression from a supervisor
- Please feel free to reach out if you want to discuss these ideas in more depth

INTRODUCTION

This study aimed to:

- Build awareness of microaggressions
- Explore their varied forms
- Examine their effects on the emotional well-being of clinicians of color in training.

METHOD

- 10 racially and ethnically minoritized trainees from the Combined Clinical/Counseling Psychology and School Psychology programs at Utah State University and one professor engaged a collaborative critical autoethnography.
- Data collection involved individual narratives shared through an online Qualtrics survey, which minimized bias and facilitated robust collaboration among authors.
- All authors read all narratives and generated themes. co-constructed a coding scheme.



Link to the Article: <https://tinyurl.com/2yytc7bz>

