

Microaggression

Subtle, often unintentional discriminatory comments or behaviours

Document Incidents: Keep detailed records of discriminatory behaviour, with dates, times and other persons present who can serve as witnesses

While it is called microaggressions, many acts are intentional and are often driven by stereotypic and prejudicial behaviours. You did not illicit the aggression and should not be afraid to speak out against the repeated actions of others.

Workplace Social Isolation

Being not invited to informal social outings organized by colleagues or team events such as work retreats, lunch or dinner meetings.

Identify allies within your workplace and connect with other Black medical professionals who can provide support for you.

The common phrase "I forgot to add you to the general email" is inexcusable. When you are new to a work environment a seasoned colleague should be assigned to you. Someone who can introduce you to the "language" spoken within the organization which helps you become familiar with and learn the dynamics of the space. This ensures you don't miss out on important events. If one is not assigned to you, be proactive and ask for a colleague to help you transition and be successful in your new role.

Biased Evaluations

Evaluations are a powerful tool used within organizations. When used maliciously you can receive unfair negative performance reviews

Report concerns to the Human Resources department

Poor performance evaluations can have a negative impact on job security and career advancement. If you feel discriminated against:

- Speak directly (but in a professional manner) to the person conducting the evaluation to determine the reason for the poor performance scores.
- Reach out to a Human Rights Consultant or the Human Rights Commission for advice.
- Discuss your concerns with the Human Resources Department.
- Speak with a representative from your local medical association.

Assumption of Inferiority

When colleagues call into question your qualifications or skills

Being a Black international medical graduate comes with the challenge of having your degree and skills viewed as inferior. While there is no truth about the Black race being intellectually inferior the narrative continues to be perpetuated. The truth is, it is important for you to believe that you are equally qualified and skilled (often more so) than your locally trained colleagues. The role you play is significant and you positively impact patient outcomes.

Disproportionate Blame

Is there a blame rather than learn culture within the organization? Are your mistakes singled out and taken out of proportion? It always seems your fault and your qualification and skills once again called into question

Are discriminatory policies and practices that disfavours Black practitioners

Maybe you were not the physician attending to a particular patient yet you were wrongfully disciplined

Have you been targeted by colleagues and other members of the healthcare team and blamed for an error or omission? Was the punishment grossly out of proportion to the mistake made? Document the event. Report your concerns with leadership and speak with a trusted colleague to help you

Tokenism

Tokenism occurs when organizations hire Black doctors to check a diversity box to appear to be a diverse and inclusive workplace but rather it is a symbolic effort.

File a complaint with your Human Resources department

It can also present itself as you being asked to speak for all Black people as though you were the expert.

Most organizations use metrics to track whether they are meeting diversity markers. These markers reflect the number of visible minorities (including Black physicians) hired. Black physicians may find themselves being either the only one or a part of a small group of colleagues with similar racial backgrounds. You may be assigned all the Black patients or questions regarding Black patients may be regularly filtered to you.

Unequal Work Assignments

Patterns where you are being given less desirable tasks or work considered menial are red flags	Understand and become familiar with anti-discrimination laws as well as your rights within the workplace
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Pay particular attention to the roles you are repeatedly assigned especially following instances where you spoke up regarding a wrong committed against you or another colleague, Retaliation and discriminatory practices are a violation of your human rights. Learn about how your organization handles racially charged complaints.

Derogatory Jokes and Comments

Racially insensitive jokes or comments made about you in your hearing or communicated to you by another staff or patient are inappropriate	Speak with a member of the leadership team who can serve as a mediator to bring about amicable resolution
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Document the comment made, date and time and witnesses present.

Racially insensitive behaviour is never acceptable. Keep a detailed account of each incident that occurs. This allows you to establish patterns of behaviour and strengthen your evidence should the matter be escalated and legal proceedings are required.

Biased Patient Assignment

Being assigned more complicated patients or less desirable patients who are themselves being discriminated against	Set clear boundaries and communicate them effectively with your colleagues
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Speak up for yourself

A constant barrage of patients with complex needs can result in burnout. It increases the time you spend and the mental and physical stamina required to carefully assess and create a plan of care. This can have catastrophic consequences physically and emotionally leading to patient errors. If your staff lead is deliberately passing difficult patients to you, SPEAK UP and find assistance in resolving the matter.

