

BAME Staff Network

Factors affecting mental wellbeing of BAME staff

- Inherent impact of invisibility, isolation, marginalisation and racial discrimination / Heavy workloads / Disproportionate levels of scrutiny / Fewer opportunities to enhance promotion prospects (*Equality Challenge Unit, 2009 ~ now Advance HE*).
- Experiencing racial inequality and discrimination can be very stressful and have a negative effect on overall health and mental health (*Williams, 2018*).
- Racism in academia has major impact on BAME staff mental health (*Times Higher Education blog, 2020*).
- Mental health problems rarely spoken about in some communities (*Memon et al., 2016*).

My University My Voice 2019 (response 58 %)

- 63 % positive about wellbeing at Greenwich.
- Mental & Physical Health among top 5 factors to improve on.

BAME staff survey November 2019 (response 37 %)

My Department / School has a clear and transparent way of allocating workload.

58 % negative

Do you have a leadership role ?

51 % negative

Do you feel you have been treated unfairly or denied an opportunity for career progression because of your ethnicity ?

49 % negative

Some proposed actions to boost morale and aspirations

Support for mental wellbeing

- Organisational competence framework to better understand and address mental health issues among BAME staff.
- Pastoral and counselling services must be culturally appropriate.

Inclusivity

- More ethnic minorities within leadership and managerial roles, as BAME staff consistently face barriers to accessing these roles.
- BAME staff on selection and promotion panels.
- Broader policies to support BAME staff (e.g. Race Equality Charter mark).
- Unconscious bias training for all staff.

Feel-good factors

- Success stories of BAME staff should be highlighted more often.
- Intentional push to enhance careers of BAME staff towards visible senior positions.

References

Equality Challenge Unit. The experience of black and minority ethnic staff working in higher education. Literature Review 2009.

Memon, A., Taylor, K., Mohebbati, L.M., Sundin, J., Cooper, M., Scanlon, T., & de Visser, R. (2016). Perceived barriers to accessing mental health services among black and minority ethnic (BME) communities: A qualitative study in Southeast England. *BMJ Open*, 6(11).

Williams, D.R. (2018). Stress and the mental health of populations of color: Advancing our understanding of race-related stressors. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 59(4), 466-485.