

Exploring School Counselors' Engagement with Anti-racist Behaviors and the Impact of Self- Care Practices

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Abstract

School counselors' well-being is closely related to their capacity to successfully promote anti-racist behaviors and advance equity in schools, highlighting the need for self-care and wellness initiatives. Promoting antiracism behaviors requires a comprehensive approach that addresses individual, interpersonal, and systemic levels within the school environment. School counselors play a pivotal role in facilitating difficult conversations about race and racism, creating safe spaces for students and staff to share their experiences and perspectives. School counselors also support diversity and inclusion initiatives, challenge discriminatory policies and procedures, and advocate for policies that advance equity and social justice. Additionally, school counselors support underrepresented students, close achievement gaps, and foster a feeling of belonging for all students by encouraging anti-racist practices. To investigate the intricate relationship between self-care practices and the frequency of engaging in anti-racism behaviors, a survey research design was employed with correlation, regression, and t-test analyses. With a sample of 188 US school counselors in western Massachusetts and New York City schools, significant correlations revealed relationships among school counselors' spiritual practices and differences among religious affiliations. The results of the quantitative analysis revealed significant positive correlations between specific self-care practices and the adoption of anti-racism behaviors among school counselors, highlighting the potential of self-care as a catalyst for promoting equity and inclusion within educational settings. By identifying these relationships, appropriate interventions can be implemented at multiple levels—for individual school counselors, within school systems, and in counselor education training programs. Suggestions for improved self-care practices and well-being are also discussed.

Keywords: anti-racism; counsellors; mental health; schools; well-being