



GLOBAL WELLNESS
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EMPOWERING WELLNESS WORLDWIDE

Awareness Action Kit - RACISM -

Global Perspectives on Inclusive Well-Being:
The Role of Health and Wellness Coaching in
Fostering Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and
Belonging

Empowering Individuals, Leaders, Service
Providers, and Advocates of DEIB Through the
Lens of Health and Wellness Coaching

- 2024 -



WELLNESS COACHING INITIATIVE
GLOBAL WELLNESS INSTITUTE

Welcome!

We are thrilled to introduce you to our **Awareness Action Kit**, designed to kickstart your journey into understanding the invaluable intersection of Health and Wellness with Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging.

This kit offers you a practical, actionable, and easily digestible resource to delve into the profound impact that Health and Wellness can have in fostering a culture of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, And Belonging.

Directly excerpted from our comprehensive 130-page whitepaper, "Global Perspectives on Inclusive Well-Being: The Role of Health and Wellness Coaching in Fostering Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging," these resources are a simple gateway to a deeper understanding.

We invite you to download the complete whitepaper along with its accompanying PowerPoint presentation and 11-page infographic, available [HERE](#).

Within the whitepaper, you'll explore 10 distinct areas of diversity, each accompanied by its own Awareness Action Kit:

- 1. Race and Ethnicity**
- 2. Age and Generations**
- 3. Gender**
- 4. Sexual Orientation**
- 5. Religion and Spirituality**
- 6. Disability**
- 7. Socioeconomic Status and Social Determinants of Health**
- 8. Health Status**
- 9. Neurodiversity**
- 10. Weight Bias and Stigma**

Each kit provides insights into the definition of the specific type of diversity, why it's crucial, how Health and Wellness Coaching can play a pivotal role in supporting it, and real-life "Voices from the field" to enrich your understanding.

Additionally, each Awareness Action Kit comes complete with a "**Questions for Discussion Guide**" to prompt thoughtful reflection and dialogue, as well as essential "**Contact Information**" to reach out for further support or inquiries. There is an **(11th)** separate **Glossary of Terms Awareness Action Kit** to enhance your comprehension across all areas covered.

Happy discovering - we're excited you've joined us!
The Global Wellness Institute Wellness Coaching Initiative Team.

X. Race and Ethnicity

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X. Race and Ethnicity

- **What it is**

Race

The concept of race is controversial. It is difficult to define a rationale for racial categories and there is no consistent agreement about an objective set of categories. Classifying individuals by their physical appearance and skin color is unreliable and of questionable validity. Genetic studies have found some evidence of broad "continental" groups that are genetically similar, however, there is little evidence that these correspond to commonly perceived racial categories.

Findings from human genetics research have challenged the view that race is genetically determined. Evolving research depicts that there is more within- rather than between-group variation in races. Due to the changing environment, this means that groups within a certain identifiable race would have more differences within their inner circle than differences with those who aren't in their inner circles, leading scholars to conceptualize race as a social, rather than biological, construct.

Despite these difficulties, the term race is still widely used in legal, health, and policy contexts and can be expressed as "any one of the groups that humans are often divided into based on physical traits regarded as common among people of shared ancestry (Merriam-Webster, 2023).

Ethnicity

Ethnicity is essentially self-defined and may change over time. Classification of ethnicity is essentially pragmatic, based on categories that include common self-descriptions, are acceptable to respondents, and identify variations that are important for research or policy. Ethnicity is different from country of origin since many countries include more than one ethnic group. A common understanding of ethnicity can be stated as "the social group a person belongs to, and either identifies with or is identified with by others, as a result of a mix of cultural and other factors including language, diet, religion, ancestry and physical features traditionally associated with race." (ScotPHO, 2023).

How race and ethnicity impact health and well-being

Race and ethnicity can significantly influence health and well-being outcomes, reflecting the intricate interplay of social, economic, cultural, and environmental factors. These demographic characteristics are pivotal in understanding health disparities as they often correlate with disparities in access to resources. Socioeconomic status, shaped by race and

ethnicity, dictates access to education, employment, and income, directly impacting health outcomes (Smith, 2011).

Cultural backgrounds play a crucial role in influencing health beliefs, practices, and the ability to navigate healthcare systems. Language barriers, rooted in diverse linguistic backgrounds, can hinder effective communication with healthcare providers. Systemic biases and discrimination within healthcare systems contribute to disparities in the quality of care, while historical injustices and traumas have lasting effects on the social determinants of health for certain racial and ethnic groups (Fiscella & Sanders, 2016).

Genetic and biological factors also come into play, as certain health conditions may have a higher prevalence in specific demographics. Recognizing and addressing these complex intersections is essential for developing inclusive health interventions that work towards eliminating health disparities and promoting equitable health outcomes for all (Hernandez & Blazer, 2006).

- **Why it matters**

Race and ethnicity play a pivotal role in the DEIB conversation within the context of well-being today. Acknowledging the impact of race and ethnicity is essential for dismantling systemic barriers that contribute to health disparities. In fact, social determinants of health influence access to education, economic stability, and healthcare resources.

Enduring prejudice can be so stressful that it has proven to shorten lives. According to Wamsley (2021), former CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky declared racism to be a major health crisis yet advanced protocols have yet to be created in the context of a healthcare system deeply strained by the arrival of COVID. Race and Ethnicity have even been shown to affect the way people adhere to medical treatment – a specificity supported by Medical Coaches (Hanlon et al., 2010).

Many people who have deeper complexions, have accents, or are immigrants live with varying amounts of anxiety about how they will be treated and must navigate situations when seeking medical care. Even Serena Williams, a world-famous, economically privileged athlete shared experiences of her doctors not believing her and providing inferior care that almost cost her and her daughter's lives (Lockhart, 2018). Many more have experienced the shame of being dismissed and being treated as if they do not feel pain or endured deplorable conditions in healthcare systems in other countries of origin.

In the pursuit of well-being for all, recognizing and addressing the unique challenges faced by different racial and ethnic groups is crucial.

Incorporating race and ethnicity into the DEIB framework ensures that well-being initiatives are not only comprehensive but also sensitive to the diverse needs of individuals and communities. By fostering inclusion and understanding the intersectionality of identities, organizations, and societies can cultivate environments that support the integral well-being of every individual, contributing to a more equitable and just world.

- **How Health and Wellness Coaching can support this diversity**

Structural racism affects many clients, and it is critical to use specialized methods to create an environment of trust as a foundation for a more equitable road to wellness. Health and Wellness Coaches play a pivotal role in addressing and mitigating race and ethnicity bias within the field by adopting inclusive practices that promote equity and empower individuals from diverse backgrounds. First and foremost, coaches can actively cultivate cultural competence by seeking education on various cultural norms, beliefs, and health practices. This outlook allows coaches to engage with clients in a non-judgmental way that respects and accepts their unique perspectives, fostering a sense of inclusivity based on connection and trust.

Health and Wellness Coaches are trained to enter relationships with absolute curiosity and without assumptions. Most people, when dealing with people of backgrounds different from their own, base what they know on their limited personal interactions. As author Chimamanda Adichie explains: “The single story creates stereotypes and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.” (Adichie, 2009, p. 4).

Moreover, Health and Wellness Coaches can advocate for the elimination of systemic barriers that contribute to health disparities. By addressing the social determinants of health—such as access to quality education, employment opportunities, and healthcare resources—coaches can work with clients to navigate these challenges and facilitate positive lifestyle changes (see section on social determinants of health). This involves tailoring wellness plans to consider the specific socio-economic, cultural, and environmental factors that impact clients from different racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Effective communication is another key aspect where coaches can make a significant impact. By being mindful of language barriers and adopting culturally sensitive communication strategies, coaches can ensure that clients fully comprehend their wellness plans and feel comfortable discussing their health concerns. Building open and trusting relationships between coaches and clients is essential for overcoming potential mistrust

stemming from historical biases and discrimination within the healthcare system.

Furthermore, Health and Wellness Coaches can serve as advocates for diversity within their profession. Encouraging and supporting individuals from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups to pursue careers in coaching contributes to a more inclusive industry. This diversity in representation helps clients feel seen, understood, and supported, ultimately breaking down biases and fostering a more equitable approach to health and wellness.

In essence, Health and Wellness Coaches have the potential to be agents of positive change by actively working to close the gaps associated with race and ethnicity bias. Through education, advocacy, and inclusive practices, coaches can empower individuals to overcome barriers, achieve optimal well-being, and contribute to the broader movement toward health equity.

- **Voices from the Field**

Voice: The Role of a Health and Wellness Coach in a remote region in Chiapas, Mexico

The following is a testimonial from Nina Raffaele Aponte, Health and Wellness Coach, Healing Conduit, Educator.

"One of my personal goals is to serve and support the collective health of community-based groups that focus on activism and social change. In July 2022, I seized the opportunity to travel to a remote town in a southern highland region of Chiapas, Mexico, where I had a long-standing contact with the founding mothers.

The coaching field has been criticized as catering its services to the mainstream white public. Seeing very few wellness resources specifically written for Latinas of all skin tones and feeling passionate about using my light-skinned privilege as a biracial person to model education beyond the deep-seated systemic prejudice installed by the colonial mindset, I saw this as a unique opportunity.

This experience proved to be an enriching exchange for both sides, learning about the struggles of Mayan women speaking Tzotzil and Tzeltal with very different cultures, living conditions, and health issues. Before my arrival, the community group I was partnering with, CEFOCAM which provides training to women traditional weavers from the highlands of Chiapas, told me that the principal health issues were diabetes, poor nutrition, and heart disease.

Once I arrived and saw firsthand how people leave food out for extended periods, I questioned the safety of consuming the food where I was staying. I realized that there were many families whose level of poverty had them living without refrigeration. I also noticed that in the typical marketplace, chickens and other meats were sold unrefrigerated.

This inspired me to set a meeting with the health promotion director to inquire about their education on food safety, and the prevention of food poisoning, in the hopes of addressing this topic specifically with the community. This practice turned out to be such a norm that despite sharing there are heat-resistant bacteria, the staff saw food safety as a nonissue. Another thing I hadn't considered was that the community educators spoke their original languages and were not fluent in Spanish, and the staff who were bilingual could not be spared from their duties to translate. I was unable to deliver diabetes prevention education nor integrated nutrition as prevention education as the health educators came down from the communities infrequently.

Working as a Health and Wellness Coach, and living within this community, enabled me to absorb some perspectives of this indigenous group as I expanded my cultural competency. I learned it's important to be immersed in a setting and consult with local experts before creating a plan. Perhaps the conversations that I had prior to my arrival had been polite in the initial agreement. Being appropriate is more than using politically correct terminology and being fair to all people, it's how we approach diverse groups, being humble and not expecting others to adapt to our postures of privilege."

Voice: The Role of the Health Coach in a Global Pandemic on Racial and Ethnic Injustices (Jordan, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic was an epidemic of noncommunicable disease, coupled with racial and ethnic injustices and longstanding health/wealth disparities, coupled with a politically divisive atmosphere that sometimes-undermined factual science and public health initiatives. The combination of these biological, social, political, and cultural forces required a multifaceted, multilayered comprehensive approach.

As evidenced by the concept paper synthesizing the demographic impact of COVID-19, establishing supportive coaching relationships with individuals and families most at risk had a clear impact. Certified professional health coaches were shown to facilitate behavior change and mindset shifts toward healthier choices and activities, thereby reducing

the risk of preventable, chronic diseases largely dependent upon lifestyle factors.

The client-focused, non-directive, reassuring, and empathetic coaching dialog has proven to be an effective approach for supporting individuals coping with the anxiety of prolonged social isolation, long COVID-19, and vaccine hesitancy, often related to past injustices suffered within marginalized and oppressed communities of color.

Both individual coaching — tailored to the specific agendas and needs of individuals, and affordable, high-efficiency models of group coaching with locally designed strategies allied with public health initiatives were shown to make a positive impact on risk reduction of chronic diseases within ethnic/racial minorities.

While health coaches often strengthen the responsibility of behavior change on the individual, the grave disparities and inequities of the COVID-19 pandemic required an expanded coach approach that regarded social determinants of health, specifically, race and ethnicity. With expanded skills in addressing social determinants of health and “next generational” cultural competencies, certified professional health coaches have been shown to work as primary actors in healthcare. Hence, they must be included in future preventive strategies.

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Want to contribute?

Health and Wellness Coaching Connection Blog Space.

It is our mission to empower individuals and businesses around the world to confidently partner with wellness coaches, optimizing health and well-being and clarifying wellness coach specialties and global guidelines through education and community resources. The GWI WCI Blog is one of these resources intended to advance the global Health & Wellness Coaching Community by providing accessible, evidence-based articles related to the field of Health & Wellness Coaching. Blogs will be posted on our area of the [GWI website](#) and cross-posted on LinkedIn.

Learn more here :

[Wellness Coaching Connection Contributor Guidelines](#)
[Blog-Newsletter Submission Form](#)

Please email us (gwiwci2023@gmail.com) if anything is unclear or if you have questions. We look forward to receiving your submissions!

Questions for Discussion Guide

Complementing our research, this Questions for Discussion Guide serves as an organized tool to facilitate ongoing discussion and contemplation on the pivotal role of Health and Wellness Coaching within the realms of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Intended for educators, students, and readers, this guide provides a structured framework for further exploration, encouraging thoughtful analysis and collaborative dialogue to advance inclusive practices in the field.

- What does a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace/ world/ community where everyone belongs look like/feel like?
- What are the gaps in your organization around this type of diversity?
- How might you champion greater inclusion in your day to day?
- How can you champion more inclusion and awareness around this diversity?
- What might be a personal obstacle to embracing this type of diversity?
- What unconscious bias might you have in this type of diversity?
 - How might you explore your unconscious bias?
- What is the greatest challenge for you concerning this type of diversity and why?
- Who might support you to better understand this type of diversity?
- In what context might you find this type of diversity most relevant (i.e. Workplace? Schools? Community?)
- Where (country, location, venue) might this type of diversity NOT be a challenge and why?
- What has been your personal experience with this type of diversity - from the outside or inside?