

WEEKLY WELLNESS AND COUNSELING
NEWSLETTER

COPING WITH RACIAL TRAUMA



WHAT IS RACIAL TRAUMA?

The result of witnessing or experiencing racial stressors such as racism, racial bias, discrimination, or violence against people of color. Experiences can occur directly or indirectly.



EFFECTS OF RACIAL TRAUMA

- Distress related to the trauma
- Avoiding things/people/places related to the trauma
- Chronic stress
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Physical pain
- Dissociation
- Hypertension
- Heart concerns
- Increased sensitivity & reactivity
- Feeling distracted
- Negative thoughts about self, others or world
- Anger



WAYS TO COPE WITH RACIAL TRAUMA

Coping often looks different to different people. It is essential that you develop a few coping skills to use when in need. We encourage you to be mindful of your needs and attend to your needs with respect, self-compassion, and self-love. Please see below for a list of possible coping mechanisms to use when experiencing racial trauma.

USE YOUR VOICE

- *Express your feelings in a safe manner
- *Attend therapy
- *Embrace communal support by connecting with family, friends, and others to discuss experiences



BE SKILLFUL

- *Use cognitive skills (meditation, daily affirmations, journaling, prayer, etc.)
- *Utilize coping skills (deep breathing, exercise, body scanning, mindfulness)
- *Explore what triggers you and make a list of ways to cope with triggers
- *Avoid triggers when possible & set boundaries
- *Become aware of symptoms



BE MINDFUL

- *Disconnect from social media and news outlets when necessary
- *Recognize when you are not able to perform optimally due to trauma and rest
- *Role play ways to respond to negative racial encounters



TAKE ACTION

- *Engage in activism
- *Peacefully protest, organize a group of peers who share similar beliefs, sign petitions, donate to anti-racist campaigns



HOW TO BECOME AN ALLY

Are you unsure of how best to support the anti-racism movement? People might become an ally to advocate for social justice for a group or community that is oppressed. What does becoming an ally look like in your daily life?

LOOKING FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO TAKE ACTION

- Taking on the struggle as your own
- Amplifying the voices of those who are oppressed without speaking for them
- Standing up even when you feel scared or uncomfortable
- Owning your mistakes (mistakes will happen!)
- Understanding that your education and awareness is up to you
- Using your position of privilege to address and challenge injustice
- Having conversations about racism and injustice- push through the discomfort!

(<https://guidetoallyship.com/>)



GET INFORMED

- Reflecting on your own privilege in a compassionate way
- Acknowledging your biases and stereotypes about other racial and ethnic groups (we all have them!)
- Learning about different racial groups and ethnicities that you are not familiar with
- Educating yourself on White privilege and various forms of racism
- Immerse yourself in cultures that you are not as comfortable with (watch films, documentaries, try the cuisine, etc.)

PARTICIPATE IN ACTIVISM

- Support anti-racist organizations and movements
- Support businesses by POC (people of color)
- Encourage anti-racist educational materials
- Attend protests, rallies, events that are anti-racist
- Donate to anti-racist campaigns

RESOURCES

See below for a list of books, films, and documentaries that might be useful to you.

BOOKS

- *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism* by Robin DiAngelo
- *How to be an Anti-Racist* by Ibrahim X. Kendi
- *It's Time to Talk (And Listen) How to have constructive conversations about race, class, sexuality, ability & gender in a polarized world* by Anatasia S. Kim & Alicia Del Prado
- *Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria? And other conversations about race* by Beverly Daniel Tatum

DOCUMENTARIES

- Race: The Power of an Illusion
- Eyes on the Prize
- 13th
- The Color of Fear
- Mirrors of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible

