

#RacialTraumalsReal

Racism & racial discrimination can negatively affect your physical & mental health. Regardless of your previous awareness, you may find yourself struggling to process your reactions to current and/or past experiences of racism & racial discrimination — reflecting an experience known as racial trauma.

This resource card provides information on racial trauma & resources to foster resilience and healthy coping.



What is RACIAL TRAUMA?

Racial Trauma is one term used to describe the physical & emotional symptoms that People of Color often experience after exposure to racism and/or racial discrimination.

Exposure may be either direct or indirect — including:

- Encountering racism.
- Experiencing racial discrimination, teasing and/or harassment.
- Witnessing the people close to you or from your racial community be affected by racism.
- Being made aware of and/or reminded of the longstanding history & influence of racism directed toward your racial community.

Racism & discrimination experiences do not exist in isolation:

- Racial trauma builds over time as a person experiences large & small racial events
- Every encounter with racism and/or racial discrimination that happens to you, you witness or read about contributes to chronic stress

Signs of RACIAL TRAUMA

Racial trauma can be experienced in our bodies & minds in many ways.

Some symptoms include, but are not limited to:

- Heightened anxiety & increased awareness of your environment.
- Re-experiencing thoughts, feelings and/or images related to racial incidents.
- Headaches
- Memory loss
- Sleep problems
- Body aches
- Guilt & shame
- Confusion

How to Cope with RACIAL TRAUMA

It can be difficult to know where to begin.

Here are some suggestions:

- **Acknowledge** the impact of racial trauma.
- **Discuss** your experiences with those you trust.
- **Seek Support** (e.g. community, counseling, spiritual or religious guidance).
- **Self-Care** - Engage in activities that bring pleasure & promote a healthy lifestyle.
- **Empowerment Through Resistance** - Speak up & engage in community service or activism.

Resources

Counseling, Health & Wellness

73 Tremont Street, 5th Floor | 617-573-8226 | suffolk.edu/chw

- Free & confidential counseling services
- Counseling appointments available:
Monday - Thursday 9 AM - 6 PM & Friday 9 AM - 5 PM
- Crisis counselor available for students dealing with urgent concerns (including being triggered by racial issues):
Monday - Friday 11 AM - 4 PM

Center for Student Diversity & Inclusion

Sawyer Building, Rm 828 | 617-573-8613 | diversity@suffolk.edu

Interfaith Center

Sawyer Building, Rm 823 | 617-573-8325 | interfaith@suffolk.edu

Report Bias Incidents on Campus to:

- Suffolk University Police Department:
617-573-8111 (Emergency)
617-573-8333 (Non-Emergency)
- Center for Student Diversity & Inclusion: 617-573-8065
- Dean of Students: 617-573-8239
- Human Resources: 617-573-8415
- Title IX: 617-573-8027

Information in this resource card on racial trauma is derived from the Institute for the Study and Promotion of Race and Culture (ISPRC All Rights Reserved, 2015) Boston College. For additional

information contact isprc@bc.edu or visit: <http://www.bc.edu/schools/lsoe/isprc/> or

http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/schools/lsoe_sites/isprc/pdf/racialtraumaisrealManuscript.pdf

Self-Care: Recovery Plan Steps

Racial Wellness Toolbox

Describe yourself when you are managing & responding to racism & racial trauma in a healthy manner.

Daily Coping Skills List

List connections or tools that help you cope with racism.

Such items include, but are not limited to:

- Resources on racial identity & racial trauma.
- Connecting with friends who are able to engage in conversations about racial awareness.
- Engage in prayer, spiritual practices or use of mantras.
- Engage in activism.
- Practice self-management (e.g. healthy eating, exercise, favorite activities that help you feel centered).

Triggers & Response Plan

List experiences that tend to result in racial trauma symptoms (e.g. anger, isolation, sadness). After each item or experience, identify a specific coping response (e.g. calling a friend, writing in your journal, activism).

Early Warning Signs & Response Plan

List early warning signs that you are experiencing racial trauma (e.g. body aches, fatigue, anxiety, depression, difficulty sleeping) & related ways of coping from your Daily Coping Skills List.

Acute Racial Trauma Response Plan

List signs that you are experiencing acute racial trauma (e.g. depression, anxiety, and anger, which impact your ability to engage in chosen activities of work, sleep or school). Identify an action plan for each item on your list.

Crisis Planning

Ask yourself how you would know if you were experiencing a crisis due to racism (e.g. thoughts of harm to yourself/others; inability to care for yourself; acute racial trauma symptoms that don't improve). List people or additional resources to contact in the event you experience such a crisis.

Post Crisis Planning

List ways of reconnecting with yourself & your communities to regain balance in the face of racism & racial trauma.



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