



We can always choose, in every moment of our life, between the way of selfishness and that of love.

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#CiteBlackWomen
#SP4SJ
#BlackLivesMatter
#SayHerName



**RED FOX
READY**
PROTECT THE PACK

Racial Trauma

#racialtraumaisreal

When I am afraid to speak is when I speak.
That is when it is most important.
Nayyirah Waheed

knowing your power is what creates humility.
not knowing your power is what creates insecurity.
Nayyirah Waheed





Regardless of a person's previous awareness of racism, many people of Color may find themselves struggling to process their reactions to the deaths of Michael Brown, John Crawford III, Eric Garner, Aiyana Stanley-Jones, and Yvette Smith, as well as the lack of indictments of the police officers who killed these men.

Anger, sadness, fear, feelings of helplessness, exhaustion, rage, and the desire to act may emerge at unpredictable times in an unpredictable manner.

<https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/lynch-school/sites/isprc.html>

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

Racism is a marriage of *racist policies* and **racist ideas** that produces and normalizes *racial inequities*.

Racial inequity is when two or more racial groups are not standing on approximately equal footing.

A racist policy is any measure that produces or sustains racial inequity between racial groups.

A racist idea is any idea that suggests one racial group is inferior to superior to another racial group in any way.



Ibram X Kendi

Racial Trauma Terminology

Carter et al. (2017) defines **race-based traumatic stress (RBTS)** as a "racial encounter that is emotionally painful, sudden and out of **the individual's control** results in reactions, some of which overlap with PTSD symptoms and also involve other criteria unrelated to PTSD that can result in RBTS injury (p. 31). " In his definition, the encounter is experienced directly by the individual.

Helms, Nicolas, and Green (2012) argue that PTSD symptoms may result from "**direct cataclysmic** racial or ethnic cultural events, **vicarious or witnessed cataclysmic events**, and racial and cultural macroaggressions (p.68).

Regardless of the theoretical orientation, the trauma of racism refers to the increasing and negative impact of racism on the lives of individuals from marginalized communities. When these experiences are **repetitive and unresolved**, they may create "severe emotional pain and distress that can overwhelm a person's and community's ability to cope, creating feelings of powerlessness (Lebron, Morrison, Ferris, Alcantara, Cummings, Parker, & McKay, 2015, p. 10)."

Williams, S. A. S. (2018). Racial trauma: Assessment and intervention. *New York School Psychologist*, 36 (3), 3-8.

cognitive
impairments

memory loss

difficulty
remembering

and somatic
symptoms, such as
headaches, body
pains and aches,

and trouble
sleeping

Helms, J.E., Nicolas, G., & Green, C. E. (2012). Racism and ethnoviolence as trauma: Enhancing professional and research training. *Traumatology*, 18 (1), 65-74. DOI:10.1177/1534765610396728

Symptoms of Racial Trauma



WHAT IS RACIAL TRAUMA?

Emotional or physical pain that results from experiences of racism. It involves ongoing and collective injuries due to exposure and re-exposure to experiences of racial discrimination.

YOU MIGHT EXPERIENCE

- Anger
- Sadness
- Fear
- Numbness
- Disconnection
- Hypervigilance
- Increased sensitivity to threat
- Anxiety
- Tension
- Intrusive thoughts or images
- Decreased immune system functioning
- Difficulty focusing or concentrating
- Irritability

RESOURCES

University Counseling Center
www.gvsu.edu/counsel | (616) 331-3266

- Teletherapy for currently enrolled GVSU students
- Black Student Support Resources at www.gvsu.edu/counsel/blacksupport

SELF-CARE

Take a break from social media and news

Do things that make you feel safe and happy

Acknowledge and validate your own feelings (anger, fear, and sadness are normal responses to racial trauma)

Communicate/share your feelings with those who can support you

Plan activities that promote a healthy mind, body, and spirit

Journal your thoughts and feelings

Share personal stories of racial experiences with people you trust

Office of Multicultural Affairs
www.gvsu.edu/oma

Division of Inclusion and Equity
www.gvsu.edu/inclusion

Coping with Racial Trauma



What is Racial Trauma?

Racial trauma is the result of experiencing and witnessing racial stressors including racism, discrimination and violence against people of color. These acts of racism and discrimination create an environment in which a person of color feels unsafe and vulnerable in their community simply for existing in their own skin.



Effects of Racial Trauma

- Re-experiencing distressing events
- Chronic stress
- Hypervigilance
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Physical pain
- Cardiovascular disease
- Hypertension
- Respiratory complications



Coping with Racial Trauma

PROTECT & PROCESS

- Avoid triggers and set boundaries
- Talk to like-minded friend/family members and know when to seek support.
- Recognize symptoms (e.g., anxiety, anger)

PRACTICE SELF-CARE

- Engage in behavioral coping (e.g., exercise, deep breathing, body scanning)
- Use cognitive skills (e.g., prayer, meditation)

PROTEST

- Peacefully protest, organize a group of like-minded peers, sign petitions

Being a Better Ally

Department of Psychology
Franklin College of Arts and Sciences
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

For more information, visit:
psychology.uga.edu



Look for Opportunities to Speak and Act

- Use your position of privilege to address injustice and intolerance
- Amplify voices that may be marginalized before speaking for them
- Have conversations about racial trauma and racism – don't shy away or feel that it's taboo!



Inform Yourself

- Reflect on your privilege with an eye toward growth, not guilt
- Take the time to learn about different races and ethnicities
- Watching films, listening to new music, trying new foods, are just a few ways to learn about different groups



Engage in Activism

- Support anti-racist organizations
- Support business owned by people of color (POC)
- Encourage anti-racist education
- Cite and read literature by POC
- Push back on your power by sharing your power with POC
- Engage in action (e.g., rallies, protests, petitions) and support leaders who promote anti-racist ideals



Racial trauma is a cumulative experience, where every personal or vicarious encounter with racism contributes to a more insidious, chronic stress (Carter, 2007).

I have privilege as a white person because I can do all of these things without thinking twice:

I can go birding (#ChristianCooper)

I can go jogging (#AmaudArbery)

I can relax in the comfort of my own home (#BothemJean and #AtatianaJefferson)

I can ask for help after being in a car crash (#JonathanFerrell and #RenishaMcBride)

I can have a cellphone (#StephonClark)

I can leave a party to get to safety (#JordanEdwards)

I can play loud music (#JordanDavis)

I can sell CDs (#AltonSterling)

I can sleep (#AiyanaJones)

I can walk from the corner store (#MikeBrown)

I can play cops and robbers (#TamirRice)

I can go to church (#Charleston9)

I can walk home with Skittles (#TrayvonMartin)

I can hold a hair brush while leaving my own bachelor party (#SeanBell)

I can party on New Years (#OscarGrant)

I can get a normal traffic ticket (#SandraBland)

I can lawfully carry a weapon (#PhilandoCastile)

I can break down on a public road with car problems (#CoreyJones)

I can shop at Walmart (#JohnCrawford)

I can have a disabled vehicle (#TerrenceCrutcher)

I can read a book in my own car (#KeithScott)

I can be a 10yr old walking with our grandfather (#CliffordGlover)

I can decorate for a party (#ClaudeReese)

I can ask a cop a question (#RandyEvans)

I can cash a check in peace (#YvonneSmallwood)

I can take out my wallet (#AmadouDiallo)

I can run (#WalterScott)

I can breathe (#EricGarner)

I can live (#FreddieGray)

I CAN BE ARRESTED WITHOUT THE FEAR OF BEING MURDERED (#GeorgeFloyd)

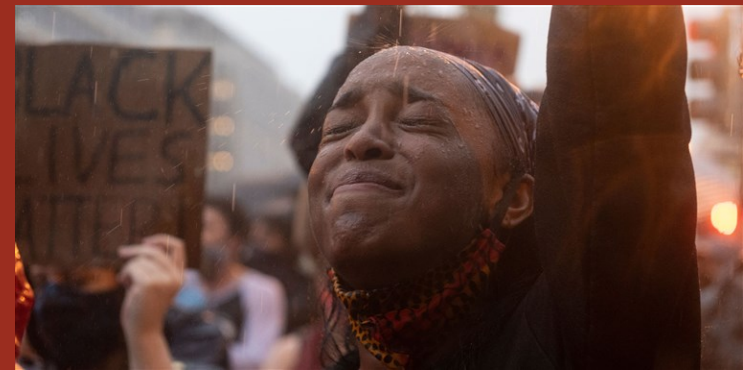
It's important to actually recognize that being able to do all these things is a privilege that everyone should have, regardless of the color of their skin.

*I copied and pasted this ... please do the same.

Words are not enough. Action is needed to dismantle the systemic racism that plagues our country and keeps resulting in the abuse and death of innocent people. I stand with my friends of color and will be an advocate and warrior to protect all humans.

#BlackLivesMatter #Solidarity #SpeakUp

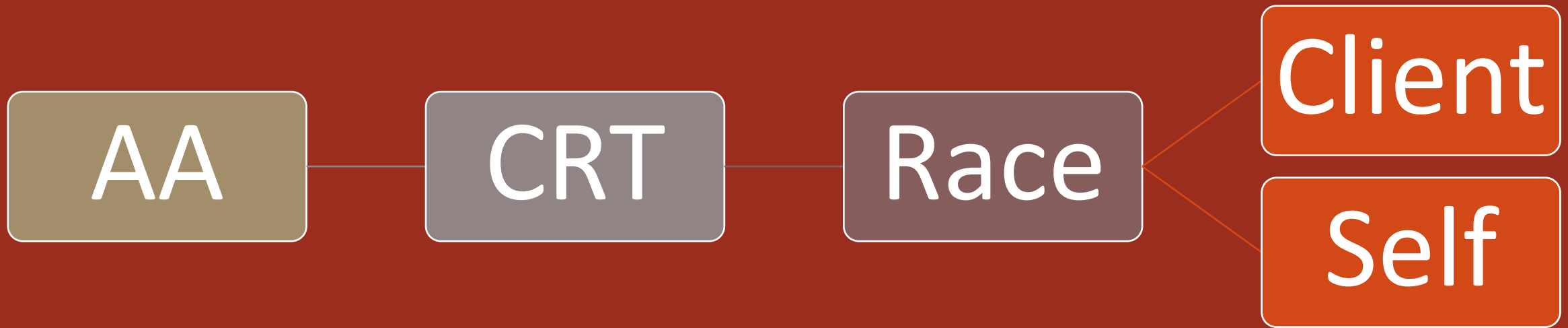
Racial Trauma is a Mental Health Concern



Hidden Wounds



Hardy, K. V. (2013). Healing the hidden wounds of racial trauma. *Reclaiming Children and Youth*, 22 (1), 24 - 28.



Affirmation & Acknowledgement

Proactive role in encouraging conversations about race.

Instigate Race Talk



Create Space for Race Make Explicit the Implicit

“The major objective of this step is to **affix words to racially based experiences**. This offers external and consensual validation to racially oppressed youth and helps restore their voices.”

The Process of Naming

#RacialTraumalsReal

Racism Recovery Plan Steps

Racial Wellness Toolbox	Describe what you are like when you are managing and responding to racism in a healthy manner.
Daily Maintenance of Centeredness in the Face of Racism	List connections or tools that help you maintain your centeredness in the face of racism. Such items can include, but are not limited to: a) Review Racial Identity Theory (see Helms); b) Connect with friends who are equally or better able to engage in conversations about racial awareness; c) Engage in prayer, spiritual practices or use of mantras; d) Engage in activism; and e) Practices self management, such as healthy eating, exercise, and favorite activities that help you feel centered.
Racial Trauma Triggers and Response Plan	List items or experiences that tend to result in racial trauma symptoms (e.g., anger, isolation, sadness). After each item or experience identify a specific centeredness response (e.g., calling a friend, writing in your journal, activism).
Racial Trauma Early Warning Signs & Response Plan	List early warning signs that you are experiencing racial trauma (e.g., body aches, fatigue, anxiety, depression, difficulty sleeping) and related ways of coping from your Daily Maintenance of Centeredness (item #2) coping skills list.
Acute Racial Trauma & Response Plan	List signs that you are experiencing acute racial trauma (e.g., hypervigilance, heightened emotional experiences, such as depression, anxiety, and anger, which compromise 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 others and/or self; inability to care for self and/or others; acute racial trauma symptoms that last longer than a specified duration). List a person(s) or additional resources to contact in the event you experience such a crisis.
Post Crisis Planning	List ways of reconnecting with yourself and your communities to regain centeredness in the face of racism.

<http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/schools/lsoe/sites/isprc/pdf/racialtraumalsrealManuscript.pdf>

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The Process of Naming

“They learn to recognize that devaluation and disrespect are directly connected to **race and race oppression.**”

Externalize Devaluation

“The goal of treatment is not to rid them of their rage but instead to help them be aware of it, gain control of it, and ultimately to redirect it.”

Rechanneling Rage

Affirmation and
Acknowledgement

Create Space for
Race

Racial Storytelling

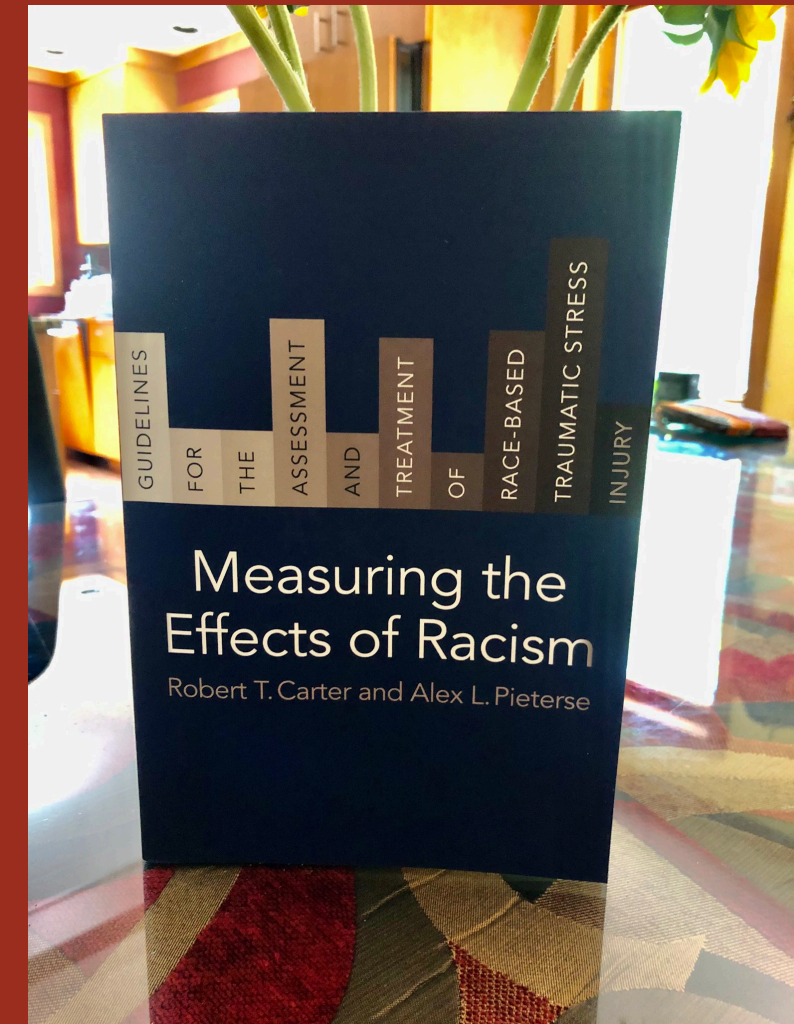
Validation

The Process of
Naming

Externalize
Devaluation

Counteract
Devaluation

Rechanneling
Rage



Hardy, K. V. (2013). Healing the hidden wounds of racial trauma. *Reclaiming Children and Youth*, 22 (1), 24 - 28.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10474412.2019.1669451>



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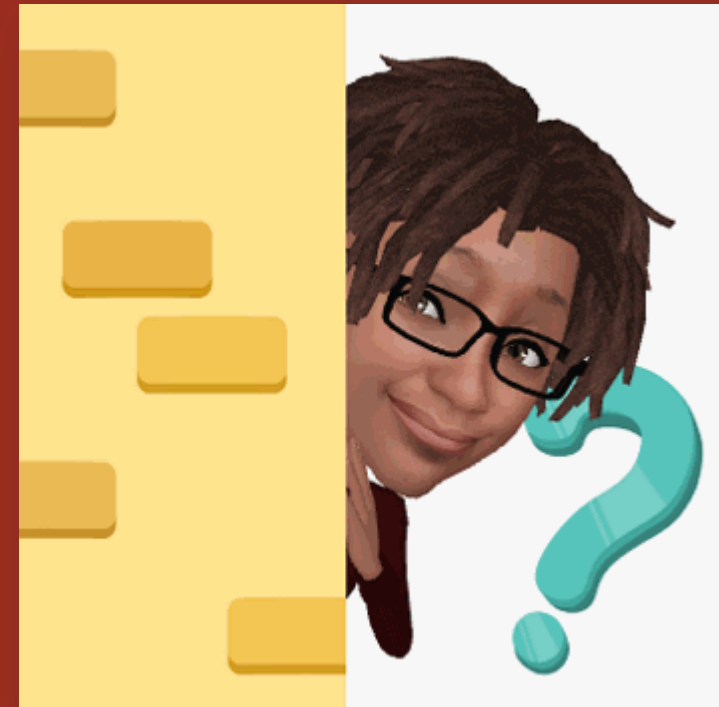
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Thank you!