

We Will Not Be Reduced: Healing from Racial Trauma



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We Will Not Be Reduced



"You may not control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them."



-Maya Angelou, Letter to my daughter

Objectives



1. Understand the underpinnings of racism in action
2. Recognize the effects of racial trauma
3. Ways to cope and continue healing from racially based trauma
4. How to identify programs working towards racial equity, and operating off a social justice oriented lens

Racism 101



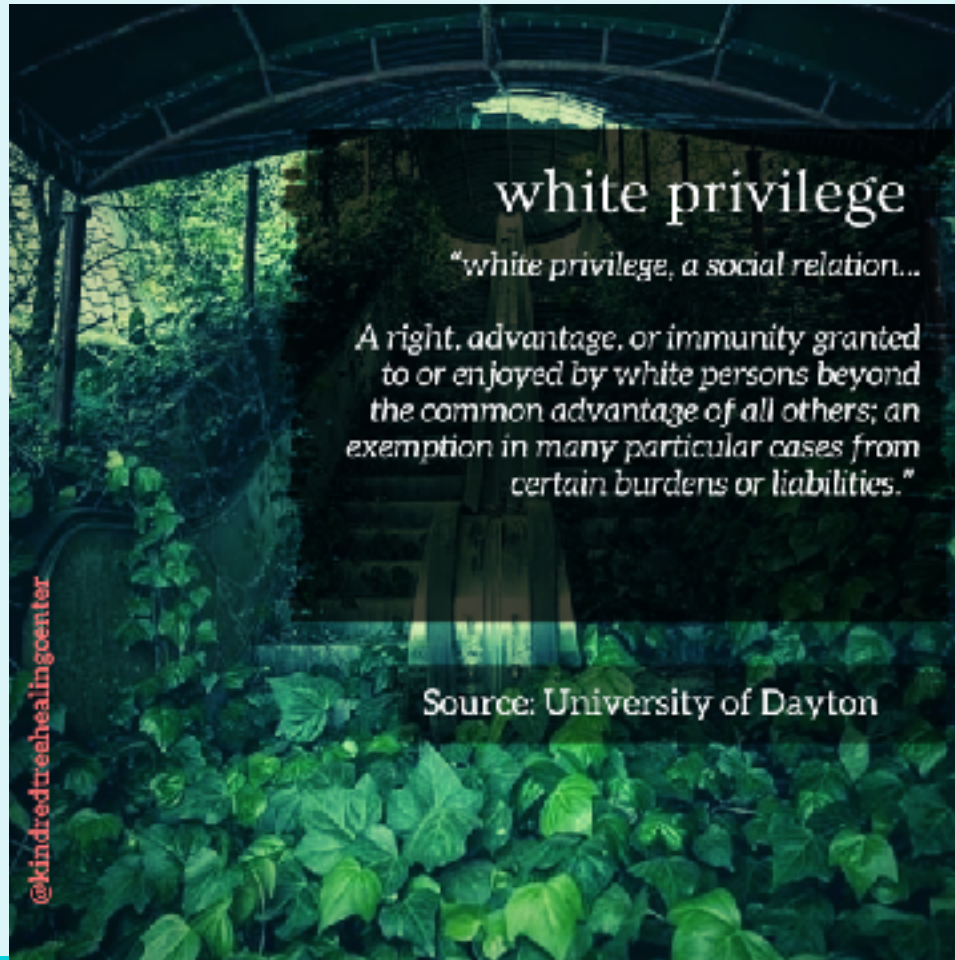
- Racism is inherently complex, and yet simple at the same time.
- Defined as a prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against a person or people on the basis of their membership in a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized.



Today we will focus on key terms that fuel racism

Racism in Action

Racism thrives when white privilege goes unchecked.



Racism in Action

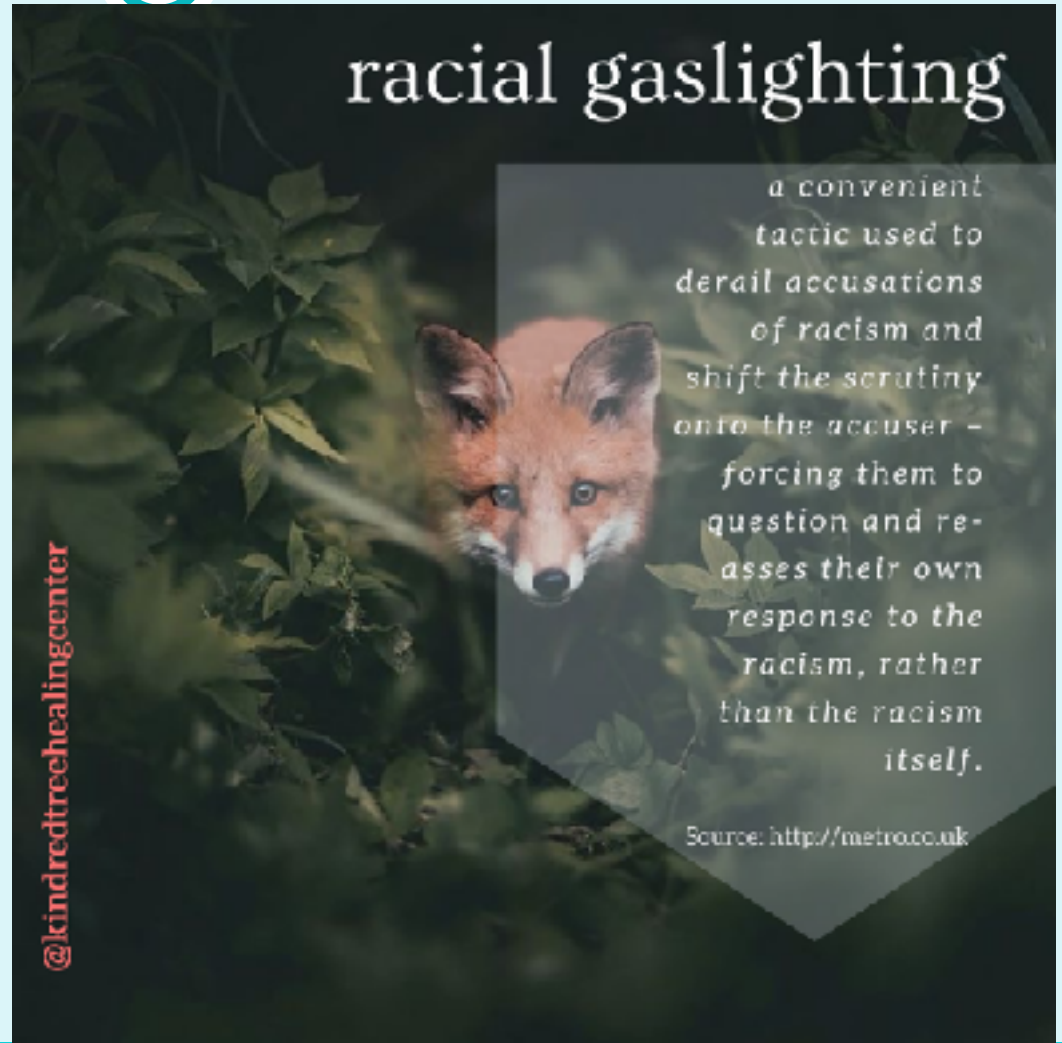


- Microaggressions are often the breeding ground for racial trauma.



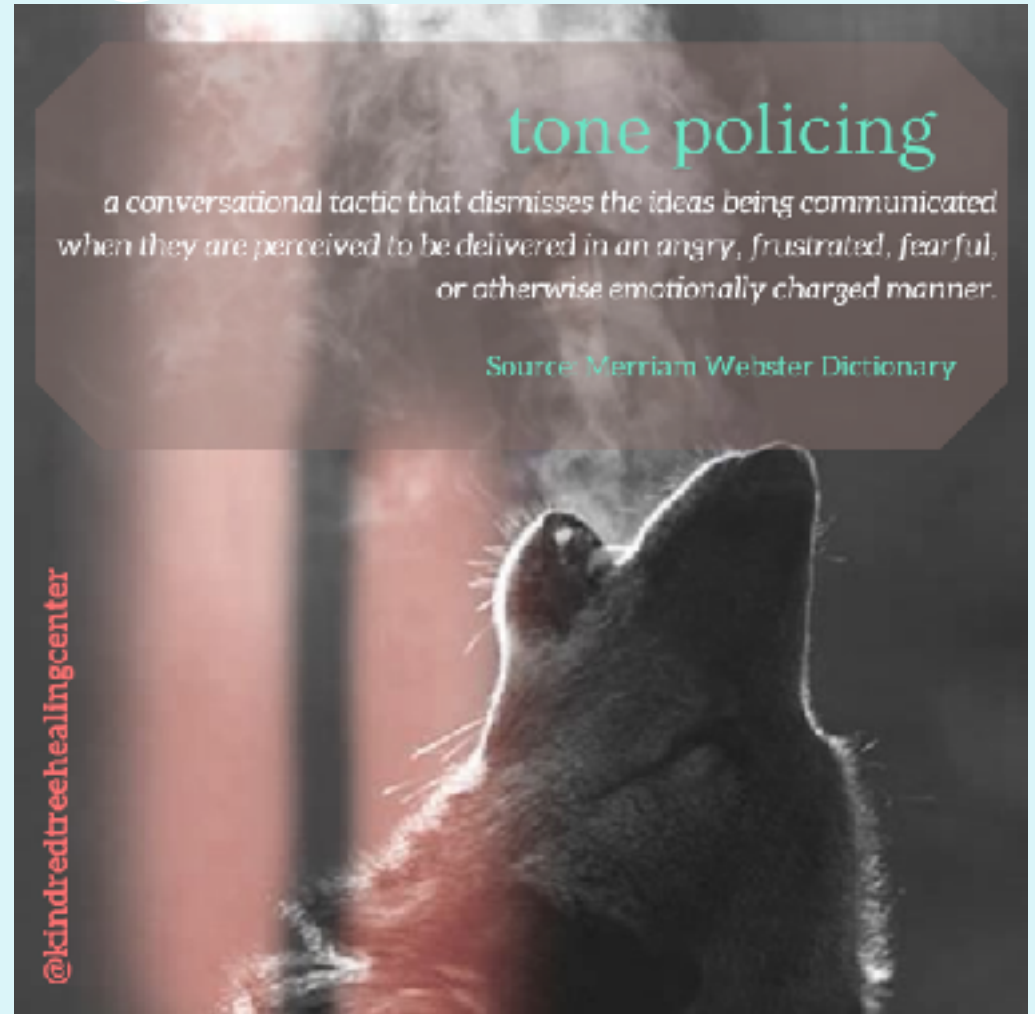
Racism in Action

- Racial gaslighting distracts from the issue at hand, thus allowing racism to continue right out in the open.



Racism in Action

- Tone policing is a form of racial gaslighting as well. Tone policing is another way to prevent victims of racism to rightfully express their experience.

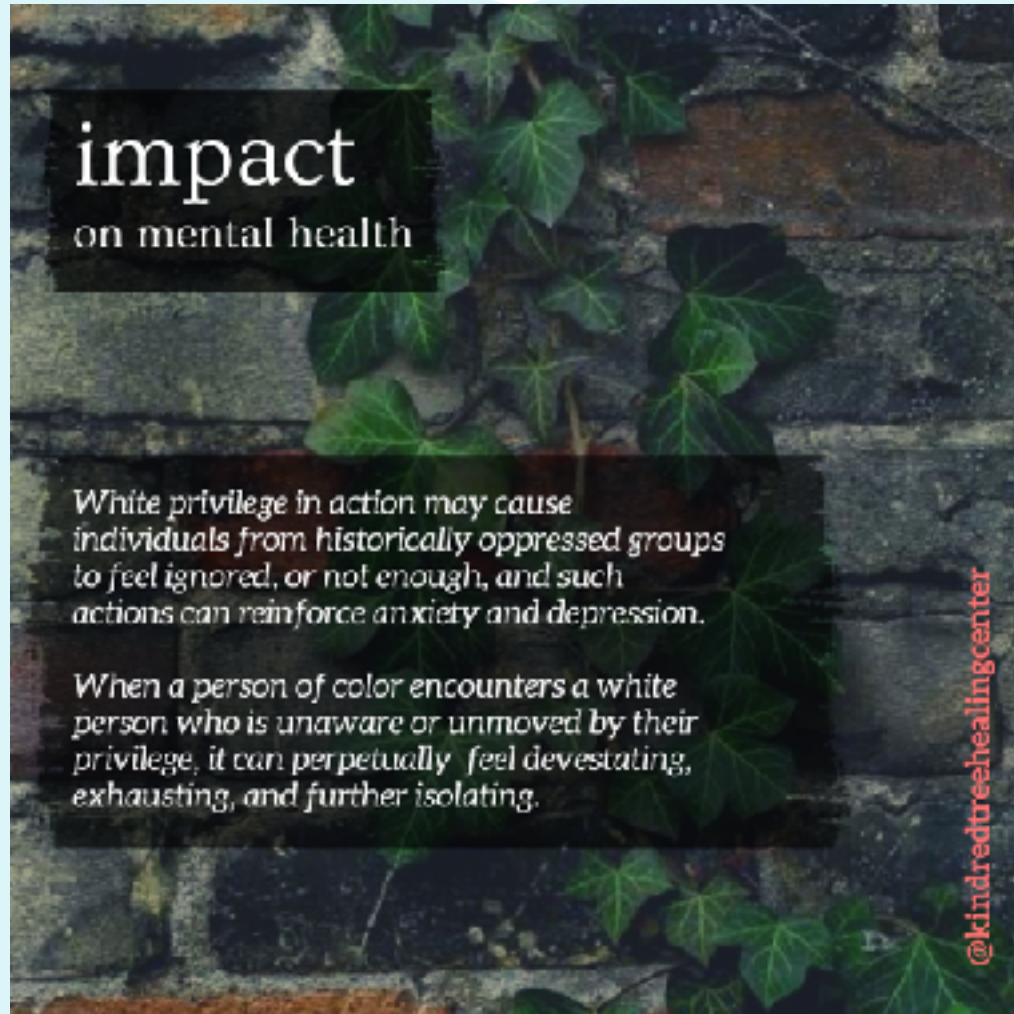


Reducing Implicit Bias



- The terms we just went over exist because one way or another, we as humans are susceptible to implicit bias. In order to shift this, we must actively work towards reducing implicit bias.
- Not working towards reducing implicit bias and everything else that operationalizes racism causes serious psychological/emotional/social/economic/spiritual and even physical harm to black, indigenous, and persons of color.

Impact of Racism on Mental Health



Impact of Racism on Mental Health



Impact of Racism on Mental Health



Impact of Racism on Mental Health



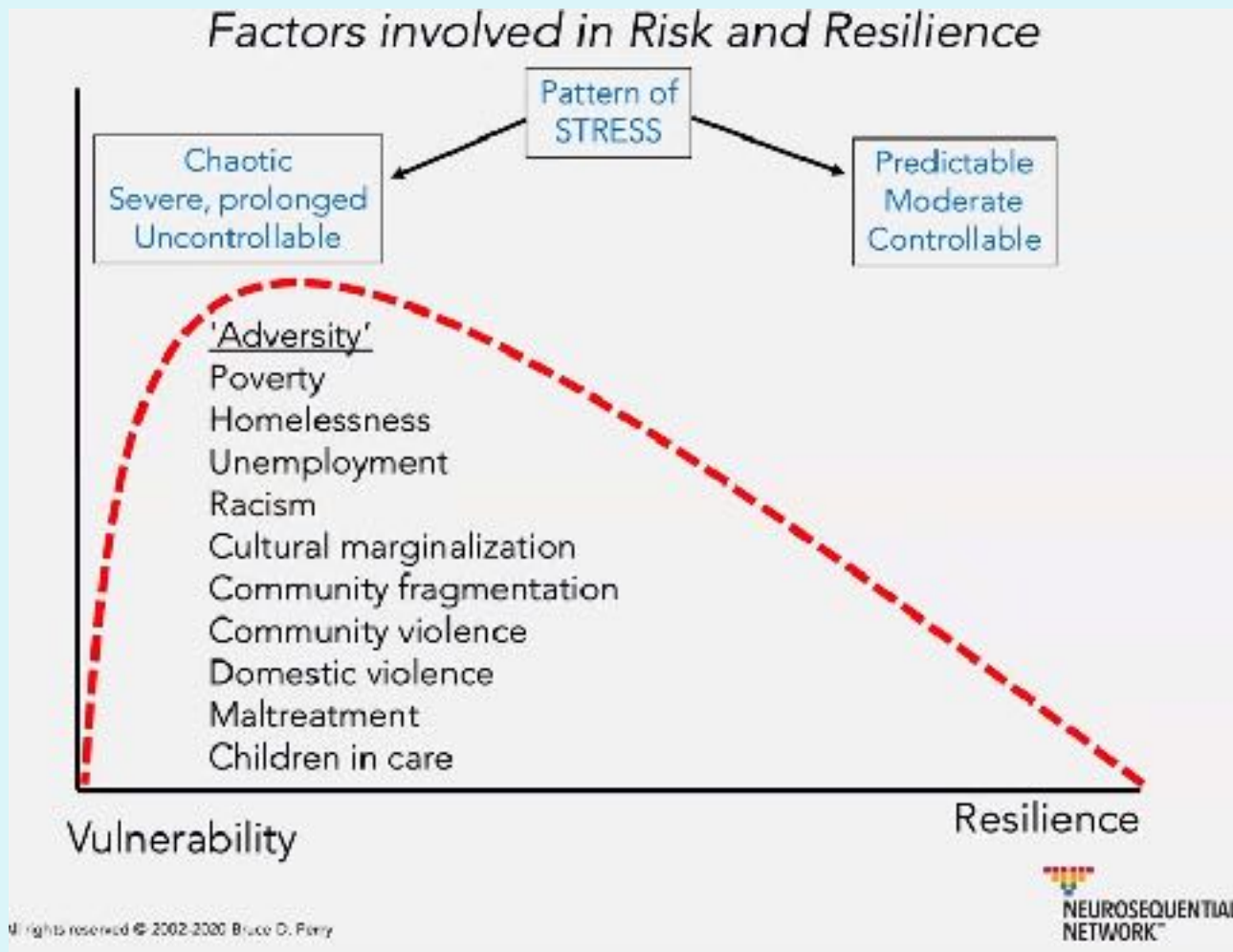
Say it louder for the people in the back.



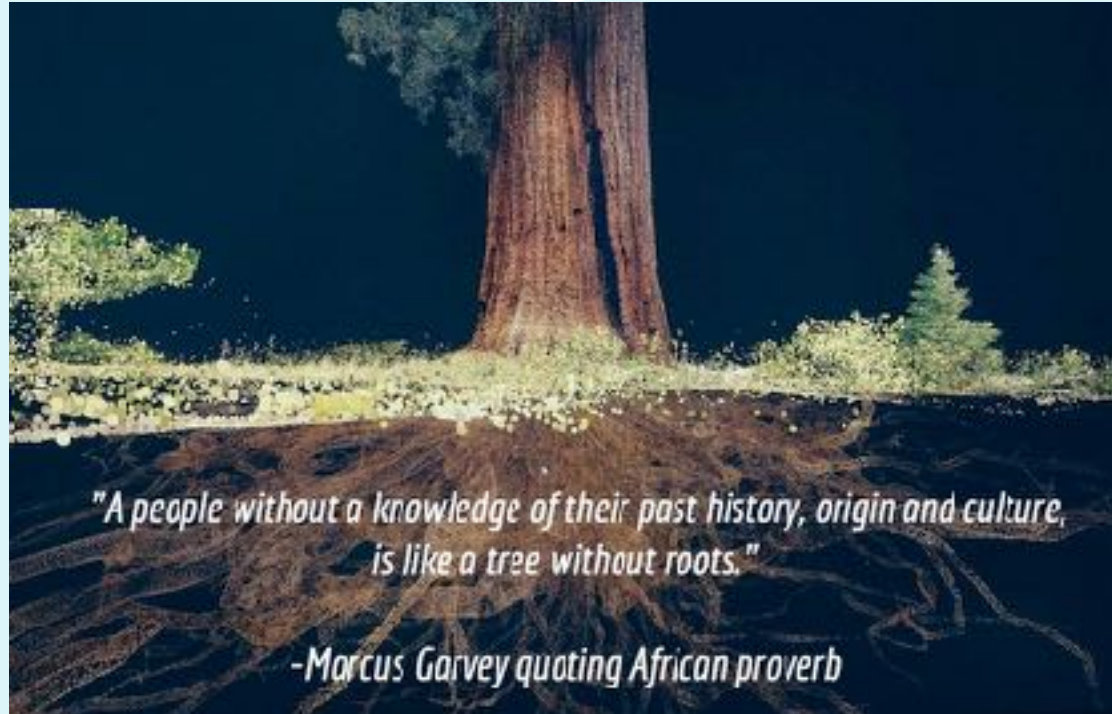
The research is clear, encountering racism (microaggressions, tone policing, racial gaslighting, etc) has a detrimental impact on our fellow people:

1. Contributes to feelings of isolation, exclusion, loneliness, and tokenism (Wallace, Moore, Wilson, & Hart, 2012)
2. Impacts the workplace by lowering the individual's work productivity and problem-solving abilities (Salvatore & Shelton, 2007)
3. Affects self-esteem and self worth by devaluing the individual's research, scholarship, and teaching contributions (Grollman, 2016)
4. Discredits hard earned work by undermining and questioning the individual's qualifications and credentials (Brown, 2016)

Risk and Resilience



Recipe for Healing & Resilience



Follow our ancestors footsteps:

- Movement/Play
- Art
- Music
- Nature



Mother & Child, Painting by Vanessa Durrant

Partners, Painting by Vanessa Durrant



#RacialTraumaisReal



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) Practice 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/isoe_sites/isprc/pdf/racialtraumaisrealManuscript.pdf

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Racism Recovery Plan Steps



- What am I like when I am responding to racism in a healthy manner? Honest, articulate, and engaged.

Symptoms	Action plan
Daily centeredness in face of racism	Social justice oriented podcasts, reading anti-racism books, regular conversation with trusted friends that are able to help me process racism, daily stillness practice via nature or meditation, daily mantra “I will not be reduced”.
Racial trauma trigger symptoms and response	Irritability- enjoy time with family, dance it off Hopelessness- attend meetings centered around activism Isolation- Call/see a trusted friend Unchecked white privilege- decrease time with these friends
Racial trauma early signs and response	Literal heartache (racing heart, chest pains)- somatic heart soothing exercise “Right now I feel ___ and that is ok” Depression- time in sunshine, nature, exercise with a friend
Acute racial trauma and response	Missing work- mental health day Hypervigilance- grounding in safe environment
Crisis plan	Suicidal thoughts/self harm- active plan-call mental health provider/crisis line/friend/family to physically be present
Post crisis plan	Recommit to doing daily centeredness steps listed above, journal about what fuels my recovery from racism

#racialtraumaisreal



- This document from The Institute For The Study and Promotion Of Race And Culture out of Boston College, is an excellent tool for incorporating conscious ways to coping for yourself, your friends, and the programs you work in.
- <https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/bc1/schools/lsoe/sites/isprc/racialtraumaisreal.pdf>

We will not be reduced.



"LET UP": A Systematic Approach to Responding to Cultural Bias

LET UP	Internal Processing	Goal
Listen:	What about this triggers you?	Make sure you are hearing the person, not your triggers
Empathize:	Honor your own history and pain	Allows you to honor their own history and pain
Tell your story:	Prepare for strategic self-disclosure	Collaborative model, authenticity, reveals the elephant in the room
Understand:	Reflect on your role in the larger system of bias, prejudice, and racism	Understand the person's individual experiences related to the bias, prejudice, and racism. Reflect on the person's experiences of fear, trauma, lack of exposure, and anger
Psycho-educate:	Use your expertise to correct unhelpful/unhealthy thinking patterns	Make it clear that you do not collude with bias, prejudice, and racism

Crawford, D. E., Patel, M., Chomilo, N. T., Krug, L., Glusman, M., & Kaplan-Sanoff, M. (2019). " LET UP": A Systematic Approach to Responding to Cultural Bias in Health Care. ZERO TO THREE, 40(2), 10-17.

Identifying the right kind of support



- ★ Healing from racial trauma involves intentional decisions about WHO we receive support from
 - Therapists that practice from an anti-oppressive, social justice lens
 - Therapists that are committed to decolonizing mental health
 - Therapists that are continually self-reflective, including being non-defensive and accountable for their own implicit bias
 - Mental health practices and organizations that are engaging in reparations based work
 - Therapists of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds that you can relate with

Influencing the places we work at



Workplace resources



- <https://libguides.massgeneral.org/CultureAndHealth>
- <http://www.ihl.org/communities/blogs/how-to-reduce-implicit-bias>
- <http://www.ihl.org/resources/Pages/IHIWhitePapers/Achieving-Health-Equity.aspx>



Thank you!!



I love doing this! It's my honor to be a part of
your learning journey.

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