

# RACIAL TRAUMA TOOLKIT



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Counseling and  
Psychological Services



Center for the  
Advancement of Well-Being




**This toolkit was created by  
Mason's Counseling and  
Psychological Services in  
collaboration with Mason's  
Center for the Advancement of  
Well-Being. The goal of this  
toolkit is to raise awareness  
about, and encourage healing  
from, experiences of racial  
trauma. This toolkit is not an  
alternative to mental health  
treatment, but rather is an  
adjunctive means of support.  
We wish you light on your  
healing journey.**





# WHAT IS RACIAL TRAUMA?



“Racial trauma, or race-based stress, refers to the events of danger related to real or perceived experience of racial discrimination.”

(Comas-Díaz, Hall, & Neville, 2019)

# This means that racial trauma can happen through...

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- **Personal lived experiences**
  - Microaggressions ("You don't sound Black," "I don't see color," touching a Person of Color's hair)
  - Discrimination (being bullied for the color of your skin, being racially profiled)
- **Vicarious trauma**
  - Consuming media and news about acts of racism
  - Hearing about a friend's experience of racism
- **Intergenerational trauma**
  - Systemic oppression throughout history (descending from enslaved African folx, or from refugees/asylum seekers)

# What can racial trauma look like?

Racial trauma can look different for everyone.

**Some common symptoms are:**

- Feeling anxious and/or depressed
- Physical manifestation of pain
- Feeling disconnected from your thoughts, feelings, and body (dissociation)
- Not trusting your reality and experiences
- Concerns about safety (hypervigilance)
- Worries about physical appearance
- Difficulty with self-esteem
- Concerns about vulnerability/intimacy



**SO, HOW CAN YOU COPE  
WITH RACIAL TRAUMA?**

# Coping with Racial Trauma

The parts of you that are impacted by racial trauma are known as the "Four Bodies."

The Four Bodies are the:

- Mental Body
- Emotional Body
- Physical Body
- Spiritual Body


([Nappy Head Club, 2020](#))

Although coping does not look one particular way, taking a holistic approach to self-care can promote balance and healing.



# Heal Your Mental & Emotional Bodies

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- **Mental Body: Ease Your Mind**
    - **Unplug** - schedule media breaks
    - **Pause** - take time off school/work if you can
    - **Talk** - talk to a professional about your experiences
  
  - **Emotional Body: Release Your Emotions**
    - **Feel** - allow yourself to express your emotions
    - **Gather** - surround yourself with safe people
    - **Write** - journal to release pent-up emotions
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# Heal Your Physical & Spiritual Bodies

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- **Physical Body: Transform Tension**
    - **Rest** - take naps and breaks
    - **Move** - stretch, walk, dance to relieve pent-up energy
    - **Self-Massage** - release tension in your body
  
  - **Spiritual Body: Return to Yourself**
    - **Meditate** - intentionally take time to reflect
    - **Reclaim** - read, listen, attend to things that empower you
    - **Organize** - support causes that are meaningful to you
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# **Guided Meditation for Relaxing all Four Bodies**






# RESOURCES




## Therapist Directories

- [Asian Mental Health Collective](#)
- [Clinicians of Color](#)
- [Inclusive Therapists](#)
- [Institute for Muslim Mental Health](#)
- [Latinx Therapy](#)
- [National Queer & Trans Therapists of Color Network](#)
- [South Asian Mental Health Initiative & Network](#)
- [Therapy for Black Girls](#)
- [Therapy for Queer People of Color](#)




# RESOURCES



## Websites with additional information and support

- [Center for Healing Racial Trauma](#)
- [Mental Health America](#)
- [Racial Trauma & Anti-Racism Resources](#)
- [Racial Trauma, Resiliency & Ally Resources](#)
- [Rx Racial Healing Circles](#)
- [Thriving Together: Diversity](#)

\* These resources are not alternatives to mental health treatment



# RESOURCES

## Books




- *Me and White Supremacy* by Layla F. Saad
- *My Grandmother's Hands* by Resmaa Menakem
- *The Racial Healing Handbook* by Anneliese A. Singh


## Mental Health Apps

- Finch
- Insight Timer
- Liberate
- Shine

\* These resources are not alternatives to mental health treatment



# RESOURCES



## **Lists of social media accounts to follow**

- [Asian American & Pacific Islander Therapists](#)
- [Black Therapists](#)
- [Latinx Therapists](#)
- [BIPOC Mental Health Accounts](#)

\* These resources are not alternatives to mental health treatment



# Mason Resources

- Center for Culture, Equity, and Empowerment (CCEE)
- Center for the Advancement of Well-Being (CWB)
- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
- First-Gen+ Center
- International Programs and Services (OIPS)
- LGBTQ+ Resources Center
- Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC)
- Student Health Services (SHS)