What is Race-based Trauma?
What is race-based traumatic stress and trauma?

Racial trauma is defined as the psychological syndrome which can develop after a person is exposed to racism/discrimination.

What can it do?

- Racial trauma can be harmful to a person's physical, emotional, and psychological well-being as a result of the stress caused by their exposure to racism/discrimination.
- It may also impact the person's academic, social, and interpersonal functioning as well as the people around them.

Types of Racial Trauma may include but are not limited to:

- racial harassment
- microaggressions
- discrimination
- ethnoviolence
- hate crime
- institutional racism
- historical traumas like slavery
- community trauma
- experiencing a perpetual threat of racism
- traumatic conditions such as poverty

Some examples:

- A person is harassed at their workplace and discriminated against because of their race/ethnicity on a regular basis. They soon become angry, begin to question their own way of defending themselves, and become depressed as a result.
- A person is shown graphic images of their family history of slavery, and begins to have daily nightmares as if they themselves had experienced the events.

What can be done to help people through racial trauma?

- If you experience racial trauma, get support from others who understand your experience, consider getting helping from mental health professionals.
- If you know someone experiencing racial trauma, be patient with them and validate their experience. Provide them with information about racial trauma such as this brochure to see if it fits with their experience.
- Limit judging them or others, you do not know what they have experienced/witnessed or what their family has been through.

Where can I learn more?

- [https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/culturally-speaking/201509/the-link-between-racism-and-ptsd](https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/culturally-speaking/201509/the-link-between-racism-and-ptsd)