

HEALING JUSTICE, SELF-CARE, AND COMMUNITY-CARE: A MINI-GUIDE



prepared by: brianna wells

healing justice is “the practice of reimagining wholeness at the intersection of intergenerational trauma, structures of oppression, and a generative and co-created future.”*

the purpose of this toolkit is to inspire personal and communal reflection on the intergenerational impact of racial trauma and provide a starting point for navigating this process.



***As defined by Healing by Choice! Detroit**

racial trauma involves emotional and psychological stress caused by encounters with racism, bias, and hate crimes.

racial trauma can be passed through generations, a concept called intergenerational trauma. people who experience trauma may pass symptoms and behavior of trauma survival to their children.

***Black, Indigenous,
& PoC (BIPOC)
disproportionately
experience chronic
diseases and
mental health
problems, partly
due to the
compounding
stressors of
experiencing
racism.***

racial trauma is often collective.

historical trauma refers to collective emotional and psychological harm from “massive group trauma experiences,” like slavery, genocide, and colonization.

trauma is not always an individual event, but a collective experience that reverberates over time.



Trauma, Healing, and the Individual

in addition to dealing with the stress of work, school, and other responsibilities, bipoc also confront the daily challenges of racism and individual experiences of collective trauma.

causes of traumatic stress include:

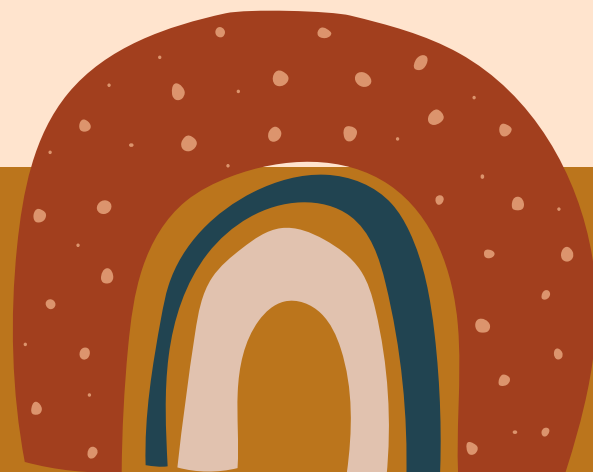
- **experiences or events that disturb a person's sense of well-being and security**
- **recurring negative experiences that threaten the safety of an individual**
- **distressing events combined with individual perception of trauma**



***ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, AND
TRAUMA RESPONSES CAN
RESULT FROM RACIST MICRO
AND MACRO AGGRESSIONS.***

symptoms include (but are not limited to):

- dwelling on past events, avoiding reminders of those past events, or feeling disconnected**
- behaving in ways you may not intend or understand**
- experiencing panic attacks, depression, self-injury, increased use of drugs and alcohol, etc.**



***USING KNOWLEDGE
OF RACIAL TRAUMA
TO BE INTENTIONAL
ABOUT HOW WE
TAKE CARE OF
OURSELVES CAN
LEAD TO
EMPOWERMENT AND
HEALING.***

ACTIONS AN INDIVIDUAL CAN TAKE TO BEGIN HEALING:

- 1. pinpoint sources of stress, then develop a plan to address them.***
- 2. avoid triggering situations, like viewing videos of police violence, binge watching the news, etc.***
- 3. stay spiritually grounded. this may include prayer or mindfulness practices that rebalance your mind, body, and spirit, and foster a sense of connectedness with others in your communities.***
- 4. attend to your body. our bodies hold a wealth of wisdom that can help us navigate restoration. do things that release the tension of stress and trauma, like breathing, stretching, dancing, or anything that puts you in touch with your body's needs.***

GETTING TO THE ROOT: QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

what ideas about the world have i learned from my family or my community that are helpful and healing? what ideas may be unhelpful or unhealthy? are these actually true?

what notions must i unlearn about my racial identity, power, and worthiness?

what is my relationship to boundaries? how am i listening to them? how am i practicing them?

how do i define justice?

how can i use my knowledge of the ways that racism has impacted my well-being to grow personally and transform systems?

RACIAL TRAUMA, HEALING, AND THE COMMUNITY

the legacy of historical oppression and trauma experienced in bipoc communities can give rise to community violence. for example, anti-black policies and practices like over-policing have left psychological and economic wounds.

but people and communities are not merely recipients of violence.

trauma can also lead white supremacy to be internalized and perpetrated by those experiencing oppression.

***COLLECTIVE HEALING
PRACTICES OFFER AN
OPPORTUNITY FOR
COMMUNITIES TO BUILD
RESILIENCE AND
FORTIFY
RELATIONSHIPS. FOR
BLACK FOLKS AND OTHER
POC, OUR LONG-HELD
TRADITIONS OF
STRENGTHENING OUR
SENSE OF FAMILY AND
COMMUNITY ARE
RADICAL ACTS.***

COMMUNAL ACTIVITIES TO BEGIN THE PROCESS OF HEALING:

healing circles: these can offer a safe setting to feel connected, share our feelings, and be comforted. (*see community healing network toolkit)

narrative reformation: start having difficult conversations about the cultural norms in your family/community that may be rooted in white supremacy. critically interrogating society's messages about bipoc can help the process of affirming cultural identity as an asset rather than an obstacle.

sanctuaries of community care: take time to relax and have fun with the people in your community. it's important to focus on what you can do for yourself and those you love, and on what your community can do to work towards liberation from systemic oppression.

Sources & Further Reading

Shani Saxon, LMSW- “Transformative Healing & Emotional Safety”

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1I8doyciTOPI1z7vCNDfeMonpXr3B_5vinq35WaJPXlo/edit?usp=sharing

Harriet’s Apothecary- Healer Guiding Questions

<http://www.harrietsapothecary.com/healer-guiding-questions>

Community Healing Network & Association of Black Psychologists- “Family-Care, Community-Care and Self-Care Tool Kit”

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B10aXyoRnxu00EViUmVicVZ0a1U/view>

Healing by Choice! Detroit

<https://www.healingbychoicedetroit.com/what-is-healing-justice>

Article: L. Padilla, “Beyond Trauma-Informed Care Is a Healing-Centered, Culturally Rooted Approach”

<https://www.bmc.org/healthcity/population-health/healing-centered-culturally-rooted-approach-trauma>

Project LETS- Race and Mental Health Resources

<https://projectlets.org/race-and-mental-health>

The Nap Ministry: Rest as Resistance

<https://thenapministry.wordpress.com/>

Acknowledgements

This toolkit was prepared with support from One Love Global's Freedom Summer program, along with Ev Milliner, Shaqyna Ross, and Korey Deans.

