Understanding and Addressing the Impact of Racism on Children's Mental Health A guide for parents and professionals



Empowering families to succeed and thrive, while celebrating their diversity.



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It restores individuals to wholeness by helping people share their stories, lean into difficult conversations, constructively engage in conflict and face conscious and unconscious biases.





It supports relationship building, trust, belonging, authenticity, constructive dialogue and repairs the damage caused by systemic bias.



It cultivates a culture of belonging that can advance racial equity and inclusion.





It deepens our understanding of the differences in opportunities, burdens, and needs relating to how people racially/ethnically identify.



Racism Impacts Mental Health

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Persons from marginalized groups have poorer mental health, including...

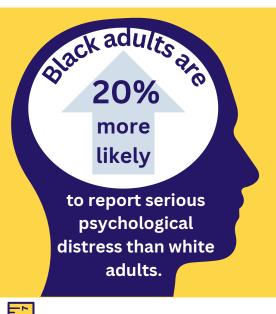


Racism can create

- acute and chronic toxic stress
- undue adversity
- intergenerational trauma



All of which can cause brain adaptations that can lead to mental health challenges.



Indigenous adults have the *highest* rate of mental illness of any race.

The link between racism & negative mental health is strongest for Asian Americans and Latin-Americans.



Marginalized populations tend to have more barriers to mental health services.

Blame

Bias Against

Treatment

Denial

Stigma

Shame

Expectations Cultural

This is caused by...

Being in an unwelcoming and stigmatizing Not being heard, environment understood or trusted

Being underdiagnosed or misdiagnosed

Misuse of client-provider power dynamic

Being treated with hostility

Service Inadequacies

Receive poor or ineffective services

Providers are culturally insensitive and incompetent



PROTECTIVE FACTORS

The Hierarchy of Racial and Cultural Needs of Transracial Adoptees by Dr. Chaitra Wirta-Leiker

If you do NOT share your child's race

You can **only** meet the **top 3 levels of need** in a **limited capacity**.

Self-Actualization Supporting and motivating others.

Self-Esteem Feeling that you matter to the world. What you CAN do!

Accept your natural limitations as a parent who does not share your child's race.

Connect your child with people who are racial/cultural mirrors & can fulfill those needs.

Love & Belonging Daily access to racial and cultural mirrors. Engage in antiracism work consciously & continuously.

Safety & Security

Understand the intersectional aspects of race, culture, and adoption.

Attend events that offer racial & cultural mirroring.



Physiological

Access to medical and mental health providers, hygiene care, and basic survival resources.



Supporting Your Child

Prepare

- Give your child language to speak about their experiences.
- Provide a safe space for open conversation.
- Educate yourself on racial trauma.



Address issues with empathy and cultural awareness.
Open communication and active listening can help your child feel heard and supported.

Share

 Express your sadness, compassion, or outrage, but be sure to moderate your feelings so that your child doesn't feel obligated to step into a role of taking care of you.

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Courageous Conversations

There are no scripts for difficult conversations and tricky topics, so it's important to think about difficult topics before your child asks.

