



# A Place to Start RESEARCH & STATISTICS

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- **RACIAL INJUSTICE AND RACIAL HEALING**

Racial oppression has been deeply rooted in American culture for centuries. The consequences of racial oppression are seen in the social and health disparities in communities of color, such as poorer health status, high levels of stress, distress, toxic stress, higher rates of incarceration, higher contacts with law enforcement, poverty, poor educational outcomes, limited access to adequate and safe housing, higher rates of unemployment/under-employment, and the list goes on.

These disparities can impact the social-emotional well-being, and mental health of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) which can lead to the development of racial trauma that further contributes to these disparities. BIPOC individuals can internalize messages of racism and engage in racially-biased behaviors toward others.

Racial oppression can have an impact on people from the majority culture as well. For whites, there can be guilt and shame, an unwillingness to acknowledge racism, threats to self-esteem, “silence” in the face of racially-biased behaviors, engagement in micro-aggressions, and so forth.

After the leaking of the video recording of Los Angeles City officials engaging in a conversation which included racially-disparaging remarks and planning for re-districting that supported racial biases, the citizens of Los Angeles were not only confused, but angered, disappointed and felt betrayed. This video spoke to the need for racial equity dialogues and healing about race relations in our city by those who lead and the residents.

- **Structural Racism and White Supremacy**.....

The white supremacy of our society is evident in the fact that whites maintain a structural advantage over people of color in nearly every aspect of life. White people maintain an educational advantage, an income advantage, a wealth advantage and a political advantage. White supremacy is also evident in the way communities of color are systematically over-policed (in terms of unjust harassment and unlawful arrest and brutalization), and under-policed (in terms of police failing to serve and protect); and in the way that experiencing racism takes a society-wide negative toll on the life expectancy of Black people. These trends and the white supremacy they express are fueled by the false belief that society is fair and just, that success is the result of hard work alone, and an overall denial of the many privileges that whites in the U.S. have relative to others.

Further, these structural trends are fostered by the white supremacy that lives within us, though we may be wholly unaware that it is there. Both conscious and subconscious white supremacist beliefs are visible in social patterns that show, for instance, that university professors give more attention to potential students who are white; that many people regardless of race believe that lighter-skinned Black people are smarter than those with dark skin; and that teachers punish Black students more harshly for the same or even lesser offenses committed by white students.

So, while white supremacy might look and sound differently than it has in centuries past, and may be experienced differently by people of color, it is very much a 21st-century phenomenon that must be addressed through critical self-reflection, the rejection of white privilege, and anti-racist activism.

- **So what is the difference between colorism and racism? Is one issue more important than the other?**

Many disagree, but I say that there is no difference. Internalized racism (colorism) and external racism are so interwoven at this point that we can't attempt to extract one without addressing the other. <https://colorismhealing.com/colorism-and-racism/>

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## • White Supremacy & Racial Trauma

- Racial trauma, or race-based traumatic stress (RBTS), refers to the mental and emotional injury caused by encounters with racial bias and ethnic discrimination, racism and hate crimes. Any individual that has experienced an emotionally painful, sudden, and uncontrollable racist encounter is at risk of suffering from a race-based traumatic stress injury. In the U.S., Black, Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) are most vulnerable due to living under a system of white supremacy.
- Racialized trauma can come directly from other people or can be experienced within a wider system. It can come as the result of a direct experience where racism is enacted on you, vicariously - such as where you see videos of other people facing racism - and/or transmitted intergenerationally.

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## • Examples of Systemic Racism

- Black people make up 12 percent of the country's population but make up around 33 percent of the total prison population. This overrepresentation reflects racist arrests and policing as well as racist sentencing practices in the criminal justice system.
- Previous and current policies of racial displacement, exclusion, and segregation have left all BIPOC less likely than whites to own their homes regardless of level of education, income, location, marital status, and age.
- The erasure of Asian Pacific Islanders (APIs) in the "Asian or Pacific Islander" category by U.S. Census data severely restricts access to opportunities in these communities by concealing the unique barriers faced by APIs that are not faced by East or South Asian communities.
- Historical occupation segregation has made Black people less likely than Whites to hold jobs that offer retirement savings which are prioritized by the U.S. tax code. This helps create a persistent wealth gap between White and Black communities where the median savings of blacks are on average just 21.4 percent of the median savings of whites.
- Lack of cultural competence in therapy training, financial incentives, and geographical isolation have created barriers in providing appropriate mental health resources in Native American communities. Rates of suicide in these communities are 3.5x higher than racial/ethnic groups with the lowest rates of suicide.

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## • Racial Disparities

- Following the COVID-19 outbreak in the U.S., there were nearly 1,500 reported incidents of anti-Asian racism in just one month. Reports included incidents of physical and verbal attacks as well as reports of anti-Asian discrimination in private businesses.
- In 2018, 38 percent of Latinx people were verbally attacked for speaking Spanish, were told to "go back to their countries," called a racial slur, and/or treated unfairly by others.
- Over the course of one year, Twitter saw 4.2 million anti-Semitic tweets in just the English language alone. These tweets included anti-Semitic stereotypes, promotion of anti-Semitic personality or media, symbols, slurs, or anti-Semitic conspiracy theories including Holocaust denial.

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## • When we experience trauma

Those who were in abusive relationships, who grew up with violence in the household or on the streets, who were constantly fending for their survival during childhood, or who have otherwise experienced soul-gripping events in their lives, all have learned how to hold trauma in their bodies. For those with not as dramatic a childhood or upbringing, we still hold disappointments that linger and are hard to shake off.



### • What are ways we hold trauma in our bodies?

- We are hyper-vigilant.
- We are hyper-reactive to our surroundings.
- We hold some level of consistent panic or anxiety in our abdomen, usually in the Heart, Solar Plexus, or Sacral Plexus areas.
- We have localized (or generalized) aches and pains that are not caused by physical trauma (or linger long after the physical trauma has been resolved).
- Our emotions are on the surface (because they're either ready to release, or overflowing with intensity that it's hard to suppress) – especially anger, rage, or sorrow.
- We get easily confused about what's going on in our lives.
- If the trauma has gone on for a very long time, we may disassociate from ourselves, our Hearts, thus fostering lack of trust in our abilities to thrive or love as human beings.
- We may have vivid nightmares where we are constantly reliving the painful memories, or feeling disempowered.
- Our thinking goes on overdrive.

### There are so many disadvantages to holding trauma in our bodies. Why do we do it?

Sometimes it's done subconsciously, in an effort to "soldier on" and move forward in life, which ends up robbing us of feeling our emotions around a given situation. This doesn't make the pain go away, it just takes it away for safekeeping, where it festers and builds a life of its own. Sometimes we do it on purpose, to punish ourselves for things we've done that we consider unforgivable. And, lots of the time, we don't even realize that we're doing it. All we know is that we feel terrible, and we don't know how to get past it.

Traumatic events reorganize the structure of the mind and brain that alters how we perceive people, things, and events. The effect is that, even when the traumatic event is over, the body continues to feel in a way that it did when the event first took place.

[Why We Carry Trauma In Our Bodies, and How to Heal It](#)

- "The intersection between the SDOH (social determinants of health) and disparities by race/ethnicity is rooted in structural racism that results in uneven access to quality schools, good-paying jobs, higher incomes, wealth accumulation, better neighborhoods, health insurance, and quality medical care. There is a clear and direct association between socioeconomic position and health outcomes. Educational attainment, household income, residential environment, and access to health care help to explain more of the disparities in CVD (Cardiovascular Disease) mortality than traditional cardiovascular risk factors. On average, individuals from historically marginalized groups, Black, Hispanic/Latino, and American Indian/Alaska Native people, in particular, are more likely to have lower high school graduation rates, individual and household incomes below the federal poverty level, and lack insurance and regular access to quality primary care, because of structural racism. However, the literature examining structural racism and its effects on health is not sufficient. One theoretical framework describes 3 levels of racism: institutionalized, personally mediated (also known as

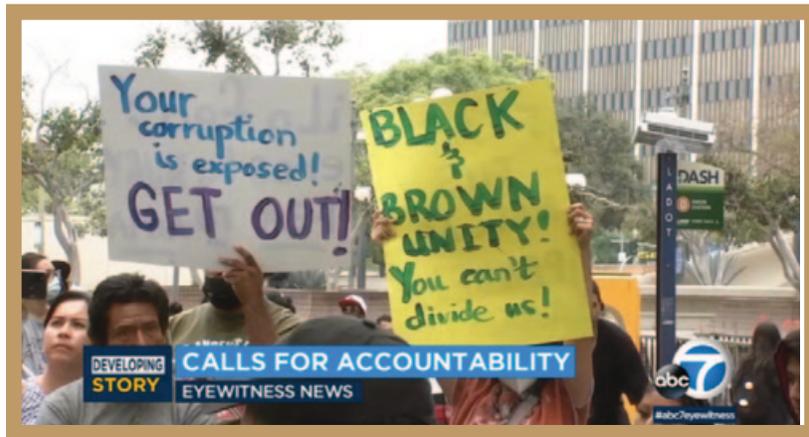
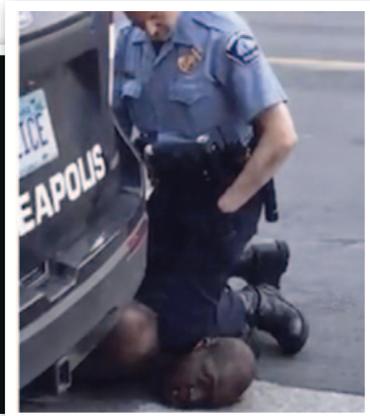


interpersonal), and internalized. This Advisory focuses on institutionalized or structural racism, which has been less studied than interpersonal racism. Race is a social construct and primarily based on phenotype, ethnicity, and other indicators of social differentiation that result in varying access to power and social and economic resources.” – *from* <https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/10.1161/CIR.0000000000000936>

Through the Prism: How Colorism Affects the Black Community

<https://michiganchronicle.com/2021/03/24/through-the-prism-how-colorism-affects-the-black-community/>

**What THOUGHTS  
and FEELINGS  
come up for you  
when you see  
these images?**



## History of Days of Dialogue

In 1995, Los Angeles’ deeply divided reaction to the verdict in the criminal trial of O. J. Simpson underscored how far apart the diverse communities of Los Angeles and the nation stand on some basic issues. As a result, then - Councilman Mark Ridley-Thomas called together a meeting of civic leaders and community activists to diffuse escalating tensions. Out of this was born an innovative, non-partisan initiative, Los Angeles’ first citywide discussion –A Day of Dialogue on Race Relations.

Since then, thousands of people, both locally and nationally, have participated in Days of Dialogue programs; from political Town Hall forums in large civic auditoriums, to small group meetings in neighborhood libraries, schools, churches and fire stations.