

## Note: For White Mentally Ill Folks

Source: Tumblr ([wlvocsource](#))

*Things I want white mentally ill people to acknowledge (that is if they genuinely care about wanting to be allies):*

### 1. Mental illness is not an equal opportunity illness.

Yes, mental illness can and does affect everyone; but no, **the way mental illness is diagnosed and treated does not fall along equal lines.** Like physical health and physical medical care, it is delineated by race, class, and gender, which means people of color, **particularly working-class people of color, have the least access to mental health care and resources.**

### 2. Calling out racism is not ableist. And assuming all people of color are neurotypical is both racist and ableist.

Yes, ableism is a problem, and we need to avoid it at all costs, but **calling out and criticizing racism is not ableist.** Assuming that all people of color are neurotypical is both racist AND ableist. Finally, using mental illness as an excuse to be racist is rife with ableism itself because you posit that mentally ill people are inherently going to be bigoted (and you also ignore the intersection of race and mental health).

### 3. Using your mental illness and past traumatic experiences as political currency is not okay. POC refusing to engage with your racism is not ableist. And pretending only white people can be victims of trauma is incredibly racist.

**Using your mental illness and past traumatic experiences as political currency is not okay,** especially when you're using it to justify your own

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racism. People of color making jokes about white people is not ableist. **People of color refusing to engage with your racism is not ableist.** People of color calling you out for your racism is not ableist. People of color using terms that are specific to their racial/ethnic groups is not ableist. **People of color prioritizing each other is not ableist.** Finally, **pretending that only white people can be victims of trauma is incredibly racist.**

4. Because of white supremacy, people of color are at a higher risk for mental illness and trauma. And culturally & racially specific programs are needed.

Acknowledge that **because of white supremacy, people of color are at a higher risk for mental illness and trauma** while also contending with little to no federal help or attention and with under-diagnosis. Acknowledge that **culturally and racially specific programs for mental health are necessary** because the way kids of color deal with mental health is very different from how white kids deal with it. Culture is very much a part of mental health and mental illness.

5. “White guilt”, “white sociopathy”, “white anxiety” and “white delusion” are not ableist terms.

Sociological and academic terms like “**white guilt**”, “**white sociopathy**”, “**white anxiety**”, and “**white delusion**” are **NOT ableist terms**. Those are very specific terms used to describe systemic phenomenon-- that white people do not see people of color as human, and thus are unable to empathize with us, they project their own guilt onto us in often violent ways, and they manifest their inherent hatred and fear of us in violent ways. You cannot be a good racial ally if you hate these terms or think that they don't apply to you-- they apply to all white people.

6. Women of color have to do far more to succeed in academic

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spaces, and blaming WOC for using terms that rich white neurotypical men came up with is racist.

Opening your mouth and screaming “ableist! this information is inaccessible!” the minute a woman of color uses specific sociological terms to describe racism is fraught with racialized misogyny. **Women of color have to do far more to succeed in academic spaces whereas white people, and yes even white mentally ill people, don’t have to contend with those obstacles.** And yes, rhetoric should be accessible - that is absolutely right - but **blaming women of color for using terms that rich white neurotypical men came up with and popularized is ridiculous--** especially because women of color are not taken seriously whether they’re being angry and “unacademic” or whether they’re being academic and “pretentious”.

7. Weathering and intergenerational trauma are specific forms of trauma caused by racism.

If you don’t see the trauma enacted by white supremacy as an actual form of trauma, you’re racist. Things like **weathering and intergenerational trauma exist and those are specific forms of trauma caused by racism.**

8. Your mental illness does not give you a pass on acknowledging your whiteness and complacency in a racist system. And white people have been conceptualizing people of color as scary and brutal and aggressive for centuries.

Complaining when you’re called out for being racist, saying that you don’t have the energy to talk about or learn about racism, saying that posts about racism cause you “anxiety” or “trigger” you, blatantly ignoring vile acts of racism because *“I don’t have to discuss this because my mental health is more important than your marginalization”*, *“being racist is my coping mechanism”* or contrasting and juxtaposing yourself as

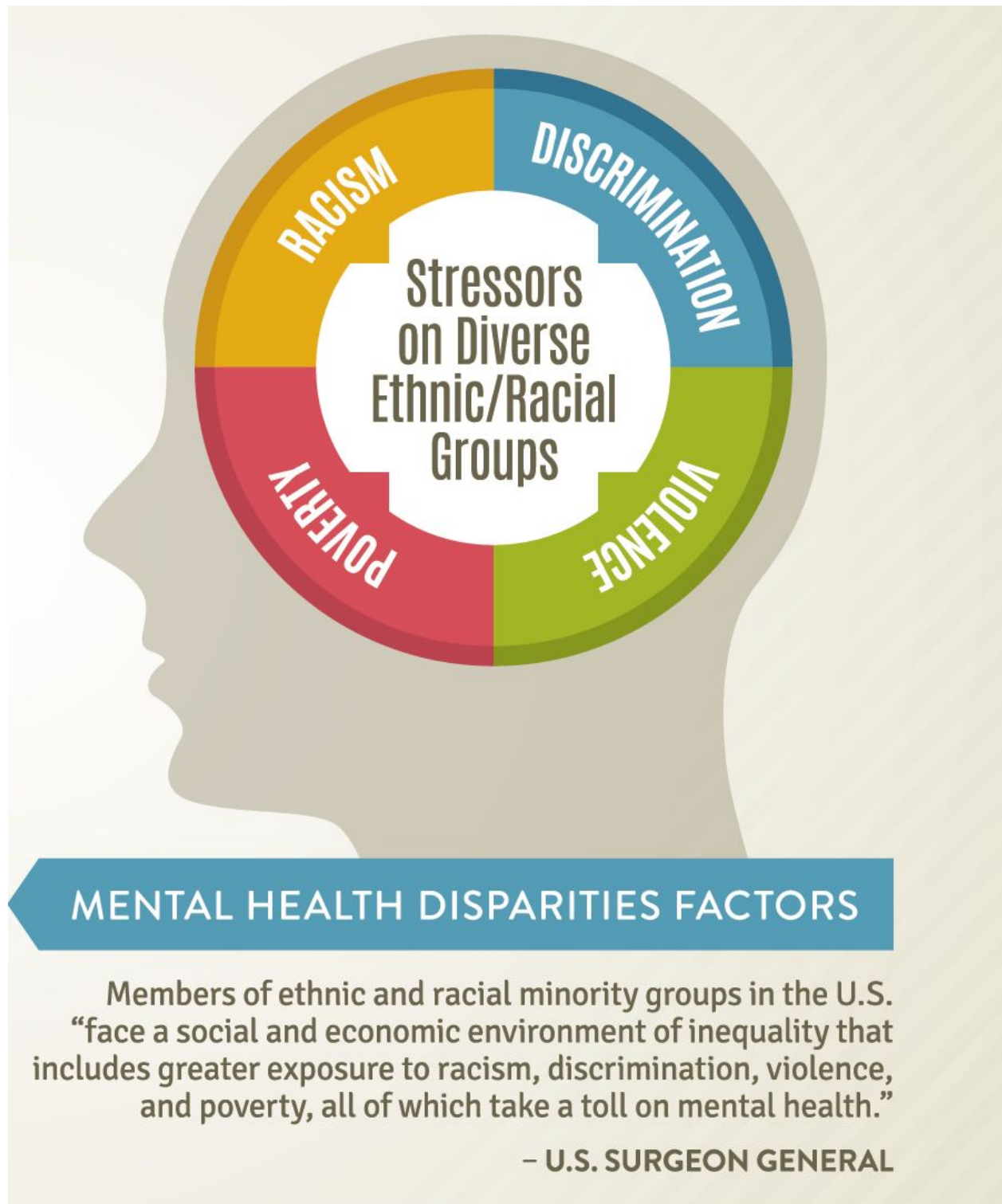
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“fragile/naive/soft/innocent/gentle” against  
“mean/aggressive/snobby/pretentious/scary” people of color is incredibly  
racist. **White people have been conceptualizing people of color as  
scary and brutal and aggressive for centuries.**



Members of ethnic and racial minority groups in the U.S.  
“face a social and economic environment of inequality that  
includes greater exposure to racism, discrimination, violence,  
and poverty, all of which take a toll on mental health.”

– U.S. SURGEON GENERAL

# How Can Race/Ethnicity/Culture INFLUENCE MENTAL HEALTH?

