

# Racism and Mental Health

Tips from Dr. Joy, Therapy for Black Girls



# Racism and Mental Health

## Tips from **Therapy for Black Girls**

1

Sometimes you really do just have to disconnect. We want to stay up to date with information and don't want to miss something, but you can still stay connected without watching every video and reading every story (information overload).

2

Turn off autoplay on your social media (in your settings) so videos do not automatically play when you scroll by them. You don't want to be triggered by a violent video.

3

It's okay to be really afraid right now. This is some scary stuff, and feels like it's just getting worse. It's okay to stay put, and re-establish a sense of safety for yourself.

4

Joy is resistance too. The goal of terrorists is to make us so afraid that we change our behaviors, and we don't want to keep thriving; that we become a shell of ourselves. It's okay to go to the concert you planned on going to & continue to laugh.

# Impacts of racism

The world becomes unsafe and unpredictable.



## Loss of Safety

In the face of terrorist attacks and racist white nationalist rallies popping up around the country (and in the wake of Charlottesville), the world can feel unsafe and unpredictable. This is often the most significant impact of racism. You're unsure what's going to happen; you look at coworkers and random people differently, thinking *"Were you one of those people in Charlottesville? Could you be?"*

A sense of paranoia permeates that feel very difficult to shake off. And some of it shouldn't be shaken off. Some is healthy, some isn't.

# Taking care of you

*Don't forget the little things!*

## Eating

Keep low-energy meals & snacks nearby

## Sleeping

Keep screen lights off!



## Bathing

Tip: Use dry shampoo & bath wipes

## Medicine

Don't slip up on your medicine regimen!

## DON'T FORGET TO KEEP TAKING CARE OF YOUR BODY

**Take care of your body in small ways, so you can keep doing the work your community needs you to do.**

**Pay attention** to the messages you give yourself about how you are involved with activism. It's important not to diminish the role that you can play in achieving social justice or make yourself feel bad that you can't show up for the marches, or you can't do x, y, or z. You don't have to be doing all of those things to consider yourself an activist, or to be playing a very big role in the work that needs to be done.

**Find your lane** and find the place that feels like a good fit for you and show up in that way.

# There is something for all of us to do.

And no one role is bigger or better than another. My activism looks different than yours and all of that is okay.



1

SENDING SUPPLIES TO  
PEOPLE MARCHING



2

CALLING YOUR  
LEGISLATORS



3

JOINING A  
COMMUNITY  
ORGANIZATION

**Try not to** go back  
and forth with racist trolls.

No matter how reasonable, rational, or accurate your argument is, you typically will not change the mind of a racist in 140 characters.

Use your energy in ways that help take care of yourself, instead of spending it on someone who is only there to get a rise out of you.



# Surviving & Resisting Hate:

## A Toolkit For People of Color

#ICRaceLab

Dr. Hector Y. Adames & Dr. Nayeli Y. Chavez-Dueñas

1. Stay physically and psychologically healthy, by eating healthy, sleeping (7-8 hours a night), taking breaks from social media, and staying physically active.
2. Stay connected to individuals, communities, and organizations that affirm your humanity.
3. Listen to your gut and remember that a healthy cultural suspicion (suspicion of white supremacy, people and systems they created) has allowed People of Color to survive during the darkest times of our history.
4. Focus on your goals. Finish your projects, do the best you can at work, school, and home. Being successful in whatever you do is in and of itself an act of liberation and resistance.
5. Focus on change and organizing with the people closest to you including family circle of friends, neighborhood, and place of employment. Focusing on the big-macro picture may feel paralyzing.
6. Give yourself permission to experience what injustice naturally evokes in you. All feelings are acceptable including anger, honor it; anger has led to positive change.
7. Listen and validate the experiences of People of Color with different backgrounds from your own.
8. The burden of oppression and injustice is too heavy to carry on your own. Do what it takes to keep yourself going while remaining committed to racial and social justice.
9. Focus on one breath and one step at a time while knowing and always keeping in mind that our ancestors never gave up; their resistance and fight led to the changes we enjoy today.
10. Remember that the system does not get to determine your worth, dignity, and humanity. Never forget that you matter!



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Physical and mental health is all connected.

““ The impact of dealing with disadvantage through the life course wears down the body’s organs and tissues, particularly the cardiovascular system, causing advanced health deterioration and early death ””

Chronic Discrimination On The Basis Of Race  
Has Been Shown To Negatively Affect:



General  
Health



Sleep  
Patterns



Cortisol  
Regulation  
(The Stress Hormone)



Artery  
Calcification



Thanks for your podcast, Dr. Joy!



THERAPY  
FOR  
BLACK  
GIRLS  
THE PODCAST



THERAPY *for*  
BLACK GIRLS