

Day 13 - Racial Trauma in Schools

“It is not who you attend school with, but who controls the school you attend.” -Nikki Giovanni, Poet and activist

[Racial trauma](#), is a form of race-based stress that refers to the reactions of BIPOC to dangerous events and real or perceived experiences of racial discrimination. These experiences may include threats of harm and injury, humiliating and shaming events, and witnessing racial discrimination toward other BIPOC.

Other experiences that may cause racial trauma include hate speech and individual, historical or institutional racism. Like post-traumatic stress disorder, racial trauma is unique in that it involves ongoing individual and collective injuries due to exposure and re-exposure to race-based stress. It is a pervasive trauma that spans socioeconomic status and levels of education. But how does racial trauma impact a student’s ability to succeed academically and socially? The consequences of racial trauma can lead to a variety of negative cognitive (i.e. flashbacks), emotional (i.e. numbing) and behavioral (i.e. avoidance) outcomes, which inevitably affect student learning and performance.

Training staff or developing and implementing programming that teaches students how to identify if they are experiencing race-based post-traumatic stress responses and how to cope can minimize potential effects that would impact student learning and success.

So, what can we do about it?

Today’s Challenge

OPTION 1: [Listen to this interview](#) about a school that intentionally prepared to make sure students felt safe physically, emotionally and culturally this school year. It included having more conversations with students and staff on how to address issues dealing with race. (1 minute)

OPTION 2: How do you personally cope with racial trauma? [Read this brochure](#) to reflect on some of your feelings. Apply at least one strategy to help you cope and heal. (2 minutes)

OPTION 3: [Watch this video](#) as a pediatric psychologist specializing in multiculturalism and trauma explains how to talk to your children about race and racial trauma. (6 minutes)

OPTION 4: “The worst conversation adults can have with kids about race is no conversation at all,” says author Jemar Tisby. “Talking to kids about race needs to happen early, often and honestly.” Watch this video [how to talk to your kids about race](#). (3 minutes)