

Racialized Trauma

Racialized trauma refers to the psychological and emotional impact of systemic racism and discrimination. In the context of Black people, especially in the US, racialized trauma is understood as that which undermines Black individuals by systemically and systematically perpetuating doubts about their competence, worth, and humanity. This trauma manifests through physical and psychosomatic disorders, PTSD, and experiences such as imposter syndrome, overperformance pressure, disparities in recognition, stereotype threat, toxic strength (especially in Black women), microaggressions, and internalized oppression. Importantly, this is not a critique of any individual or group, nor is it rooted in the belief that all white people are racist; instead, it reflects the documented impact of systemic and historical patterns of racism over time.

Trauma, as we all know, is not the event itself but the response within the individual. Resmaa Menakem states, "Trauma is also not an event. Trauma is the body's protective response to an event—or a series of events—that it perceives as potentially dangerous." Similarly, racialized trauma represents the internalized toll of navigating environments shaped by these structural and historical forces. From the perspective of the Vision Collective, this trauma is not merely an individual experience but a collective wound that reflects and perpetuates a broader societal imbalance.

Addressing racialized trauma requires understanding its roots in oppressive, marginalizing environments and the roots of its healing and transformation in fostering environments that honor Black individuals' and Black communities' striving for meaning and recognition, with the support of neuroception of psychological safety. Stephen Porges's work on neuroception explains that psychological safety is the subconscious process by which our nervous system automatically assesses the environment for safety cues or threats. This reflexive response triggers a change in the autonomic state without conscious awareness, involving both top-down and bottom-up mechanisms equal to interoception, where autonomic reactions send signals of bodily sensations to the brain for interpretation.

In this context, AEDP (Accelerated Experiential Dynamic Psychotherapy) in action and within the community can contribute to fostering affirmation, a sense of safety, and honoring the inherent worth of being human. The SEEKING system, as described by Panksepp, reflects the drive to explore, achieve, and find meaning, while the CARE system underscores the need for connection, nurturing, and belonging. The Vision Collective emphasizes that true healing and transformation requires addressing both the systemic and interpersonal dimensions of trauma, creating spaces where Black individuals and communities can feel seen, valued, and supported.

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