

We are now into **Week 4 of the 14-Week Equity Challenge!** People continue to join the Challenge, and we ask you to invite your friends, family and co-workers. All prior weeks' content will remain on the site, and new participants can catch up with relative ease.

If you had the chance to join us at the Castellani Art Museum last Thursday, then you got to see, up close, the impact and generational trauma resulting from the boarding school experience. *Unseen Tears*, a documentary produced by [Native American Community Services](#), right here in Buffalo, features boarding school survivors, who talk openly about the tragic separation from their families, abuse, and a systematic assault on their language and culture. The documentary also highlights efforts made in local communities to heal these wounds and break the cycle of intergenerational trauma. As mentioned earlier in the Challenge, in Canada, September 30<sup>th</sup> marks the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The day honors the children who never returned home and survivors of residential schools, as well as their families and communities. If you think about it, on Saturday, consider wearing orange to commemorate and support all who have been impacted.

On the heels of that event at the art museum, we move into Week 4 where we examine the deep and lasting impact of race-related stress, racial violence, racial harassment, racism and discrimination. It is essential to revisit the concept of intersectionality that we introduced in Week 2 which requires us to look at how those who occupy multiple identities are impacted by racial trauma. The compounding impact of belonging to multiple marginalized and oppressed groups increases susceptibility to experiences of racial trauma. "It is important to consider the effects of racial trauma through the lens of intersectionality because this allows for a more thorough account of the multiple identities occupied by Black Americans (e.g., Black trans women, Black differently-abled Americans, etc.) and how those who occupy multiple identities are impacted by racial trauma." The above quote comes from the "Coping with Racial Trauma" page at the University of Georgia. This is also a great resource for helping people cope and heal from trauma. The page can be found at [here](#).

Racial trauma is the result of ongoing exposure to racial stressors such as racism, racist bias, discrimination, violence against people of color, and racist abuse in the media that creates an environment in which a person of color feels unsafe simply because of the color of their skin. It is widespread among all marginalized or stigmatized racial or ethnic groups. (SOURCE: <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/racial-trauma>)

Research has linked racism to psychological distress, physical health problems, depression, anxiety, and trauma. Experiences of race-based discrimination can have detrimental psychological impacts on individuals and their wider communities. In some individuals, prolonged incidents of racism can lead to symptoms like those experienced with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This can look like depression, anger, recurring thoughts of the event, physical reactions (e.g., headaches, chest pains, insomnia), hypervigilance, low-self-esteem, and mentally distancing from the traumatic events. The internalization of bias and oppression can cause great distress to minds, bodies, and spirits.

The 2020 article in MedicalNewsToday identifies the many triggers for a person to experience racial trauma. These include:

- Direct or indirect exposure to racist abuse or discrimination
- Media depictions of racism, such as police violence against unarmed Black people
- Exposure to racial or ethnic stereotypes
- Others not taking experiences of racism seriously.

A person experiencing racial trauma can experience both psychological and physical symptoms. Psychological symptoms have been recorded in children of color as young as 12 years old. Both psychological and physical symptoms are exacerbated by the common lack of access to mental health care and medical care resulting from systematic racism.

The resources and materials offered this week recognize the widespread nature of racial trauma to include the historical and recent increase in anti-Asian violence, the trauma experienced by the Latinx immigrant community, as well as the historical violence against Native Americans (which we examine more closely in Week 6). We also recognize that it is not limited to only these groups.

## **READ**

### **[After Buffalo Shooting, I thought, “Will I be Next?” Racial Trauma is Real: Opinion](#)**

In this honest and raw opinion essay, Dr. Carmen Reese Foster, Assistant Professor at the University of Tennessee College of Social Work, shares her very real anxiety and trepidation on going into her local grocery store (more than 10 hours away) the day after the mass shooting last year at the Tops on Jefferson in Buffalo. This essay was written less than a week after the shooting. (About a 3-minute read)

### **[The Link between Racism and PTSD](#)**

In this brief article, Dr. Monnica Williams discusses the effects that racism can have on your mental health. Importantly, Dr. Williams notes that race-based trauma and stress extend beyond the experiences of prejudice and racism; it is the constant reminder and fear that race-related danger could be right around the corner at any time. (About a 5-minute read)

### **[Latinx College Students are Struggling with Self-Hate but Counselors Can Help, Scholar Finds](#)**

This article explores the ways in which Latinx college students internalize racism and how counselors are helping them heal and thrive. (About a 6-minute read)

### **[Why this Wave of Anti-Asian Racism Feels Different](#)**

The March 2021 killings of six Asian women (eight people in total) at massage parlors in the Atlanta area have brought the issue of anti-Asian violence to light. This article includes an interview with poet and essayist Cathy Park Hong whose essays explore the painful and often invisible racial traumas that Asian Americans experience. (About a 7-minute read)

### **[8 Ways You Can Practice Self-Care in the Face of Daily Racism](#)**

Read this list of 8 ways to practice self-care when you are personally affected by racism. Author of the article is Roberta K. Timothy, Assistant Lecturer, Global Health, Ethics and Human Rights School of Health, York University. (About a 5-minute read)

## **WATCH**

### **[Asian Americans Face Rise in Racist Incidents](#)**

This CBS News report from 2021 states that there has been more than an 800% increase in racist incidents against Asian Americans reported in the last three years. The report also looks at the tone and rhetoric exhibited by everyday citizens up to our nation's leaders. (About 6 minutes)

### **[How the U.S. Stole Thousands of Native American Children](#)**

In Week 6 of the Challenge, we take an in-depth look at the unique experiences of Native Americans right here in WNY and in Southern Ontario. Here we give an early look at the generational impact of trauma experienced by the Indigenous peoples of America (often the preferred term) as a result of the long and brutal history of the United States trying to “kill the Indian and save the man.” (About 14 minutes)

### **[Unseen Tears](#)**

In case you were not able to make the film screening last week ... In this powerful documentary, survivors of the Thomas Indian School and the Mohawk Institute discuss the abuse they endured and the systematic assault on their language and culture. (About 30 minutes)

## **LISTEN**

### **[‘It Just Stays With You’: The Corrosive Health Effects of Decades of Anti-Asian Violence](#)**

Racism against Asians has a long history, and anti-Asian hate incidents have been on the rise in recent years. Health scientist Doris Chang, who you will meet in the WBUR episode below, says that there has been a severe lack of research into the health effects of racial violence on Asian Americans. Please note that at about 5 minutes in, the story includes racist slurs from a Zoom bombing during a meeting. (8 minutes)

### **[Do the Work Podcast: Don’t Call Me an Oreo: Tomi & Alex](#)**

“Do the Work” is a podcast hosted by Brandon Kyle Goodman, about race and our personal relationships. Each episode is an intimate conversation between two people who know each other well. They bring them together so they can finally have a real conversation about race, and we can all learn how to be anti-racist in our daily lives. This episode (Episode #7) features Tomi, a Black woman; she and Alex have been friends for years. But there’s one painful moment from when they were teenagers that still upsets Tomi to this day: when Alex, who is white, called Tomi an "Oreo." At the time, Tomi just let it go, but now she's speaking up. (About 30 minutes)