

WEEK 5

The Impact of Racial Trauma on Black, Indigenous and other People of Color



“It took many years of vomiting up all the filth I’d been taught about myself, and half-believed, before I was able to walk on the earth as though I had a right to be here.”

JAMES BALDWIN

On October 12, 2019, [Atatiana Jefferson](#), a black woman, was murdered by a police officer in her home and in front of her nephew, while playing video games with him. A welfare check-up, requested by her Black neighbor, was the impetus for the call to police. Weeks after her death, her father died of a massive heart attack.

News like this is traumatizing and re-traumatizing to people of color. It is like a wound that never heals. Research has linked racism to psychological distress, physical health problems, depression, anxiety, and trauma. The internalization of bias and oppression can cause great distress to minds, bodies, and spirits.

As Dr. Monnica Williams of the University of Connecticut has written: “What we really need is a large-scale shift in our social consciousness to understand the toll this takes on the psyche of victims so that even small acts of racism become unacceptable. We need those who witness racism to speak out and victims to be believed.”

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Week 5 Challenge

Please **choose one or two** of the below activities to engage with for 15 minutes this week, and if you have time, we encourage you to complete more.



ACTIVITY A

We invite you to **read** this [short article by Dr. Williams](#) to better understand the effects that racism can have on your mental health.



ACTIVITY B

Read this list of [8 ways to practice self-care](#) to support you and your loved ones when you are personally affected by racism.



ACTIVITY C

Watch this PBS News Hour segment on [how to combat the mental toll of racism](#).

Share your reflections and any resources that helps further the discussion on today's topic on social media using the hashtag **#UWIEquityChallenge**.

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