

What is Race-related Stress?

While many college students are dealing with stress and anxiety navigating general college life experiences, students of color may face a specific type of strain: **Race-related stress**. “Race-related stress can be described as the psychological or emotional distress that an individual or group of people experience as a result of being a target of a racial discriminatory act”. It can result from major experiences of racism as classroom discrimination or hate crimes, or it can be the result of an accumulation of many everyday microaggressions.

When students of color experience these unfortunate racial incidents, it not only causes problems in their social and economic lives, but also negatively impacts their physical and psychological health.

Effects of Race-Related Stress

Possible Psychological Effects:

- Emotional withdrawal/numbness
- Intense anger
- Anxiety
- Frustration
- Hypervigilance
- Depression
- Internalized racism
- Self-blame
- Paranoia
- Resentment
- Social isolation
- Helplessness/hopelessness
- Alcoholism/substance abuse
- PTSD

Possible Physical Effects:

- Sleep disturbances
- Headaches and body aches
- Fatigue
- Hypertension
- Digestive problems

Possible Educational Effects:

- Decrease in academic motivation
- Decline in academic grades
- Withdrawal from school

Self-care tips to manage race-related stress

1. **Find community-** Make plans to spend time with loved ones who are supportive. Surround yourself with people who understand how you feel and can validate your emotions.
2. **Ignore the trolls on social media-** Avoid wasting your precious energy going back and forth with strangers on the internet whose goal is to antagonize and invalidate.
3. **Get Support:** Begin the journey of self-exploration through seeking professional help to talk about your experience in a safe, supportive environment.
4. **Find healthy coping strategies:** Rely on positive internal and external coping strategies such as spirituality/faith, running, exercising, or journaling.
5. **Set firm boundaries:** You are under no obligation to explain your feelings or educate people on what we are dealing with.
6. **Be tactful about your daily scrolls on social media:** Not every post, tweet, article or message requires your attention and response. A constant intake of appalling footage and information can be overwhelming, to say the least.
7. **Educate yourself:** Having a positive cultural identity and strong sense of self is particularly helpful in combating race-related stress. Take classes that focus on the historical experiences and contributions of your cultural group and join campus organizations that celebrate your cultural norms and ideals.

If you feel like you need to speak with a mental health Professional to get support on this matter, please contact UNLV CAPS. To make an appointment call us at (702)-895-3627.

Other Mental Health Resources:

- [BlackLine](#): a 24/7 national crisis support hotline that provides a space for peer support and counseling, reporting of mistreatment, and affirming the lived experiences to those who are most impacted by systematic oppression.
- [Inclusive Therapists](#): A database to find a therapist that celebrates and shares your identity. Offers reduced fee teletherapy.
- [Therapy for Black Girls](#): A database to find trusted, culturally competent therapists that know the feelings and experience of navigating the world as a black woman.
- [Ethel's club](#): Offers free mental health counseling resources in an online community designed for people of color to thrive. Hosts free, hour-long grieving sessions twice monthly. Led by licensed Black therapists to help hold space and process the weight of the many complex emotions that we are feeling and carrying right now.
- [Dive in well](#): Prioritizing the spread of self-care and affordable health solutions with a diversity and inclusion lens to wellness. Offers both offline and online experiences, resources, and tools to empower those who believe in soul-centered wellness.