

# TOOLKIT FOR COPING WITH RACIAL TRAUMA

## RACIAL TRAUMA

### a holistic approach

Our ancestors knew that our health was more than just about the physical, that our bodies are made up of four distinct parts: the mental body, the emotional body, the physical body and the spiritual body. Trauma can be stored in these different parts of our being, and so by working with our four bodies, we remind ourselves of our full humanity.



## THE MENTAL BODY

### Easing Our Minds After a Racially Traumatic Incident

1. **Unplug:** Take some time away from viral videos and media. Vicarious trauma can create more anxiety and stress.
2. **Pause:** Take time off from work or school if you can. This will help reduce the mental load you have to deal with during the day.
3. **Release Thoughts:** Release the thoughts in your mind to a licensed therapist who knows how to make space for your racial trauma. This is key.

## THE EMOTIONAL BODY

### Releasing Emotions After a Racially Traumatic Incident

1. **Feel:** Allow yourself to express sadness, anger and fear so that they do not remain trapped in your body. Trapped emotions can lead to bodily inflammation.
2. **Gather:** Surround yourself with people who give you a safe space to express your emotions. Your emotions deserve a soft landing place.
3. **Write:** Take the time to journal about your experience and accept the emotions that emerge as you do so. You may feel a sense of relief.



## THE PHYSICAL BODY

### Transforming Tension After a Racially Traumatic Incident

1. **Rest:** Take a moment to sleep and take naps. Rest is a reparational practice for our people whose bodies have been exploited.
2. **Move:** Walk, dance, stretch, run or shake your body. Allow your body to release the pent up energy within you. You may feel the pressure decrease.
3. **Self-Massage:** Release tension stored in the muscles and tissues in your body. You may get emotional, that just means the energy is being released.

## THE SPIRITUAL BODY

### Returning to Ourselves After a Racially Traumatic Incident

1. **Meditate:** Take a moment of reflection to remind you how divine you are. It is easy to forget how special you are when you experience racism.
2. **Reclaim:** Read, listen to, watch, or go to events that can help you regain a sense of pride in your racial identity.
3. **Organize:** Engage with and support local anti-racist organizations that can help you feel hopeful and empowered.



#### References

Ogorchukwu, J. (2020, May 30). The Four Bodies: A Holistic Toolkit for Coping With Racial Trauma. Medium.Com. <https://medium.com/nappy-head-club/the-four-bodies-a-holistic-toolkit-for-coping-with-racial-trauma-8d15aa55ae06>