

Special Edition · Even The Score · The Revolution

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**“Sometimes we are
blessed with being
able to choose the
time, and the arena,
and the manner of
our revolution, but
more usually we
must do battle where
we are standing.”**

- Audre Lorde

#blacktranslivesmatter

homie house press

**“Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.”
- Audre Lorde**

We would like to take a moment to talk about healing as it pertains to the revolution, and ultimately -- Healing and Rest as an essential part of the resistance. It's important to acknowledge that this country was built on a foundation of white supremacy and, therefore, black trauma. We must focus on that when we talk about black mental health within the context of racial injustice -- we have to look at this from a trauma-informed lens. When we talk about trauma, we are referring to the emotional and physical responses that we have to an overwhelmingly frightening event, like an accident, an assault, or a natural disaster. But the difference is that when it comes to racial trauma, we're not talking about an event, we're talking about events, both large and small. This means everything from experiencing violence, to continuously watching black people die on social media, all the way to microaggressions experienced in primarily white spaces. What about having to maintain "professionalism and decorum" in our jobs as our communities are in pain? This is at the surface to reiterate -- when we talk about racial injustice and violence towards black bodies, we have to understand it within the framework of trauma.

We hear a lot about self-care today, but I want to share a quote from the black writer and activist Audre Lorde to contextualize what self-care means. She says, *“Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.”* That means that when we are in systems that harm us, tries to make us disappear, and erase us, caring for ourselves in order to survive is foundational to the work of dismantling those systems. Here are some pointers from trauma informed research on how to cope during this time.



COMMUNITY

- Trauma is incredibly isolating, and can cause us to feel we're going through the world alone. When the feeling of being in danger is added, we feel we have no one to protect us and must do everything ourselves. But the fact of the matter is that we are communal beings and a sense of community helps us to understand that we're all in this work together.

- Purpose-trauma takes away our sense of purpose and leaves us feeling confused about what to do. We often feel tension in our shoulders and I wonder if it comes from a belief we must carry the world on our shoulders. When we are in community, we come to realize that we share the load. If you don't know your purpose, ask yourself, "what am I good at?" Maybe it's protests and marches, but there's also music, drawing, poster-making, cooking, heavy lifting, sending emails, making phone calls. You don't have to do it all, you just have to do your part.

- Community is particularly important in the workplace. This question is for the nonblack folk -- ask yourself, What are you doing to ensure that the burden of dismantling white supremacy in your work or education spaces doesn't overwhelmingly fall on your black colleagues? Are you providing space and resources to ensure that your black colleagues can process and continue the work? Because the process of dismantling oppression can't fall on the oppressed.

BODIES

- Trauma directly impacts our body, because when our danger signals and alarm bells are constantly going off, and we don't attend to them, we can waste away.

- Pay attention to your body's alarm bells: For some people that's increased heart rate, and increased breathing, muscle tension, or gastrointestinal issues.

- It's important to engage in practices that bring calm like breathing exercises, mediation, moving our bodies with things like yoga, aerobic exercises, or strength training.

- It's important to pay attention to what I call the basics: Eating enough food to fuel you and eating at regular intervals throughout the day. Get your 8 glasses of water in and sleep!

- Many of us have lost sleep. We are hyper vigilant and that is playing out in how we attend to what's going on in the world. The news and Social media are the last things we look at before sleeping and the first things we look at upon waking. This is where the concept of community comes back, because to do this work, rest is key. We have to rest in the knowledge that just because we rest doesn't mean the work stops. We hold each other down. I like to say, "I need to rest so that you can rest." Start with an hour or two each day, trusting that community holds you. Nap, move, journal, talk about how you feel. A friend of mine said, "When I say I'm tired, I also say, I need to rest so that I can come back stronger."



EMOTIONS

- There is no right or wrong way to react to trauma. Your anger is valid, your sadness is valid. Similarly, mental reactions to trauma include difficulty concentrating/focusing, having issues with memory, confusion and procrastination.

- It's important to understand that these are all normal reactions to trauma, and we need to be gentle with ourselves. Acknowledge them, by not only speaking them out to yourselves, but sharing them amongst each other.

- This may also include seeking out the support of mental health counseling. We suggest that you seek out culturally-responsive and trauma informed care. See resource list.



RESOURCE LIST

- Ayanatherapy.com
- Therapyforblackgirls.com
- Inclusivetherapists.com
- Therapyforgpoc.com
- Therapyforblackmen.org
- Latinxtherapy.com
- Beam.community
- Expansivetherapy.com
- Melaninandmentalhealth.com
- Rootsofsouthla.org
- Psychologytoday.com
- Crisistextline.org
- Trans LifeLine 877-565-8860

**The act of breathing is communal.
When you are feeling tired, alone
and drained in this work towards an
anti-racist society - take a moment to
breathe.**

**As you breathe, know that you are
breathing in strength from your
ancestors. You are sharing breath with
revolutionaries across the country
and globe. The breath you take in is
shared by ancient trees, plants and
wild animals that provide healing,
grounding and vitality. Our shared
breath makes us stronger.**

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