



## Day 16: Trauma to Healing

*“Here is what I would like for you to know: In America, it is traditional to destroy the black body—it is heritage. Enslavement was not merely the antiseptic borrowing of labor—it is not so easy to get a human being to commit their body against its own elemental interest. And so, enslavement must be casual wrath and random manglings, the gashing of heads and brains blown out over the river as the body seeks to escape. It must be rape so regular as to be industrial. There is no uplifting way to say this. I have no praise anthems, nor old Negro spirituals. The spirit and soul are the body and brain, which are destructible—that is precisely why they are so precious. And the soul did not escape. The spirit did not steal away on gospel wings. The soul was the body that fed the tobacco, and the spirit was the blood that watered the cotton, and these created the first fruits of the American garden. And the fruits were secured through the bashing of children with stovewood, through hot iron peeling skin away like husk from corn.”*

- [Ta-Nehisi Coates, \*Between the World and Me\*](#)

We hear a lot about trauma related to combat veterans, those who’ve been in significant accidents, and those who’ve been the victim of violence. Racism is also trauma, and many Americans are subject to racism in both overt and covert ways every day, including the youngest among us.

In [#racialtraumaisreal](#), Jernigan and colleagues state, “Similar to survivors of other types of trauma (e.g., sexual assault survivors), people of color often experience fear and hypervigilance, headaches, insomnia, body aches, memory difficulty, self-blame, confusion, shame, and guilt after experiencing racism. When the experiences of racism are more frequent, the consequences tend to be more acute and deleterious. These experiences of racism never exist in isolation; racial trauma is a cumulative experience, where every personal or vicarious encounter with racism contributes to a more insidious, chronic stress.” While the ultimate goal is to prevent this form of trauma altogether, we know that this is not our current reality. Therefore, the authors also offer a [Racism Recovery Plan](#) with steps toward recovering from and healing trauma.

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**Option 1:** Watch [Growing Roses in Concrete](#) (13:29) by Jeff Duncan-Andrade in his TEDx Talk (13 minutes). Here, he describes the impact of ongoing, recurring complex PTSD in urban youth, who are twice as likely to get PTSD than a soldier returning from Iraq. He also offers a model for schools as the center of community health to create and support ongoing safety, security, and growth.

**Option 2:** Read [Racism is Trauma](#) by Judith Sandalow, Executive Director of The Children's Law Center in DC, where she offers ways to talk with youth and addresses racism as trauma, helping to raise anti-racist children.



## Questions to Consider for Self-Reflection:

- Have you experienced trauma because of your race or the color of your skin?
- What feelings come up for you as you read about the destructive nature of racism on the human psyche?
- What steps can you take to foster a more supportive environment at work, at school, in the community?

## Looking for a safe space to talk and heal?

Check out [Root3d](#) in Albany, a wellness center that focuses on the liberation, healing, and power of BIPOC.

**Share the resources in Racism is Trauma** on social media to inspire friends, family, and colleagues to participate in raising antiracist children. Use the hashtags [#unitedforequity](#), [#equitychampions](#), and [#CREquitychallenge](#) when sharing!