

*Multiple incidences of generational and individual trauma have been caused as a result of racism and bigotry. This trauma often goes unnoticed and left out of discussion.*

*Colors. I find myself surrounded by colors. In New Mexico, the place I call home, I see a plethora of colors. The Sandia mountains in the east are pink, the chiles in my mom's home cooking are green and red, and the sky is dotted with hot air balloons of the prettiest yellows, greens, blues, and purples. Even at school, the colors of the children's skin are mostly dark, but nevertheless a wide range of colors. This is the way I've grown up. The first presidential election I can recall was that of the 44th president, Barack Obama. I was taught through the actions of my mom and the people around me to love the black man I saw on TV. My eyes attentively watched the screen as I surveyed people that looked like my family and I cry out of pure joy and relief at this moment in history. At the time, my first grade self was not too sure what all the hype was about, but I knew that I could feel the overwhelming amount of hope that this incredible man brought to the people in my community, and I adored him for that. However, I also got to see an abundance of hate stem from this election, right in the hallways, playgrounds, and classrooms of my elementary school. I specifically recall reading a Scholastic News article in class that mentioned the news of Obama's election, and a group of white students saying that they were going to cut out the picture of Obama so that they could take it home and burn it. One of these children specifically went on to bully and subject me to her negative thoughts on Barack Obama because she knew that I held so much respect and admiration for him. I don't doubt that much like me, these students were most likely imitating the actions and speaking the words of their family members, acquaintances at church, etc. However, this is my first recollection of discrimination in an institutionalized setting, and because of this, it is an experience that I still think about often and cease to ever forget, no matter how much time passes. At the time, this made a significant impact on me and the way I perceived the world.*

People of color have continuously been affected by discrimination. The experience of racism in itself has proven to be traumatic to many. According to Monnica T. Williams, PhD, ABPP, a board-certified clinical psychologist and Associate Professor at the University of Connecticut in the Department of Psychological Sciences, "Higher rates of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) have been depicted among racial and ethnic groups as compared to white Americans". Racial trauma is described as traumatization as a result of experiences of racism. These experiences can range from major experiences of racism such as hate crimes or discrimination in the work place, all the way to an accumulation of small occurrences such as everyday discrimination. Racial trauma may justify a DSM-5 diagnosis of PTSD when there is a recognizable and identifiable index trauma (Criterion A), re-experiencing of the trauma (Criterion B), avoidance of trauma reminders (Criterion C), negative mood/cognitions (Criterion D), and hyperarousal (Criterion E). Notwithstanding, all side effects of PTSD might be present because of racial trauma, regardless of whether a Criterion A cannot be distinguished. A traumatic experience as defined by the DSM-5 is limited to direct exposure to physical and sexual violence such as death, repeated exposure to traumatic information in a work setting, and indirect exposure by receiving news of a traumatic event involving a close friend or loved one. However, this may preclude a PTSD diagnosis, even if all of the symptoms are present. Nevertheless, the criteria of the trauma's nature does not need to meet DSM-5 standards; PTSD may still be diagnosable based on the International Classification of Diseases-10 criteria. This is because this criteria does not specifically restrict the types of traumas that may result in a PTSD diagnosis.

Mental health and service providers often miss bona fide Criterion A events because they are not aware of the impacts that discrimination can make. They fail to recognize experiences of

racism as traumatic or do not inquire about experiences of racism at all. Criterion A events that could merit a DSM-5 Diagnosis of PTSD, such as being bullied at school for being called “different,” being racially profiled, harassment in the workplace, etc are rarely included in conventional checklists and batteries for trauma. Some common racial traumas include overt racial slurs and threats made by anyone, police harassment, body searches, and assaults, workplace discrimination, community violence, distressing medical experiences, incarceration, immigration difficulties, and deportation. In addition, evaluating discriminatory distresses in patients of color in a clinical setting may be uncomfortable for therapists, especially those who do not have practice in discussing racial issues. Often, white people are taught to demonstrate non-racist acts by simply not talking about race. However, this socialization has left many clinicians ill-equipped to talk about or have conversations regarding race with clients of color, resulting in it being even less likely that they will be able to engage in fruitful discussions about experiences of racism.

*A major event in my life has been the election of the United States 45th president, Donald Trump. I witnessed the negative effects of this election as I watched the lives of countless students, friends, and family members completely shift as a result. As the numbers rose to petrifying quantities on that night of November 9th, 2016, we could feel the room become heavy as all hope was beginning to drain from our hearts. We had watched this man deliberately and unashamedly campaign his entire election - and win - using a political strategy of hate and fear that targeted our people. His presidential political rhetoric of racist and hateful words of anti-immigrant and refugee attacks made it extremely clear that having this man in office was going to strew massive amounts of not only fear, anxiety, and even more threats, but also hate from his supporters. This was the main problem of the matter, not Trump himself. The election served us as a clear implication that hate and all of the things that come as a result of it were about to be at an all time high.*

In recent years, racial resentment, animosity, and political polarization has been increasing in the United States. President Obama’s election being a major contributing factor to this increase. According to research, Obama’s election led to an increase in the belief among white Americans, especially conservatives, that racism no longer exists. In addition, one out of three white Americans indicated that they were “troubled” that a black man was President, the Tea Party movement emerged with anti-minority rhetoric, resentment towards Democrats increased, support for the Democratic party among white Americans decreased, and support for addressing racial inequities decreased among white Americans. In terms of social media, Obama’s election also led to a proliferation of racial animosity, where there was a dramatic increase of hate websites and anti-Obama Facebook pages, with the widespread use of historical racial stereotypes that are considered uncommon in mainstream media.

According to David R. Williams, Ph. D., M.P.H and Morgan M. Medlock, M.D., M.Div., writers for The New England Journal of Medicine, evidence suggests that election campaigns can have both positive and negative effects on people’s health. Positive although short term effects on health have resulted from campaigns that give voice to the disenfranchised. For example, such associations were observed among black South Africans in 1994, at the time of Nelson Mandela’s election, among black Americans in 1988 during Jesse Jackson’s presidential campaign, and among Latino and black Americans in 2008 when Barack Obama was nominated for President. Thus, an increase in psychological well-being, pride, and hope for the future were evident among Trump supporters in 2016 at the time of his election. In addition,

events linked to this campaign and election gave rise to fear and anxiety in many Americans. According to research, these events can have negative health effects on people who have been direct targets of what they perceive as hostility or discrimination stemming from this event. These negative health effects have also been seen among individuals and communities who feel that they are vulnerable because they belong to a stigmatized, marginalized, or targeted group.

The major dilemma with Trump's election was not Trump himself but the implication that it had on the rest of the United States and the world. It surfaced preexisting hostile attitudes towards immigrants, Muslims, and racial and ethnic minorities. In a national survey of 2000 K-12 (elementary through high school) teachers, more than half of respondents said that since Trump's 2016 presidential campaign began, many of their students had been "emboldened" to use slurs and name calling to say bigoted and hostile things about Muslims, immigrants, and other minority groups. In addition, 67% of these same teachers reported that many of their students (especially Muslims, undocumented students, and those who had undocumented family members) were worried and scared and had expressed concerns or fears regarding what might happen to them or their families after the election. Even some American-born black students whose families and ancestors have been in the United States for centuries expressed concerns about being sent back to Africa or returning to slavery.

Postelection, one of the first messages on the *Daily Stormer*, a hate website, claimed that the election encouraged verbal intimidation of foreigners and was a referendum on "multiculturalism". It stated, "We want these people to feel unwanted. We want them to feel that everything around them is against them. And we want them to be afraid." According to The Southern Poverty Law Center, since Trump's election, there has been an increase in incidents of hateful intimidation and harassment. What some would find the most unsettling is that most of these incidents of harassment have been reported to be at K-12 schools. In addition, it has been documented that incidents of racial discrimination experienced by teenagers predicted flatter diurnal cortisol slopes and lower cortisol awakening response in young adulthood, elevated levels of endocrine, cardiovascular, and metabolic parameters at age 20, as well as epigenetic patterns of aging at age 22. Furthermore, beyond personal experience of hostility, a large amount of adults in the United States have reported being stressed because of the current political environment. A January 2017 national survey found that Democrats were more likely than Republicans (72% vs. 26%) and minorities (69% of blacks, 57% of Asians, 56% of Hispanics) more likely than non-Hispanic whites (42%) to report that the outcome of the 2016 presidential election was a significant source of stress. In addition, two thirds of all surveyed adults reported that they were stressed about the future of the United States overall.

*Warm, bitter taste easily makes its way down my throat. The sweet, sugary taste of my morning doughnut is washed down and I'm ready to do what I came here for. We set down our coffees and pick up signs to make our way to the street. I plant my feet firmly on the sidewalk as we stand on the corner of Zuni and San Mateo, right next to our beloved school. I am gathered together with other students in my MEChA club (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán or Chicano Student Movement of Aztlan). This is the way we know to fight back. We were taught that giving up is not an option and that any little bit of effort makes a difference. I see the resiliency and the glimmer of hope in the eyes of my peers and the faculty that go out of their way to support us. Racism is and continues to be a difficult topic of discussion in contemporary history. However, I have learned to appreciate what makes me and my peers different. My brother and his friends call each other beaners and takuaches out of amusement and love for*

*eachother. I am aware and am continuously learning about the hardships and generational trauma that my family has experienced, as are countless other families and people of color.*

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