



Pause. Breathe. Connect.

Racial stress and trauma

Racial stress, or trauma, refers to the physical and psychological reactions that we can have from experiencing racism. Racism includes being called names, experiences of racist abuse, reading racist misinformation and experiencing or witnessing distressing and racially motivated events or interactions.

Racial stress is real and what you feel, physically and emotionally, is a normal and reasonable response to racism. However, it can take a toll on our physical and mental health.

During times of increased political or media commentary on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs we are exposed to increased negative coverage about our mob on social media, in the news and in conversations in our daily life.

Racism in all its forms has an impact on the social and emotional wellbeing of our mob. It can feel overwhelming.

It shouldn't be up to us to manage, but there are some strategies we can use to help us feel strong and take care of ourselves, our family, and our mob.

What it could feel like

- ▶ Shock, sadness, anger, shame.
- ▶ Wanting to avoid situations or events where harmful discussions might come up.
- ▶ Feeling disconnected or alone.
- ▶ Feeling stressed.

What you may experience

- ▶ A faster heartbeat.
- ▶ Sweating.
- ▶ Racing thoughts.
- ▶ Difficulty responding or focusing on what others are saying.
- ▶ Negative thoughts or feelings about yourself.

If you begin to feel stressed there are some things that you can do that might help

Report racism here: www.australia.gov.au/helpstopracism

If your stress feels overwhelming or is stopping you from doing things like seeing friends, going to community events, or school or work, reach out for help.

Pause.

Turn off devices or remove yourself from uncomfortable situations if you can. It is ok to need time out, trust your gut reaction and trust yourself.

Breathe.

Pause and focus on your breath.
Breathe in for 4.
Hold for 4.
Breath out for 4.

Connect.

Yarn with mob. Walk on Country.
Listen to the sound of Country.
Connect with culture through stories, song, dance, or anything that keeps you culturally strong and feeling deadly.

And remember to reach out to support services if you need to: