

# How to Care for Each Other: Providing Support to Helpers

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Adapted from:

Self-Care for Advocates, Activists, and Accomplices

Enedelia Saucedo, PhD & Arlene Rivero, PhD

And

Coping with Racism & Discrimination (UCSC Counseling & Psychological Services)

# Today's focus:

- Racial Trauma
- Taking care of self
- Being an effective ally

# Racial Trauma

- Racial Trauma is Real
- The cumulative effects of racism on an individuals mental and physical health
- Linked to anxiety, depression, and PTSD
- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/culturally-speaking/201509/the-link-between-racism-and-ptsd>

# Reminders about Self-Care

- What we need for self-care is highly individualized and this needs to be acknowledged and respected
- No universal recipe or cookbook
- What we need often varies over time
- Understanding possible reactions is important. They may vary from numbness, sadness, irritability, anxiety and physical symptoms like headaches, back and neck pain etc.
- May depend on each person's experiences and history with trauma in general and racial trauma in particular

# Learn From Your Past

Ask yourself the following\*:

- What kinds of events have been most stressful for me?
- How have those events typically affected me?
- To whom have I reached out for support?
- What have I learned about myself during difficult times?
- Was helpful for me to help someone else going through a similar experience?
- Have I been able to overcome obstacles, and if so, how?
- What has helped make me feel more hopeful about the future?

*\*Perhaps these are also questions we ask those we are helping\**

# Self-Care and Culture

- Culture as a strength rather than a barrier!
- A person's culture can impact how they communicate feelings and deals with adversity.
- How does your culture cope? What did you see growing up? What were you taught and told about how to get through tough times?
- How do cultural factors impact self-care?
- How do cultural factors impact your care of others?

# Ways to reduce your stress

- Body: nutrition, exercise, deep breathing, dance, physical intimacy...
- Mental/Emotional: laugh, music, get creative, play...
- Spirit: meditation, prayer, nature...
- Connection: talk to someone... (be strategic about who that person is)
- Disconnection: from media or toxic culture
- Seek professional mental and medical help if needed.
  - Employee Assistance Program

(From a collectivistic perspective, caring for others is caring for self.)



# Tips for Being an Effective Ally

- Get educated
- Speak up
- Know the difference between intent and impact
- Challenge the behavior, not the person
- Be willing to make mistakes
- Allowing space for others to process with you