



# Gun Violence, Covid, and Prevention Strategies

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Discussion Panel

Vanessa Prosper, Ph.D.

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# Root Causes & Social Determinants of Gun Violence in Black Community

## Macrosystem

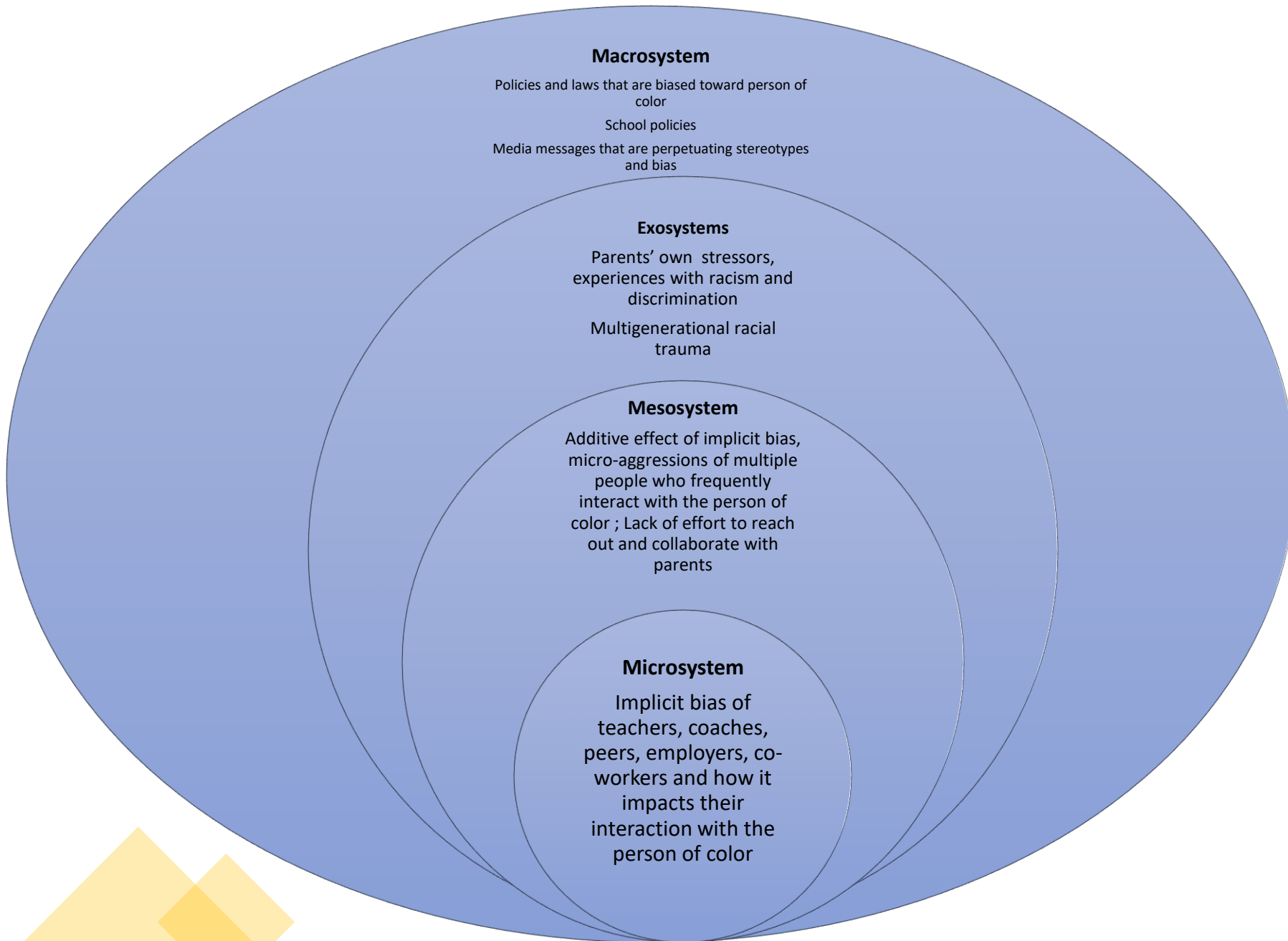
- Unhealthy living conditions
- Poor access to quality education
- Systemic racism/discrimination/Racial reckoning
- Poor access to quality medical and behavioral health care
- Culture of violence/chronic exposure to violence

## Exosystem

- Income insecurity
- Unemployment
- Food insecurity and quality
- Intergenerational trauma

## Microsystem

- Conflict within families
- Conflict within community social networks
- Interpersonal conflicts



### **Macrosystem**

Policies and laws that are biased toward person of color  
School policies  
Media messages that are perpetuating stereotypes and bias

### **Exosystems**

Parents' own stressors, experiences with racism and discrimination  
Multigenerational racial trauma

### **Mesosystem**

Additive effect of implicit bias, micro-aggressions of multiple people who frequently interact with the person of color ; Lack of effort to reach out and collaborate with parents

### **Microsystem**

Implicit bias of teachers, coaches, peers, employers, co-workers and how it impacts their interaction with the person of color

# How has Covid Impacted the Black Community?

Losses

Exposed the many ills of society

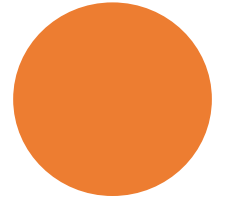
Exacerbated what was already problematic

- Racism
- Disparities
- Inequities
- Racial/Intergenerational trauma

Further widened the economic, mental health, & health disparities

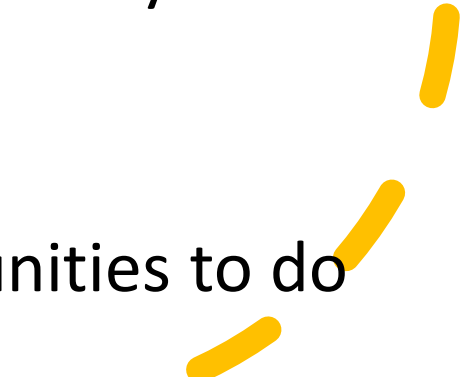
# Why is Covid-19 Pandemic Considered Traumatic?

- ❖ Disruption and loss of daily routine and structure
- ❖ Loss of social connection
- ❖ Loss of certain hobbies and activities
- ❖ Loss of access to certain services
- ❖ Loss of freedom
- ❖ Loss of financial, housing, food security
- ❖ Loss of a sense of safety
- ❖ Loss of loved ones to the virus
- ❖ Constant worries about one's safety and health
- ❖ Constant worries about getting contaminated
- ❖ Constant worries about parents who are essential workers





Additional  
Stressors for  
students and  
families  
brought on by  
Pandemic and  
Racial Unrest

- Food insecurity
  - Loss of employment/financial hardship
  - Parents/family members are essential workers
  - Housing instability (threat of eviction)
  - Loss and grief of parents and family members due to Covid-19 and the medical complications it exacerbates
  - Disproportional rate of Covid-19 in communities of color due to health disparities, poverty, lack of access, availability, to quality culturally competent care
  - Repeated cycles of racial trauma
  - Limited green space and opportunities to do activities outside of the house
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# Additional Trauma Experienced by Parents

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- Juggling being a parent, being an employee, and being a “teacher” in your household all at once
- Not always knowing how to help your child
- Loss of social support and connection with extended family members
- Being an Essential Worker
- Not being able to stay home to take care of one’s own children and support their virtual learning
- Fear of contaminating your family
- Being the emotional anchor for your family





# Signs & Symptoms of Racial Trauma

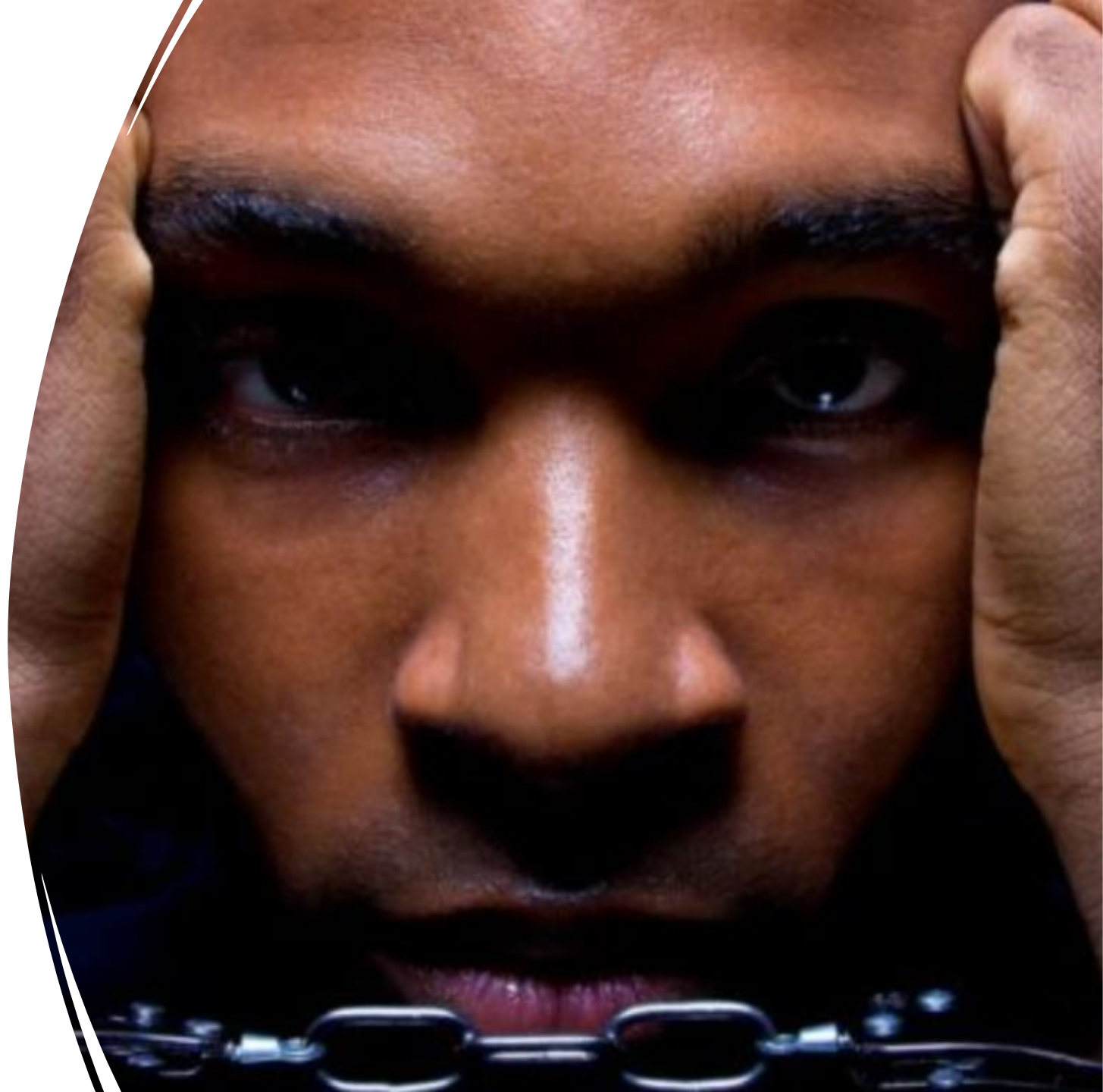




# Definition of Racial Trauma

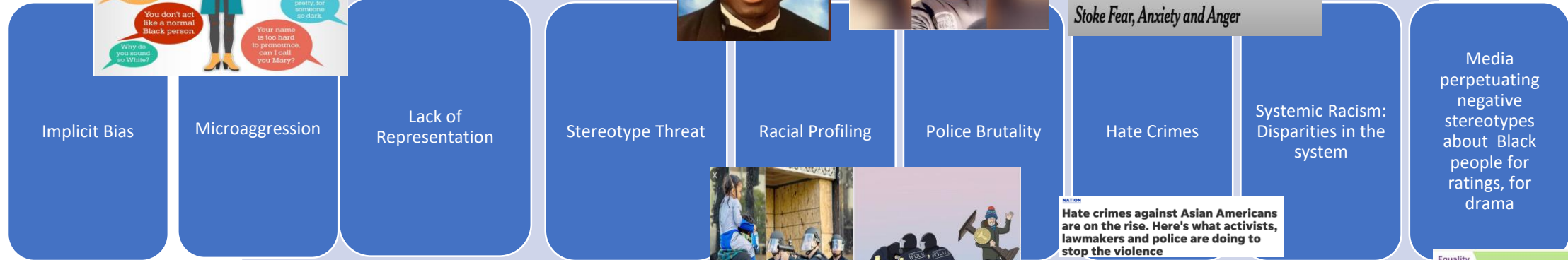
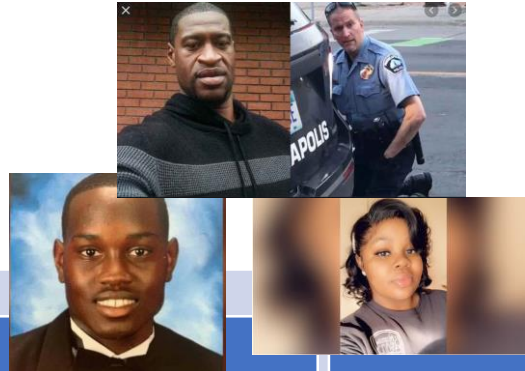
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- **Racial trauma** or **race-based traumatic stress**, is the cumulative effects of **racism** on an individual's mental and physical health. It has been linked to feelings of anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation, as well as other physical health issues



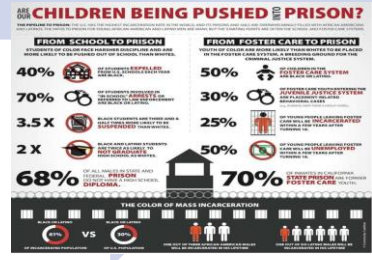
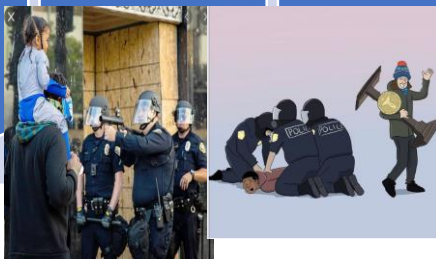
# Why is Racial Reckoning of 2020 Evoked by the Murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery Traumatic?

“You are pretty for a Black girl”  
 “Can I touch your hair?”  
 “You speak English so well”  
 “You are not like the others”

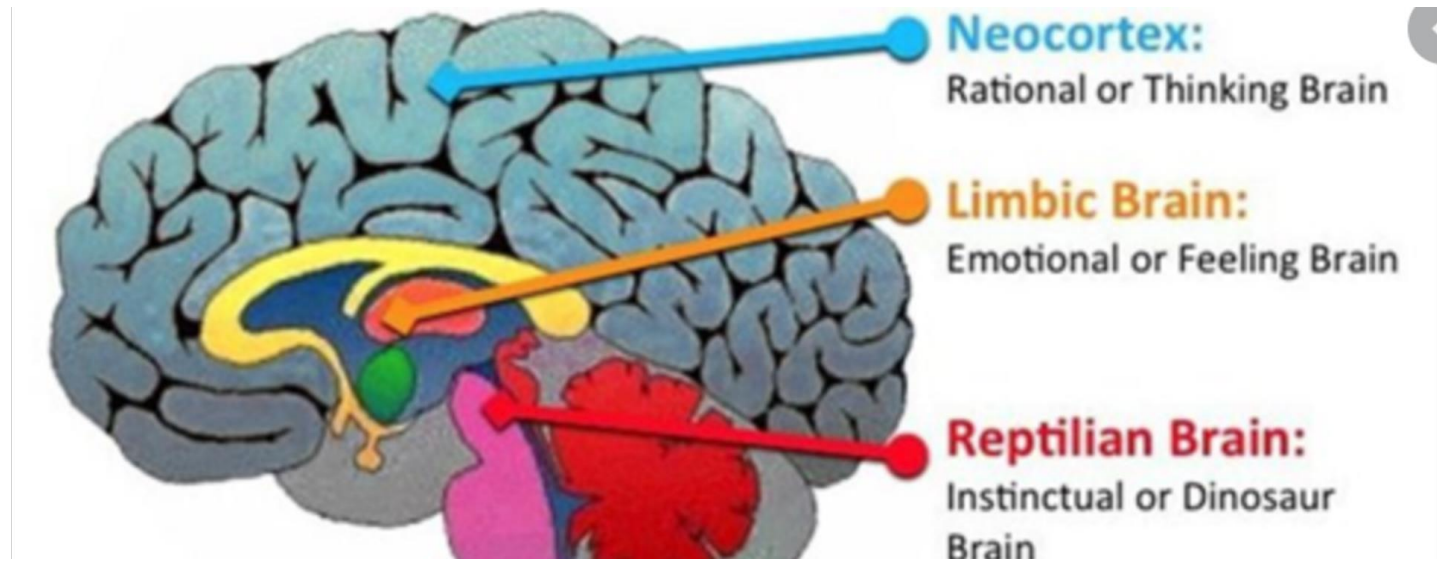


Attacks on Asian-Americans in New York Stoke Fear, Anxiety and Anger

Hate crimes against Asian Americans are on the rise. Here's what activists, lawmakers and police are doing to stop the violence



# Flight or Fight or Freeze Response





# Psychological Impact of Racial Trauma



Emotional	Cognitive	Physiological	Behavioral
Feeling overwhelmed and anxious	Loss of focus	Insomnia	Social withdrawal
Feeling guilty	Difficulty retrieving information (memory difficulties)	Increase or loss in appetite	Avoiding going anywhere
Irritability/Anger/Rage	Loss of motivation and interest to get anything done	Nightmares	Avoiding certain topics of conversation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling on edge</li> <li>• Paranoia</li> <li>• Hypervigilance</li> </ul>	Self-doubt	Headaches/stomachaches	Keeping busy in order to avoid feelings and thoughts evoked by traumatic experience
Frequent crying/sadness/hopelessness	Flashbacks/intrusive thoughts	Lethargy/Low energy	Being defiant as a form of avoidance
Feeling confused		Panic Attacks	Quick to react to protect self by engaging in verbal and physical fights
Mistrust of the system		Medical problems worsen	Suicidal Attempts
Loss of sense of safety		Disrupted sleep patterns	Self-Harm/Self-destructive behavior
Feelings of powerlessness and disappointment		Physical exhaustion	Avoid anything that may remind one of his/her traumatic experiences
Emotional numbness/apathy			Avoiding opportunities to advance in one's career



# Warning signs that your teen may need to access professional mental health support

Changes in sleep

Changes in appetite

More socially isolated than usual

Acting out more than usual; More defiant than usual

More irritable and edgy than usual

Loss of interest in activities they use to enjoy

Unable to get any chores or schoolwork done

Constantly seeking reassurance

Constantly worried and anxious

More lethargic than usual

More agitated than usual



# What can you do to best support your teen during these challenging times?

Help your teen establish a routine/structure to their day/week

Limit screen time and closely monitor social media use

Encourage social connection with peers

Engage in practicing healthy coping skills together

Encourage daily physical activity

Model and encourage healthy nutrition

Model and encourage healthy sleep schedule

Educate your teen about the Covid-19 virus and ways to keep safe and healthy

Spend more quality time with your teen and engage in a daily/weekly talk and activity ritual with them

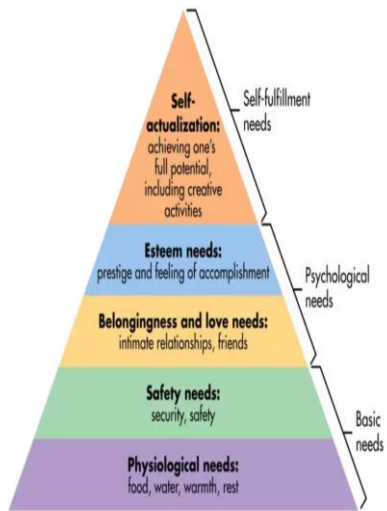
Limit and reduce news exposure

# Connect your Child to a Therapist if They Exhibit Signs of Significant Emotional Distress

- **Connect your child to a therapist if they exhibit signs of significant emotional distress**
  - **All health insurance companies are now mandated to cover telehealth sessions.**
    - Contact your primary care provider for a referral to a therapist
    - Consult the website of your health insurance company to access a directory of mental health providers
    - Consult the website: **psychologytoday.com**
    - Consult the website: **innopsych.org** to find a mental health professional
    - Contact the **National Alliance of Mental Illness Helpline 1-800-950-NAMI**
    - **Contact your child's school guidance counselor**



# General Trauma Healing Concepts



## AM I SAFE?

- **Regulate the reptilian brain** → Deep breathing, meditation, exercise
- Consistency, routine, predictability, safety in setting where the person is most likely in
- Help one satisfy basic needs of breathing, sleeping, stable housing, food security in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

## AM I LOVED?

- **Heal feeling brain** → Therapy
- Get validated, seen, understood
- Building relationship/Connecting
- Learn Coping Skills

## CAN I LEARN?

- **Heal thinking brain**
- Learn and enhance executive functioning skills
  - Problem solving
  - Planning
  - Organizing



# Ingredients of Building Resilience



Access and Build Affirming/Supportive Social Connections

Strengthen Self-esteem/Self-efficacy

Opportunities to strengthen adaptive skills and self-regulation/Coping skills

Sharpen Problem-Solving Skills

Practice Optimism

Develop Independence/Autonomy

# Components of Trauma Informed Practice

Safety

Choice

Empowerment

Collaboration

Trustworthiness

# Healing and Protecting Self From Impact of Racial Trauma

Develop Strength & Resist & Empower oneself

Develop Positive Ethnic Identity

Develop Positive Racial Identity

Develop Critical Consciousness

Establish Social Connection

Identify and Acknowledge the nature and source of one's pain/racial trauma



# Deep Breathing Technique

- Breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth
- Breathe in and out 5 times slowly
- Visualization of a calm place
- Relaxing music to go along if wanted
- Use Deep breathing apps on phone:
  - **Calm**
  - **Headspace**
  - **Breathwrk**
  - **Stop, think, and Breathe**

## Belly Breathing: It's good for your lungs.

This Monday, try belly breathing to reduce your cravings.

Place one hand on your chest and the other on your belly.

Inhale deeply through your nose for a count of four, making sure your belly is expanding and not your chest. Exhale through your mouth for a count of four.

Continue this breathing cycle for a few minutes.

Feel the stress leave your body while your mind becomes calm.

