

# Racism and mental health

Adapted from resources from **YoungMinds 360°**





## Racism and mental health

Being treated differently or unfairly because of our race, skin colour or ethnicity can negatively affect our mental health.





## Racism and mental health

The events that have taken place in the US and in the UK have brought racism into the spotlight across the world.

For many who have experienced racism it is difficult to come to terms with what has happened to us.

Being treated differently or unfairly because of our race, skin colour or ethnicity can negatively affect our mental health.

Here's some information on how to get help if you've experienced racism.



## Racism and mental health

This information is also for those who have not experienced racism and were unaware of the prevalence of racism and now want to begin to understand how it can affect others.

It will help you to understand how racism can affect others who may be members of your family, your friends, your neighbours, even your teachers.



## Racism and mental health

Racism can happen anywhere. It can happen at school, at work, or at home; it can happen online or outside; it can even happen within families and relationships. Sometimes racist abuse is obvious - verbal abuse about the way someone looks, stereotypes about how someone might behave, or physical violence and bullying, for example. Sometimes racism is part of the structures and systems that we live in. And sometimes racism is 'subtle' and difficult for other people to notice.



## Racism and mental health

Luke, 15

The important thing is how you see the situation and how it makes you feel. We can spend a lot of time wondering whether we have been badly or unfairly treated because of our skin colour, race or ethnicity, or for some other reason, and it's not always totally clear. This can make us feel confused or even foolish for talking about our experiences, especially if the people we are talking to have never had to ask themselves these sorts of questions.



## Racism and mental health

Sometimes, even when we are convinced we have experienced racist treatment, people around us might try to tell us we've got it wrong. This can feel very lonely and isolating. But remember, you are not alone and your feelings are valid.

It's also valid if you feel that experiencing racism 'indirectly' has an effect on your mental health. Sometimes the things going on around us, to people just like us, can feel like they have happened to us and make us feel personally attacked, helpless, or like our lives don't matter.



## Racism and mental health

You might also be affected by:

- racism directed towards your family and loved ones
- constant negative headlines about a group you identify with or a country you have ties with
- misrepresentation or no representation in the media
- noticing worrying patterns of behaviour from the institutions you interact with (whether at your doctor's surgery, at school, at work)
- reading statistics that show unfairness and inequality across the justice, health and education system
- people dismissing how we feel, telling us we're overreacting, or denying there is a problem





## Racism and mental health

Our experiences of being treated differently from others because of our skin colour, race or ethnicity can mean that we live with constant fear or anxiety.



## Racism and mental health

We might start to avoid doing the same things that other people simply do without thinking about. Some examples of this can include:

- speaking in another language, or with an accent, in public
- using public transport or going to certain public places alone where you could be a minority
- using your real name on a job application
- worrying about interacting with the police
- worrying about wearing the clothes we want to wear
- hiding parts of our identity, like our religion or culture
- sharing our worldview and taking part in topical discussions
- visiting places, or going on holiday to places, where racism has been reported



## Racism and mental health

You might not even be aware that you are doing things like these. If you are constantly making decisions to protect yourself from others, this can affect how you feel.

You might find it helpful to think about whether this is something you relate to.

By figuring out where our feelings are coming from, it can make them easier to talk about.



## Racism and mental health

It is normal if your experiences of racism – whether big or small, constant or one-off, direct or indirect – affect your self-esteem and/or make you feel angry, depressed or hopeless.

It might feel difficult to believe, but things can get better.



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## Racism and mental health

Things can change, for you and for society. There are lots of people working hard every day to make a difference so that we can live in a fair and just world.

You deserve to feel great about who you are, and to live without fear or prejudice.



## Racism and mental health

Always remember that  
your present situation  
is not your final  
destination. The best  
is yet to come.





## Racism and mental health

### Task 1:

- What are the ways that you think racism can affect someone's mental health?

(Think about the information in the presentation so far and give your own views if you have any to add)

- Write your answers down.
- Share them if you feel comfortable to do so.



## Racism and mental health

If racism is affecting your mental health, there are steps you can take to get the help and support you deserve.

Your feelings are valid, and you do not have to go through it alone.





## Racism and mental health

### Session 2.

# What can I do to improve my mental health?



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## What can I do to improve my mental health?

Here are some things you can do if racism is affecting your mental health:

**1. Speak to someone you trust** about how you are feeling, like a family member or a friend. Talking about how you feel can often be the first step to getting help and finding support. It might feel difficult to talk about how you are feeling or to revisit personal experiences of racism. Take your time and only share what you want to.

You might find it helpful to talk to someone of a similar race or ethnicity to you. The [Black, African and Asian therapy network](#) have a directory of specialist Black and minority ethnic (BME) counsellors or therapists.



## What can I do to improve my mental health?

### 2. Speak to your GP if you:

- are experiencing flashbacks or intrusive thoughts about a traumatic incident or think you might have [PTSD](#)
- have a continuously low mood, [depression](#) or low self-esteem
- are feeling numb or empty inside
- experience changes to your sleeping or eating habits
- experience any changes to your mood and behaviour that feel out of the ordinary
- are feeling worried or are anxious a lot of the time



## What can I do to improve my mental health?

**3. Learn your rights and how to report abuse.** This can help you feel empowered and remind you that what you are experiencing is not okay and no one should believe that it is.



## What can I do to improve my mental health?

Luke, 15

**4. Find supportive groups and communities** who understand what you are going through. It can be very hard to explain how you feel to a person that has not experienced racism, whether directly or indirectly.

Online communities can be a way to find like-minded people with similar experiences and shared interests that you can talk to, have a safe space to be heard and remember that you are not alone.



## What can I do to improve my mental health?

**5. Join a movement to create change.** There are many anti-racist movements and organisations who are fighting for change in society. Being part of a larger movement can help you feel empowered, valued and give you a sense of hope that change is possible. Make sure to take time out to rest and look after yourself if you are regularly involved in activism.



## What can I do to improve my mental health?

Wes

**6. Remember it is not your responsibility to fix racism.** Do not put pressure on yourself – this is a problem you cannot solve on your own. The people around you all have a responsibility to make changes to their behaviour and to uphold the rights of Black and ethnic minority groups.



## What can I do to improve my mental health?

**7. Clean your social media feed.** What we see on online can have a negative impact on our mental health, but remember you can have control over what you see on your social media. Try unfollowing or blocking accounts and muting words that upset you. All social media channels have ways you can report abusive behaviour.

[Read our guidance on how you can report, mute or block accounts on social media](#)





## What can I do to improve my mental health?

### Task 2 (Individual)

- How many social media feeds do you have?
- List all the social media feeds that you use
- Think about the images, language and ideas that they present
- Are you comfortable with what they show you or say to you? (Think about how they make you feel)
- Make a list of all those that you now think are not positive or good for your wellbeing and mental health
- **Mute them or block them**

[Read our guidance on how you can report, mute or block accounts on social media](#)





# What can I do to improve my mental health?

## Session 3

### Task 3:

Read the blogs by Luke and Wes about how racism has affected their mental Health and what they have done to improve things





## What can I do to improve my mental health?

Blogs on racism and mental health **YoungMinds 360°**

Read our blogs written by young people on racism and mental health:

[Racism and my mental health](#)

"Nobody has any right to discriminate against you based on your race or ethnicity. Ever." Our Activist Luke, 15, shares how his experience of racism has affected his mental health.

[Black mental health matters](#)

Everybody deserves mental health support when they need it. Our guest blogger, Wes, shares why it's important that we talk about Black mental health.



## What can I do to improve my mental health?

### Reporting a hate crime

Any crime motivated by hostility or prejudice towards someone because of their race or ethnicity is a 'hate crime'. Anybody can report a hate crime - whether they are the victim, someone who witnessed the crime, or someone the victim has told about the crime or incident.

You can report a hate crime online, via the [True Vision website](#).

What should I do if I think a mental health professional is being racist?

Any mental health professional who you are interacting with has a duty of care to do their best to support you. If you are not happy with how a mental health professional is behaving towards you, you have a right to speak out.



## What can I do to improve my mental health?

### How you can raise a complaint:

- Every NHS service provider (such as your GP, or hospital) has their own complaints procedure. You can find information on making a complaint on your service provider's website, in waiting rooms, or by talking to a member of staff.
- You can choose to complain to the NHS service provider directly, or to the commissioner of the services, which is the body that pays for the NHS services you use.
- You can make a complaint verbally, in writing, or by email.
- Once you have made a complaint, you should expect an acknowledgement and the offer of a discussion about the handling of your complaint within working days.
- Visit the [NHS webpage on making complaints](#) for more guidance.



## What can I do to improve my mental health?

If you need help and support with making a complaint, you can contact your local [NHS Complaints Advocacy service](#). This is a free and confidential service, independent from the NHS and is an opportunity for you to talk to someone about your complaint. They can give you assistance and support throughout the complaint process.

# Where to get help and support

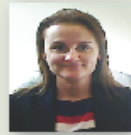
## MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

Who do you **TALK** to if you are worried about something or someone?

- An adult you trust
- School Therapists from Brent Centre for Young People (BCYP) (E306 and SA Medical Room)
- Ms Minott-Statham – Mental Health Lead / Adult Mental Health First Aider (E131)
- Ms Hazley – Wellbeing Lead (E005)
- Ms Hussain – Mental Health First Aider (MHFA) / SENCO (E129)
- Mr Hawes - Mental Health First Aider (MHFA)
- Ms Barnett - Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) E300
- Your Pastoral Manager



Ms Minott-Statham  
Mental Health Lead /  
Adult Mental Health  
First Aider (E131)



Ms Duchonave  
Lead School Therapist  
(E306 and SA  
Medical Room)



Ms Turner  
School Therapist  
(E306 and SA  
Medical Room)



Ms Newton  
School Therapist  
(E306 and SA  
Medical Room)



Ms Hazley  
Wellbeing Lead  
(E005)



Ms Hussain  
Mental Health First  
Aider / SENCO  
(Room E129)



Mr Hawes  
Mental Health  
First Aider (MHFA)



Ms Barnett  
Emotional Literacy  
Support Assistant  
(ELSA) E300



## Where to get help and support

### Stop Hate UK

- confidential and accessible support for victims and witnesses of hate crime
- <http://www.stophateuk.org/>
- Call Hate Out : a 24-hour support service for young people under 18 experiencing or witnessing a hate crime
- call 0808 801 0576 or text 07717989025

### Equality and Human Rights Commission

- Find out more about your rights under the Equality Act 2010.
- <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/deddf-cydraddoldeb/know-your-rights>





## What can I do to improve my mental health?

You may also find the following pages on our **YoungMinds 360°** website helpful:

- [Self-esteem](#)
- [Reaching out for help](#)
- [Guide to support](#)
- [Anxiety](#)
- [Depression](#)
- [Online safety](#)



## Where to get help and support

### Black Minds Matter

- <https://www.blackmindsmatteruk.com/>
- connects Black individuals and families with professional mental health services across the UK
- send them a message on their website to be connected with a Black therapist





# Black Minds Matter



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# Black Minds Matter

## Task 4

### Black Minds Matter competition

- Create a poster with the title “**Black Minds Matter**”
- The purpose of the poster is to help people to understand how racism can affect someone’s mental health and

A: Encourage that person to reach out to get help

or

B: Encourage people to change their behaviour so that they don’t have a negative impact on others

**The class will vote for the two best posters that will be displayed in their form room**