



COVID-19 PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLNESS GUIDE:
RACIAL AND ETHNIC DISPARITIES AND DISCRIMINATION

Version 1, 5/12/20

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected people in some groups more than other groups. People who are African American, Latinx, or from an indigenous background are more likely to get the virus, suffer more serious symptoms, become hospitalized, and die than people who are White. This is largely due to systemic oppression and less access to necessary resources. Many people of Asian descent have personally been targets of discrimination, injustice, and even verbal or physical attacks or their community has been targeted given that the first reports of the virus were in Asia. Such disparities and discrimination may result in you feeling anxious, afraid, scared, sad, or angry and these feelings are valid. Even when you do not have full control of a situation, there are things you can do to protect yourself and your family, feel better, and counter social injustice. Here are some tips to help you cope better during this time when discrimination and bias have reached new heights and are being publicized more. Helpful resources are also included.

Take Care of Yourself

- Prioritize taking care of your physical, mental, and spiritual health – this will leave you better equipped to cope with the stress of bias and discrimination and make empowered choices for yourself
- Advocate for yourself to helping professionals to listen to your concerns when you are feeling unwell and are in need of help, this can also include helping to advocate for other members of your group
- Resist using unhealthy ways to cope such as using drugs or alcohol excessively or isolating yourself from the broader community
- Prioritize going to places like grocery stores and restaurants where you feel safe and welcomed
- Be kind to yourself, even when you are having a hard time or make mistakes
- Recognize your own value and worth and that you deserve to belong
- Remind yourself of your community's positive and powerful characteristics, cultural influences, and contributions to the world to help counter repeated negative messages and narratives about your community



- Limit repeated exposure to media (e.g., television, print, social media) that relay negative images, maltreatment, biases, and stereotypes towards members of your group
- Engage in pleasurable and healthy activities (e.g., cooking a dish that originated from your community; read empowering books from members of your community) that help you feel good and connected to your group

Get Support

- Reach out for psychological support if you or your family are stressed because of harassment or discrimination
 - Remember, you are not alone
- Connect socially while maintaining your physical distance
 - Remember, social connection is one of the most effective ways to cope with feelings resulting from being treated unfairly
 - Use virtual platforms (e.g., Facetime, Zoom, Skype) to talk and spend time with (virtually) supportive friends, family, colleagues or mentors to release your stress and reduce your sense of isolation
 - Reach out and connect with your religious or spiritual support network
 - Identify other trusted members of your group and discuss your concerns, as well as hear their perspective
- Post positive and uplifting images and stories about members of your group to social media
- Let people know if you need extra support or understanding from them

Stand Against COVID-19 Prejudice or Discrimination

- Get and share with others accurate information about COVID-19
 - Note, COVID-19 is not linked with any race or nationality, despite some misinformed or incorrect references
- Use online communities (e.g. Asian Americans Advancing Justice) to
 - Get coping advice when facing harassment or discrimination



- Connect with, empower, advocate, and support people in your community who can relate to what you are going through or who are encountering discrimination
- Have your voice heard - this can be empowering and healthy and can reduce feelings of depression or helplessness, and give frustration and anger a positive outlet
 - Start a dialogue
 - Appeal to shared values to open conversations about prejudice or discrimination
 - Offer a different opinion
 - Educate people about why their comments or actions were offensive or hurtful
 - Use humor to challenge an offensive statement
 - Get involved in a political or activist cause
 - Blog or get involved with online discussions
- Speak up against bias
 - Interrupt – pause the conversation to address the bias
 - Question – ask someone what they meant or why they did what they did
 - Educate – provide information, share the impact on you of what was said or done, help the other person understand why their thoughts or actions require rethinking
 - Echo – echo someone else who speaks up by emphasizing or amplifying their message and thanking them
- Intervene when in intense situations only when it's safe to do so (see resource below for a bystander intervention virtual training)
- Report hate crimes you experience or witness to local law enforcement and consider submitting it on the website <https://www.standagainsthatred.org/report>
- [Work with people who are like you and different from you, but who share your values, to fight this pandemic – we must all face it and fight it together](#)
 - Remember, social divisions are counterproductive



Minimize Your Own Biases

- Remember we all have biases
- Recognize your own biases, many of which you may not be fully aware of
- Take responsibility for your own actions
- Acknowledge your biases and make amends when you say or do something that is insensitive

Helpful Resources

- Asian Americans Advancing Justice: <https://advancingjustice-aaajc.org/covid19>
- “Asian Americans, Anti-Blackness, and COVID-19”
https://www.liberatedtogether.com/blog/asian-americans-anti-blackness-and-covid-19-part-1-of-2?fbclid=IwAR0ZAiXbo8j5vLw-N6H2fQWDkivliNi5S-pu-NIU61OI_kIVeJruT0uz3Q8M
- Asian American Feminist Antibodies: care in the time of coronavirus:
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59f87d66914e6b2a2c51b657/t/5e7bbeef-7811c16d3a8768eb/1585168132614/AAFCZine3_CareintheTimeofCoronavirus.pdf?fbclid=IwAR284I9M1DK5B-Bw43OzRINTEO5Kdcok5vanjKBVIsCJG4gR-Jvz8W-ZSprk
- Bystander Intervention Resources:
 - Show Up – Bystander Intervention Guide: https://www.ihollaback.org/app/uploads/2016/11/Show-Up_CUPxHollaback.pdf
 - Virtual Training: <https://advancingjustice-aaajc.org/events>
- COVID-19 disproportionately affect African Americans:
 - <https://thegrio.com/2020/04/10/black-america-covid-19-deaths-racism/>
 - <https://racism.org/coronavirus/covid-19-articles/8620-collective-response-to>
 - <https://www.usnews.com/news/healthiest-communities/articles/2020-03-25/why-black-americans-face-an-uphill-battle-against-the-coronavirus>
- EmbraceRace is a multiracial community of parents, teachers, experts, and other caring adults who support each other to meet the challenges that race poses to our children, families, and communities. Their website contains free resources and webinars describing the racial realities of COVID-19:
<https://www.embracerace.org/resources/disproportionate-racial-impacts-of-covid>



- How should people of color protect themselves from COVID-19
 - <https://www.bet.com/news/national/2020/03/18/coronavirus-dr-corey-tebert-things-to-know.html>
 - <https://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/healthcare/491487-how-african-americans-and-communities-of-color-protect>
- Report Hate Crime on Asian Americans Advancing Justice: <https://www.standagainstthatred.org/>
- The Stop Hate project provides **legal and social services** through a hotline for all hate crimes, including those related to COVID-19.
 - <https://8449nohate.org/>
- Take action to support providing more health services for African Americans during COVID-19:
<https://www.naacp.org/latest/african-american-organizations-request-decisive-government-action-amidst-covid-19-crisis/>
- Why does it matter what we call the virus? <https://theconversation.com/naming-the-new-coronavirus-why-taking-wuhan-out-of-the-picture-matters-131738>