

Collective Trauma and Collective Care: Healing Together

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Disclaimer

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What is Collective Trauma?

We have all been experiencing cascading, overlapping, traumatic experiences

- COVID-19 Pandemic: losses, instability, and uncertainty
- Police Violence Crisis: injustice, historically based, precariousness
- Climate Anxiety: fear, powerlessness, anger



Chronic Events with an Ambiguous Endpoint

- Experiencing collective trauma means we do not know how bad things will get, nor when recovery can truly begin
- Individuals must grapple with intense direct exposure to cascading events (personal illness or loss, social isolation, economic loss, violent policing), with varying and sometimes conflicting policies dictating public response
- These events are broadcast in real time on traditional and social media, and we watch news coverage repeatedly and across multiple mediums, compounding our exposure. News has been almost entirely bad, with escalating intensity. The overlay of sensationalized media coverage in the context of repeated direct exposure to adversity is likely creating an additional crisis for our mental health.

Resiliency Amidst Collective Trauma

- How can we seek resiliency in a shared experience of disorientation, helplessness and loss?
- Resilience does not mean immunity to pain or distress or grief or anxiety. It means being able to navigate difficulties in a way that enforces strength and fosters growth.



Self Care vs. Collective Care

Self-care is saying **“I need to look after me”**, while

Collective self-care is saying **“we need to look after each other”**

The importance of prioritizing collective and reciprocal care emerges from the understanding that our stresses and traumas are a common collective experience and not individual pathologies. While we may not be able to eradicate COVID-19 or systemic racism immediately, we stand a far better chance if we don't get tricked into thinking our struggles, or the solutions to them, are individual. The more we develop ways to support one another; whether in sorrow or in excitement, the more resilient we become - both individually and collectively.

Tool for Resiliency- the Four “S” Discussion

Supports

Individuals and communities
that have kept you upright

Strategies

That have kept you moving

Sagacity

Wisdom that gives you
comfort and hope

Solution Seeking

Behaviors you showed