



The WHALE Study  
Family Newsletter  
August | 16<sup>th</sup> | 2022



### How are you really doing?

Our [last issue](#) touched on ways to approach your *child* about community violence to mitigate fear and confusion. In this issue, we will be focusing on *caregivers* affected by these difficult times who feel *extra* stress related to parenting responsibilities. Specifically, those who belong to communities that have been targeted by extremists - both in recent times and under years of systemic oppression and abuse.

Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC) experience increased stress related to their marginalized identities. Race, in particular, can affect how you interact with others, including your child. Witnessing and experiencing racism and race-based violence build on top of each other and can slowly affect one's holistic wellbeing - resulting in a form of trauma, *racial trauma*. When one's skin is weaponized against them, they experience uncontrollable threats to their sense of self and their safety.

[Racial trauma in children](#) may look like:

- Anger, anxiety, sadness
- Lack of confidence, self-hate
- Difficulty sleeping or remaining asleep
- Bed wetting
- Lack of eating or overeating

For caregivers of color, the anticipation and experience of racial trauma can affect parenting. As a caregiver, looking after the health and wellbeing of your child is a top priority, and racism makes it more of a challenge for those closely affected by it. You may be experiencing more work to care for your child in addition to racism from the world around, and in these times, it is important to recognize that **looking after your own health and wellbeing is crucial to that of your child's.**

When struggling to take proper care of oneself, it can be difficult to provide emotional and overall support for your child ([APA, 2019](#)). Racial trauma in adults presents similarly to that of children, but due to extended exposure over time, adults can additionally experience the following more often:

- Self-blame
- Hypervigilance (being on high alert, watching for danger)
- Helicopter Parenting (excessive monitoring out of fear)
- Difficulty regulating emotions
- Physical pain like stomach aches and headaches

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Check out the page below for [community resources](#)!

Click [here](#) to tell us what topics you want covered in future newsletters!



Please reach out if you have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding The WHALE Study or the COVID-19 situation. Staff can be reached by call, text, or email: [whalestudy@unc.edu](mailto:whalestudy@unc.edu) | 919-914-0588  
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When faced with race-related stress, we invite you to take a few seconds to recognize the emotions you feel (and those that you do not), affirm their validity, and tap into your community to discover some ways to rethink self-care, healing, and wellbeing. **Radical self-care** has been historically used as a tool for social justice, resistance to dehumanization, and the survival of marginalized communities ([Wyatt & Ampadu, 2021](#)). Some tips for parents of color from [ParentsTogether](#) include, disconnecting from social media, creating a grief jar, identifying your stressors, and combating negative self-talk. See below for many other resources.

Your journey with yourself, your child(ren), and your community will look different from others'. We respect and empower you to **explore what is right for you** and how that could help determine what is the right approach for your child. Fear, anger, or frustration specific to raising a child with marginalized identities in our society are not uncommon. There is difficulty in raising a child in an environment that is not welcoming to you or your child's identities nor to the presence of your emotions that may be a reflection of years of harm perpetrated against your community. Sharing information about tragic events with your child can be extremely difficult when your community is strongly targeted by interpersonal and systemic racism and race-based violence. For some families, you may have already had and continue to have conversations around identity and safety with your child. For others, you have every right to not yet begin these conversations - it may not be the right time for you and/or your child. The complexities of parenting a child of a marginalized identity makes these conversations more impactful requiring more time, energy, and healing.

Allowing and understanding yourself first through different healing coping strategies can aid in the conversations you have with your child. Not only are you a caregiver, you are also **your own human being first**. It is important to take care of yourself in the midst of caring and reassuring others.

## RESOURCES

Thinking about the following questions from [Creating a Family, 2016](#) may help you feel prepared for beginning or continuing conversations with your children:

- *"What are things you love about yourself, your identities, and your communities?"*
- *As your child grows to navigate the realities of our society, how can your understanding of yourself help them to better understand themselves and their place in this society?"*
- *How can you share how you came to be, and the things you love about yourself with your child, so they know they can find similar things to love about themselves and know they are not alone in their journey?"*

### QUICK READS:

- Self-care suggestions designed for and by: [parents of color](#), [women of color](#), [men of color](#), and [Black families](#)
- Learn about [Raising a Proud Emotionally Healthy Black Child](#) in a transracial adoptive family
- Read about ["the talk"](#) – generational reflections on conversations with children about what it means to be Black in America
- Click [here](#) for mental health resources for BIPOC
- Learn about [helping children of color heal from collective trauma](#)

### EXTRA RESOURCES:

- Click [here](#) to watch a video on Nurturing Resilience & Joy in Young BIPOC Children
- Click [here](#) for a 21-Day Activism Self-Care Challenge

### LOCAL COMMUNITY SUPPORT GROUPS:

- [Durham Mocha Moms](#)
- [The Black house at Radical Healing \(Durham\)](#)
- [Growing Resilience Movement - SAFEchild Raleigh NC](#)

### ACADEMIC PAPERS:

- [Racism is an Adverse Childhood Experience \(ACE\)](#)
- [How Racism Can Affect Child Development](#)
- [The Other Pandemic: Unpacking the Mental and Physical Health Consequences of Racism](#)
- [Moving from "Self-care" to a "Healing Justice" Framework](#)

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

### HOUSING

- [Durham Continuum of Care \(CoC\)](#)
- Eviction Information: 216-965-5095
- [Durham Rescue Mission](#)
  - 919-688-9641
- [Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness](#)
- [Urban Ministries of Durham](#)
- [Durham County Social Services](#)
- [Orange County Social Services](#)
- [Wake County Social Services](#)

### FOOD & GROCERIES

- [Wake County Public Schools Free Meals](#)
- [Durham County Public Schools Free Meals](#)
- [Orange County Food Resources](#)
- [Chapel Hill/Carrboro Schools](#)
- [TABLE](#)
- [Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina](#)
- [Wake County Food Resources](#)
- [No Kid Hungry NC](#) - Text FOODNC or COMIDA to 877-877 to receive information about 3 drive-thru or pickup sites with meals for kids closest to you

### HEALTH & SAFETY

- [Compass Center for Women and Families](#)
  - 919-929-7122
- [Durham Crisis Response Center](#)
  - 919-403-9425
- [InterAct Family Safety and Empowerment Center](#)
  - 919-828-7501
- [Orange County Rape Crisis Center](#)
  - 866-935-4783 (call) , 919-504-5211 (text)
- [Freedom House](#)
  - 919-967-8844 (Crisis Unit, Chapel Hill)
  - 1-877-967-8844 (Mobile Service)
- [Suicide prevention lifeline](#): 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Hope4NC Helpline: 1-855-587-3463
- [Crisis Text Line](#): Text HOME to 741 741

### CHILDCARE

- [NC Hotline for Critical Workers Seeking Child Care Options](#)
- [Covid Childcare Co-op Creator](#)
- [Covid Urgent Childcare](#)
- [Child Care Services Association](#)

### LEARNING

- [Scholastics Learn at Home](#)
- [Khan Academy](#)
- [PBS Kids](#)
- [CDC Tips for Talking with Children about COVID-19](#)