

00:00:22 Ama-Robin Lofton

Hujambo, courageous community! and akwaaba to Espresso talk today. I'm your host, Ama-Robin, and I'm having my turmeric coffee today for this special and interesting show. The espresso talk today team is joined again by Professor William Smith from the University of Utah. Professor Smith introduced us last week to racial battle fatigue.

00:00:50 Ama-Robin Lofton

If you haven't heard that show or you haven't heard of racial battle fatigue, then I hope that you will listen to last week's episode where Professor Smith introduced it and really helped us to understand it. In fact, I know you're going to want to hear from the good doctor. Actually, he is a psychologist.

00:01:09 Ama-Robin Lofton

Because racial battle fatigue is real and it is damaging our mental and physical health. I'm talking about black people here. But you are here with us now, and I'm really happy about that because we're going to go deeper into some uncomfortable truths about racial stress.

00:01:31 Ama-Robin Lofton

Yes, that's right, my dear brothers and sisters and beloved, gender neutral and gender nonconforming folks. Our topic today is five uncomfortable truths about racial stress.

00:01:47 Ama-Robin Lofton

But before we dive in, hit that subscribe button if you haven't already. And if you're feeling this show and this topic, share it with your fam, your crew, your circle, everyone in your community.

00:02:01 Ama-Robin Lofton

Just so you know, I'm getting a little serious here. We will be talking about racism and bringing up some difficult racial encounters.

00:02:13 Ama-Robin Lofton

If this feels too difficult or stressful, then take a break or listen to the show later. The information is important, but your mental and physical health are also important.

00:02:27 Ama-Robin Lofton

And we're going to take several breather breaks during the show to help with that. But you do.

00:02:33 Ama-Robin Lofton

You, you do what's best for you. We're going to be here for you anyway.

00:02:38 Ama-Robin Lofton

Now grab that espresso or tea. Tea drinkers are absolutely welcome here, too.

00:02:46 Ama-Robin Lofton

And close the door behind you. We're going to get deep and we're going to get real.

00:02:51 Ama-Robin Lofton

And I hope that you all are ready for this.

00:03:01 Ama-Robin Lofton
You.

00:03:02 Ama-Robin Lofton
Welcome back. Let's go straight to our first uncomfortable truth directly from Professor William Smith.

00:03:13 Ama-Robin Lofton
Uncomfortable truth number one, racism is a violent attack against the black body. That's right.

00:03:25 Ama-Robin Lofton
Racism is a violent act against the black body. Never thought of it that way.

00:03:32 Ama-Robin Lofton
Right, but that's the way we should be thinking about it. But let me ask you a question.

00:03:37 Ama-Robin Lofton
Have you ever had headaches, chest pains, insomnia or nightmares, high blood pressure, exhaustion, shortness of breath, anxiety, depression? Or perhaps you couldn't stop trembling or crying or shaking?

00:03:54 Ama-Robin Lofton
First of all, I'm really sorry to hear that. But this is racial stress.

00:04:02 Ama-Robin Lofton
This is what Dr. Smith is talking about for racial battle fatigue.

00:04:09 Ama-Robin Lofton
Professor Smith here really does cut straight to the core with this stuff. Racism is indeed a violent act against the black body and mind.

00:04:18 Ama-Robin Lofton
Racism is not merely an abstract concept or historical concept or anything. It's a real and tangible thing.

00:04:26 Ama-Robin Lofton
It's visceral. It's a violent assault on black bodies and minds.

00:04:31 Ama-Robin Lofton
The impact affects individuals, families, communities, and it even reverberates through generations, leaving scars that really go beyond the visible. Some of the scars are very visible, but some, many, perhaps even most, are not visible.

00:04:51 Ama-Robin Lofton
Racism in its many forms, manifest as a constant barrage. I love that word.

00:04:58 Ama-Robin Lofton
Sorry about it. In this context, though, barrage of physical and psychological assaults on black

people.

00:05:05 Ama-Robin Lofton

But it doesn't stop there. The stress induced by everyday racism, we've talked about that in the past, triggers physiological responses known as the fight or flight response.

00:05:19 Ama-Robin Lofton

This heightened state of alertness, while helpful as an adaptive tool from an evolutionary standpoint, it creates problems when it's activated continuously and persistently because of racial stressors. As we've discussed, chronic stress has been linked to a range of health issues.

00:05:40 Ama-Robin Lofton

As I just mentioned, high blood pressure, the cardiovascular disease, immune functions, headaches, all kinds of things. Yeah.

00:05:50 Ama-Robin Lofton

Trembling, shaking, tension in the body. In essence, when we acknowledge that racism is a violent act against the black body, we're acknowledging that these discriminatory, these racist acts or microaggressions have tangible, lasting effects.

00:06:12 Ama-Robin Lofton

It's not just about hurtful words or prejudiced beliefs, which are really damaging, too. Don't get me wrong about that.

00:06:20 Ama-Robin Lofton

This sticks and stones thing was never true. They can break bones, and they can break minds and bodies, but it's about the physical toll that systemic and structural racism takes on individuals and communities, leaving a legacy of trauma that does go across generations.

00:06:40 Ama-Robin Lofton

So, yes, words can hurt and cause damage. Actions also hurt and cause damage.

00:06:46 Ama-Robin Lofton

And it doesn't stop when the encounters stop. It continues to manifest throughout the body and mind and throughout families and communities.

00:06:58 Ama-Robin Lofton

An extreme but common and sometimes deadly example is the pervasive issue of racial profiling. When we as black people are targeted because of our blackness, rather than because of any actions or behaviors or something we're doing wrong, it results in a direct and harmful impact on our physical well being.

00:07:20 Ama-Robin Lofton

The unwarranted scrutiny, suspicion, and violence that can arise from racial profiling not only lead to immediate physical harm, sometimes death. We've seen that.

00:07:33 Ama-Robin Lofton

But it also instills a profound sense of fear and trauma. The body in these instances becomes a

battleground where systemic racism exerts its force.

00:07:46 Ama-Robin Lofton

It assaults the body. Dr.

00:07:49 Ama-Robin Lofton

Smith's quote was eerily profound and uncomfortably profound. Understanding the physical effects of racism is an essential step in addressing the broader occurrence of racial battle fatigue as we work at dismantling systemic racism and white supremacy.

00:08:09 Ama-Robin Lofton

Because those are really the problems, not us. Those are the problems.

00:08:13 Ama-Robin Lofton

We can also recognize and prioritize our healing and our well being and protecting our bodies and minds and ensuring that future generations can exist and thrive without the burden of this violent legacy. Well, this was a powerful start.

00:08:32 Ama-Robin Lofton

I would say a good start. We're off to a real start.

00:08:35 Ama-Robin Lofton

We have some momentum here. But let's continue with the second of the five uncomfortable truths about racial stress as defined and as stated by Professor William Smith.

00:08:47 Ama-Robin Lofton

I hope you all appreciate that you get to hear directly from the doctor himself, because I'm not hiding anything here. You are hearing a direct quote from Professor William Smith.

00:08:59 Ama-Robin Lofton

Uncomfortable truth number two. Racial battle fatigue is a repetitive stress injury.

00:09:12 Ama-Robin Lofton

We're back. I'm back here.

00:09:14 Ama-Robin Lofton

Professor William Smith defines racial battle fatigue. He defines it as a repetitive stress injury.

00:09:22 Ama-Robin Lofton

Remember before violent attack against. Assault against a black body.

00:09:26 Ama-Robin Lofton

Now we have a repetitive stress injury. The social stress response to living in a racist environment causes sickness and premature death.

00:09:36 Ama-Robin Lofton

Those are his words. Imagine being hit constantly and persistently in the arm.

00:09:43 Ama-Robin Lofton

Even if the hit, the strike, is light and doesn't on its own, cause any immediate harm, the repetitive nature of the action will eventually cause damage. Professor Smith defines it as a repetitive stress injury.

00:10:00 Ama-Robin Lofton

And this constant barrage, again, that's that word of racial stressors takes a toll not just on our mental health, but on our physical health, too. It's a sobering acknowledgment that the toll of living in a racist environment extends beyond the emotional fatigue to impact our physical well being and contributing to sickness and even premature death.

00:10:29 Ama-Robin Lofton

Racial battle fatigue is a term that includes the cumulative toll of the persistent exposure of racial stressors. It's not a fleeting feeling, but a chronic condition that arises from the daily navigation of a world infused with racism.

00:10:49 Ama-Robin Lofton

And this term encompasses both macroaggressions and microaggressions, which we encounter across all every facet of life. Macroaggressions, let me just define, are overt, explicit acts of racism, often manifested in things like discriminatory policies, racial profiling, or hate crimes.

00:11:15 Ama-Robin Lofton

Microaggressions, on the other hand, are subtle, sometimes unintentional. I don't believe that.

00:11:23 Ama-Robin Lofton

But sometimes not. They are verbal or nonverbal slights that communicate hostile or negative messages.

00:11:33 Ama-Robin Lofton

And these can range from stereotyping comments to exclusionary behavior and lots of other subtle forms of racism. And yet they still have an effect.

00:11:45 Ama-Robin Lofton

Consider the workplace, a space where many of us spend a significant amount of our time, a portion of our lives. We may face macroaggressions in the form of discriminatory hiring practices or demotions based on race.

00:12:02 Ama-Robin Lofton

Simultaneously, microaggressions may manifest as dismissive comments, assumptions about competence, or even being subjected to racial jokes, schools, stores, and public spaces. No realm of life is untouched by racism in educational institutions.

00:12:22 Ama-Robin Lofton

Many black students, some as young as six years old, even younger, experience macroaggressions through unequal discipline or even a lack of representation in the curriculum. Remember, some kids, sometimes they're even calling the police on children.

00:12:39 Ama-Robin Lofton

Simultaneously, microaggressions occur in the form of biased teaching methods, behaviors that inferiorize, make inferiorize black students, make them feel inferior, or the perpetuation of racial stereotypes. The constant exposure to these stressors, to this stress, triggers a social stress response, which is very much like the body's reaction to an ongoing threat, the fight or flight.

00:13:12 Ama-Robin Lofton

This chronic activation of the stress response sustained over time, contributes to the onset of racial battle fatigue. Okay, so what can we do about it?

00:13:24 Ama-Robin Lofton

And I'm glad you asked that, because there are ways to fight against the effects of racial stress. But we're going to leave that to the end.

00:13:33 Ama-Robin Lofton

So stay tuned. It won't be long, I promise.

00:13:36 Ama-Robin Lofton

Remember, it is a repetitive injury, so you got to do something to stop it or to deal with it. And there are ways to do that.

00:13:47 Ama-Robin Lofton

So I think this is actually a good time to take our first breather break. This gives both of us a chance to breathe for a minute when things get intense.

00:13:59 Ama-Robin Lofton

I do like to breathe. You know that?

00:14:01 Ama-Robin Lofton

And I actually do do that during this section. I hope you do, too.

00:14:06 Ama-Robin Lofton

I'll see you in a minute. And y'all know I just love hearing this song.

00:14:10 Ama-Robin Lofton

So sit back, relax, breathe, and I'll see you in a minute.

00:14:15 SPK_2

Anything is possible. Turn me up an airphone, grind it, get a lot of dough and dirt the water obstacles because anything is possible.

00:14:32 SPK_2

Oh, man, I got a lot of gold.

00:14:34 Ama-Robin Lofton

Stack that bread, Aquapa. Welcome back to the show.

00:14:38 Ama-Robin Lofton

We've discussed the first two uncomfortable truths about racial stress. Yes, these are causes of

racial paddle fatigue.

00:14:48 Ama-Robin Lofton

Let's get to the third uncomfortable truth from Professor William Smith. Uncomfortable truth number three.

00:14:59 Ama-Robin Lofton

Your body is a human lie detector. You cannot deny what's going on.

00:15:06 Ama-Robin Lofton

Physiologically that's right. Wow.

00:15:12 Ama-Robin Lofton

He says, your body is a human lie detector. You cannot deny what's going on physiologically.

00:15:19 Ama-Robin Lofton

I know we try to deny it. I know I do.

00:15:22 Ama-Robin Lofton

But this is dangerous, and it's damaging. Our bodies are absolutely a living testament to the truth of our experiences.

00:15:30 Ama-Robin Lofton

Professor Smith reminds us that our physiological responses, the racing heart, the tense muscles, are undeniable. We deny it, but they're undeniable.

00:15:42 Ama-Robin Lofton

Our bodies bear witness to the stress inflicted by racism, acting as unwavering lie detectors in a world that often wants to deny our truths. Our bodies, in their wisdom, react to the stress of racism in ways that are impossible to dismiss.

00:16:03 Ama-Robin Lofton

Though, as I said, we try to dismiss and deny them. The physical responses that Professor Smith speaks of are not inconveniences.

00:16:13 Ama-Robin Lofton

They're signals of a deeper, often hidden struggle. The increased heart rate, the tightening of the muscles.

00:16:21 Ama-Robin Lofton

These are the body's language, speaking volumes about the impact of racism. The insomnia, the hypertension, the headaches, the migraines, the diabetes, obesity, anxiety, depression, and even suicidal ideation.

00:16:39 Ama-Robin Lofton

Suicidal thoughts are all messages from the body of the stress and trauma, the persistent stress and trauma that's being felt throughout the body and our minds. Consider the scenario of racial microaggressions, those subtle, subtle but harmful acts that we experience daily.

00:17:02 Ama-Robin Lofton

The body reacts almost instinctively to these aggressions, or even to the threat of these aggressions entering into a heightened state of alertness. We've talked about hypervigilance.

00:17:15 Ama-Robin Lofton

That's what this is. The physiological, the physical response is not a sign of weakness or oversensitivity, I promise you.

00:17:24 Ama-Robin Lofton

It's an adaptive mechanism rooted in our survival instincts. This is a human response, an evolutionary response.

00:17:35 Ama-Robin Lofton

When faced with perceived threats, the body gears up for action, prepared to fight or to flee. This is a normal response.

00:17:44 Ama-Robin Lofton

What is not normal is white supremacy and the racism that's so pervasive in our lives. Now we can talk about self care, and it's crucial to dismantle the harmful notion that we can simply get over it or let go of the effects of racism.

00:18:08 Ama-Robin Lofton

This dismissive attitude undermines the genuine struggles and perpetuates a cycle of invalidation. Our feelings are often invalidated very often, too often, and it's not helping the situation.

00:18:26 Ama-Robin Lofton

In fact, it's increasing the damage. It also increases the feeling of isolation that so many of us experience every day.

00:18:34 Ama-Robin Lofton

And it's time to stop this behavior. Instead, embracing self care acknowledges and addresses the effect of racial stress.

00:18:45 Ama-Robin Lofton

This is radical and powerful, and we will talk about some self care. Healthy self care steps at the end of the show.

00:18:53 Ama-Robin Lofton

By embracing the truth that our bodies are human lie detectors, we shift the narrative. We reject the notion that we can simply get over it and instead acknowledge the reality of our physical responses.

00:19:10 Ama-Robin Lofton

And through self care, which we will talk about, we affirm the importance of our well being, taking intentional steps towards healing and resilience in the face of racial stress. All right, let's move on to our next uncomfortable truth by Professor William Smith.

00:19:30 Ama-Robin Lofton

Uncomfortable truth number four. Black people live between risk and fear every single day.

00:19:53 Ama-Robin Lofton

And this is just a daily doctor that Dr. Smith says. Living between fear and risk is not a choice, but a consequence of navigating a world where racism is in every part of life.

00:20:09 Ama-Robin Lofton

And it's a call to action, urging us to recognize the weight carried by black folks every day. But living between risk and fear is a huge experience, and it's on different levels.

00:20:23 Ama-Robin Lofton

It's deeply rooted in systemic racism and societal prejudices. It's also deeply rooted in individual racist encounters.

00:20:33 Ama-Robin Lofton

But let's explore some of this reality and what it may look like in different aspects of life. I want to give a trigger warning here.

00:20:42 Ama-Robin Lofton

I'm going to mention a few racial encounters in which black people have been attacked, harassed, and even killed. Please listen with caution, or even choose to listen later, or not to listen at all.

00:20:56 Ama-Robin Lofton

After this section, we'll take a breather break. So here's the first example.

00:21:01 Ama-Robin Lofton

Navigating public spaces. In public spaces, the simple act of going for a jog, shopping, or even waiting for the bus can become an exercise in risk assessment.

00:21:16 Ama-Robin Lofton

The fear of racial profiling, harassment, or violence is a constant companion, and the everyday activities that others take for granted become a potential source of anxiety and danger for us. For black people.

00:21:33 Ama-Robin Lofton

Here's another example. In the workplace.

00:21:36 Ama-Robin Lofton

In the workplace, we do, we often navigate a delicate balance between expressing our authentic selves, being who we are, and conforming to societal expectations. The fear of being stereotyped or penalized for asserting our identity, even as much as wearing dreadlocks or something, creates a constant undercurrent of stress.

00:22:04 Ama-Robin Lofton

And this fear can impact professional growth, mental well being, and the ability to fully contribute

to the workplace and just to feel like just a normal person going to work every day. Now here's one for students.

00:22:20 Ama-Robin Lofton

In this example, the educational journey is often marked by fear of being overlooked or treated unfairly. And not just fear, but actual real experiences and the risk of encountering biased teaching methods, including biased teachers, inadequate representation in educational materials, or constantly written out of history or discriminatory disciplinary actions like calling the police on a six year old is an ever present concern and a reality in many cases.

00:22:59 Ama-Robin Lofton

Some students, black students, have even been arrested and handcuffed at school. And some of these children, as I said, were as young as six years of age, and they didn't call their parents.

00:23:11 Ama-Robin Lofton

The fear that this creates can affect the academic performance and hinder the pursuit of knowledge because, well, school is supposed to be a safe place, but this type of behavior makes it a space of suspicion and danger for many black students. So living between, those are the examples now.

00:23:33 Ama-Robin Lofton

So we're going to move back to some of the theory, but the examples are open now. And I hope that it wasn't too much for you, but if it was, I apologize, but I had to discuss it.

00:23:45 Ama-Robin Lofton

So, living between risk and fear does take a toll on mental and physical health and well being. And the constant vigilance, the hyper vigilance that's necessary to navigate a racially charged environment contributes to heightened stress levels.

00:24:04 Ama-Robin Lofton

And this constant stress can manifest in anxiety, depression, attempts at suicide, and other mental health challenges. And this can last for a person's entire life.

00:24:17 Ama-Robin Lofton

And physically, the body's stress response is triggered repeatedly, leading to long term health problems, higher cortisol levels, that's the stress hormone. Elevated blood pressure, and a compromised immune system.

00:24:33 Ama-Robin Lofton

Those are just some of the physical consequences. The toll of living between risk and fear becomes ingrained in the very fabric of the black experience.

00:24:43 Ama-Robin Lofton

It's just something we live with because we don't know anything else. But we know that we have to constantly be aware and vigilant about navigating that pendulum.

00:24:56 Ama-Robin Lofton

We're going to talk about things we can do about it in a minute. But let me just say that

recognizing this daily struggle of living between fear and risk is one first step towards self empowerment.

00:25:08 Ama-Robin Lofton

And by understanding the mental and physical toll, we can collectively work towards protecting our health and creating a world where we are free from that constant burden of navigating racial biases that are often denied by even well meaning friends. But we still got to go.

00:25:28 Ama-Robin Lofton

After dismantling anti black racism and white supremacy, we are going to take another breather break here. So take this time.

00:25:38 Ama-Robin Lofton

This will be a little bit longer to breathe, to think, to stretch, to do push ups, to do jumping jacks, grab some coffee or tea, whatever speaks to your soul. Talk to the ancestors if you need to.

00:25:52 Ama-Robin Lofton

This is some great stuff that we're doing here, and it's important stuff, but we all need a short break.

00:26:01 SPK_2

Anything is possible. Turn me up an airphone, grind it, get a lot of dough and dirt the water obstacles, because any thing is possible.

00:26:17 Ama-Robin Lofton

We are back. Thanks for showing the courage to stay in the building and discuss these difficult topics.

00:26:25 Ama-Robin Lofton

Let's go directly to our final uncomfortable truth by Professor William Smith. Uncomfortable truth number five microaggressions tend to cause us more damage because we have fewer coping strategies to keep them at bay.

00:26:50 Ama-Robin Lofton

It's sad, but it's true. Microaggressions do tend to cause black people more damage because we do have fewer strategies, and we're going to get into why that is.

00:27:00 Ama-Robin Lofton

But Professor Smith sheds light on the insidious nature of microaggressions. These subtle but corrosive acts cause more damage because as black people, yes, we have fewer coping tools to shield ourselves.

00:27:17 Ama-Robin Lofton

And this is a stark reminder of the importance of developing and sharing coping mechanisms to navigate the persistent onslaught of racial aggression. Microaggressions are like tiny droplets of water, and they may seem inconsequential individually, but their cumulative impact is far reaching.

00:27:43 Ama-Robin Lofton

They are corrosive acts that eat away at our mental and emotional well being. Unlike macroaggressions that are overt, microaggressions often operate in the shadows, making them hard to identify and to confront.

00:28:04 Ama-Robin Lofton

Consider the microaggression of racial stereotyping. You know, a seemingly innocent comment, seemingly innocent comment that reinforces harmful stereotypes.

00:28:17 Ama-Robin Lofton

These repeated instances subtly erode at a person's sense of self worth, fostering feelings of invalidation and otherness. The corrosive nature of microaggressions lie in their ability to chip away at the psyche over time, creating a persistent undercurrent of stress.

00:28:46 Ama-Robin Lofton

Empowering oneself against racial battle fatigue involves the cultivation of healthy coping mechanisms that address the unique challenges posed by microaggressions, and we're going to get to that in just a minute. We're really close now.

00:29:02 Ama-Robin Lofton

I just want to finish off this one part, because in the face of microaggressions, microaggressive actions that we experience the development and sharing of coping mechanisms become powerful tools of resistance. By cultivating collective mindfulness, building supportive networks, and engaging in education and advocacy, individuals and communities can empower themselves and contribute to a collective movement against the corrosive effects of racial battle fatigue.

00:29:44 Ama-Robin Lofton

So those were the five uncomfortable truths about racial stress. Asante Sana to Professor William Smith from the University of Utah for his incredible and life affirming work and for joining us on this podcast show.

00:30:00 Ama-Robin Lofton

What do you think of these truths? Were they uncomfortable to you?

00:30:04 Ama-Robin Lofton

Do you know of other uncomfortable truths? Yes, I know there must be a lot more, and I'm sure that there are.

00:30:12 Ama-Robin Lofton

But we wanted to focus on these five for today. The importance of community just cannot be overstated.

00:30:20 Ama-Robin Lofton

Community and collective action are essential to our mental and physical health. Self care tools, healthy, adaptive tools are so important.

00:30:32 Ama-Robin Lofton

I'll just mention briefly, breathing, journaling, having a safe space, talking with a culturally competent therapist. These all make a difference and can mitigate, can lessen the effects of the cumulative repetitive stress injury known as racial battle fatigue.

00:30:54 Ama-Robin Lofton

But remember, your body is having a natural and normal response to these stress injuries. What is not normal is antiblack racism.

00:31:05 Ama-Robin Lofton

What is not normal is white supremacist and white supremacist systems. You are not the problem, and you should not bear the burden or the effects.

00:31:18 Ama-Robin Lofton

Let's take one last breather break here, then we're going to wind it down. And yes, I got some info that I know you're going to want to hear.

00:31:27 Ama-Robin Lofton

And as I promise, the healthy coping tools that you can use to avoid the racial battle fatigue and racial stress. And I know that y'all are ready for this jambo.

00:31:50 Ama-Robin Lofton

Very brave souls and asantesano for staying with me today. Racial stress is real.

00:31:58 Ama-Robin Lofton

Racial battle fatigue is real. And don't let anybody tell you different.

00:32:03 Ama-Robin Lofton

They will try. They will tell you that everybody feels stressed, that racial stress is no different than any other form of stress.

00:32:11 Ama-Robin Lofton

They will try to make you question what your body, the great lie detector, is telling you through its symptoms and signs. They will try to make you feel weak by experiencing anxiety and depression because of racial stress.

00:32:26 Ama-Robin Lofton

They will try to make you feel paranoid because of your hyper vigilance in white spaces. But they are wrong at best, but they are lying, ignorant, or dehumanizing at worst.

00:32:41 Ama-Robin Lofton

Or more likely, that's what it is, because they don't recognize racial stress. They don't understand it.

00:32:50 Ama-Robin Lofton

But, fam, I promise to give you a few self care activities that can help you to fight the damaging effects of racial stress. And I never go back to my promises to you.

00:33:01 Ama-Robin Lofton

You know that I use all of these activities, and so they definitely work. They're effective for me, and they're not hard to do.

00:33:11 Ama-Robin Lofton

They may not be what you want to do. I hope that you'll find one or two that are helpful.

00:33:15 Ama-Robin Lofton

But remember, you have to do you. But I'm going to put this out there for you just to get you started.

00:33:20 Ama-Robin Lofton

So let's go. Let's see.

00:33:22 Ama-Robin Lofton

Number one, mindful reflection and journaling. You know, I'm a big journaler and I just mentioned journaling earlier, but maybe take time each day to reflect on your experiences with racial stress and write them down in a journal.

00:33:38 Ama-Robin Lofton

Reflect how these experiences made you feel and any physical sensations that you noticed. Then practice mindfulness techniques such as deep breathing or progressive muscle relaxation to help release tension and promote relaxation.

00:33:55 Ama-Robin Lofton

Number two, community connection and support. You know, I'm also big on community.

00:34:01 Ama-Robin Lofton

Seek out supportive communities of fellow black people or other allies who understand and who empathize with our experiences of racial stress. Engage in open and honest conversations about your shared experiences and offer support and validation to one another.

00:34:21 Ama-Robin Lofton

This sense of belonging and solidarity can provide incredible support and comfort and strength in navigating racial battle fatigue. This is a different one.

00:34:34 Ama-Robin Lofton

Number three, creative expression and healing arts. Explore creative outlets such as art, music, dance, or writing as a means of expressing and processing your emotions around racial stress.

00:34:49 Ama-Robin Lofton

Engage in activities that bring you joy and allow you to connect with your cultural heritage and identity. Whether it's painting a picture or composing a song or practicing traditional dance, creative expression is a powerful tool for healing and self care, particularly in the face of racial stress and racial isolation.

00:35:14 Ama-Robin Lofton

Number four, this is my number one, actually. But here's number four.

00:35:18 Ama-Robin Lofton

Nature. Connecting with nature and grounding doing grounding exercises.

00:35:24 Ama-Robin Lofton

Spend time outdoors in natural settings such as parks, forests or gardens to connect with nature and to ground yourself. Take leisurely walks.

00:35:34 Ama-Robin Lofton

Practice mindfulness amidst the sights and sounds of nature or simply sit and soak in the healing energy of the environment. Engage your senses by noticing the colors, the textures, the scents all around you to help you find peace and rejuvenation.

00:35:53 Ama-Robin Lofton

Nature is amazing. Let's not ever ignore nature.

00:35:57 Ama-Robin Lofton

And number five, this one is one I struggle with. Boundary setting and self advocacy practices Practice setting clear boundaries in your personal and professional life to protect your mental and emotional well being from the impact of racial stress.

00:36:17 Ama-Robin Lofton

Communicate with others. Be assertive if you need to about your needs and your limits, and advocate for yourself in situations where you feel marginalized or discriminated against.

00:36:29 Ama-Robin Lofton

Honestly, I don't have a problem with that part. This may involve asserting your rights, speaking up against injustice, or seeking support from allies and advocates, but prioritizing.

00:36:40 Ama-Robin Lofton

By prioritizing self care and self advocacy, you empower yourself to navigate the challenges of racial battle fatigue with resilience and dignity. Now, you don't have to write all these down.

00:36:54 Ama-Robin Lofton

These are all in the show notes, which you can find on the espresso talk Today website@espressotalktoday.com. But these self care activities aim to provide a holistic support for you.

00:37:07 Ama-Robin Lofton

If you're experiencing racial stress, addressing both the emotional and the physical toll of stress while fostering resilience and empowerment, you kind of need that balance. And these are my favorites and I use them a lot, so I hope that they will be helpful to you as well.

00:37:24 Ama-Robin Lofton

Now I would like to hear from you. I don't want to do all the talking.

00:37:28 Ama-Robin Lofton

I think I've done all the talking today. What self care steps do you use to uplift and protect your physical and mental health?

00:37:38 Ama-Robin Lofton

What do you use? I also want to know, have you been experiencing racial encounters and microaggressions and racial stress?

00:37:47 Ama-Robin Lofton

Honestly, I think I know the answer to that. But how do you cope with it, and are you experiencing symptoms?

00:37:56 Ama-Robin Lofton

Do you need extra support right now? If you feel comfortable, please share your thoughts and your stories using the hashtag racial stress.

00:38:08 Ama-Robin Lofton

Together we can keep this important conversation and very uncommon conversation going. You're not alone.

00:38:15 Ama-Robin Lofton

We are a community and we are here to support each other. Let me know.

00:38:20 Ama-Robin Lofton

Let us know what we can do to support you. How can we support and uplift each other as a community?

00:38:28 Ama-Robin Lofton

And that's what we'll be talking about on Instagram and in our Facebook group. So there's more information on that later.

00:38:35 Ama-Robin Lofton

And yes, I'll be buying the espresso asantesana for being part of the conversation today. On Espresso talk today, I look forward to continuing these talks with you as we strive for liberation and joy for all oppressed people, not just for some, but for all.

00:38:55 Ama-Robin Lofton

Espresso talk today stands for the liberation and joy of black and brown people. Espresso talk today stands in solidarity with the oppressed people of Palestine, Sudan, Congo and Haiti and Ethiopia.

00:39:10 Ama-Robin Lofton

The list is getting longer. Unfortunately.

00:39:13 Ama-Robin Lofton

Espresso talk today stands in the truth that if one black or brown person is oppressed, we all are oppressed. And if one black or brown person is suffering, we all are suffering.

00:39:26 Ama-Robin Lofton

Liberation and joy are our birthright, and there is no place for white supremacy, anti black racism, or racial stress in our lives. And returning back to Professor Smith for just a minute,

black people are not the problem.

00:39:44 Ama-Robin Lofton

The problem is white supremacy. The problem is the white supremacist patriarchal system that is attacking black bodies, minds, and hearts.

00:39:56 Ama-Robin Lofton

That is causing the problem. But as Professor Smith said, we do get distracted and we call for lots of other things.

00:40:04 Ama-Robin Lofton

Call it lots of other things like black on black crime or weak black families or bad diets among black people, but they won't call it what it is, which is white supremacy. We are having a normal response to these repetitive stress injuries.

00:40:21 Ama-Robin Lofton

We are normal. White supremacy and antiblack racism are not, and they must be dismantled.

00:40:29 Ama-Robin Lofton

It's not you. It's them.

00:40:32 Ama-Robin Lofton

And I hope you got this because it is true. So remember, my fellow warriors, know this.

00:40:39 Ama-Robin Lofton

Deep in your soul, you are powerful beyond measure, and together, we are invincible. And the problem, the real problem with society is white supremacy.

00:40:52 Ama-Robin Lofton

You are not the problem. Asante Sana to Professor William Smith and all people who are working to empower and uplift black people.

00:41:02 Ama-Robin Lofton

AsanteSana to you for being in the building and showing the courage to talk about these issues. If you want to keep discussing or reading about these issues, then I would definitely want you to subscribe to my weekly Black Empowerment newsletter, the Nomo beat.

00:41:20 Ama-Robin Lofton

We discuss lots of different issues there. Get your dose of black empowerment every single week.

00:41:27 Ama-Robin Lofton

Never a dull moment, but lots of powerful, uplifting, and liberating moments. You can subscribe at the Espresso Talk today website@espressotalktoday.com, or on Instagram at AMA Underscore Robin Underscore the letter L.

00:41:47 Ama-Robin Lofton

You can also find us on Facebook in our newly opened espresso Talk today Black Liberation

lounge. I know it's a long word.

00:41:56 Ama-Robin Lofton

That's a long name. But you'll find us there, and we're active and we really want you to join in.

00:42:01 Ama-Robin Lofton

This group is a safe space for us to hold discussions, share thoughts and ideas, feel joy, express sadness, or just be. Join us on Instagram to discuss these issues, too, and share our thoughts and find an uplifting and safe space where you are valued and heard.

00:42:20 Ama-Robin Lofton

Find us again on Instagram at AMA underscore Robin underscore the letter L. I'm ama Robin for espresso talk today and remember, now more than ever, strength, soul and reparations.

00:42:38 Ama-Robin Lofton

Ashe.