

00:00:30 Ama-Robin Lofton

Welcome to Espresso Talk Today! I'm your host, Ama-Robin. And I'm having my turmeric coffee today. Yes, I'm having turmeric coffee again today for this informative and interesting show today. Espresso Talk today is joined by Professor William Smith from the University of Utah. Professor Smith is going to introduce us to racial battle fatigue. Haven't heard of it? Well, you're going to want to hear the the good doctor today. Actually, he's a psychologist because racial battle fatigue is real and it is damaging our mental and physical health. When I say our, I mean black folks, this is this episode is also great because we're having the return of the incredible Hans who's going to introduce Professor Professor William Smith. And the incomparable Marlene is going to be here to talk with him too. And she's had some great questions. So yes, that's right, my dear brothers and sisters and gender neutral and gender nonconforming folks, we are talking today about racial battle fatigue. Before we dive in, hit that subscribe button if you haven't already. And if you're feeling this topic and this show, just share it with your fam, your crew, your friends, your circle, everyone in your community, just so you know. And I'm going to get a little serious here.

00:02:07 Ama-Robin Lofton

We will be talking about racism and bringing up some difficult situations, some difficult racial encounters. If this feels too troubling or too triggering, then take a break or listen to this show later. This information is very important, but your mental and physical health are also important. You've got to take care of you. We want to take care of you. We are going to do a breather break during this show so you can take some time to disconnect and process. With that said, I encourage you now to grab an espresso or tea. Tea drinkers are also welcome here too. And close that door behind you. We're going to get deep and we're going to get real to you now, Hans.

00:03:17 Hans Hyppolite

Hello, everyone! Welcome to Espresso Talk Today. My name is Hans and thank you for joining us today. The Espresso Talk Todays team welcomes a special guest, Doctor William Smith, who talks about a serious condition known as racial battle fatigue. Doctor William A Smith is a Professor and department Chair in the Department of Education, Culture and Society at the University of Utah. He also holds a joint professorship appointment in the Ethnic Studies program. Doctor Smith is the Co editor of the book The Racial Crisis and American Higher Education. His research primarily focuses on racial battle fatigue, which is the cumulative emotional, psychological, physiological, and behavioral effects at racial, micro level aggressions and macro level aggressions have on people of color. We are honored and excited to have Doctor Smith on the Espresso Talk Today show. So grab an espresso and get comfortable for this uncommon episode. Let's listen in.

00:04:26 Ama-Robin Lofton

Are you there, Marlene?

00:04:32 Marlene Slaughter

Yeah. I'm here, I'm here. I was thinking, we had been talking last time about racial battle fatigue, and I just wanted to get your your opinion, Doctor Smith. What, what, How would you define racial battle fatigue?

00:04:48 Dr. Smith

Well, the the easiest way to define it is a repetitive stress injury, right? So what, What that means is it's a biopsychosocial stress response to living in a racist environment that causes premature death sickness in a less than ideal lifestyle for infected people. And those are usually the racial minorities in that society. And then within those racial minorities, there is a system that attacks each group independently of each other. And so some of that attack might have more weight in certain domains than it does for other groups. But there are at least four kind of stress responses - There's a constitutional one, there's a social demographic one, there's a psychological one, and then there's a behavioral one. And all those together, collectively, what how we understand the impact of racial battle fatigue.

00:06:07 Ama-Robin Lofton

Well, when you say constitutional, I'm I'm a lawyer, I'm thinking what? What do you mean by constitutional? Are we talking about same kind of constitutional?

00:06:14 Dr. Smith

No, no, not not the law part. But what makes you you. So what - When I see you, I can say, well, that's a black woman, right? And so there's certain things about you that make you who you are that without you opening your mouth, which you could just be standing there, then you can receive certain types of racial microaggressions based upon how I identify you.

00:06:44 Marlene Slaughter

Is that like profiling?

00:06:46 Dr. Smith

Oh, it's definitely profiling, right? So, but it's it's a way to keep people in their place, and that's what racial microaggressions do. They keep people in their place and keep them out of other places where they're not welcome.

00:07:06 Marlene Slaughter

And. So, So what? Oh no. You go ahead. Go ahead.

00:07:14 Ama-Robin Lofton

What's an what's an example? I think we're going to ask the same question. What's an example of of microaggression and you mentioned like a micro level one or is micro a small thing happening?

00:07:24 Dr. Smith

So Chester Pierce Doctor Chester Pierce was a Harvard psychiatrist and a professor also in the College of Education. He's the one who gave us the term racial microaggressions. And racial microaggressions initially meant those kind of subtle, mundane experiences that black people

deal with on a daily basis. That causes them stress. All right. So it can be instead of a macro aggression, the microaggressions tend to cause more damage because we have less coping strategies to kind of keep those things at Bay as opposed to those that are macro aggression. So macro aggressions are those things that are typically at the Moore community level, group level, institutional level, right. So if something happens like that's, we see the clan March, we have more adapting coping strategies for that, as opposed to somebody making a racist remark towards us and that causes us a kind of psycho emotional injury.

00:08:44 Ama-Robin Lofton

I mean, like a common thing I've had, you know, being followed around in like one of my favorite makeup stores, I go in there and I'm finding that I'm getting followed around in there. Is that like that?

00:08:56 Dr. Smith

Exactly. And then they can say, well, no, we're just making sure that you, if you need anything, we're there. Or if somebody gives a backhanded compliment, you know, all the time. So somebody looks at Marlene and says, "oh, you're cute for a black girl-" you know, and all. It's like, "what do you mean, I'm cute for a black girl," right? So they might not realize what they said was a microaggression, but Marlene codes that as a microaggression. In any time of microaggression, someone codes it, then it causes some kind of response and it could be any of those kind of psychosocial psycho emotional responses, right? And even if she didn't code it as a racial microaggression, then she her body still respond to that attack. Because while the mind is a great source to avoid conflict so it it can play games, right? He said. Well, that wasn't racist, but your body is a human lie detector, so you you can't deny what's going on physiologically. Psychologically you can play mind games with yourself, but physiologically your body seeks balance and any threat against your body is an attack and racism is a violent act against the black body.

00:10:40 Ama-Robin Lofton

Huh...What do you think, Marlene?

00:10:42 Marlene Slaughter

I think, I think that's. I mean, I relate to that completely. But also it reminds me of this time when I was in gymnastics and there was a white girl on the floor and I was doing laps and I brushed past her maybe and barely touched her. The next time I came around, she said to me, "African-American" and you know, and I know it's a little different than what you're talking about, but, but I I couldn't say anything. So I'm like, what am I going to do? She called me an African American, but it was, you know, the way in what she actually wanted to say. It was like. So it just makes me wonder if white people one are aware. Of.

00:11:23 Marlene Slaughter

Of how strong of a hand, even if they think like the oppression isn't visual that they have like on our psyches. What do you what do you think about that?

00:11:35 Dr. Smith

One of a scholars that I really respect is Monica T Williams. She's up in Canada, and what she and her research has shown is that there are some whites who don't realize the microaggressions that they are using against targets of white supremacy. However, those are in

the minority. The majority of them who are use it to keep you in your place, to make you uncomfortable, and those people tend to be more aggressive. So in one of her studies, she calls it microaggressions are a form of aggression. So these are aggressive tendencies that people understand. I can say something, I can do something that can knock you off of your center and put you back in your place.

00:12:35 Marlene Slaughter

Wow. So the emphasis shouldn't be on the micro, but that this is an act of aggression.

00:12:39 Dr. Smith

Right. And so most people misinterpret micro to think that it means something that's very small, insignificant, tiny. Instead of a micro level. Like, we understand micro sociology, microeconomics, micro business, micro politics. Nobody would ever say that those are tiny politics. Those are insignificant politics over insignificant money. When they say microeconomics, they understand that it's talking about it at a micro level.

00:13:10 Marlene Slaughter

Now let's do some more definition because I'm, I'm still thinking, I'm trying to figure out like you mentioned the constitutional social psychological one. Other two. Yeah. People to like the social and stuff. And I mean what I'm thinking about what I was just thinking about being followed around in the in one of my favorite stores, actually, I'm kind of shaking, you know, I'm feeling a bit of trembling and I'm thinking, is this, is this an example?

00:13:36 Dr. Smith

Yeah. Oh, that's definitely an example. And so some another black woman that's going with, you might say, oh, girl, that ain't nothing. Don't pay attention to them. But what they don't realize is these things are cumulative, right? So it's like what you explained earlier in the pandemic situation, You were talking about an R naughty, what we call AR naughty. And that's the infectious rate, right? So what that means is your infection rate 1 to one is less than somebody else's who might have a higher number like A2. So for every one person they'll infect 2. So in our society what is happening is one person can get affected based upon another person's racism, right?

00:14:30 Dr. Smith

And it usually is much bigger than a one to one type of contamination, right It because we have linked lives, we know that black mothers well, let's start early. Black women who deal with racism as young girls and then young adults will have higher levels of depression as they become older. Now the link live part of this is when they have children, when their children are dealing with racial microaggressions, we see a higher impact on depression and mental health condition of those black mothers between the ages of 40 and 50. So what their children experiences impacts them. Well that shows how we're linked together and that also speaks to that kind of are not infection, right. So what we have to realize is that we're linked together as a community. So we should have more unity than this unit. We should be not fighting each other. We should be fighting white supremacy, all right? And so we we also see the same thing in black men.

00:15:54 Dr. Smith

So what happens with them is if their children are impacted and their wife becomes impacted,

they become impacted. And we don't see the same thing happened to the wife from the husband, right? Because the wife is concerned about the children and the husband is concerned about the wife and the children, so it spreads all the way through.

00:16:21 Marlene Slaughter

So I mean, even if something didn't, I didn't experience something directly. You know, maybe I saw something on or I read an article about there's some racist act that happened on an airplane. I know of a of a flight that did happen that could still have an effect on me.

00:16:37 Dr. Smith

Definitely. And a good example of that is a study that was done recently and it and it's kind of following up on this kind of linked lives ideology. For if a black person who was unarmed and killed by the police in a state in which it occurred, all black people can expect to have one to three months of poor mental health days. All right, just for that person being unarmed and black, the rest of those black people in that state can expect to have one to three months of poor mental health days. Now, if a black person who was unarmed and killed by the police in the state in which it occurred, white people don't have poor mental health. If the black person is armed and killed by the police, black people don't have extended poor mental health, nor do whites. So it doesn't work across race, right? So again, what if we look at that with the George Floyd situation and the whole black community can expect one to three months of poor mental health days? Collectively, that that equals 55,000,000 poor mental health days. And if you compare that to the 75,000,000 poor mental health days that all people who are dealing with diabetes have, and you can see the impact that it has on black people, and that is a conservative estimate.

00:18:22 Ama-Robin Lofton

Wow, that's huge. That is huge. And when you say that poor mental health mean depression, days, anxiety, insomnia.

00:18:31 Dr. Smith

All that all and all that equals up to racial biopathy.

00:18:36 Marlene Slaughter

Wow.

00:18:38 Dr. Smith

And when we think, think about epigenetically. Now, there's been studies, and I know some black folks don't like the animal studies, and that kind of turned me off in psychology as an undergrad student. I'm like, hey, we ain't no monkeys, we ain't no rats. But it really works, all right. So if we look at, let's just say it's a mouse, right? And let's say that mice like what? Chamomile smell? All right, so mice likes the chamomile flour and go and eat the flour and, you know, enjoy that. Now if you have it in a laboratory and you have the chamomile, the mouse goes over to eat the chamomile and you do an electric shock, right, It'll run away, but it'll come back and try to eat the chamomile when reintroduced and you shock it, It'll run away after a series of shocks, the rat or mouse will avoid the chamomile, right? Never again, irrespective if a shock is elicited or not.

00:19:56 Dr. Smith

Now what happens is when you look at the the grandchildren of the mouse, they avoid the chamomile almost from birth. So that is a epigenetic kind of understanding of how this is passed down genetic. So the same thing can be passed down through trauma and stress. That's why it's so important for a pregnant woman to have psychosocial balance in her life. When she's pregnant, because she's carrying a child, Because the stressful environment that that woman is under will impact the child. Now the good thing about those studies is that it can be reversed, but we have to understand how. And part of it is a healthy environment, a safe feeling environment, and also plenty of love. And for black people, what that means is that we have to seek safe environments, we have to promote healthy relationships and we must have love. So a overabundance of love on those children can reverse that epigenetic kind of flow, that cellular level contact from the trauma of the past.

00:21:25 Ama-Robin Lofton

Wow. Should we show us the healing power of love?

00:21:28 Dr. Smith

Right, right. So we mother, I mean So what you see in those mice is the the mice would lick the babies and all of that. But if the mother mouse avoids the baby mouse, so it doesn't give that attention. The trauma is passed down and so that trauma will keep going for generation to generation. I think Marlene is frozen.

00:21:56 Marlene Slaughter

OK, well, she'll come back in. Oh, you're good. You're there. OK, well, what do you think? What do you think? If this is what we're being passed down, what are white people being passed down? You know what?

00:22:09 Dr. Smith

Yeah, well, they're they're being passed down something similar. And part of what they're past passing down is the fear of blackness, right? That blackness is a threat. Right. So just like we have to be racially socialized and love ourselves, they have to be racially socialized. Not to fear blackness or have a negative reaction towards blackness, but everything that we see on TV, on the news, everything is to reinforce this anti blackness. And So what you see is when a situation occurs on television, they don't bring me in to explain it. They bring in a wrapper or they bring in some, you know, somebody with a whole bunch of gold teeth and chains. Not that they don't have an important position to make, but they might have a different analysis of the problem than I would have, right. And so they keep giving us a certain type of image, and this is the only thing acceptable and we fall for it.

00:23:19 Dr. Smith

Hook, line and sinker, right all the time. It's just like when they took over hip hop. So hip hop is a culture, right? Gangster rap is such a minority piece of the culture. But what they did was they said we don't care about that other part, we want to blow up the gangster part, right? And that's the only way you going to get a DAB A/B, A/B who ain't gangsters, you know, And so everybody played. But then what we do is we critique the black men and black women and it more a critique on the black men, right. And saying this is what you do with the black women. But gangsta rap also is a negative thing. So yes, it objectifies black women, but it objectifies black men.

00:24:09 Dr. Smith

But we don't have that lens. So when I show up, they see me as a gangster, as a thug. They don't see me as a professor, right? And what did Malcolm X say? A black man with a PhD at Harvard is called the N Word, right? You have to realize that that is being passed down, right? That there's this fear. And then it's also also also also that if they had done to me what we did to them what they would do to us, right. And we haven't done that. So there's this sense that man, at some point they going to wake up and they going to have a militia.

00:24:56 Dr. Smith

So, So part of these restrictive policies, covenants and things like that is to keep us away. And that's why they have this thing in sociology called a tipping scale. And that's when the black or the white predominantly white community reaches right about 7% black, the most mobile whites move out because they're saying that the community is going to turn and we got to get the value that we have in our house. So it's all that part is economic investment, right? So they have equity. Whiteness is a part of having equity and you don't want to lose your equity.

00:25:40 Ama-Robin Lofton

Right. Wow. But I don't know. I'm still trying to think of, you know, back to about racial battle fatigue. And you say that it's a repetitive stress injury. And what other. I mean, I mentioned, you know, trembling and you mentioned some other some other things of what? What other? Actually, for me, I should say, just knowing that this has a name has already made me feel better. You know, I'm already thinking, oh, OK.

00:26:12 Ama-Robin Lofton

So yeah, because mentally I would say, well, was that something? Oh, well, OK, it was. But I shouldn't let it bother me. But now I know it's OK to let it bother me because. And I know because these things are cumulative. It's not just a small thing.

00:26:25 Dr. Smith

Right. Well, let let me let me put that in context if you can, if you can name your pain, you can develop effective strategies for resistance and resilience. So it is. It's less about it being OK. But racial battle fatigue allows you to say, ah, it's not just me. I thought it was just most black people don't play the race car. They wonder, well why am I not good enough? Why couldn't I have done better? What? You know, they think that whiteness is better, right?

00:27:01 Dr. Smith

And they devalue blackness, right? Because that's what our society trains us to believe. And so when some, when you don't get the marker on that you think you deserve on a test. And he said, man, that's I'm not smart enough to compete something about me and me being black, I shouldn't be here and it might be the subjective nature of the professor, right. So when we look at this cumulatively, having racial biblical team as a way to put your pain into a definition that you can understand, remove the burden and the weight off of your back to say this ain't about me, this is a systemic issue of white supremacy.

00:27:52 Ama-Robin Lofton

I mean, Marlene, I don't know if you've read, you know, Michelle Obama's book Becoming, but I know one thing she was talking about was how she used to be in a room with all these people that were really important and she felt she didn't belong. And, you know, wow, how can

someone like her feel that way? She's so brilliant.

00:28:11 Dr. Smith

We've all felt that. We've all been in that situation so we can relate.

00:28:16 Ama-Robin Lofton

Yeah, Yep.

00:28:20 Dr. Smith

Were you about to say something, Marlene?

00:28:22 Marlene Slaughter

So do you. Well, we.

00:28:27 Ama-Robin Lofton

Can't hear you.

00:28:28 Marlene Slaughter

I was just agreeing. But do you think, is it better? Yep. Do you think there's a way to achieve a work environment that is lacking of racial battle fatigue? You know, I I, I know, I know that's a loaded question but and given white people's history and workspaces, I, I I'm with you right there. But do you think what what would be the steps to ensuring that that that wasn't a side effect of going to work?

00:29:02 Dr. Smith

Well, since you're in Chicago, you probably have passed bus stops, long lines of black people going out of their community to and to and to and to and right. So I think if we practice more the Inguzu, Saba, the principles of Kwanzaa, you know, self determination, cooperative, self cooperative economics and things like that we built businesses for in the black community, I think we can succeed, but we know that every time we get a successful black community then something happens, Tulsa happens, right? Or you have in Philadelphia when they had the move and then the government bombs Philadelphia and that small community of black people. So we always know that it's a threat, but what we need to do is to believe in self, empower our own community and come to the table as equals as opposed to asking for something, you know, asking can I be there and can I have just a biscuit instead of now I'm coming up in here and I'm going to eat the whole entree because I come with economic wealth, power.

00:30:30 Ama-Robin Lofton

Yeah.

00:30:31 Marlene Slaughter

Well, they say, they say the black dollar is very powerful. So I mean I think personally that's just because we're distracted. But why? Why haven't we, you know, began to to you wrote, withhold our dollar, or why are we so stuck on spending it?

00:30:50 Dr. Smith

Well, we, we've been conditioned to do that, right? So sociologists called it an internal colony, right? And so blacks, he said, lived on an internal colony and that the resources are on the

colony and we live on the internal colony where we have to leave to go get the resources work and then we spend over there and then we come back to the our colony. So what happens really is that black people, we don't spend our money in our own community by two black-owned businesses. So we're the only community that you can see. All groups from the outside have businesses in it that we support, but we can't have businesses in their communities, right? And so we're we're fine with that. So think about it this way. If you spend all your money into these external people that don't live in our community, when they take the money back to their community, they support the Girl Scouts, They support the Boy Scouts. They support Little League baseball, they support the gymnastic arena arena.

00:32:11 Dr. Smith

They support ice skating, they support the theater, the performing arts, and they don't support anything within our community. And we don't hold them accountable, just like we don't hold politicians accountable. So what what happens is that's a that's called pimp logic.

00:32:33 Marlene Slaughter

Oh, no. Like.

00:32:35 Dr. Smith

That Williams can break that down, right? That's pimp logic and and we've become the prostitutes.

00:32:45 Marlene Slaughter

So you're saying that this is one way that we contribute to our our own, you know?

00:32:52 Dr. Smith

Well, there's there's a force against us that, you know, so we can't get loans like white people can, you know, so and they've done a number of studies in Chicago that shows that, you know, audit studies where they'll have a black person go in with the same credentials as a white person and don't get the loan and the white person gets it. So we know that the system is set up not to allow us to do it when even when we want to do it, but we have to expose that system, right. And So what happens is scholars and grassroots activists aren't coming together to do that, right. And so we'll have some grassroots activists who will speak to it and then they get silenced or canceled. And then some outside external agent will come in and say, well, this person does such and such, and this person was, you know, from risky with. So they're labeled just like the FBI tried to do Martin Luther King and then we start believing that stuff. Now J Edgar Hoover already said do not allow the rising of a black Messiah. And then he said create any kind of story that will cause the vision and and agitation among him and his wife. Right. So then they create these things.

00:34:20 Dr. Smith

And then we say, well, see, Martin Luther King was a womanizer. And then the freaking FBI is the one who gave the story out there and said it was going to do it. And we so gullible that we'll just believe it. You know, the whole tale with no evidence. And often times that's what happens to anybody who tries to become a leader in the black community. There's someone who's going to attack, right? And we don't do the work to say is this true or does it matter?

00:34:56 Marlene Slaughter

Is it true or it doesn't?

00:34:59 Ama-Robin Lofton

Do they have money?

00:35:00 Marlene Slaughter

What? No, I'm once again just agreeing.

00:35:04 Ama-Robin Lofton

Yeah the but we accept that in other in other communities. I mean even if it's true it would be JFK. We considered him one of the you know, best presidents that we've had and well, he, he had gone up a colorful past and all the, and I mean even right now when people with with Trump people are even you know, fundamentalist very religious people are accepting Trump's background in extracurricular activities if they're true.

00:35:36 Dr. Smith

Right. So whiteness allows you to accept whatever benefits you, right? So all of a sudden all those people who were trying to find, I mean think about how squeaky clean Barack Obama had to be and they couldn't find any dirt on them. And so they had to go to a picture that looked like he was holding a joint when it was a cigarette. But I mean, but the finger still it looked joint like. And so we know nobody smoked a cigarette like that. So he might have had a little bit of experience, right. I think he, I think he admitted to that. But and then they tried to talk about Jeremiah Wright as if Jeremiah Wright didn't have a right to say what he said, right. And so that shows how in order to achieve certain things, we have to distance ourselves from people who are trying to speak truth to power.

- Song Break -

00:36:42 Ama-Robin Lofton

We're about halfway through this uncommon conversation with Professor William Smith. These are heavy things to discuss, and they're about to get a little bit heavier. So take a minute to unwind, breathe, do some stretching, talk to the ancestors, or anything that uplifts your soul. I will see you in a minute. We are back for the final part of this conversation. I hope that you took some time to clear your mind. I just want to remind you of a few points that Professor Smith said because they are worth remembering. "Racism is a violent act against black bodies and black minds. It's real and it has an effect." Don't let anyone tell you to just get over it or that there's something wrong with you because there isn't. Racism isn't a tact, and it should be treated that way. Racial battle fatigue is a repetitive stress injury. This is not just one thing. It happens over and over and over and over again. Comes from different people. It's in different situations. It comes from different directions. It appears differently, but it's the same attack and it has the same effect.

00:38:57 Ama-Robin Lofton

Remember that Professor Smith also said the best way to fight the effects is through having a safe environment, a healthy environment, and an overabundance of love. And this applies to you. This applies to your family, to your friends. Let's create that healthy, safe environment that is overflowing with love for all of us. And yes, I'm not going to forget this because he's going to

keep coming back to this. We have to focus on attacking the real enemy, the real problem. And that is, yes, white supremacy. So you are not the problem. White supremacy is the problem. Let's get back to the show.

00:39:48 Marlene Slaughter

Well, do you, how do you account for the population of black people who don't believe in racial VAT of fatigue or or who who, you know, less similar to the ones who were with the Trump people who stormed the capital yesterday? What, How do you account for those members of our of our community?

00:40:09 Dr. Smith

Well, I I don't. There's there's such an insignificant minority right and and they eventually come back home, right. What they're trying to do is to benefit off of token whiteness agenda right now some might believe in certain principles but others black people just like any other group or opportunists can be opportunists, right. We're not a perfect group. So there's opportunists amongst us, right? And it's just like, think about it this way, 880 last updated data that I saw. 86% of black men voted for Biden. 94% of black women voted for Biden. Yet didn't you see how much controversy there was in the media about black men not voting in the numbers like black women? Like it was a problem?

00:41:15 Dr. Smith

Like, they don't have the right to say, you know, I'm going to be independent, I'm going to vote for somebody else, I'm going to vote for Trump, but for whatever reason. But yet black men were the second highest to to to black women and above every other group. But black men were a problem.

00:41:37 Ama-Robin Lofton

But is that so? I didn't know that, yeah.

00:41:39 Dr. Smith

No other group came close to blacks. No other group came close to blacks. Even Latinos were split and nobody called them out. Both men and women in Latino Latina groups were split. Biden and Trump. Nobody called them out, but they called black men out. That's always an exercise to keep the vision. When you get 86 percent, 85%, eighty, 4% of a vote, that's outstanding. That's great, yeah. But we should also hold all those people accountable too, because just giving your vote as a matter of fact, without a demand is problematic.

00:42:25 Marlene Slaughter

Absolutely.

00:42:26 Dr. Smith

So. But nobody will say that, right? So nobody said, well, black women, why? Why are y'all giving 949596 percent of your vote to to the Democrats and black men? Why are you giving 8485% of your vote to the Democrats and not making demands?

00:42:43 Marlene Slaughter

And not, yeah, that's.

00:42:46 Dr. Smith

Right, that should be problematic.

00:42:47 Marlene Slaughter

Well, that that was a question of fear. Whether black people or, you know, people who voted for Biden in general were going to hold him. He, you know, calmed us down with, you know, when he was battling from the Trump show. But but are we actually going to hold him to these ideals? Are we going to nonstop until we get what we want?

00:43:14 Dr. Smith

And we we we don't have a history of that yet. A typical history of doing that. And Biden, even Biden even told you you ain't black if you ain't voting for me.

00:43:25 Marlene Slaughter

Yeah, Yep.

00:43:27 Dr. Smith

What do you have said that to any other group? So we got to be better than what we've been. So we we, we need to study the 60s and the 70s very indefinitely to understand how things changed, how families got broken up, how the prison industrial complex got developed and why it got developed. So all of these things social. Because remember, part of this stuff I said about stress and a stress response is social demographic. So part of it can explain the South side of Chicago or the West side of Chicago and and poverty. But what we fail to look at is what about so-called successful black people they're facing the same so it becomes social demographic that way too because check. Here's a here's a good way of looking at it. There's a study that shows that black women. I should give you a quiz since I'm a professor, so since let's look at four groups.

00:44:42 Dr. Smith

Black men, black women, white women, white men. Those people with just high school education, who sleeps the less.

00:44:55 Marlene Slaughter

Black.

00:44:55 Marlene Slaughter

Women, you say? Black women.

00:44:59 Dr. Smith

Yes, black women.

00:45:00 Marlene Slaughter

Who's.

00:45:01 Ama-Robin Lofton

Second, white women.

00:45:02 Dr. Smith

Who's third?

00:45:05 Marlene Slaughter

Black men.

00:45:05 Dr. Smith

And who's 4 white?

00:45:07 Marlene Slaughter

Men. White men.

00:45:08 Dr. Smith

OK, that's pretty close to true. Black men are just above black women now. More education, college education and above who sleeps the less?

00:45:24 Marlene Slaughter

Probably people with more education.

00:45:27 Dr. Smith

No, no. Out of those four groups? Those.

00:45:29 Marlene Slaughter

Old.

00:45:30 Marlene Slaughter

People. Black women, Black women, Yeah.

00:45:32 Dr. Smith

And then second.

00:45:35 Marlene Slaughter

Black men.

00:45:36 Dr. Smith

3rd.

00:45:38 Marlene Slaughter

White women.

00:45:39 Dr. Smith

And then white men, right? Black men have shorter sleeping patterns than all other groups then black women. So there's there's a gap. And then white people sleep well. Oh, they sleep.

00:45:57 Marlene Slaughter

Well, all.

00:45:58 Dr. Smith

Right. So they're pretty close together, all right. But when you follow that that trend line, you see crisscrosses and then with more education, more income. White people have better life circumstances and sleep much better. Black people aren't saved from that. And that also is a factor of racial bountiful team, right? So the more education and the more income that you tend to acquire will often move you out of the black community. And once you're in a predominantly white community, in a predominantly white business or occupation, then there's a different type of stress that you're going to be dealing with that causes all kind of other symptoms consistent with racial viral fatigue. So you sleep less, you are more likely to be depressed, your children are more likely to have suicide ideation, and if you they have suicidal ideation, then you're going to be more concerned. Your stress level goes up.

00:47:05 Dr. Smith

So the things that you give up in being in a predominantly black community, even a predominantly black professional community, is far worse than what you gain in with your education and income and in a racist environment that you expose so much more of that. So the black man will be followed by the police more often. Right now, I got to worry about that black woman's going to shop in certain spaces, that she can afford to buy more expensive things and you're going to look more like a criminal.

00:47:44 Marlene Slaughter

Yeah, yeah.

00:47:48 Dr. Smith

You going to typically be the only person who's black bear. Now you got to be on guard. If you're on guard all the time, then your stress is high. And then when your stress is high, because you're on guard during the day, when you go to sleep, you take that to bed with you at night. When you take it to bed with you at night, you dream about those things that could occur the next day, when it occurs the next day, or when you're thinking about it occurring in your dreams the next day. You're just as stressed while you're dreaming, sleeping as you are when you're awake. So when does your body get physiological relief? When does it acquire homeostasis? It doesn't. And that's why I said that black people rarely understand what it really feels like to be human.

00:48:44 Marlene Slaughter

Well, I remember we were talking and when I was saying when I go back, you know, I lived in Belgium when I was planning to go back to the US during the summers that before I would go, I would have, I would have nightmares. And really, Yeah, yeah, I did. And and especially as my son became older, really came into manhood. I was.

00:49:05 Ama-Robin Lofton

Really very.

00:49:06 Marlene Slaughter

I was. I didn't think I was thinking about it that much, but I would have these nightmares and this

stress and this worry and Oh well, I'm about.

00:49:14 Ama-Robin Lofton

To be sure to tell him about this and.

00:49:15 Marlene Slaughter

Teach him about that. And yeah, and there was definitely, you know, insomnia, anxiety, you know, all related to that. And nothing had actually happened yet. You know, it was just thought of it. And I'm wondering if people what, you know, going to to these, you know, to their jobs, you know, they get up in the morning just thinking, wow, facing another day of possibilities. You were mentioning, you know, swinging between risk and fear.

00:49:42 Dr. Smith

Right. So that's, that's been our life condition as black people is that we have to navigate between risk and fear. All right. So if we stand up, if we speak up, if we do these things, we always have to have a kind of a mental conversation about when it is appropriate to respond versus to accept or take or just deal with it, right. And so that's a risk and fear kind of equation. So sometimes we're fearful of the results if I do X and other times we challenge the risk nature of responding or addressing issues and both of those can cause stress. And so, as a part of it, let me give you some of these symptoms of of racial biopathy since we brought that up. So psychologically it could be frustration, defensiveness, apathy, mood changes, shock, anger, disbelief, disappointment, helplessness, hopelessness, fear. So all of those things, one or more, can be psychological stress responses to risk of racial biopathy. Some of the emotional behavioral responses could be stereotype threat, John Henry ISM or Jane Henry ISM, which is that prolonged high effort coping, you know, based on increased kind of commitment to proving somebody wrong.

00:51:28 Dr. Smith

We might focus more on spirituality. We might lose our appetite. We might eat more, right? So part of even there's been studies that show that black women who have suffered with daily racism add 10 to more additional pounds and weight. Now I often say when I, especially when I'm addressing black women, I don't use racial battle fatigue as your excuse for being overweight. You can explain part of it, but the other part is that we have to do something about it. So if you realize it then the adaptive coping strategies that you employ must address your health. And so that means we have to be in shape because what what racism is, what gendered racism is, is like a heavyweight fight. And if you could any of y'all box 1 round, most people would like tire out route, route, route and round. So you have to you have to go 8 rounds dealing with racism and you don't realize it.

00:52:35 Dr. Smith

So we have to be in shape, both mentally, psychologically, physiologically. So some of those things again, you might increase your spirituality, you might step away from spirituality, might increase drug use, drinking. So all of those are the emotional behavioral responses. The physiological responses. It might be headaches. You might grind your teeth at night when you sleep. You might find yourself clenching your jaws a lot. You might have shortness of breath or chest pains, or feel like your heart is about to jump out your chest. You might have insomnia. You might have frequent illnesses.

00:53:18 Dr. Smith

Some people even get hives. Doesn't mean that you have to have all of those things, but one or even more might be symptomatic of racial boundary team.

00:53:35 Marlene Slaughter

I mean, this is this stunning say, you know, think that, well, somebody's experiencing headaches. They go to their doctor and would the doctor even? Yeah, yeah.

00:53:46 Dr. Smith

Right.

00:53:47 Marlene Slaughter

Yeah.

00:53:48 Marlene Slaughter

And some some medicine that's going to cause five other problems. So exactly.

00:53:53 Dr. Smith

Exactly. And most therapists aren't trained to understand racial bio fatigue but. Or racism, right? But fortunately there's a growing movement, a therapist who specialize in racial bio fatigue. And obviously those would be more black or non white people than they would be white. But there is a We even see it on college campuses that some counseling centers now say that they have somebody who specializes in racial bio fatigue.

00:54:26 Marlene Slaughter

Fantastic. That's really good and and this thing would only be for for black.

00:54:32 Dr. Smith

Students, then. No other other racially marginalized groups too. OK, so, so Latinas, Latinos, Asian Americans, Afro, Latinos, African immigrants, African immigrants.

00:54:55 Marlene Slaughter

Do you fear that if? Do you fear that if we have programs like this, or or therapists and psychiatrists who are, who are taught to identify it and treat it and, you know, suggest things? Are you afraid that if we let too many of minority groups who claim to have experienced racial battle fatigue soon be like we experienced the two, we deserve a space?

00:55:20 Marlene Slaughter

In there when.

00:55:22 Marlene Slaughter

Would you give them a space in there or you know, because?

00:55:26 Dr. Smith

I'm pro mental health.

00:55:27 Marlene Slaughter

Yeah.

00:55:28 Dr. Smith

Yeah. So everybody deserves to be healthy, right? And if there is a system in place that doesn't allow you to have optimum health, and I'm talking about balance, stress knocks you off balance. OK, so there's there's a there is a difference between stress and racial battle fatigue, because there could be some good stress, right? You're a lawyer. The bar exam was stressful, I'm sure, but that stress caused you to prepare for the exam, right? And you got motivated to do the best that you could do. So all stress isn't bad stress, and it could, but it could have be a psychological threat. But racial bottle fatigue is different than that because as I said, it was a repetitive stress injury. It happens over and over and over again, and that can be something that any racially marginalized group can have.

00:56:40 Dr. Smith

Now the the unfortunate thing is it seems as though blacks at every subgroup level report the highest number of racist events and also poor mental health. OK, so I don't care how you decipher it. If you are gay a black man, if you are lesbian black woman, if you are transgender black man, you going to face more? Are you going to report more racism than every other group? And it's not even a close second. Not even.

00:57:22 Marlene Slaughter

A close second. Well, what about this? Would you say that it could she should be defined, defined disability?

00:57:31 Dr. Smith

You know, because the disability would say that there's something wrong with us, right? Instead of white supremacy. So it's true. What happens is, what happens is, is that it would be equal to saying, you know, why do you, why do black people have more lung cancer than everybody else? Y'all. Just don't. Just don't. Just don't. Just you're doing something wrong. Instead of having that big industrial racism where you have factories and smoke all around us, right, High bonus wires in our communities that causes the symptoms that we have, that causes the health problems that we have.

00:58:19 Dr. Smith

You need to remove that. You need to clear the air, clean the air up, right. Then I will be able to. We will have less lung cancer, right. So it's I'm not, you know, I'm a result of a toxic environment.

00:58:34 Marlene Slaughter

I can see.

00:58:35 Dr. Smith

OK, and So what happens is people. And if you can, look at most researches, because most most academics. Many, I should say many academics are disingenuous and untruthful, and just like many politicians, they're out for personal gain. They'll say that, for instance, they'll look at black men as pathological, that you're born problematic, right. And we'll look at, say, women in general and say something happened to them environmentally, right. So we'll, we'll treat it as an environmental problem, right, that caused them to become what they are or be in a condition that they are black men. You were born problematic almost like genetically instead of something happened to you like the conversation we had earlier. So if you just watch TV, watch the media

watch some of these so-called scholars talk about it when they even black men when they talk about I mean gangster, gangster rap is an example of that. There was a special issue in a journal that talked about gangsta rap and the problems that it had. Black women's scholars, black men's scholars, both Co authoring together, all of them came up to similar conclusions.

01:00:04 Dr. Smith

It's objectifying women, it's misogynistic, it's all these different things, right? Not even the black men ever said what it is to black men about black men, because in their own heads they've been tricked. Just like Carter G Watson said, if you educate a black person at Harvard and bring him to the black community to teach, he can be just as problematic as a white person in a black school. So I don't, I don't trust all black men who are scholars. Read yourself like you just 'cause you black don't mean that you understand blackness.

01:00:54 Marlene Slaughter

Right. But I'm just going to ask you something. Oh, OK. On the flip side though, OK, when things that we consider positive happening, like the election of a president of Obama or we see, you know, what's a policeman who has, you know, killed a black person, being indicted or being even put in jail. Is that something that helps relieve, you know, of battle fatigue, something that pulls us together or?

01:01:22 Dr. Smith

What? Well, it offers some psychic relief, but it's short lived because does it really impact us on a day-to-day basis other than the psychic relief that it offers? Right. So we can all feel really good that a black woman is vice president and never happened, and she's only one sickness away from being president.

01:01:49 Marlene Slaughter

Yeah.

01:01:53 Dr. Smith

You know, and we would all say, well, that's so great, but how will it really impact the lives of black people? Just being in that office doesn't necessarily mean that you will do something for black people.

01:02:12 Ama-Robin Lofton

No, but I think, I think.

01:02:13 Marlene Slaughter

Particularly the older generation, I love seeing people, black people in these in positions. There's a real pride there, and I it was.

01:02:22 Dr. Smith

Definitely a pride, but that's all psychic, right? So emotionally we feel great to see that finally we've done it. But if the person doesn't represent the group's self-interest and will do some for the group self-interest, we always as black people give third and 4th and 5th and 6th chances.

01:02:40 Marlene Slaughter

Yeah.

01:02:41 Dr. Smith

We even said that about what's the black Supreme Court Justice Clarence?

01:02:48 Marlene Slaughter

Thomas.

01:02:49 Dr. Smith

Clarence Thomas, once he get in there, he going to show his blackness, right? We he he going to show up different. He would y'all got to remember he was a student Black Panther when he was in college, right? So, so that's going to come out. He just got there because he knew what the system was like and that's why he was acting conservative. Then he became the the most conservative of the conservatives. Yeah, just because it's that saying that we have in the community all skin folk and kinfolk.

01:03:22 Marlene Slaughter

Yeah.

01:03:23 Dr. Smith

That's true. And so that's what we have to see. Your look here. If I wanted to hire you as a lawyer, I'm going to look at your resume, right? If somebody's going on hire me as a professor, they're going to look at my curriculum detail, right? And they're going to say, OK, this justifies why we should bring you into the position for a professor. We don't look at people's resumes in the black community. We just look at them. And if you black, that's good enough. We don't ask no questions.

01:04:02 Dr. Smith

And you wouldn't do that in any other way. You wouldn't just somebody show up and you just give them your money because they look like a banker. You wouldn't do that. But we have to be much better. We have to be stingy. And we got to say, you got to come, you got to give us some promises and we're going to hold you accountable. And if you don't come through, we're going to vote your butt out. Yeah.

01:04:29 Marlene Slaughter

I just looked up to looking that deeply at all, though.

01:04:33 Dr. Smith

You know, because we we still on this. You know, because of oppression and because we've been oppressed and because we don't see these things. It's a psychic relief. Just having a black face in on places that were there haven't been one and that just ain't enough.

01:04:52 Marlene Slaughter

Right. We're hearing that.

01:04:53 Dr. Smith

We need help.

01:04:55 Marlene Slaughter

So the pool that the cop was was indicted. It's like, oh, OK, you know, you can confiscate.

01:05:01 Dr. Smith

That was one of thousands. Most police do not get arrested for killing black people. And even with Breonna Taylor's killers, they're still out, right? No arrests have been made, right? If there was arrest, he was let go on bail on a little bit of bail money. And think about it this way. When you kill a black person, automatically there's money raised to support your release. Just like Dylan Roof kill all the black people in the church and the police take them to McDonald's.

01:05:44 Marlene Slaughter

Yeah, yeah.

01:05:46 Dr. Smith

Or, or if it would have been demonstrators around Breonna Taylor and George Floyd who stormed the Capitol to say we want to make sure that Biden gets elected, they all would have been gunned down.

01:06:03 Marlene Slaughter

Yeah.

01:06:04 Dr. Smith

So that was an example of white privilege, because white privilege is synonymous with white power. So every black person, when they saw that, they said if to themselves or to somebody else. They said if that would have been a black person, the outcome wouldn't have been like that. There's no way a black person can break the windows in, the Capitol, can go in and get the podium of the Speaker of the House, sit in the chambers, take selfies and come out alive. No.

01:06:36 Marlene Slaughter

It's it's almost laughable be.

01:06:37 Marlene Slaughter

Escorted out they were.

01:06:39 Dr. Smith

Right. Be escorted out. Come and be helped in some cases. So that also feeds into our racial bowel fatigue because we understand the irony of life. We have different lived experiences. So black people will say, no, there's more racism and we experience it. And then white people will say we're in a post racial society, but we know the realities. Just like I said, higher infant mortality, higher maternal mortality, all these things impacted because of racism that happened in the black community. Why are we at the largest percent of all of these things that lead to mortality and morbidity statistics? Disproportionately.

01:07:33 Dr. Smith

Why do we find black people there if it's not something systemically wrong? Anything that black people are a victim of racism and that's can answer the majority of our problems.

01:07:51 Marlene Slaughter

OK. So we've talked about, we've heard about some maladaptive strategies that we that we take on about you know increased alcohol or something like that. But and I can, it's understandable. But what are some of the, I mean you mentioned about love and I mean love is Gray. What can we do? What are some of the ways we cannot be left with? There's no hope. But we have to get rid of white supremacy because that's not going to waste it you.

01:08:15 Dr. Smith

Think.

01:08:16 Marlene Slaughter

No. What can we do on a daily basis? The.

01:08:19 Dr. Smith

Way the way I look at this is we have to realize that racism again, is a violent act. And if it's a violent act, then it produces trauma. So I know we might not want to say that we've had problematic conditions. So, but if we accept the fact that racism is a violent act, that the body codes racism as violence. So in response to that and it's trauma that we need to have trauma informed care that we use for racial bio fatigue, what does that mean? I have 4 Rs for trauma informed care for racial biopathy. First we have to realize that systemic and individual racism is real. We have to realize that it also is real that racial biopathy exists. And then we have to seek resilient adaptive coping strategies. So that's just the first part realizing.

01:09:26 Dr. Smith

The second R is recognizing. So we have to then recognize the signs and symptoms of racial bout of fatigue in oneself, in your family and in your group members. All right, Once we can identify that by recognizing it, then we could again we can use resilient coping strategies to try to deal with that and that gets to the next R respond. We have to respond by fully committing to strength based, asset based coping strategies and that are those those are those things that are healthy racial identity development things. Howard Stevens is Stevenson is a great psychologist and part of his racial socialization, racial identity coping strategies is several things. One is protective racial socialization, proactive racial socialization, and adaptive racial socialization. Now the proactive is that kind of spiritual or religious coping. The other part of proactive is the cultural pride reinforcement, because whiteness and white supremacy tries to attack the cultural pride of black people. To think that we don't have anything that offer the extended family care has always been a part of it and that's another aspect. All right.

01:11:02 Dr. Smith

So the protective racial socialization, the proactive racial socialization and the adaptive racial socialization are the things that Howard Stevens offers us and that gets into part of that resistance. So realize, recognize, respond and resist. We have to resist individual, institutional, and systemic efforts at racial re traumatization. Right, re.

01:11:33 Marlene Slaughter

Traumatization.

01:11:34 Dr. Smith

OK, right. So if we do those four things, then we can have hope. Chester Pierce, Doctor Pierce

said that when hope is compromised, stress goes up. Yeah, right. So that gives us hope. Now to address Marlene's question about become an effective ally. What they have to do is what I call the four as they have to become aware because most of them are blind to the realities of systemic racism. Then the next thing they have to do is accept or have acceptance. Part of the acceptance is an understanding of systemic racism and white supremacy. Next A is assurance.

01:12:27 Dr. Smith

They have to offer assurance which is a commitment to social justice, to anti racism. And then the last A is action. All right, Action is a verb. So a verb means movement. You have to do something and that action is your resume. So we have proof that you've done something too many white folks, once they become aware or accept, they want to jump to action. But part of The thing is in the commitment is to learn. Don't just try to come to the front of the line just because you oh, I see now that white privilege and white supremacy is real and now you want to be the head of the movement.

01:13:15 Marlene Slaughter

Yeah, they've.

01:13:16 Dr. Smith

Been doing this over 400 years.

01:13:19 Marlene Slaughter

Well, similarly, similarly, I feel like I encounter a lot of white people when I bring up these issues and help to and or try to inform my my colleagues and my friends, I get hit with emotion. You know, they're so overcome by the fact that you know they they can't even fathom what we've been through that I then need to turn around and coddle them.

01:13:41 Marlene Slaughter

Because it's hurting their.

01:13:43 Marlene Slaughter

Feelings, you know, How do I, how do I work through that? And instead, you know, get over that hump and tell them, you know, straighten up. It's not. It's a big deal, but you can't do it while you're crying.

01:13:56 Dr. Smith

Well, you know, I forget the what that technique is. It don't happen really in the black community, but it's when you let the baby just cry and then they, they sued themselves, right? You just let them cry, sue themselves, don't comfort them because those are called white tears, right. So it, it distracts you from really the issue at hand in terms of focus or attention on them and solving their emotions, right. So now you're spending less time about the issue of systemic racism and you're focusing on white tears, right? If you want to cry, yeah, I understand you. You see in the reality, you know that pain is real. I understand it, but I ain't got time to be giving you Kleenex, right? I have to deal with this on an everyday basis and that's also an indication of their awareness of what many of us do not aware. And that is how far from being fully human we are still today.

01:15:02 Dr. Smith

Because they realize the balance in their life, right? White women are the most protected fruit in the world, right? And so they can float on and and they can do certain things and have a lot of privilege. And the protection of white womanhood has always been a part of patriarchy, right? So we understand that. And so for them to have a reality of that everything is pretty cool and I can just, I can work hard, I can do these things, but I know that it's my skin color and my whiteness is not going to be held against me when they realize that that isn't true. For those people who come aware, realize how a black woman, no matter how hard she works, have to go through all these hurls that becomes painful for them. You don't see it as pain because that's all you know. Well, that's normal. And that's the unfortunate part because you've never been somewhere where you haven't had to deal with gendered racism.

01:16:16 Dr. Smith

And that's why racial by fatigue is not post Traumatic Stress Disorder. It's a repetitive stress disorder or injury. It's.

01:16:30 Marlene Slaughter

I'm thinking about, you know you. You're saying we can't go anywhere without feeling it. I'm. I'm my house and I feel it. You know, I'm the most comfortable spot. You know, that's supposed to be the most comfortable spot. But I'm still feeling like I should keep an eye on my neighbors.

01:16:47 Dr. Smith

Yes, yes. You don't know what safety fully feels like and sometimes the unfortunate thing is we have to have, you have to get more coupled in our in the community. So we have to have a significant other because there's usually one who takes the role that I'm going to make sure that this whole house is protected and one is going to say, well, I'm going to spend more time making sure that we comfortable or they balance it off some. And it's just like if you look there was ACDC report, this is how uninformed we are about black folks. And and again really on black men, black men are the most by the CDC and the CDC is not our friends CDC report said that black men spending more time with their children than any other group of men even when they're unmarried. Yes, the CDC has a report on the involvement of black fathers, white fathers, Mexican fathers, Asian fathers, spending time telling bedtime stories, walking kids to school, eating dinner or eating breakfast or whatever. And we black men spend more time, but see, because we block, because our reality. So if your father didn't do that, don't mean that all black fathers didn't do that. But what we do is we say, oh, that ain't my experience, but your experience ain't the whole black community's experience or your neighborhood experience. Maybe there's no black fathers in your neighborhood, but that don't mean the whole black community is like that, right?

01:18:40 Dr. Smith

So we ignore those things so we don't have hope. So stress is high. If I have a black man, a black man, they don't offer me nothing, right? But then when we see these studies and we say, wow, he's much more involved than any other group, married or unmarried to the mother, right? Or that he might be when we, the children, feel more safe, right? So the stress from racial microaggressions are removed when you have a black male presence in the house and when you have that in the house. And he and the mother, the wife, are loving each other and have a loving situation, she's less stressed, right? Then she offers stress relief to him as well, right. But we've been taught that we don't need each other.

01:19:41 Marlene Slaughter

Yeah, yeah. But we've also been taught that, you know, black men are just shirking their responsibilities. And that seems like the data is just not even proving that. I mean it does happen, but I mean but overall the data is not.

01:19:54 Dr. Smith

Yeah. So you you have some of that obviously, but when you look at a a larger level and we examine the data, it doesn't appear to be true in certain communities, in certain micro neighborhoods we can find that that is true, but we also find those other competing elements out there. And then what we also see is that some black women will report, though no black man lives here. Because they're getting assistance when he actually comes, right. So. So in order to keep the assistance, I have to say that you don't live here and we all see that, right? But the data then says that it's something else. So we we just got to do our own research and the issues and problems that we do have that are legitimate, we need to address then the good things about us that we know are there. We need to support that. We have to understand the full strength of black women, right.

01:21:02 Dr. Smith

And that if anything, because she's the most unmaritable, right, she's the most overweight. So all these other things we can say, but we can explain a large part of that away because of systemic racism. So we should be saying, I have black women, I don't need one of them. Are you freaking kidding me? That's the queen of the world. That's the mother of civilization. And what we don't understand is the strength, the full strength that a black woman brings to society. That's why there's a part in one of the religious texts that say that you do not put a basket over candles, right? You allow the illumination to light up the world. And what we're doing is unconsciously we're putting baskets over black women, black children and black men and not allowing them to illuminate the world because we believe this false data.

01:22:16 Marlene Slaughter

Well, I mean when we, when we talk about entertainment as well, you know, I know that there are a lot of black stories that are coming out and you know for a long time there was only a couple different.

01:22:28 Marlene Slaughter

Type of black.

01:22:28 Marlene Slaughter

Stories coming out, but even now that.

01:22:31 Marlene Slaughter

Are produced, are produced.

01:22:32 Marlene Slaughter

Mainly by white people, yeah. There's Tyler Perry Studios and Oprah Winfrey. Oprah Winfrey has her own set of studios as well, but even those shows that are produced on those networks are the ones that perpetuate stereotypes and negative images in in all respects against every single minority of of black inside of black people.

01:22:56 Dr. Smith

That's all they allow, yeah, that's all they're allowed to do.

01:22:59 Marlene Slaughter

That's all they allow.

01:23:00 Dr. Smith

Yeah. And so you can make money off of that, right? So again, remember I said that every group has people who are opportunistic and can become very wealthy and just think about the stories that are allowed to get out there and think about their connection to wealth. Most of the stories that are out there that has made people rich have been highly stereotypical. Dysfunctional stories about black people, color purple, some of Tyler Perry's movies, I mean, all these different things. Now one can say, well, does not some of that exist? I know that's a double negative. I would say yes. All right. But is that the whole story?

01:23:53 Dr. Smith

Do we get the full picture? We tend to get the full picture of experiences of white people. So when we see something that's negative, it's offset by the curve because it's at a tail. So the median is some typically good experiences. However, we get the negative end of the tale for black people, we rarely get the positive stuff. So even when it's all positive, it's always a pathological, stereotypical thing. The black woman got to be in the ghetto. No husband, 4 kids, three babies daddies, black men got to be coming out of jail, ex-con. If you darker, you're closer to criminality. If you're lighter, you're closer to whiteness and and smarter.

01:24:42 Dr. Smith

If you look at New Jack City, when that movie came out, I have. I had my students evaluated. They couldn't understand it. I said look at Nino Brown. Nino Brown was the darkest in New Jack City. And then Christopher Williams was the lightest and he was the banker. Right now. Nito Brown every If you look at the color shades of the phenotypes of those people, the closer to criminality and violence that they got, the darker they got. And we see the same thing. The darker you are in the black community, the more hypertension you tend to have.

01:25:29 Dr. Smith

So there's a phenotypic response, and that's part of the constitutional stress that I talked about.

01:25:36 Marlene Slaughter

OK, well, this has been really interesting. There's so much here, you know, to discuss, don't you think, Marlene? I mean, I love going to the politics as well, but there's I.

01:25:53 Marlene Slaughter

Mean thank thank you for sharing your scholar with us because there are levels of levels of things we could talk about. I mean you you just have this wealth of knowledge and I really appreciate you letting us tap into that. Would you, would you say that, like, I mean, I'm just putting words in your mouth, but would you say that life has been your biggest teacher or, you know, what were your biggest learning opportunities, you know, to to help complete your education or to to ground your education in things?

01:26:23 Dr. Smith

Yeah, well, I mean, definitely life. And then when I realized that I was being miseducated as Carter G Woodson would say that what we don't look at is data. Anytime somebody offers you something, you shouldn't say, OK, where's the data to support your thesis, right. If somebody says something about black women, show me data. I don't believe it. Until you show me some data, I don't care about your opinion.

01:26:55 Marlene Slaughter

Right.

01:26:56 Dr. Smith

So when I see data, then I can analyze data, whether it's qualitative or quantitative. So what I don't do now that I used to do is just take things wholesale. And if you look at some of my early work, I fell in line with the Majoritarians sentiment. And I realized that, you know, I'm not speaking the full truth here, right, that I have blind spots. So my struggle has always been to remove blind spots and my theories and my way to analyze data. And so that's always if I find a way to be better, sharper, more magnifying, more analytical, that's what I will do. So yes, life has been my lesson and many people can get very rich off of publishing pathologies about black people, right? If I was a conservative and I want to just, I can write that all well, you know about the black family and say all kind of negative things and become rich. But what I want to do is attack white supremacy, mesopotamize racism and have people have a healthy condition.

01:28:20 Marlene Slaughter

It seems to me like you have white supremacy is kind of where where it's at, and it's easy to get distracted.

01:28:25 Dr. Smith

But that's why you don't see people talk about it. They don't name names. You never see that. You never see a college professor name names. You'll talk about something like, oh, it's the structure. Well, who's in the structure, right? Oh, no. No, we ain't. We can't go there, right? That's why it's always easy to attack the oppressed group than to attack the oppressor.

01:28:55 Marlene Slaughter

Yeah, it always has been.

01:28:57 Dr. Smith

Yeah.

01:28:59 Marlene Slaughter

Well, you know, we do hope that, you know, you'll come back on, you know, for another espresso. I've actually finished mine now, but I hope that we can be for another espresso one day, you know?

01:29:09 Dr. Smith

I enjoyed myself and I will definitely call, I come.

01:29:14 Marlene Slaughter

Thank you so much Professor Smith. It's been so it's learned so much. Andy, I appreciate your

Yeah, you've been great and you too, Marlene, always always happy to see you too.

01:29:24 Dr. Smith

Yeah, yeah. It's good to see you.

01:29:26 Marlene Slaughter

Happy New Year, you both.

01:29:28 Dr. Smith

Take care and be safe.

01:29:30 Marlene Slaughter

Sure, will you too.

01:29:35 Hans Hyppolite

Thank you for listening to this episode of Espresso Talk today. I hope you enjoyed this conversation with Doctor Smith, so let's have some after coffee talks. This was definitely a helpful and interesting conversation in which Robin and Marlene learned about the serious health effects of systemic racism. They also discussed their personal experiences with racism and some of the ways that it affects them. Defining and describing the physical, mental, and emotional effects of racial battle fatigue is an important step in coping with this condition. Another important part of the conversation was identifying unhealthy coping mechanisms such as taking drugs or overeating, which can worsen the problem. Doctor Smith also presented healthy coping strategies such as therapy, learning your history, and talking with friends to deal with systemic racism. Overall, the important point made by Doctor Smith is that people of color do experience health consequences from the constant macro and microaggressions of systemic racism, but this has not been recognized by the medical community. The constant high levels of racism into stress can lead to depression, hypertension, diabetes, anxiety, insomnia, and many other disorders. Promoting healthy coping mechanisms is essential for the mental, physical, and emotional health of individuals in communities.

01:31:11 Hans Hyppolite

Now we have some questions for our audience. Do you think that racial battle fatigue is a real condition? If so, have you experienced it? What do you think are healthy ways to cope with distress disorders caused by systemic racism?

01:31:31 Ama-Robin Lofton

I saw this on a hunt. Those are great questions, and to my audience, I hope that you will answer them. It's not just for me, but answering them is a form of coping. It's a coping strategy and it does help. It's one step towards protecting and promoting your fight against racial battle fatigue and its effects on your mind, body and spirit. I'll tell you where to send your answers in just a minute. In fact, I'll just tell you now is that team at espressotalktoday.com. Don't bother to write that down. It's on the website and I'm going to repeat it anyway. Speaking of repeat, let me repeat Professor William Smith for a minute.

01:32:14 Ama-Robin Lofton

We are not the problem. The problem is white supremacy. The problem is the white supremacist patriarchal system that's attacking black minds, bodies and hearts. That is what is causing the

problem. But as Professor Smith also said, we get distracted and 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, white supremacy. We're having a normal. We black people are having a normal response to these repetitive, repetitive stress injuries to these attacks on our bodies and minds. We are normal. White supremacy and acting black anti black racism are not. It's not you, it's them.

01:33:11 Ama-Robin Lofton

I hope you got this because it is true. And so remember my fellow warriors noses deep in your soul. You are powerful beyond measure. Together we are invincible and the problem, the real scourge on society globally is white supremacy. You are not the problem. Asante sana to Professor William Smith for his amazing research and work and his continuing to work and to speak and to teach about racial battle fatigue. And I'm so glad that he joined us on today's show. We are truly blessed. Asante, Sana to you, my dear audience. Being in the building today, this is not easy stuff to talk about.

01:34:05 Ama-Robin Lofton

But you showed up, you showed courage and you showed character. Shout out to you. If you want to keep discussing or reading about these issues, then I please would encourage you to subscribe to my weekly black empowerment newsletter, The Normal Beat. We discuss lots of different issues there. You can get your dose of black empowerment every single week. Never a dull moment. Lots of powerful, uplifting and liberating moments, though. And you can subscribe at the Espresso Talk Today website at espressotalktoday.com or on Instagram at Alma Robin L. That's Alma AMA_Robin ROBIN_the Letter L Join us too on Instagram to discuss these issues, share your thoughts and find an uplifting and safe and healthy space where you are valued and heard. Find us again on Instagram at amma Robin L. I'm Amma Robin for espresso.

01:35:19 Ama-Robin Lofton

Talk today. And remember now more than ever, strength, soul and reparations Ashe community.