



**Presentation Title:** Understanding Racial Stress and Trauma

**Presentation Time:** 2:30 PM - 4:00 PM US Eastern Time

**Content Level:** Beginning/Introductory

**Abstract:** Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) describes the constellation of symptoms that may occur after experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event. Anyone exposed to traumatic event is at risk to develop PTSD, and this typically includes survivors of violent acts or disasters, emergency responders, abuse victims, and combat veterans. However, many other events can be traumatic as well, particularly to people of color, including police harassment, workplace discrimination, community violence, distressing medical experiences, and incarceration. Immigrants and refugees may suffer racial trauma from experiencing or witnessing torture, ethnic cleansing and persecution, destruction of cultural practices, living in a war zone, immigration difficulties, or deportation. This presentation will provide an overview of the cultural factors relevant for stigmatized ethnic groups, with an emphasis on understanding and assessing PTSD caused by experiences of racism, or *racial trauma*. The various facets of racial trauma will be described, including the experience of historical, cultural, and individual trauma, and how these may or may not fit into a traditional mental health framework. The presentation will include case examples and Q&A.

**Learning Objectives:**

At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

- Explain the clinical implications of racial experiences leading to trauma symptomology
- Communicate how historical, cultural, and individual trauma may or may not fit into a DSM-5 framework
- Identify tools for assessing stress and trauma symptoms from experiences of discrimination
- Discuss how interventions that address traumatic experiences with racism may be applied in trauma treatment sessions

**Presenter**

**Monnica T. Williams, PhD**

Dr. Monnica T. Williams is a board-certified licensed clinical psychologist who was named one of the top 25 thought leaders in PTSD. Her work has been featured in several major media outlets, including NPR, Huffington Post, CNN, and the New York Times. Dr. Williams has published over 100 book chapters and peer-reviewed articles focused on trauma and other anxiety-related disorders and cultural differences. She is an associate editor of the Behavior Therapist and New Ideas in Psychology, and serves on the editorial board of several additional scientific journals. A past president of the Delaware Valley Association of Black Psychologists, Dr. Williams is currently an Associate Professor at the University of Ottawa in the School of Psychology, where she is the Canada Research Chair for Mental Health Disparities. She is also Clinical Director of the Behavioral Wellness Clinic in Connecticut, where she provides supervision and training to clinicians for empirically-supported treatments.

**Continuing Education**

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