

**Topic:** The effects of racism on the mental health of African American teens in America.

**Specific purpose:** To inform the class about the psychological effect of racism on young minds.

**Thesis:** Racism can affect individuals through a range of pathways. Racism is associated with several mental health issues faced by many African American teens in modern day America. It is important to talk about these issues, as well as strategies that can cope with these stressors. Racism can be linked to problems with anxiety, depression, trauma, self-doubt and identity issues, behavioral and developmental problems in young teens of color.

## **Introduction**

Racism, or discrimination based on race or ethnicity, is a key contributing factor in the onset of disease. Black teens experience several forms of racial discrimination every day, which leads to increased short-term depressive symptoms. Racism causes trauma and trauma paints a direct line to mental illnesses, which need to be taken seriously. It is also responsible for increasing disparities in physical and mental health among Black, Indigenous, and people of color. Black people are 10 percent more likely to report serious psychological distress than non-Hispanic whites, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health. People who experience racial microaggressions meaning insults, invalidations, and interpersonal slights subtle and often unintentional are more likely to show symptoms of anxiety and depression, according to a 2014 Journal of Counseling and Developmental study. Research demonstrates that racism can adversely affect mental health in direct and indirect ways. It can inflict psychological trauma, create unfavorable socioeconomic conditions that increase

the risk of psychiatric disorders by as much as threefold, and lead to negative feelings of self-worth and wellbeing.

Firstly, Black teens experience several forms of racial discrimination every day, which leads to increased short-term depressive symptoms. Black teens who are exposed to racism have a higher risk of depression and obesity. Suicide attempts among black adolescents have risen, while attempts by all other racial groups have dropped. Racism is the discrimination of people of a different race, according to many dictionary definitions. Ironically, scientists believe homo sapiens are the same race with nuances in people's evolution. In effect racism is discrimination of people of different slight variations which are often common to the country they originated from. Racism is prevalent in all countries at some time by some people. Today it is a crime in most countries by law. It is illegal in many countries to write discriminatory words which are racist. It is a crime in most countries to behave discriminately in fields of education and employment.

Secondly, When the mind senses a potentially harmful situation, it prepares the body by increasing heart rate, breathing and blood pressure. This response helped earlier humans outrun or fight predators and enemies. Now a growing body of evidence demonstrates that racial discrimination can trigger this stress response. Racial minorities may experience more health problems as a result. One review of 121 studies published in 2013 found that youth between the ages of 12 and 18 who reported experiencing discrimination were significantly more likely to experience mental health problems such as depression and anxiety compared to those who did not. Another review of 66 studies found that Black adults who perceived they were subjected to racism were more likely to experience mental health problems and more likely to report a lower

quality of life. A third review breaks down types of racism in our society and explains the health implications of each.

Thirdly, Fortunately, there ways to combat the negative effects of race-related stress and produce positive outcomes. Build a support network. You are not the only person dealing with race-related stress and connecting with other people with similar experiences and feelings can help you successfully navigate racism. Having a positive cultural identity and strong sense of self is particularly helpful in combating race-related stress, stereotype threat, and the imposter phenomenon. If a student, take classes that focus on the historical experiences and contributions of your cultural group and join campus organizations that celebrate your cultural norms and ideals. Try not to get discouraged. Change does not happen overnight, and movements are a long process.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, this speech was to give you knowledge on the psychological effect of racism on young minds. Discrimination has always been an American battleground, but teens today are growing up in a world where it seeps into the crevices of everyday life in new and sinister ways. Racism is a topic that has been going on for ages and should be taken more seriously. It can cause many issues for African American teens that can alter the way they perceive the world. Stress plays a crucial role in how racism affects both physical and mental health. As stated, before Black teens experience several forms of racial discrimination every day, which leads to increased short-term depressive symptoms. There are many places they can seek help from. It starts by them opening and wanting to get help. It is only right to establish a manageable system to counter the effectiveness of social, cultural, systematic, and institutionalized racism.