



Prevention Connection: Building a Healthy Community

Inside: Race Perspective, Thoughts on Finding Meaning, Don't Ignore the Mess, Improve Testosterone

Race: One Person's Perspective by Michael Sanford, VPI

It's been over a year since the death of George Floyd, a death that put racism and equality on the forefront of America's mind. As a nation, we have made some attempts to address these concerns. Yet after a year, the question still remains: how do we help our communities that have been devastated by racism? According to Merriam-Webster, one definition of racism is "[the] unfair treatment of people of a particular race in a society especially to the benefit of people of another race" [1]. This type of racism comes in the form of the Klan, or blatantly avoiding sitting next to someone based on the color of their skin, or making derogatory comments. Although this type of racism still exists, it's not as prevalent as systemic or institutional racism. Institutional racism is defined as "the systemic oppression of a racial group to the social, economic, and political advantage of another" [1].

Institutional racism is a form of racism that is embedded in society. It usually comes in the form of laws and regulations that prevents people of color from thriving. It is more covert than interpersonal forms of racism. Systemic racism affects areas such as employment, housing, education, criminal justice, health care, political influence, etc. According to Glenn Harris, president of Race Forward and publisher of Colorlines, systemic racism that impacts African Americans that has a direct correlation with their overall wealth [2] as well as their physical and mental wellness. *(Continued on page 2)*

Special points of interest:

For more information on race go to the following:

<https://www.apa.org/topics/racism-bias-discrimination>

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthequity/racism-disparities/index.html>

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In 2016, the net worth of a typical white family was \$171,000, nearly 10 times more than a black family (Federal Reserve's 2016 Survey of Consumer Finances) [3]. Likewise, African Americans make up approximately 13% of the US population, yet make up nearly 50% of those who are homeless (Department of Housing and Urban Development) [4]. It doesn't stop there... within the criminal justice system, approximately 475,900 blacks are in federal and state prisons compared to 436,500 whites (Bureau of Justice Statistics) [5]. African Americans are less likely to have adequate health insurance coverage, twice that as white Americans (US Bureau of Labor Statistics) [6]. I could go on.

A little over a hundred years ago, the Tulsa Race Massacre occurred. It was "one of the worst episodes of racial violence in US History" [7]. Not only approximately 300 residents died, but one of the nation's most thriving African American communities (Greenwood) at the time was destroyed. The destruction left approximately 8,000-10,000 African American homeless and 6,000 detained in internment camps [8]. Some say it never came back to the way it was prior to the destruction. Several successful businesses were never rebuilt. The effects of the massacre erased possibilities and prosperity due to the economy being ruined and the trauma that was dealt.

Another thriving African American community was torn down in the late 1950's, the Rondo neighborhood in St. Paul. During the 1920's and '30's, this area was inhabited mostly by African Americans and was considered a vibrant and booming community. The Federal Aid Highway Act signed in 1956 allowed cities to develop highway systems to meet the demands of increased automobile usage, thus, Hwy 94 was developed. With the construction of the new highway, 600-700 African American families lost their homes to which the city paid fractions of what they were valued at, and 300 businesses were forced to shut down causing an economic collapse to those in the area [9]. This could have been avoided and impacted far less residents had developers used a route further north [9]. If residents of the Rondo neighborhood refused to sell their home to the city, they were met with police with sledgehammers [9]. Obviously, this was not done in the same manner as what was done in Tulsa, but nonetheless the lasting effects were damaging.

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As a White American, I've had the luxuries afforded to me, unlike some of those who have been impacted by institutional racism. I've never had a mob or the government come and tear down my house. It would be ignorant of me to say I understand and empathize with those in the African American community because I am White, not Black. But I do acknowledge the atrocities of this country on our own citizens, and I know that giving reparations in the form of a dollar amount can't fix the hurt these atrocities caused as no amount of money can replace possibilities and prosperity that have been taken away from generations. What is needed is to give those who have been oppressed the hope that they will have the same opportunities I have. That not only African Americans, but Native Americans, Asian Americans, Latino Americans... all Americans have the same rights as those afforded to people like me. In addition to ensuring these communities don't become victims of oppression, we need to give them the hope that they can be successful and prosperous. "Fear never builds the future, hope does." – President Joe Biden

Sources:

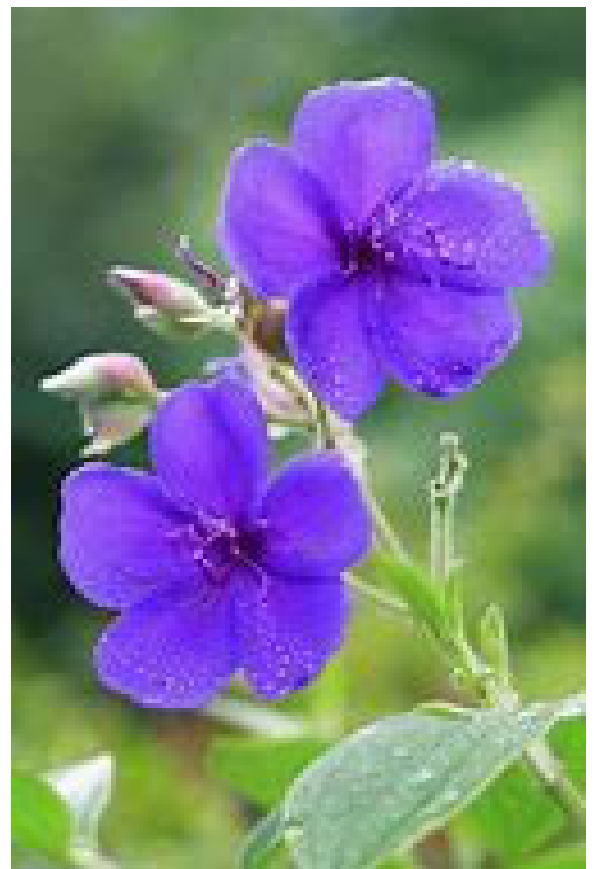
1. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/racism#note-1>
2. <https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/news/2020/06/18/12-charts-racial-disparities-persist-across-wealth-health-and-beyond/3201129001/>
3. <https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/scfindex.htm>
4. <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/5948/2019-ahar-part-1-pit-estimates-of-homelessness-in-the-us/>
5. <https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=11>
6. <https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2019/article/racial-and-ethnic-disparities-in-access-to-and-use-of-paid-family-and-medical-leave.htm>
7. <https://www.npr.org/2021/05/24/998683497/a-century-after-the-race-massacre-tulsa-confronts-its-bloody-past>
8. <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/05/1921-tulsa-race-massacre-economic-census-survivors/618968/>
9. <https://medium.com/@enelson009/from-ashes-to-asphalt-st-pauls-systematic-destruction-of-black-neighborhoods-54ea9c0c25f>

Thoughts on Finding Meaning by Liz Swanson, SARC

“A place for everything and everything in its place,” my grandma used to tell me as she was helping me clean up my room when I was a kid. She insisted this was the key to happiness. I wasn’t sure I agreed but I knew I needed to clean my room and was happy to have the help. Flash forward to adulthood. I realized this wisdom could apply to more than just my room and she was right it could evoke happiness. Let me explain, storms, for example, as threatening and scary as they can be have their place. They shake things up as the chaotic winds blow seeds in different directions. Each seed lands in a place far beyond the reach of its parenting plant and is given a chance to grow. Come spring, we have a vast prairie of wild flowers. This would have never have been possible without the chaos of a storm. Storms have their place, chaos has its place, all of life’s challenges have their place..... I would even be willing to bet there is something beautiful waiting to bloom on the other side.

Most people are familiar with Post-Traumatic Stress, but are you familiar with Post Traumatic Growth? PTG is a positive psychological change that is experienced as a result of a challenging life circumstance. Those who’ve received resilience training have a greater chance of having PTG after experiencing a traumatic event than those who have no resilience training. Characteristics of those with PTG are: a renewed appreciation of life, a recognition of new possibilities, an understanding of enhanced personal strength, improved relationships with others, and a greater sense of meaning.

Source: Comprehensive Airman Fitness



Don't Ignore the Mess by Ch. Len Brokenshire

A few weeks ago, I was returning on I-35 from a weekend trip to Iowa. I left just before sunset and up until that point, I hadn't noticed that the bugs were out. They were. I must have gone through half of my wiper fluid reservoir on that three hour drive just so I could see. Stopping for gas and vigorously scrubbing the windshield, I felt satisfaction in temporarily having a clear view. The clarity was short lived. Upon entering the freeway, more bugs were there to greet me.

The next day, I went through the Air National Guard gate and the airman actually called out to her fellow guards to marvel at the assortment of splattered bug pieces on the front of my car. "You guys have to see this, I told you the bugs were out." After filling up at the base gas station, I once again scrubbed my windshield clean. I was busy, I would take care of the rest of the mess later. Now two weeks later, the front of my vehicle is still covered with dead bugs. I've been through the car wash twice and have attempted to take advantage of rainy days to wipe the bug carnage away, but it is stuck. Through this frustration, I have been reminded of a couple of life lessons:

1. **Life is messy. The only way to keep a car clean is to park it permanently in the garage. Unless, you quarantine yourself from the world, a mess is bound to happen. Strained and broken relationships are part of imperfect people living together in an imperfect world.**
2. **Address problems early. Whoever said that "time heals all wounds" was wrong. It may be tough to deal with your mess today, but it likely won't get easier.**
3. **Problems rarely resolve themselves. Oftentimes, problems get more complex when ignored. Turning up the radio volume so you don't hear the noise your car makes doesn't resolve the problem and neither does ignoring current challenges.**
4. **Sometimes you need help. A little time and effort should resolve my bug problem. However, sometimes we need to rely on others. Chaplain services and other helping agencies are available when you problems seem insurmountable.**

Don't ignore the messes in your life nor let them define you. No matter what you are facing or how big your problems seem, know that you are not alone.

Improve Testosterone Through Exercise, Nutrition, and Sleep to Enhance Men's Health and Physical Resilience by Eric Neal, Exercise Physiologist

Are you aware low testosterone has some pretty nasty side effects? The American Urology Association (AUA) identifies low blood testosterone (Low-T) as less than 300 nanograms per deciliter (ng/dl) and identify low sex drive, fatigue, reduced lean muscle mass, irritability, erectile dysfunction and depression as symptoms that may accompany Low-T [1].

Treatment for Low-T is Testosterone Therapy (TT). The AUA recommends TT only be prescribed for men who have been tested for testosterone levels that meet clinical and laboratory definition of testosterone deficiency (Testosterone less than 300 ng/dl) [2].

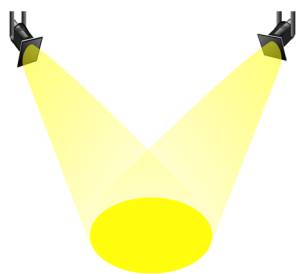
Prevention of Low-T must also be considered by maintaining a healthy weight, practicing good nutrition habits, and getting enough exercise and sleep. In addition to aging, obesity and metabolic syndrome (hypertension, high cholesterol, high blood glucose, and belly fat) contribute to Low-T. We can become healthier by reducing these components of metabolic syndrome and improve testosterone or prevent Low-T through the following guidance below:

- Sleep 7-9 hours per night.**
- Consume a diet that is moderate in protein, high in monounsaturated fats to include up to 1/3 saturated fats, and adequate carbohydrates. My favorite macronutrient breakdown for controlling weight and improving testosterone is 25% protein, 50% carbohydrates, and 25% fat.**
- Include some high intensity interval training for cardiovascular activity and moderate to heavy weights for resistance exercise. Include proper recovery and avoid overtraining.**

Taking the following steps to improve your testosterone will improve your physical resilience as you will perform better and feel better about yourself leading to a reciprocal effect of physical and mental resilience throughout your life.

Sources:

- 1. <https://www.urologyhealth.org/urology-a-z/l/low-testosterone>**
- 2. <https://www.urologyhealth.org/urology-a-z/l/low-testosterone>**



Resource Spotlight

Airman and Family Readiness (612-713-1516) - Provides support to the DOD community (both military and family) to maintain readiness and retention. A&FR offers assistance in the following areas: Relocation Assistance, Personal and Family Life Education, Personal Financial Management, transition assistance, employment assistance (e.g. resume writing), and deployment support (pre, during, and post deployments).

Prevention Partners/Response:

Violence Prevention: 713-1159

Sexual Assault Response Coordinator:
713-1315

Director of Psychological Health:
713-1224

Airman & Family Readiness: 713-1516

Personal Financial Counselor:
612-297-2826

Chaplain Corp: 713-1226

Equal Opportunity: 713-1221

Exercise Physiologist: 713-1472

Security Forces (BDOC): 713-1101

Military One Source: 1-800-342-9647

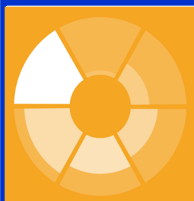
DoD Safe Helpline: 1-877-995-5247

Suicide Prevention Lifeline:
1-800-273-8255

National Domestic Violence Hotline:
1-800-799-7233

National Human Trafficking Resource
Center: 1-888-373-7888

Self Care Strategy—Add this to your Tool Box!



Mood Coach is an app for Veterans, Service members, and others to learn and practice Behavioral Activation. This app is designed to help you boost your mood through participation in positive activities. Make a plan with positive activities and track your progress.

This app provides: scheduling of positive activities for your selected values, an activity log for tracking your progress, a daily mood rating tool, education about depression, post traumatic stress, and Behavioral Activation,

The PHQ-9 assessment for tracking symptoms of depression. Mood Coach can be used on its own by those who would like mood management tools, or to augment face-to-face care with a healthcare professional. It is not intended to replace therapy for those who need it. Mood Coach was developed by the VA's National Center for PTSD.