

America to me *real talk*

EPISODE GUIDE 09

Racial Fatigue & Self-preservation

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TOPIC

Racial Fatigue & Self-preservation

By Episode 9, Chanti and Caroline experience fatigue as women of color, as does teacher Jessica Stovall as she continues to engage the administration in piloting an equity program that benefits all faculty and students. Both students of color like Tiara and white students like Brendan continue to spiral from emotional and physical fatigue as they navigate their experience at Oak Park and River Forest High School (OPRFHS).

Organizing a Group Discussion?
Be prepared! Before you start, read the Organizer Guide.



ANALYZE

- What are the barriers that the people of color at OPRFHS are facing? Who and what in the system are creating those barriers? Why are people of color most impacted?
- What is the impact of race on white students vs. students of color as they navigate OPRFHS?
- What moments of fatigue do you see play out with the adults and students?

WHAT IS RACIAL FATIGUE?

Studies have found that chronic exposure to racial discrimination can result in significantly higher rates of anxiety disorders, extreme physical fatigue, and other serious physical symptoms among people of color. Also known as “racial battle fatigue.”

REFLECT

- Do your school's administrators and teachers reflect the student demographics? Why is it important for schools to have administrators and teachers of color, and why isn't racial representation enough?
- Why do you think it's difficult to recruit and retain teachers of color?
- List some examples of racial fatigue that you've either experienced or witnessed. If you haven't experienced or witnessed any, why not?

ENGAGE

These can be group or individual activities. Encourage participants to share their findings with the whole group.

- Faculty Protection Policy** [30 min.]
Write a fictional policy that would protect, support, and empower teachers like Tyrone and OPRFHS's special education teachers, Anthony and Michael. How could you help to create an actual policy like that for your school or institution?
- Racial Equity Policy** [1 hour]
Research if your school, institution, or community has a racial equity policy. If it has one, what is it? If not, what steps could you take to get the conversation going?

RACIAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Describe what you learned about race as a student at school, and how it impacted your understanding of yourself, others, and/or the world?

- Were you explicitly taught about race in school? At home? Within your community?
- Did you learn through racialized messaging or implied socially constructed meanings within school?
- Who or what taught you about race and how did it impact you?

