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Applying the Five Stages of Grief to My Experiences with Racism

Think about an experience with racism you have had recently. For White folks, think about a time you enacted racism or witnessed racism. For people of color, think about what it was like for you to experience a racist incident or internalize racist stereotypes about your race. Once you have that incident in your mind, write about it here:

Next, you have the opportunity to identify the emotions, thoughts, and behaviors that typically come up for you in that stage and related cultural and social norms that are important to acknowledge. You will also be able to identify what you needed in these instances in terms of support and connection to enable you to heal from this racism instead of continuing in an uninterrupted cycle of grief:

Denial—What did this stage look like for this incident? What were the accompanying feelings, thoughts, and behaviors?

Feelings: _____

Thoughts: _____

Behaviors: _____

Cultural and social norms in this stage: _____

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What support I needed to challenge my own racism or internalized racism when I was in the stage of denial: _____

Anger—What did this stage look like for this incident? What were the accompanying feelings, thoughts, and behaviors?

Feelings: _____

Thoughts: _____

Behaviors: _____

Cultural and social norms in this stage: _____

What support I needed to challenge my own racism or internalized racism when I was in the stage of anger: _____

Bargaining—What did this stage look like for this incident? What were the accompanying feelings, thoughts, and behaviors?

Feelings: _____

Thoughts: _____

Behaviors: _____

Cultural and social norms in this stage: _____

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What support I needed to challenge my own racism or internalized racism when I was in the stage of bargaining: _____

Depression—What did this stage look like for this incident? What were the accompanying feelings, thoughts, and behaviors?

Feelings: _____

Thoughts: _____

Behaviors: _____

Cultural and social norms in this stage: _____

What support I needed to challenge my own racism or internalized racism when I was in the stage of depression: _____

Acceptance—What did this stage look like for this incident? What were the accompanying feelings, thoughts, and behaviors?

Feelings: _____

Thoughts: _____

Behaviors: _____

Cultural and social norms in this stage: _____

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What support I needed to challenge my own racism or internalized racism when I was in the stage of acceptance: _____

Adapted from: *The Racial Healing Handbook: Practice Activities to Help You Challenge Privilege, Confront Systemic Racism, and Engage in Collective Healing* by Anneliese A. Singh