



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

SUPPORTING STAFF AND COMMUNITIES DURING TRAUMA

Trauma comes in many forms and from many sources. Recently, these sources have included a global pandemic, an economic recession, racial injustice, mass-casualty violence, political or ideological divisions, and natural disasters. As these contributing factors have overlapped, the trauma has been compounded for many, particularly for communities that have been historically marginalized.

Incidents contributing to trauma can be local, national, or global. An individual's or community's response to trauma can be hidden or visible, personal or collective. In cases where trauma is tied to social injustice, the pain felt by the impacted individuals and communities is profound and thus requires increased empathy, compassion, understanding, and allyship.

Our core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility; our mission to serve all; and our purpose of strengthening community compels the YMCA to support our neighbors who are hurting and remind all those we serve that, despite our differences, what unites us will always be stronger than what divides us. **As a widely trusted community-based organization, the Y has the privilege and obligation to convene community members to heal, facilitate dialogue across differences, and build bridges that close the divides between communities.**

REMEMBER....

- **Create safe environments** and spaces as part our commitment to the communities serve.
- **Check on colleagues** who may be struggling or experiencing trauma as a result of the current reality.
- **Develop an internal and external communications plan**, and come together if the situation calls for it, to help your Y and community process, heal, and come together.
- Make sure your board and staff are aware of **your Y's commitment to advancing equity** in your community, and develop a supporting strategy if one does not yet exist.

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

This document outlines key resources, considerations, and critical questions to contemplate as your Y prepares to help your staff and the communities you serve process, heal, and stay safe in the event of any traumatic events that may occur. The questions and considerations posed are meant to promote thoughtful discussion that lead to creative and innovative strategies that are relevant to the context of your association and your community.

This resource is for informational purposes only. It is designed to assist Y leadership in caring for staff and strengthening community during traumatic times. It is not a substitute for legal advice or medical expertise on specific issues. When making decisions that result in workforce changes, seek the assistance of legal counsel.

KEY RESOURCES

- [Building Bridges: Creating Safe Spaces for Healing and Dialogue](#) – provides guidance on how to create safe spaces for reflection and discussion to foster community cohesion
- [The Y's Way of Advancing Equity](#) – a framework to help Y associations develop long-term strategies to address systemic inequities in partnership with their communities
- [Trauma-Informed Responses](#) – provides information on how to respond to challenging or difficult behaviors in an effective and trauma-informed way

KEY CONSIDERATIONS AND QUESTIONS

Following your team's discussion, record your team's responses, and document your shared approach.

Considerations and Critical Questions	What It Looks Like at Our Y
STAFF	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What steps are we taking to support staff by checking in on their physical, emotional, and mental health needs during stressful times?	

Considerations and Critical Questions	What It Looks Like at Our Y
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How are we ensuring physical and psychological safety for our staff? – How are we encouraging self-care? – How are we equipping staff to support one another? – Are there staff or volunteers who may be more impacted by an incident or event in light of one or more of their self-identified dimensions of diversity? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are we creating a safe space for staff healing and dialogue? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Host a Brave Space conversation at your Y where all feel comfortable learning, sharing, and growing. – Use Mental Health Go Kits to foster staff healing and dialogue with a trauma-informed lens. – Encourage staff to participate in upcoming events with the Diversity, Inclusion, and Global network. – Encourage staff to participate in a national Brave Space conversation (national conversations will be added to the Diversity, Inclusion, and Global community calendar on Link). 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does our current human resources policy support staff who may need time away from work before, during, and after traumatic events? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What opportunities might we have to provide flexibility for our staff? – To what extent do our benefits support mental health care? 	

Considerations and Critical Questions	What It Looks Like at Our Y
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the case of race-related trauma, how are we <u>communicating</u> our Y's ongoing commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism to our staff? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [Add your own] 	
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are we creating a safe space for <u>bridge-building conversations</u> in the communities we serve? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are we preparing staff and volunteers to serve as facilitators? How are we supporting community conversation in a consistent manner as opposed to merely reacting when incidents or events happen? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are we showing up and engaging in the current <u>community dialogue</u>? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are we engaging with partners? Is the Y present and visible in the community before, during, and after traumatic events? Are our public-facing messages and statements consistent and aligned with our mission, values, purpose, and commitment to equity and inclusion? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the case of race-related trauma, what are our Y's <u>key messages regarding our ongoing commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism</u> for the general public? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop <u>talking points</u> in response to the current situation or event. 	

Considerations and Critical Questions	What It Looks Like at Our Y
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share the Advancing Our Anti-Racism Journey webpage on YMCA.org. • How might we collaborate with our partners on a response to [add your own]? • What is our multichannel communication plan in response to [add your own]? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Audience segmentation - Sequencing and timing of communications - Email - Website - Text alerts - Phone message - Social media • Who should serve as the spokesperson? • How is our governing board informed and engaged? • [Add your own] 	
MEMBERS AND PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will we equip staff to check in with members and program participants and engage in dialogue to promote empathy and healing? • How are we helping the youth in our programs understand the current landscape and cope with the trauma they may be experiencing? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Host a youth-only Brave Space conversation to discuss current trauma in the community. - Learn more about how to talk to children about violence and help children manage distress. - Employ strategies at camp and in other programs that promote mental health in youth. 	

Considerations and Critical Questions	What It Looks Like at Our Y
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [Add your own] 	
OPERATIONS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What updates or modifications need to be made to our emergency action plan and shelter-in-place policy? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the process and timeline for changes? Which communities may be most impacted by changes and in what ways? How are changes communicated to all impacted stakeholders? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What will inform our decision to close a facility or programs? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If we close our facility for membership, what programs will remain open to support our community (e.g., child care, feeding)? How might we repurpose our closed facility to meet immediate community needs (e.g., safe haven for media personnel, certified mental health support)? What will inform our decision to cancel any programs or services? How might our decision(s) regarding facility and program closure be perceived by the communities we serve? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does our member policy currently say about bullying and the use of hate language? Do we need to update it? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How might we reaffirm our policy with members during this time? How do we promote inclusive language with members? 	

Considerations and Critical Questions	What It Looks Like at Our Y
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does our current insurance plan ensure our Y is protected in case of damage to property or a threat to the security of individuals? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [Add your own] 	
THE Y'S COMMITMENT TO DIG, EQUITY, AND ANTI-RACISM	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What steps are we taking to develop a long-term organizational strategy specifically around advancing inclusion, equity, and anti-racism? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure your board and staff are aware of your Y's commitment to advancing equity in your community. Develop a supporting strategy if one does not yet exist. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are we engaging with our community to elevate our commitment to inclusion, equity, and anti-racism? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are we actively inviting people to join us on this journey? What organizations are we currently partnering with, or should consider partnering with, to advance equity and anti-racism? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are we using the tools on the Advancing Our Anti-Racism Journey webpage on YMCA.org to help our staff, members, and community consider and act on the role they can play to address the racism and racial inequities that affect us all each day? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage staff to participate in a national Brave Space conversation (national conversations will be added to the Diversity, Inclusion, and Global community calendar on Link). 	

Considerations and Critical Questions	What It Looks Like at Our Y
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What resources are available to us to begin to integrate our commitment to inclusion, equity, and anti-racism into all facets of our work? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are we <u>cultivating trust</u> in the relationships we currently have in the community? • How are we consistently gathering feedback from our community on issues causing trauma? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Add your own] 	