@opra_beratung

Ratgeber für Betroffene

Handbook for victims of right-wing, racist & antisemitic violence

OPRA
Psychologische Beratung
Für Opfer rechtsextremer, rassistischer & antisemitischer Gewalt

Legal Notice

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Introduction

Experiencing right-wing, racist, or antisemitic violence is not “normal”—and no one should have to go through this! Unfortunately, it is not uncommon here in Berlin. If your body and mind react strongly afterward, it is not a sign of weakness, but a normal reaction to violence.

These reactions can manifest in a wide variety of ways: in the form of concentration difficulties or sleep problems, headaches, intense feelings of anger, irritability, sadness, or in interpersonal relationships- often with the ones closest to us.

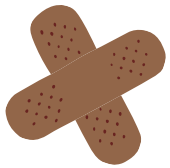
For people who are already affected by racism, this is an additional burden on top of the racial stress they face in their daily lives.

In this guide, we’ll take a closer look: What are some typical responses and feelings after such an incident? Why do they occur? And what kind of support structures exist for you?

What is a Trauma?

A **trauma** is often described as a wound to the soul. It occurs when a person experiences a life-threatening event, such as a natural disaster or violence. Just as a physical wound bleeds, the soul can also be wounded.

You may not see this wound with your eyes - but it is there and can be very painful.



Being traumatised means that an emotional wound has formed and has not been adequately taken care of. Just like a physical wound, it can become inflamed, get worse and if left untreated, linger for a long time.

An emotional wound calls for care, patience and compassion—from yourself and from those around you. Healing is a process that takes time to understand and work through what you've experienced and how it has affected you.

Just as a physical wound can leave a scar when it heals, trauma can leave one too. This scar may become a sign of your strength and your survival.

Examples of Traumatic Experiences

- Right-wing, racist, or antisemitic insults, threats, or violence (it is important to note, that how the perpetrator reads the victim's identity indicates the motivation of the violence)
- Being verbally abused, spat on, or harassed—because of one's appearance, perceived origin or religion
- Right-wing violence may be expressed against people with disabilities, people experiencing poverty or homelessness, as well as queer people from the LGBTIQ+ community (with reference to the social Darwinist concept of right-wing violence.)

A traumatic experience can take a heavy toll. While everyone reacts differently, those affected may share similar experiences...

Typical Reactions

Brooding
Difficulty concentrating
Forgetfulness
Being pre-occupied
Flashbacks

Sleep problems

Nervousness
Irritability
Chronic tension

Fatigue
Emotional numbness
Lack of energy

Pain

Apathy
Social withdrawal



What is Happening to Me?

Blocking it Out
You might be trying not to think about the incident – a strategy to protect yourself from emotional distress.

Fear
Maybe you are afraid or even panicking, you may experience your heart racing or breaking out in a sweat.



Avoidance
You might be avoiding places or triggers connected to the traumatic event.

What is Happening to Me?

Shame
You might feel ashamed about what happened. Maybe you ask yourself: "Could I have done something different?"

Anger
You may feel a deep anger, even rage - towards other people, society at large, yourself or your loved ones.

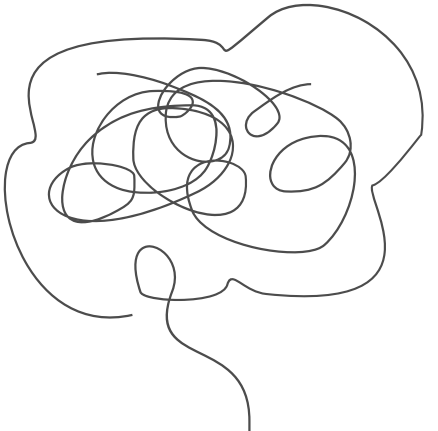


Helplessness
Perhaps you feel very vulnerable or like you have lost control.

Guilt
You might blame yourself or feel as if the incident was your fault. But you are not responsible for what happened to you!

After a racist, right-wing, or antisemitic incident, your **perception of things may change**. You might find yourself noticing racism or antisemitism in everyday life more than you used to. This is a **normal reaction**.

In addition, people who are affected by racism in their daily lives already face higher stress levels. This is known as **racial stress**. If this stress persists over a long period of time, it can have a negative impact on the mental and physical health of racialized people.



Racial Stress

... can trigger intense emotions
... may cause you to be constantly on edge or hyper-vigilant
... may undermine your self-esteem

The **consequences** may include...

- physical stress
- emotional burnout
- symptoms of depression or trauma
- difficulty trusting others
- feelings of not belonging
- feeling pressure to perform at very high levels

What triggers racial stress?

- Racial profiling (for example, arbitrary police controls)
- Structural discrimination in housing, education or at work
- Everyday experiences of exclusion, of othering
- Uncertainty about one's residency status
- Secondary traumatic stress, i.e. by seeing videos of racial violence online
- Systemic racism endured by the family over generations

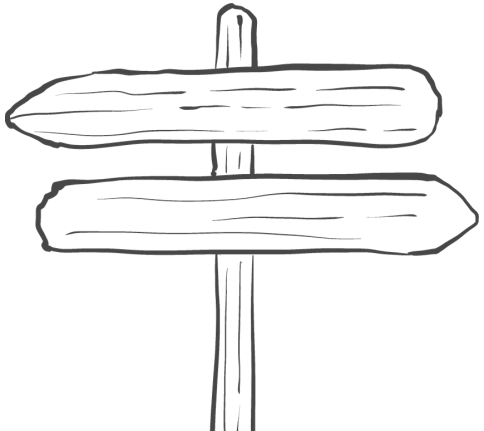


Important!

Racial stress is not oversensitivity.
It is a normal reaction to repeated trauma and marginalization.

SOS-Guide

What can I do after a right-wing, racist or antisemitic attack?



First steps to take after an incident

Medical Documentation
Seek a medical evaluation to record your injuries in writing or contact a violence-intervention crisis center (Gewaltschutzambulanz).

Visit a Counseling Center
Contact a support service – they are there for you and can provide support.

Legal and Psychosocial Support
In these sessions, you can discuss your legal options, receive emotional support, file a police report and get information on financial assistance.

Psychological Support
If you would like to talk about what's weighing you down, we are here to help you process your experiences in personal conversations.

OPRA
Psychologische Beratung
(OPRA Psychological Counseling Service)

You can reach out to us immediately after an incident or even months, years later! Our psychological counseling is

- **free of charge**
- **anonymous upon request**
- **with translators, if required**

Our team is made up of qualified psychologists trained in anti-racist trauma counseling, capable of handling your experiences with empathy and respect.

Whether you have experienced violence in your neighborhood, while taking the train, or by the police—we believe you and offer our support!

Who does OPRA offer counseling to?

- Those affected by right-wing, racist and antisemitic violence
- Their family and friends
- Witnesses of right-wing, racist and antisemitic violence

What does OPRA do?

- Psychological counseling
- Educational outreach
- Connecting you to specialized services
- Accompany you to court proceedings
- Writing psychological statements on your behalf

Please remember...

... many people affected by this kind of violence, are going through similar things you are.
... things don't get better overnight; it takes time.
... this situation will not last forever.
... you are not alone!

If you need to talk and would like a consultation, schedule an appointment with us.

Here is how to reach us:

Heinrich-Heine-Straße 15
10179 Berlin
(elevators available)

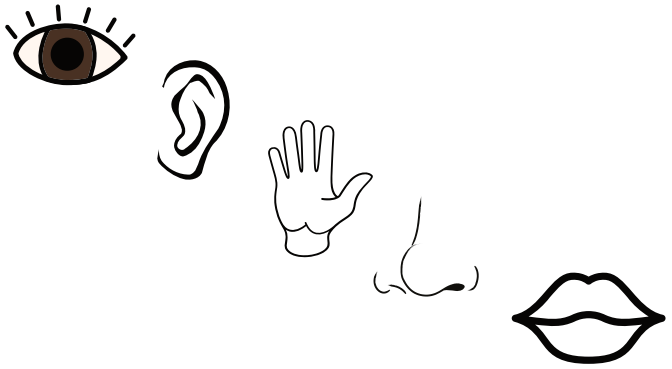
030/ 922 182 41 (answering machine)
info@opra-gewalt.de
www.opra-gewalt.de (contact form)

5-4-3-2-1 Exercise

This exercise is good for bringing you back to the here and now in difficult situations that trigger memories of the event. It can also help you fall asleep if your mind is racing or you are feeling very tense. You can do it anywhere.

Take a relaxed position, either standing, sitting or lying down. Choose a point to rest your eyes on.

Tell yourself either silently or out loud what you are perceiving with your senses at that moment:



5 times: I see...
5 times: I hear...
5 times: I feel...
5 times: I smell...
5 times: I taste...

Then: 4 times..., 3 times..., 2 times.., 1 times...
(You can name things more than once)

4-7-8 Breathing Exercise

The 4-7-8 technique is done by breathing in for 4 seconds, holding your breath for 7 seconds and then breathing out for 8 seconds. If you are feeling anxious or wound up, this exercise helps calm you down. It can also help for falling asleep.

Here's how it works:

Find a comfortable position whilst sitting or standing with a straight back and relaxed shoulders. Try to focus on the present moment, on the here and now.

- Breathe in calmly through your nose for 4 seconds
- Hold your breath for 7 seconds
- Then, breathe out through your mouth for 8 seconds

Repeat this pattern for three more breaths.

You can practice this exercise regularly and add it to your daily routine, for example, whilst using public transport.

Helpful Addresses

Gewaltschutzambulanz
Forensic Clinic for Victims of Violence
Free service for legal medical documentation; even without filing a police report
Birkenstraße 62 (House N), 10559 Berlin
030 450 570 270
gewaltschutz-ambulanz@charite.de

reach out
Counseling for Victims, Relatives and Witnesses of Racist and Right-Wing Violence
Heinrich-Heine-Straße 15, 10179 Berlin
030 695 68 339
www.reachoutberlin.de
info@reachoutberlin.de

ADNB – Antidiskriminierungsnetzwerk Berlin des Türkischen Bundes in Berlin-Brandenburg
Counseling Center for Equal Treatment - against Discrimination
Richard-Sorge-Str. 13, 10249 Berlin
030 5506 5905
www.adnb.de
adnb@tbb-berlin.de

LesMigraS
Anti-violence, anti-discrimination counseling and empowerment for racialized and refugee LGBTIQ+ individuals
Kulmer Straße 20a – 4th floor, 10783 Berlin
030 21 91 50 90
www.lesmigras.de
info@lesmigras.de

MBR – Mobile Beratung gegen Rechtsextremismus Berlin
Mobile support services for those affected by right-wing extremism Berlin
Berlin Franz-Mehring-Platz 1, 10243 Berlin
030 817 985 810
www.mbr-berlin.de
info@mbr-berlin.de

KuB – Kontakt- und Beratungsstelle für Geflüchtete und Migrant:innen e.V.
Contact and Counseling Center for Refugees and Migrants
Oranienstr. 159, 10969 Berlin
030 / 614 94 00
kontakt@kub-berlin.org

Rassismuskritische Psychotherapie e.V.
Racism-Critical Psychotherapy (registered association)
www.rassismuskritische-psychotherapie.de

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