

## Recognizing the Impact of Collective Trauma

### Worksheet

In life, we may find ourselves impacted by collective trauma. Collective trauma refers to traumatic situations and the effects that it has on a group of people, community, or society. Collective trauma may be caused human-caused or natural disasters and can include situations like hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, floods, wildfires, tsunamis, mass shootings, terrorism, war, genocide, systematic oppression, historical oppression, pandemics, displacement, or famine and severe poverty (Saul, 2014). It is important to note that a group, community, or society may experience collective trauma in response to a one-time incident, but that it may also be a response to cumulative adverse experiences (such as systematic racism and oppression).

The hope of this worksheet is to provide you with a tool to better understand how collective trauma may be impacting your well-being. As we gain an increased understanding of where we are and how collective trauma may be impacting us, we then may find ourselves more equipped to cope with the challenges we are facing and be able to seek out any resources we may need.

In this worksheet, you will work through four areas to help you identify where a collective trauma response may be surfacing in your life. These areas include 1) physiological well-being, 2) psychological and emotional well-being, 3) relational well-being, and 4) spiritual well-being. After going through these areas, you will also find space to reflect on what insights you have gained and what action steps you would like to take in response to your new insights.

#### References and Additional Resources to Look Into

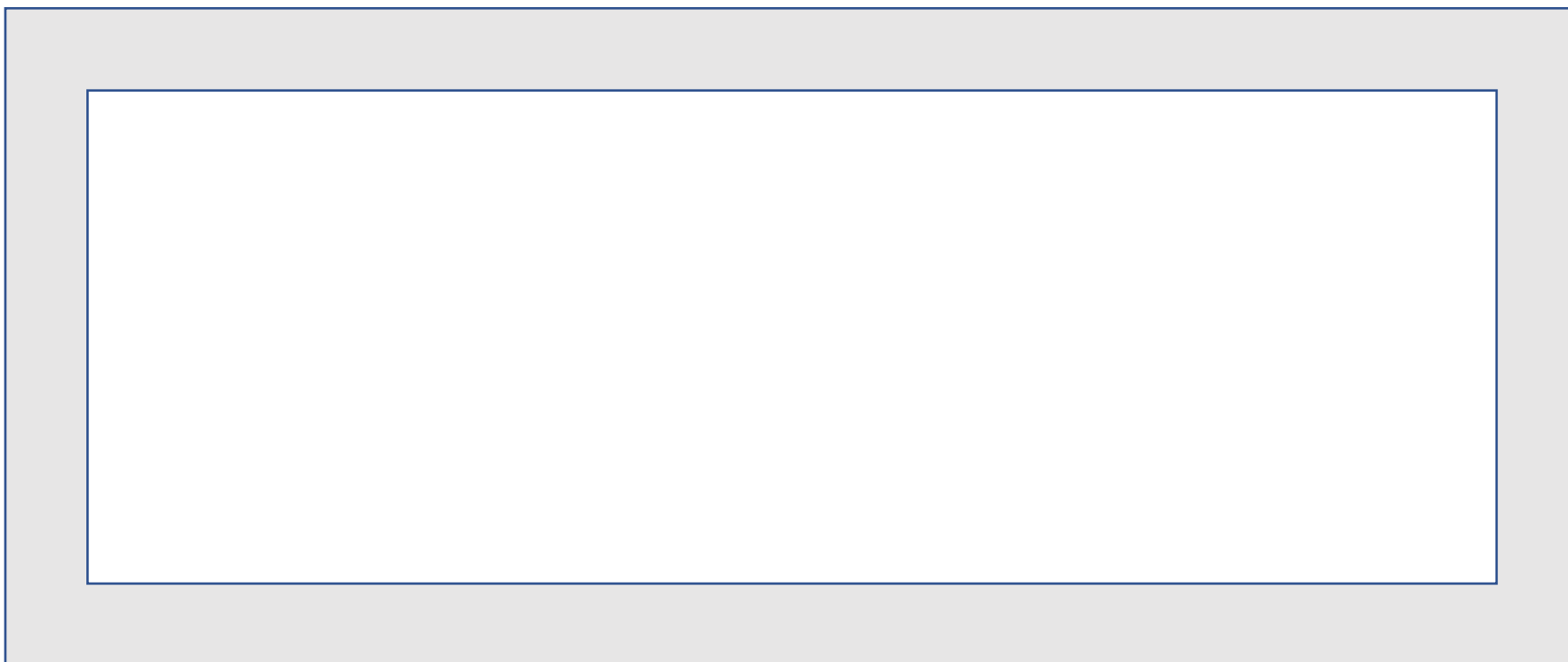
Render Turmaud, D. (2020). What is collective trauma? Retrieved from: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/lifting-the-veil-trauma/202005/what-is-collective-trauma>

Saul, J. (2014). Collective trauma, collective healing: Promoting resilience in the aftermath of disaster. New York, NY: Routledge.

## Physiological Impact

Our bodies are magnificent and often provide us with valuable information about how we are doing. When we endure stress, especially high levels of stress (like experienced in response to trauma), a stress response may surface in the body. This portion of the worksheet allows you to take some time to consider how collective trauma consequences may be surfacing in your body.

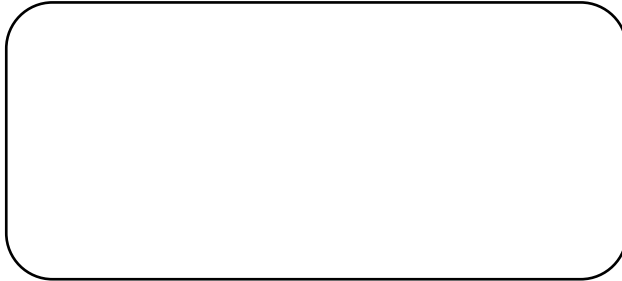
Before filling out this portion of the worksheet ask yourself the following question: In response to the situation that elicited collective trauma, or the ongoing situation that may be leading to collective trauma in myself, the group I identify with, my community, or my society, have I noticed any physiological changes in my body or health? If so, what are they? Brainstorm and jot any changes that you have noticed in the space below:

A large rectangular box with a light gray background and a blue border, intended for brainstorming and jotting down physiological changes.

After brainstorming, utilize the section below to help you consider in what ways collective trauma may be impacting you.

## Have you noticed any.....

Changes in your sleep?



Changes in your appetite?



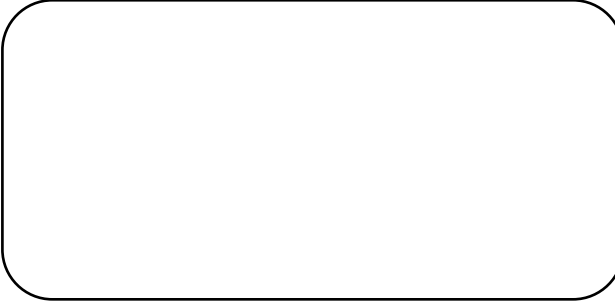
Changes in your sex drive?



Changes in your energy levels?



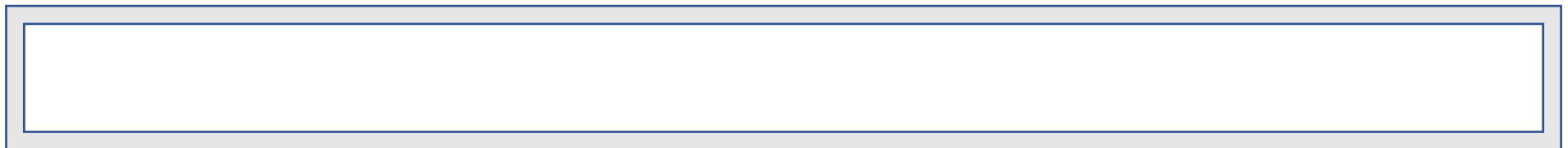
Changes in your body's typical functioning  
e.g. body aches, stomach aches, headaches, etc.)?



Changes in your ability to  
fight off illness?



Other physiological or health changes (e.g. sweating, heart palpitations, difficulties breathing, etc.)?



## Psychological Impact

Trauma and collective trauma situations may impact the brain and our ability to cope. It is important to recognize that in response to traumatic situations, it is not uncommon for us to struggle with a number of psychological or emotional consequences. This portion of the worksheet allows you to take some time to consider how collective trauma consequences may be impacting your psychological and emotional well-being.

Before filling out this portion of the worksheet ask yourself the following question: In response to the situation that elicited collective trauma, or the ongoing situation that may be leading to collective trauma in myself, the group I identify with, my community, or my society, have I noticed any psychological or emotional changes? If so, what are they? Brainstorm and jot any changes that you have noticed in the space below:

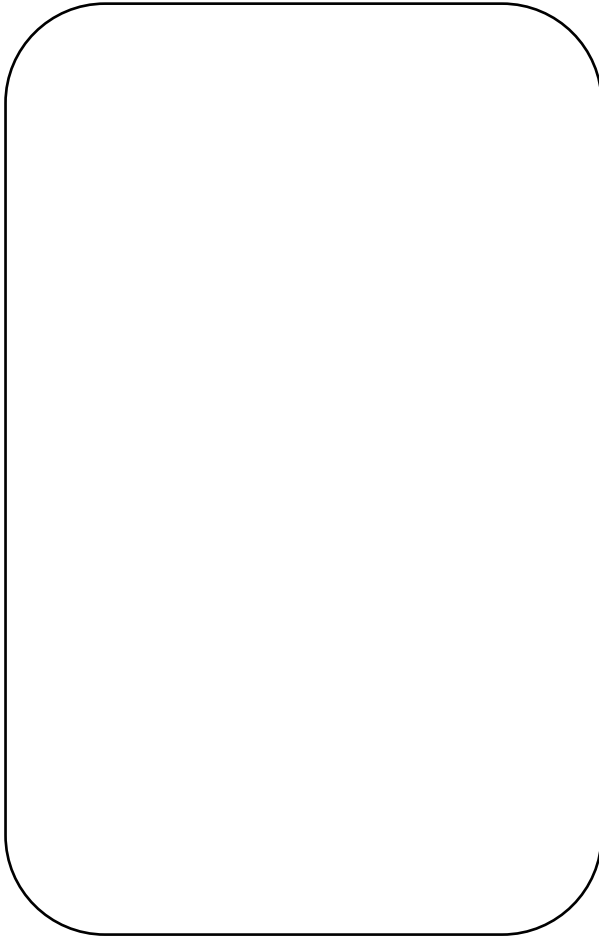
A large rectangular box with a light gray background and a blue border, intended for brainstorming and jotting down psychological or emotional changes.

After brainstorming, utilize the section below to help you consider in what ways collective trauma may be impacting you.

## **Have you noticed any.....**

Changes in your stress levels?

If so, how? What have you noticed?



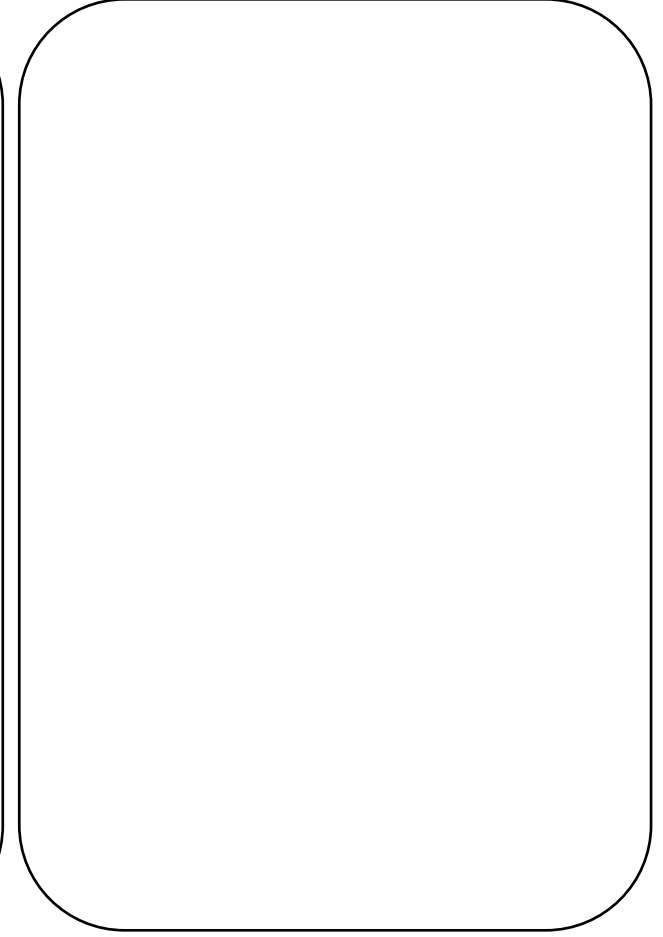
Changes in your emotions?

If so, how? What have you noticed?



Changes in your behaviors or ability to cope?

If so, how? What have you noticed?



Circle any of the potential psychological or emotional impacts below that you relate to in your experience of collective trauma:

Anxiety

Decreased  
Motivation

Feeling in a  
“fog”

Feeling  
Disconnected

Feeling  
Hypervigilant

Spacing Out

Fear

Feelings of  
Worthlessness

Addictive  
Behaviors

Nightmares

Impulsivity

Grief

Depression

Confusion

Feelings of  
Shock

Forgetfulness/  
Difficulties  
Remembering

Altered  
Worldview of  
Self/Others

PTSD/Traumatic  
Stress Symptoms

Loneliness

Difficulties with  
Substance Abuse

After going through this worksheet thus far, what insights have you gained about yourself and how collective trauma may be impacting you?

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Are you recognizing any areas where you may need extra support in this time? If so, what?

A large rectangular box with a double border, intended for writing areas needing extra support.

What are some things that you can do to meet yourself where you are with kindness and support?

A large rectangular box with a double border, intended for writing self-care strategies.

## Relational Impact

Trauma and collective trauma may not only impact us on an intrapersonal level but may also impact us interpersonally. We may find our ability to relate to others or interact with others altered. This portion of the worksheet allows you to take some time to consider how collective trauma consequences may be impacting your relationships.

Before filling out this portion of the worksheet ask yourself the following question: In response to the situation that elicited collective trauma, or the ongoing situation that may be leading to collective trauma in myself, the group I identify with, my community, or my society, have I noticed any changes in my relationships? What about your ability to relate to others? If so, what are they? Brainstorm and jot any changes that you have noticed in the space below:





Below are some of the ways that a collective trauma response may surface in our ability to relate with others.  
Circle any that you relate to:

Reduced sense of Safety and  
Openness with Others

Reduced Social Involvement  
or Isolation

Difficulties in Trusting  
Others

Increased Conflicts

Difficulties with Aggression  
or Violence

Difficulties in Parenting

Difficulties in  
Communicating with Others

Difficulties in Feeling Able  
to Connect to Others

Increased Concerns about  
Loved Ones' Safety and  
Placing a lot of Energy in  
Protecting Them

Or have you noticed any other changes in your relationships?

## **Spiritual Impact**

The impact of collective trauma may surface in many areas of our lives, including our faith or spirituality. Regardless of our beliefs, religion, or spirituality, we may find our beliefs altered or changed in response to collective trauma (in positive or negative ways). This portion of the worksheet allows you to take some time to consider how collective trauma consequences may be impacting your spirituality.

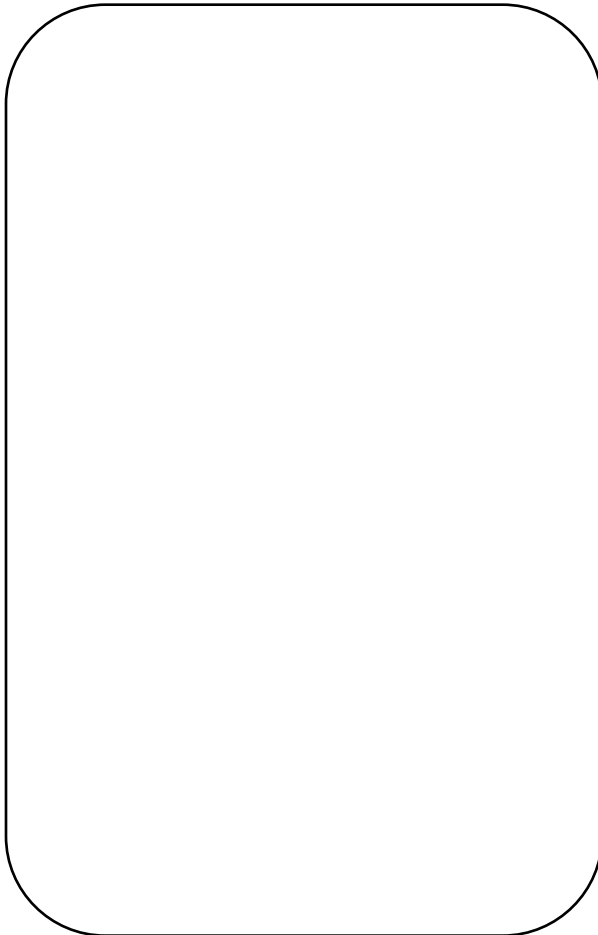
Before filling out this portion of the worksheet ask yourself the following question: In response to the situation that elicited collective trauma, or the ongoing situation that may be leading to collective trauma in myself, the group I identify with, my community, or my society, have I noticed any changes in my spiritual beliefs/faith? If so, what are they? Brainstorm and jot any changes that you have noticed in the space below:



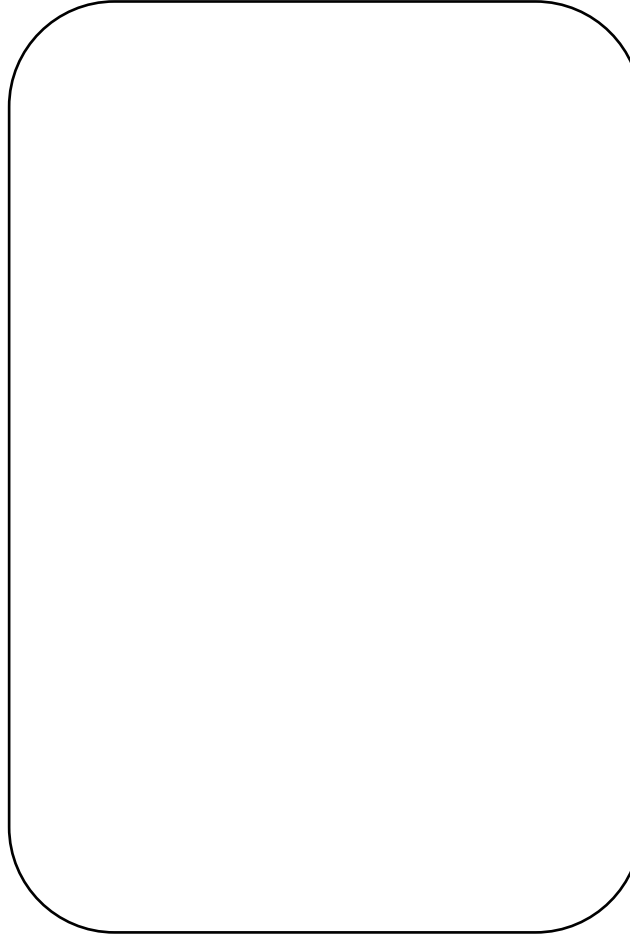
After brainstorming, utilize the section below to help you consider in what ways collective trauma may be impacting you.

## **Have you noticed any.....**

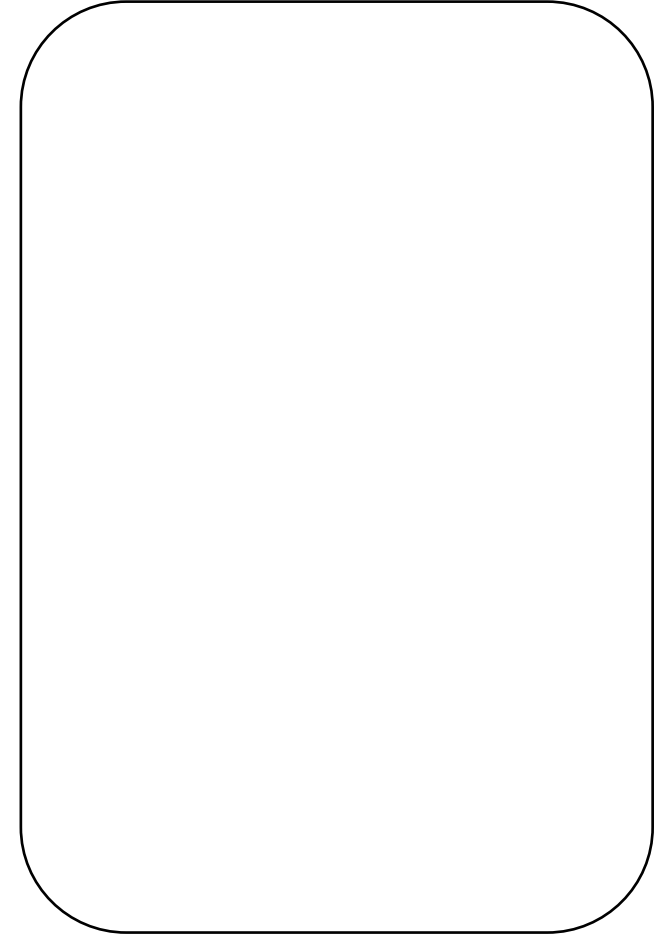
Changes in your beliefs?



Changes in the way you interact  
with your spirituality/religion/deity?



Changes in the way you understand  
or see the world?



After completing this worksheet, what insights have you gained about yourself and how collective trauma may be impacting you?

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What are some action steps you can take in the next week to meet yourself where you are and support yourself accordingly? In this section include resources you will look into, coping tools you want to utilize, etc. Be specific in your response.

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