



Sometimes it's hard to trust white doctors and white mental health professionals, especially if they are profiling us and seem more focused on the color of our skin than who we are as an individual. If we have had an experience of racism in our mental health care, reflecting on it and making a self-care plan can help.

Example: *My doctor seems afraid of me. She interrupts me and talks over me a lot. She treats me like I am uneducated. I think it's because I'm Black. How am I supposed to trust the meds are right for me as an individual, when I feel my doctor is profiling me?*

What we can do:

Tip 1: Trust. It's important we trust that our experience is real. Research shows that 75%-80% of white people, including doctors and other mental health professionals, have unconscious biases towards Blacks. They usually do not intend to stereotype, but sometimes they treat us differently than white patients. Their unconscious biases can affect the diagnosis they give us, and the medication or therapy they recommend for us.

Tip 2: Practice self-care. Don't keep the stress and anger bottled up inside. After the appointment, find a friend, family member or support group to talk with. It's important that we don't blame ourselves.

Tip 3: Make a plan for what to do next. Sometimes it makes sense to find another doctor or mental health professional. If that's not possible, try not to drop out of treatment. We can self advocate for better treatment.

We can use the exercise below to reflect on our experience and develop a self care plan. It can be helpful to ask a trusted person for help in completing this exercise.



Reflection on My Experience My Self-Care Plan

What did you observe during the appointment?

Example: My doctor interrupted me, prescribed a bunch of different meds and didn't ask for my opinion about the meds.

What did you think?

Example: I thought the doctor was profiling me. She treated me like I was uneducated because I'm Black.

What did you feel?

Example: I felt angry and like I couldn't trust her or the meds she was prescribing for me.

What do you want to be different at your next appointment?

Example: I want her to listen to what I have to say. I want her to treat me like an intelligent person. I want to trust the meds are right for ME.

Use this template to create your self-care plan

Trust yourself:

I will create an affirmation. *Example: I am not making this up. It really did happen. I am not to blame.*

My affirmation:

Practice self-care:

I will:

- Talk to family or friends
- Attend online support groups like Black Minds Matter <https://www.namincymetro.org/black-minds-matter/>
- Cook myself a healthy meal
- Take a warm bath
- Workout to relieve stress
- Other:

Get the health care I deserve

I will:

- Find a new doctor or mental health professional
- Read my reflection to the doctor (or mental health professional)
- Ask someone I trust to go to the appointment with me
- Other: _____

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