

# African-American women stress compounded

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Using incense or lighting a candle may seem like good ways to let go of racial stress, but a recent study found that might not be the case in terms of racial tension among women. In fact, some coping strategies employed by African-American women may actually increase their stress instead of alleviate it, according to a recent study from *Psychology of Women Quarterly*.

Race-related stress has been studied extensively. This new research looks at the various methods of coping with the effects of race-related stress among [African-American women](#) to determine whether the use of various methods of coping were more successful. [Coping strategies](#) were categorized as:

- Collective-centered coping, such as asking for advice from elders or the community
- Cognitive-emotional coping, such as seeking out people who could draw out emotions like laughter or happiness
- Spiritual-centered coping, such as prayer
- Ritual-centered coping, such as lighting a candle

"I expected that higher use of coping efforts would reduce the severity of [psychological outcomes](#) associated with individual race-related stress," wrote Tawanda Greer, the study's author. However, the outcomes were surprising. The results showed that the use of one particular method of coping, the use of ritual-centered coping, actually increased [stress levels](#).

"African American women are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of race-related stress, given their socially constructed identities as African Americans and as women," wrote Greer. "Thus, it is critical to the overall well-being of African

American women that coping efforts are identified that assist in alleviating the psychological impacts associated with race and the intersection of race- and gender-related challenges."

**More information:** The article "Coping Strategies as Moderators of the Relation Between Individual Race-Related Stress and Mental Health Symptoms for African American Women" in *Psychology of Women Quarterly* is available free for a limited time at: [pwq.sagepub.com/content/35/2/215.full.pdf+html](http://pwq.sagepub.com/content/35/2/215.full.pdf+html)

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