



# Systemic

## *How Racism Is Making Us Sick* Loyal Liverpool

HC ISBN: 9781662601675 | eBook ISBN: 9781662601682



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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1. In *Systemic*, Loyal Liverpool shares her years-long experience as a teenager struggling to get a diagnosis for what turned out to be a common skin condition. What was it about her experience that made her reflect on biases in medical education? What did she discover about the diagnosis of health conditions across diverse skin tones?
2. How has racism or discrimination in healthcare affected you or those close to you?
3. Serena Williams' experience following the birth of her first child is highlighted in Chapter 1. What was Williams' experience and what does it teach us about the key factors contributing to racial inequities in maternal health?
4. How did the covid-19 pandemic put a spotlight on the harmful effects of racism on health?
5. In Chapter 6, Liverpool reflects on some of the stories of racism in healthcare featured in the book up to that point and notes that there was "a common thread in people's negative encounters with healthcare". What is the common thread Liverpool is referring to and how does it manifest throughout the book?
6. In Chapter 7, Liverpool shares her journey as a science journalist investigating the harms of race-based medicine. But she also argues that medicine shouldn't be "color-blind". What do you think is the right way for doctors to consider race?
7. Liverpool argues that beyond racism in healthcare, racism in society at large is also harmful to health. How does racism embedded into the systems, structures and institutions that underpin society lead to racial health disparities?
8. "Race may be a social rather than a biological construct, but racism clearly affects our biology," writes Liverpool. What does she discover about the biological effects of racism in the body?
9. What is colourism and how does it contribute to health inequity?
10. Liverpool emphasises the importance of health data and medical studies when it comes to identifying and tackling racial health disparities. Why is it important to disaggregate health data based on race and ethnicity? What are the benefits of increasing diversity among medical study participants?
11. Liverpool examines racial health inequities in the US as well as in other countries across the globe. What are some of the similarities and differences in terms of how racism manifests and harms health in the US compared with other countries?
12. In the Conclusion, Liverpool says she wants *Systemic* to convey a message of hope. Why is she hopeful about the future and what are some examples of the ways in which the people and organizations featured in *Systemic*—and all of us—can help to tackle the problems highlighted in the book?