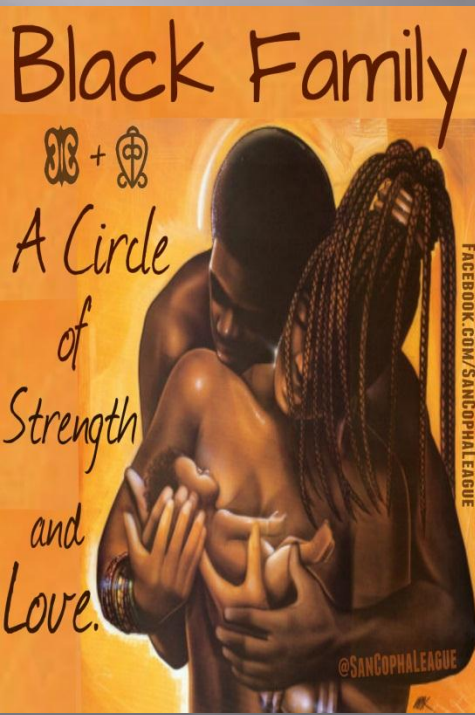


# INTERGENERATION TRAUMA AND THE BLACK FAMILY

-FROM TRAUMA TO TRIUMPH,  
A ROAD TO RECOVERY!



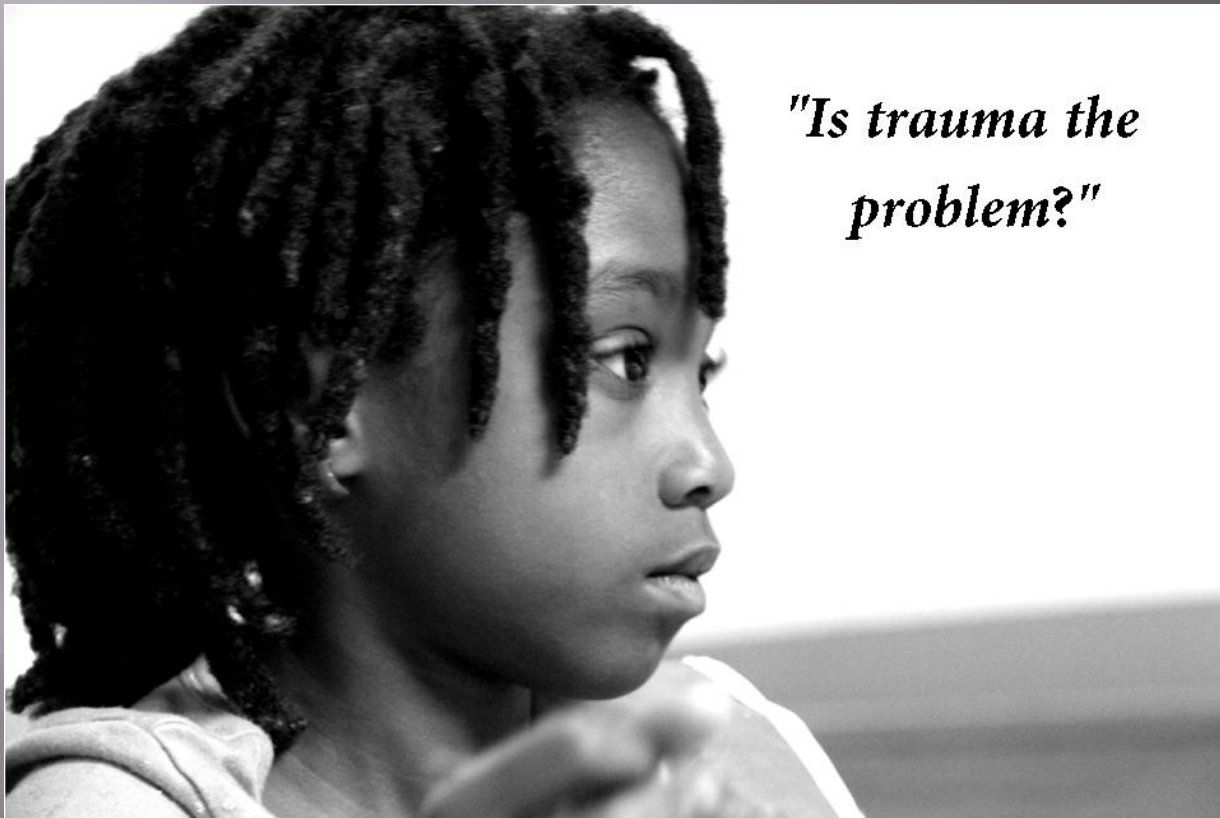
Kamyala Howard MSW, LICSW  
Independent Consultant & Trainer  
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# Goals and Objectives

Participants will gain a deeper understanding of Adverse Experiences in relation to Historical & Intergenerational trauma

- ▣ Participants will increase their understanding of what children and their family need to thrive.

# WHAT DOES THE IMPACT OF TRAUMA LOOK LIKE



**In the Black family?**

# What is your reaction to this story?

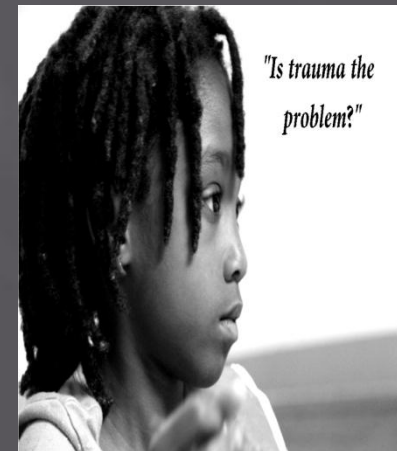
First impression of this family?

Perspectives? Thoughts? Beliefs? Biases?

What happened to this family?

How might the “Stressors” be impacting the “Quality of the Relationships”?

- Ms. Smith and Tasha relationships
- The grandmother belief think the child has these symptoms?
- The grandmother’s response to symptoms of trauma (grandchildren, daughter , self)?





# What does trauma look like in the family narrative?

Can you consider:

“What happened to this family” vs. “What is wrong with this family”?

“What is wrong with this parent?” is not the right question. Instead ask, “What happened to this parent?” Then, “What is the best response?”

# Their Story...Our Story



Before Tasha dropped out of high school she was an honor student as school was something she enjoyed and she was good at it!

However shortly after getting pregnant, at the age of 16, her mother put her out of the house. Since then she believed you can't depend on any one but yourself?

She never told her mother about the sexual abused as a child, by her mothers boy friend. Though she believed her mother knew, and feels guilty. Only reason she helps her with the children, as she never been much of a mother to her.

Tasha never believed in God as she didn't think God cared much about her.

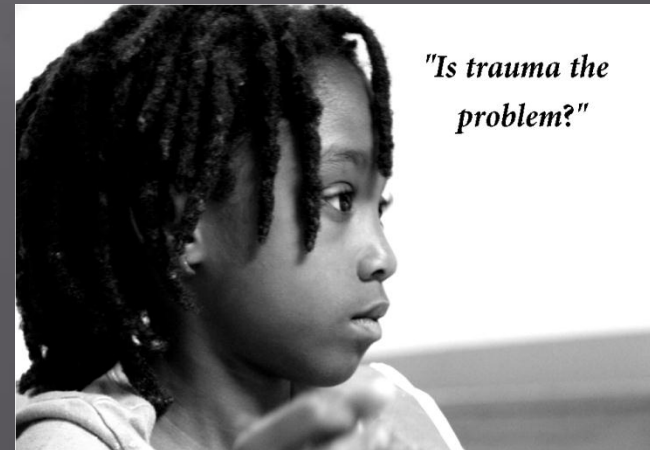
# What Is this families view of you?

The families thoughts, beliefs, view you or who you represent?

- How can you help me?
- You never been here, you don't understand my life?
- My momma don't care and neither does God, so why should you?

What is the history of your relationship within the community?

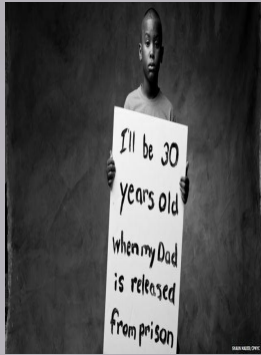
- ▣ Are we working "with" or working "for"?
  - Overly compassionate "I just want to take these kids home"
  - Belief role to "Fix the Family or Healing the Hurt"
- ▣ Resource of "Trust" of "Mistrust"
- ▣ Level of Acceptance? based on Community perspective?
- ▣ Can you Identify Strengths? Protective Factors?
- ▣ Family Belief Systems, values?
  - View themselves?
- ▣ Other Risk Factors? Considering various of stress



*"Is trauma the problem?"*

# What do we already know?

## Prevalence of Trauma



# Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)



Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that can have negative, lasting effects on health and well-being.

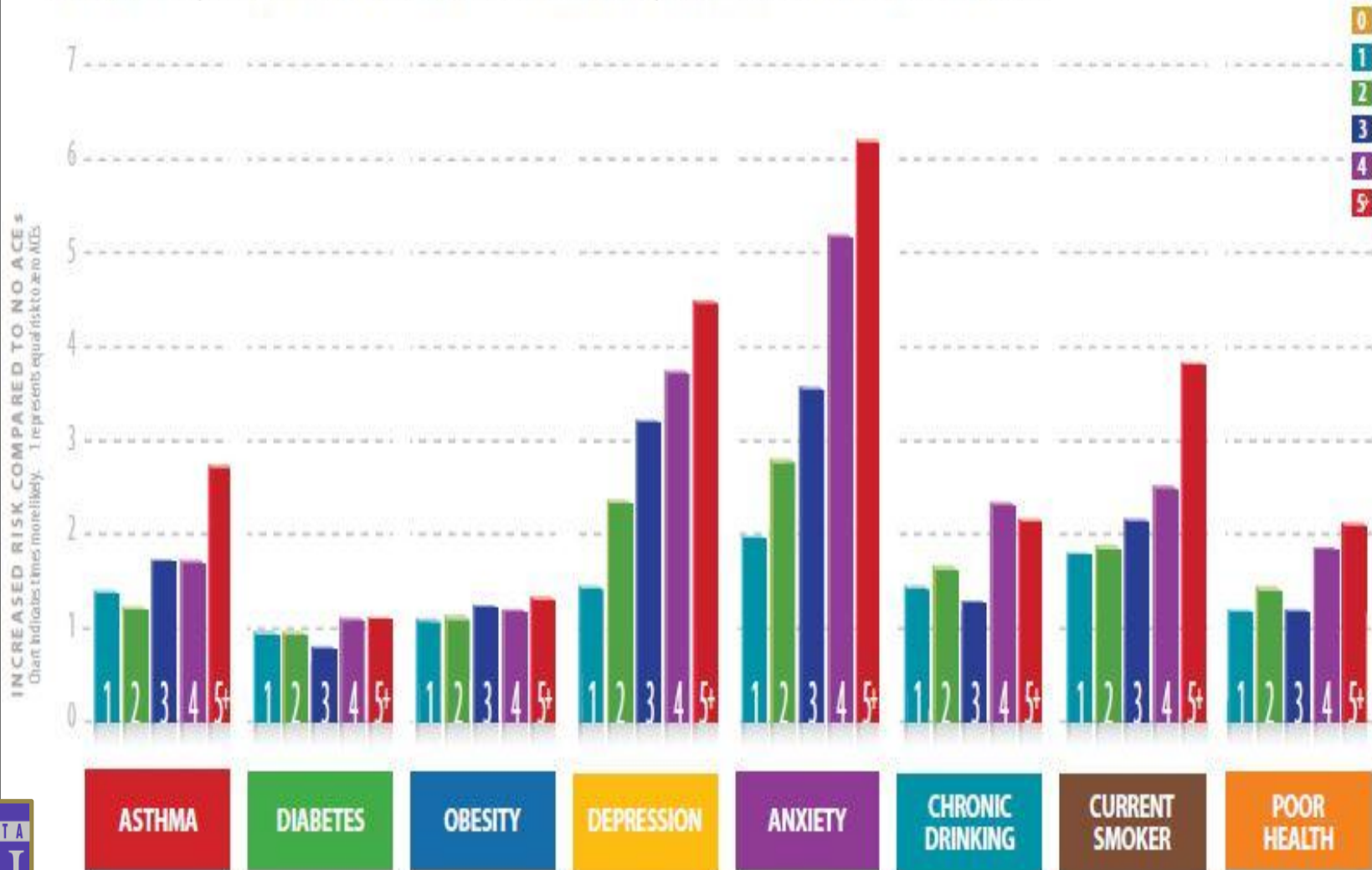


**TABLE 20: Increased Risk\* of CONDITION/BEHAVIOR WHEN ACE IS PRESENT**

MINNESOTA 2011

\*Increased risk = percent with chronic condition (1 or more ACEs)/percent with chronic condition (No ACEs)

Number of Aces



Times more likely



# What do we already know? About Stress & Trauma?

Individual **trauma** results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically and emotionally harmful or threatening and that has **lasting adverse effect on the individual's physical, social, emotional, or spiritual wellbeing.**

--(Early Trauma Treatment Network, ND)

**A traumatic event overwhelms the nervous system**

Rather” **Real or Perceived Danger”**, as our nervous systems does not distinguish very well **between real and perceived threats**, what is dangerous for one may not be dangerous for all.

# Stress/Trauma and the Impact on Brain

The body stays activated to accommodate to perceived danger and fear.

- Interpreting new situations based on experience, “Expect the worse”
- Develop an expectation that bad things will happen to them.

Response: We can FIGHT it, we can get away from it (FLIGHT), or we can FREEZE

- Fight – Hyperactivity, verbal aggression, oppositional behavior, limit testing, physical aggression, “bouncing off the walls”
- Flight – withdrawal, socially isolated withdrawal, escaping, running away avoidance
- Freeze- disassociated, still, watchfulness, looking dazed, daydreaming, forgetfulness

*\*Freeze survival response, often the least understood. Used when someone cannot fight the danger and cannot physically escape it.*

Blaustein M.E. , Kinniburgh K.M. (2010). *Treating Traumatic Stress*



# “Survive” and not “Thrive”?

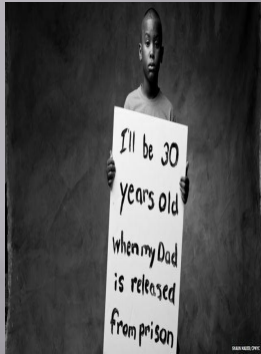
Traumatic experience during development – generates predictable patterns of brain architecture, behavior, and traits. Under these circumstances, our bodies tend to prepare for life in a dangerous world.

Response: We can FIGHT it, we can get away from it (FLIGHT), or we can FREEZE

- Fight – Hyperactivity, verbal aggression, oppositional behavior, limit testing, physical aggression, “bouncing off the walls”
- Flight – withdrawal, socially isolated, escaping, running away avoidance
- Freeze- disassociated, still, watchfulness, looking dazed, daydreaming,



# What do we know? What have we learned? Experience Matters...Prevalence of trauma in the African American Community





# Intergenerational Trauma

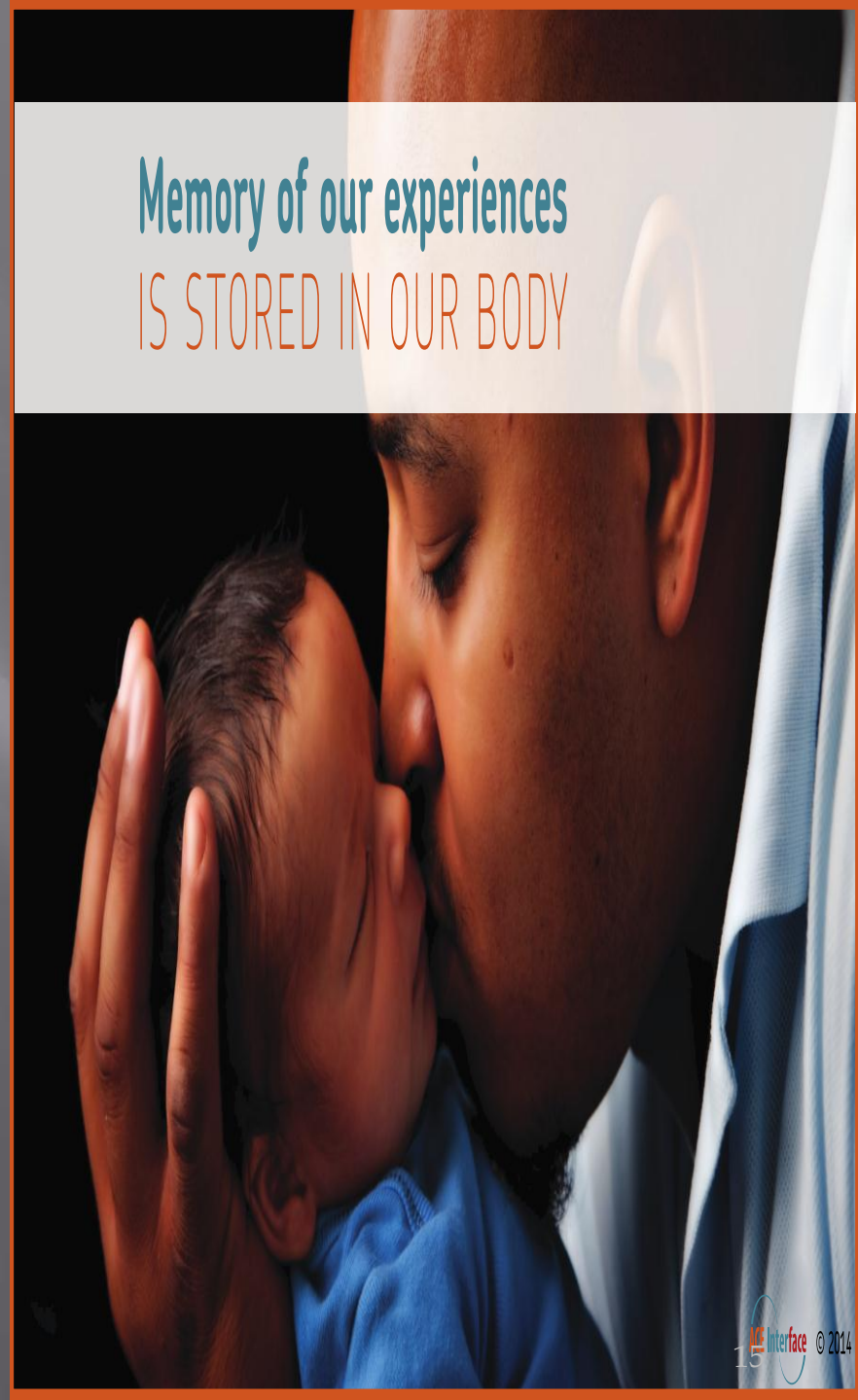
When trauma is ignored and there is no support for dealing with it, the trauma will be passed from one generation to the next.

Happens when the effects of trauma are not resolved in one generation.

—Sam Simmons

*Our Experiences matter!*  
*And relationships with another person and with the world around us has profound impacts on beliefs, values who we are, who we will become.!*

Memory of our experiences  
IS STORED IN OUR BODY

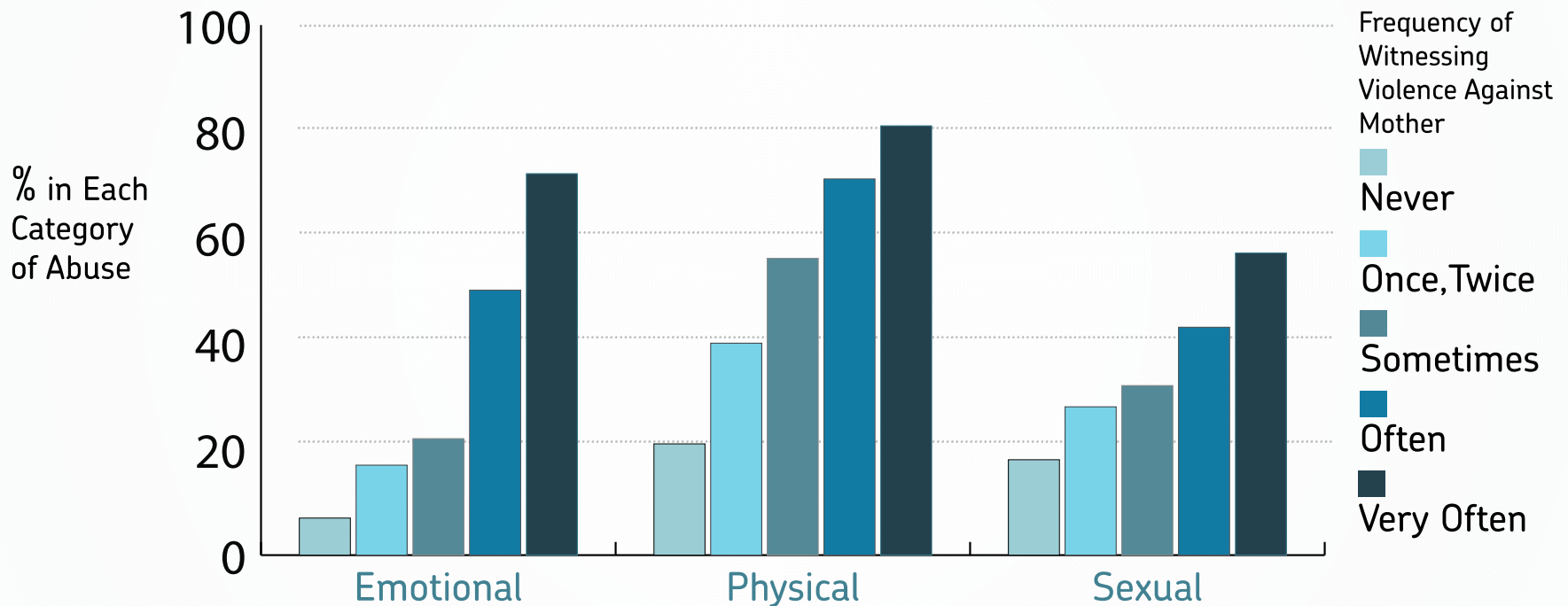


# ACES Intergenerational Trauma

Happens when the effects of trauma are not resolved in one generation.

When trauma is ignored and there is no support for dealing with it, the trauma will be passed from one generation to the next. —Sam Simmons

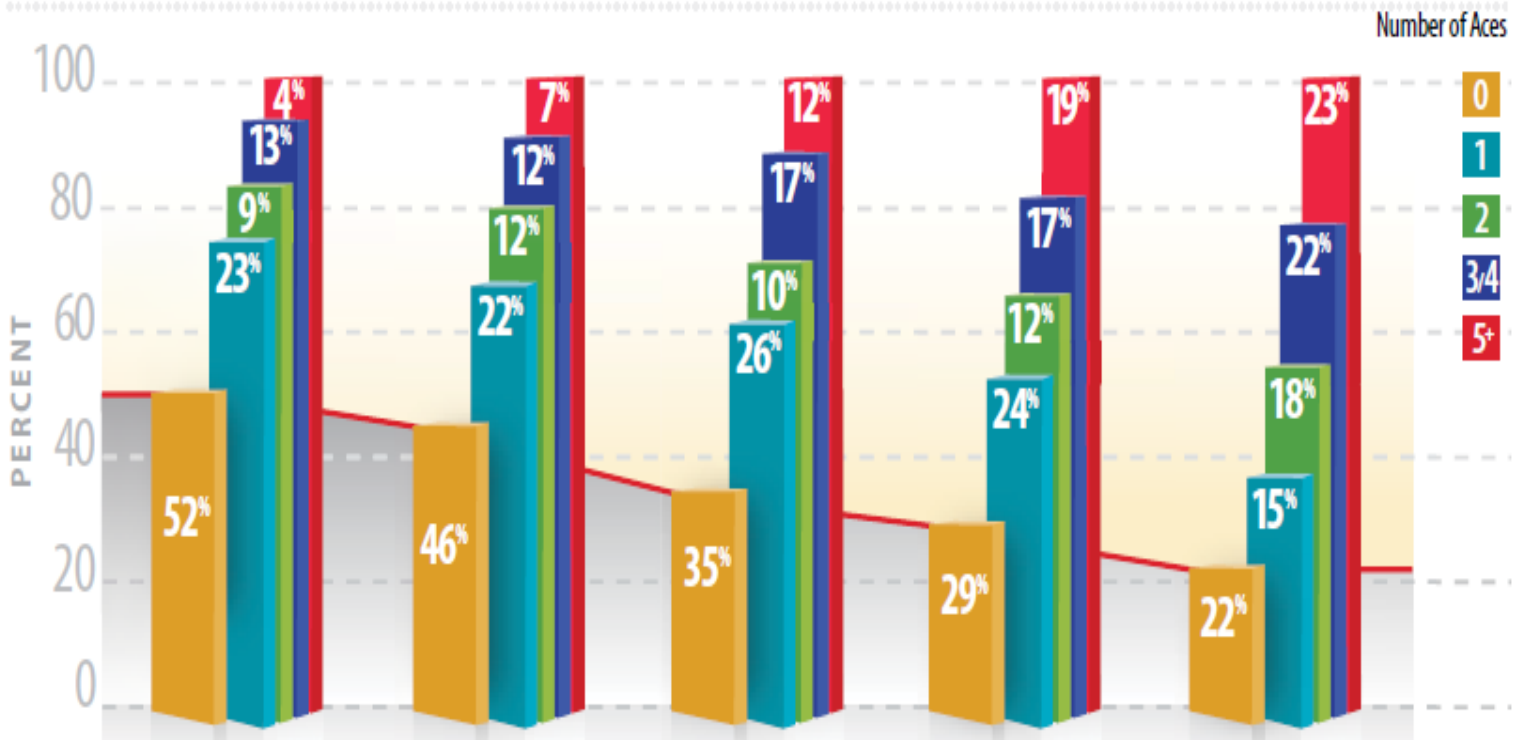
## Witnessing Domestic Violence and the Risk of Childhood Abuse





**TABLE 5: ACEs BY RACE/ETHNICITY**

MINNESOTA 2011



**Asian**  
4%  
5 or more ACEs

**White**  
7%  
5 or more ACEs

**Hispanic**  
12%  
5 or more ACEs

**African American Black**  
19%  
5 or more ACEs

**American Indian**  
23%  
5 or more ACEs

*Due to rounding, the numbers may exceed 100%.*

# Intergenerational Trauma

“The people at the highest risk of trauma and those with the most difficulty working through it have experienced their own trauma but also have come from a family where there was a trauma in their parents and often in their parents’ parents,” says Stephanie Swann, PhD, LCSW,

One of the major barriers to interrupting intergenerational trauma is that very few [in previous generations] have gotten any kind of help”

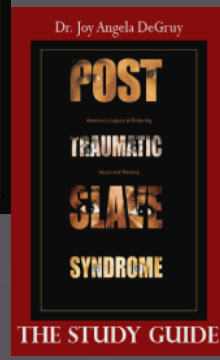
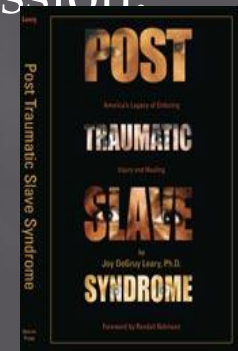
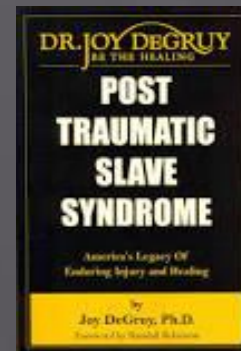
# Trauma can show up Historically (Collective) Trauma

**Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome** *America's Legacy of Enduring injury and healing-Result of twelve years of quantitative and qualitative research* Dr. Joy DeGruy

Trauma upon trauma that occurs in history to a specific group of people causing emotional and mental wounding both during their lives and to the generations that follow. Dr. Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, Native American Children & Family Services Training Inst., 1999

Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: Is a condition that exists as a consequence of centuries of chattel **slavery followed by institutionalized racism and multigenerational oppression.**

Resulting the etiology of many multigenerational adaptive -survival behaviors in African American communities. Some positive reflecting resilience, and others that are harmful and destructive.



# Outcomes of Historical & Intergenerational Trauma

- “PTSS”: “Slavery violated the primary value system of familial and tribal relationships. The violation of these relationships over generations resulted in large groups of feeling, unsafe, conflicted, confused, unrecognized, and disrespected- all of which contributes to a heightened sense of shame Dr. Joy DeGruy
- Differential treatment towards marginalized groups
- Absence of opportunity to heal or access the benefits available in the society
- MISTRUST (systems, institutes)
- Micro aggressions- offensive sports team names
  - For many indigenous peoples, names and references to their race and ethnic identity are very important – especially in a time when names and derogatory references to Native people are being challenged in popular culture.

# Outcomes of Historical Trauma

## KEY PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOR

Under such circumstances, some of the predictable patterns of behavior that tend to occur:

### Vacant Esteem-

- Loss sense of self worth/identity
- Loss sense of culture and culture Identity (A.Indian, and A. American)
- Insufficient development of what Dr. DeGruy refers to as primary esteem, along with feelings of hopelessness, depression and a general self destructive outlook.

### Marked Propensity for Anger and Violence

- Violence against self, property and others, including the members of one's own group, i.e. friends, relatives, or acquaintances
- Extreme feelings of suspicion perceived negative motivations of others.

### Racist Socialization and Internalized racism)

- Learned Helplessness, literacy deprivation, distorted self-concept
- Absence of opportunity to heal or access the benefits available in the society
- MISTRUST (systems, institutes)

# Where would we place: Symptoms/Impact of Historical & Intergenerational Trauma?

## Cultural / Societal

Continuous oppression  
Define our role in society  
Conditioned to feel inferior

## Biological

• ACES

- Impact experience on brain, development
- Response of nervous system ramps up to respond and manage the threat Fight-Flight-Freeze and other SURVIVAL responses
- Pre-disposition/Increased risk for diseases

## Culture

- We pass down the experience of Trauma
  - Historical Trauma-  
Our Legacy of Trauma
- patterns of behavior taught for survival (prep young to accept rape, abuse exploitation
  - Ignore dignity be obedient!
- Slave master-Taught control through aggressions-

## Psychological-Impact

- Become "Embedded in our belief system"-who we
- Absent self-worth
  - Internalized





# Racially Evoked PTSD? Thoughts?

“In this season of racial violence, the public finds itself exposed to real-life scenes of police brutality and gun violence, church burnings, white supremacist massacres and funerals of massacre victims through viral media and the 24-hour news cycle.

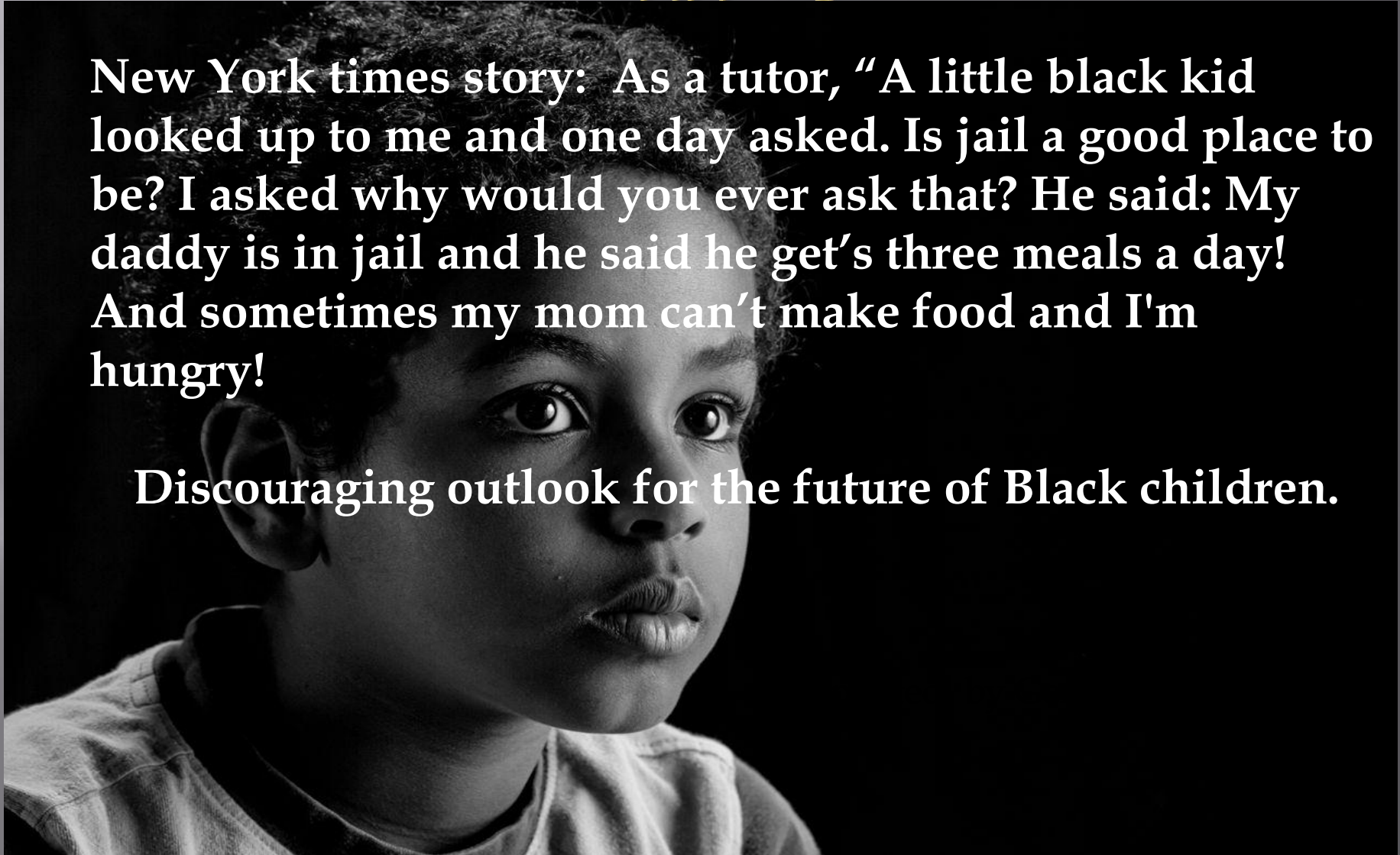
Moreover, daily exposure to this racism takes a psychological toll on those who are exposed to it, causing PTSD, or post-traumatic stress disorder, which lingers even after the events have subsided, according to a number of reports”.

# “Black kindergartner's Perception of the world”

What experience, lens is getting passed to our

**New York times story: As a tutor, “A little black kid looked up to me and one day asked. Is jail a good place to be? I asked why would you ever ask that? He said: My daddy is in jail and he said he get’s three meals a day! And sometimes my mom can’t make food and I'm hungry!**

**Discouraging outlook for the future of Black children.**

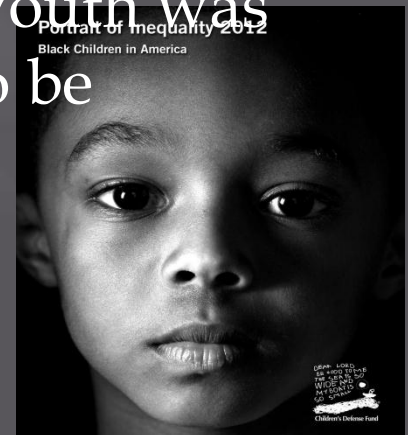


# Sense of Self? Involvement in the Juvenile Justice Systems

Children of color, particularly Black children, are grossly overrepresented in the juvenile justice system.

Young Black men without a high school diploma are incarcerated at very high rates, and for many, serving time in prison has become a “Normal Life Event.”

In 2009, Black children were more than twice as likely as White children to be arrested. From ages 10-17 a Black youth was more than five times as likely as a White youth to be arrested for a violent crime.



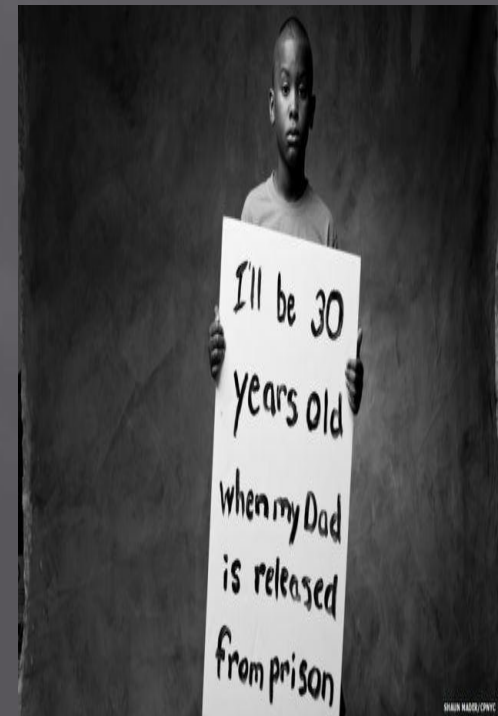
# Sense of Self & Adult Criminal Justice Systems

*Hart Research Associates*



## *Adult Incarceration & Institutionalized*

- Black males born in 2001 are more than five times as likely as White males to be incarcerated some time in their lifetime.
- This gap is even larger for females, with Black females born in 2001 more than six times as likely as their White peers to be incarcerated at some point.
- One in 12 working-age Black men was in prison or jail in 2008, compared to one in 87 working-age White men.
- Black adult men were incarcerated in state and federal facilities at over six times the rate of White adult men in 2010, and Black adult women were incarcerated at more than two-and-a-half times the rate of White adult women





# Surviving vs. Thriving

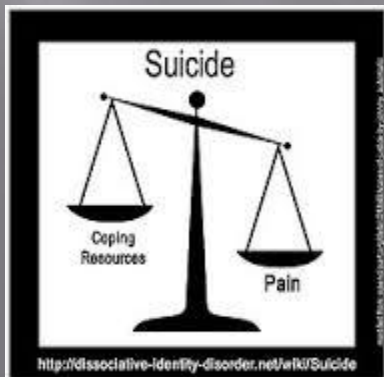
## Our Internal Working Model- Our Belief System

### Systemic Impact and Community

- Evidence suggests that Black youth ages 12 to 19 are victims of violent crime at significantly higher rates than their white peers.
- Black youth are three times more likely to be victims of reported child abuse or neglect, three times more likely to be victims of robbery, and five times more likely to be victims of homicide.
- In fact, homicide is the leading cause of death among African American youth ages 15 to 24.

“I cannot die in front of my kids. They cannot see me die. They can't see my body lying here dead.”

“Why are you still so sad? – At least you're alive!  
Is our only goal in life to wake up the next day?”



The National Center of Crime Victims  
victimsofcrime.org





# Black People Experience Racism Daily!

This subtle type of discrimination can be traumatic, Nuru-Jeter says, when the victims of these slights believe that it is persistent. She points to last year's fatal encounter between [New York police and Eric Garner](#) as an example.

Garner died after an officer put him in a chokehold. "You'll recall that Eric Garner, before he passed, he said, 'I'm tired of you all. I'm tired of you harassing me. I'm tired of you messing with me every day,' " she says. "He was really acknowledging that what he experienced on that one particular day was what he had experienced on many, many other days."

--Coping While Black: A Season Of Traumatic News Takes A Psychological Toll  
<http://www.npr.org/>



# The State Of Black Children & Families

## Adults Who Think Half Or Less Than Half Of Black Children Will Reach Adulthood Without Being The Victim Of Violence

□ All adults	74%
□ Caregivers	74%
□ Men: age 18 to 49	73%
□ Men: age 50 and older	72%
□ Women: age 18 to 49	77%
□ Women: age 50 and older	69%
□ Large city	75%
□ Medium city or suburb	72%
□ Small town or rural	75%
□ High school degree or less	73
□ Some college	70
□ College degree	76
□ Income: less than \$20k	76
□ Income: \$20k to \$50k	78%
□ Income: more than \$50k	74

**“This belief is not unique to Black adults who live in disenfranchised communities,**

**It spans the Black population, with large majorities of every subgroup of the population holding this discouraging outlook for the future of Black children”.**

# Can Racism Cause PTSD?

## Race-based trauma

Sacredness of the Sanctuary...

“We hear in the news about African-Americans being shot in a church, and this brings up all sorts of other things and experiences,”

“Maybe that specific thing has never happened to us. But maybe we’ve had uncles or aunts who have experienced things like this, or we know people in our community [who have], and their stories have been passed down. So we have this whole cultural knowledge of these sorts of events happening, which then sort of primes us for this type of traumatization.”

Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, S.C.,

# Micro Aggressions-There is Nothing MICRO about it!

Microaggressions: Be Careful What You Say

What's your problem?

I mean, this is a compliment?

Why are you mad? What's the issue?

*Your articulate!*

*You look so professional...*

*I mean I believed you?*

## Examples of Racial Microaggressions in Therapeutic Practice

Theme	Microaggression	Message
<p><b>Color blindness</b> Statements which indicate that a White person does not want to acknowledge race</p>	<p>A therapist says "I think you are being too paranoid. We should emphasize similarities, not people's differences" when a client of color attempts to discuss her feelings about being the only person of color at her job and feeling alienated and dismissed by her co-workers.</p> <p>A client of color expresses concern in discussing racial issues with her therapist. Her therapist replies with, "When I see you, I don't see color."</p>	<p>Race and culture are not important variables that affect people's lives.</p> <p>Your racial experiences are not valid.</p>
<p><b>Denial of individual racism</b> A statement made when Whites renounce their racial biases</p>	<p>A client of color asks his or her therapist about how race affects their working relationship. The therapist replies, "Race does not affect the way I treat you."</p> <p>A client of color expresses hesitancy in discussing racial issues with his White female therapist. She replies "I understand. As a woman, I face discrimination also."</p>	<p>Your racial/ethnic experience is not important.</p> <p>Your racial oppression is no different than my gender oppression.</p>
<p><b>Myth of meritocracy</b> Statements which assert that race does not play a role in succeeding in career advancement or education.</p>	<p>A school counselor tells a Black student that "if you work hard, you can succeed like everyone else."</p> <p>A career counselor is working with a client of color who is concerned about not being promoted at work despite being qualified. The counselor suggests, "Maybe if you work harder you can succeed like your peers."</p>	<p>People of color are lazy and/or incompetent and need to work harder. If you don't succeed, you have only yourself to blame (blaming the victim).</p>
<p><b>Pathologizing cultural values/communication styles</b> The notion that the values</p>	<p>A Black client is loud, emotional, and confrontational in a counseling session. The therapist diagnoses her with borderline personality disorder.</p> <p>A client of Asian or Native American descent has trouble</p>	<p>Assimilate to dominant culture.</p>

<p><b>Second-class citizen</b> Occurs when a White person is given preferential treatment as a consumer over a person of color</p>	<p>A counselor limits the amount of long-term therapy to provide at a college counseling center; she chooses all White clients over clients of color. Clients of color are not welcomed or acknowledged by receptionists</p>	<p>Whites are more valued than people of color. White clients are more valued than clients of color.</p>
<p><b>Environmental microaggressions</b> Macro-level microaggressions, which are more apparent on a systemic level</p>	<p>A waiting room office has pictures of American presidents. Every counselor at a mental health clinic is White.</p>	<p>You don't belong/Only white people can succeed. You are an outsider/You don't exist.</p>

Adapted from: Wing, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal, Esquilin (2007). Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Implications for Clinical Practice. *American Psychologist*, 62, 4, 271-286

## Types of Racial Microaggressions Identified by an African American Focus Group

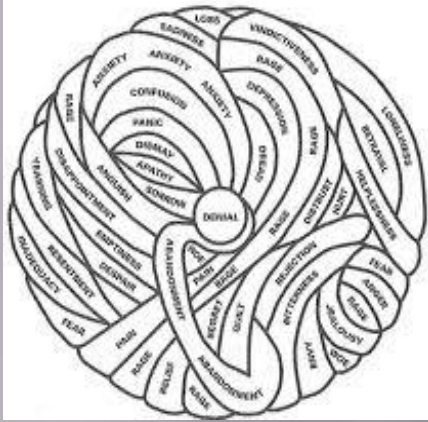
Microaggression	Definition	Example
<b>Colorblindness</b>	Denying racial-cultural differences	"I don't see you as Black; I just see you as a regular person."
<b>Overidentification</b>	Denying or minimizing individual racial bias because of assumed similarity	"As a gay person, I know just what it's like to be discriminated against because of race."
<b>Denial of personal or individual racism</b>	Professing presumed freedom from or immunization to racism	"I'm not racist because some of my best friends are Black."
<b>Minimization of racial-cultural issues</b>	Minimizing or dismissing the importance of racial-cultural issues to a person of color	"I'm not sure we need to focus on race or culture to understand your depression."
<b>Assigning unique/ special status on the basis of race or ethnicity</b>	Assuming that a positive behavior or characteristic is atypically present in a person on the basis of race or ethnicity	"You're not like other Blacks; you're a credit to your race" and "You're a very articulate African American."
<b>Stereotypic assumptions about members of a racial or ethnic group</b>	Assuming that a behavior, norm, or characteristic exists on the basis of a person's race or ethnicity	"I know that Black people are very religious" and "Did you grow up in the inner city?"
<b>Accused hypersensitivity regarding racial or cultural issues</b>	Assuming that a person of color is hypersensitive during discussions of racial or cultural issues	"Don't be too sensitive about the racial stuff. I didn't mean anything bad/offensive."



<b>Meritocracy myth</b>	Ignoring the responsibility of individual perpetrators and sociopolitical systems for perpetuating racism	"If Black people just worked harder, they could be successful like other people."
<b>Culturally insensitive treatment considerations or recommendations</b>	Displaying cultural insensitivity in the context of understanding or treating clients' concerns	"You should disengage or separate from your family of origin if they are causing you problems."
<b>Acceptance of less than optimal behaviors on the basis of racial-cultural group membership</b>	Accepting or normalizing potentially dysfunctional behaviors on the basis of a person's racial or cultural group	"It might be okay for some people to cope by drinking alcohol because their cultural norms sanction this behavior."
<b>Idealization</b>	Overestimating the desirable qualities and underestimating the limitations of a person on the basis of racial or ethnic group membership	"I'm sure you can cope with this problem as a strong Black woman" and "Black people are so cool."
<b>Dysfunctional helping/ patronization</b>	Offering help that is unneeded or inappropriate on the basis of racial or ethnic group membership	"I don't usually do this, but I can waive your fees if you can't afford to pay for counseling."

Adapted from: Constantine, Madonna G. Teachers College, Columbia University (2007) Racial Microaggressions Against African American Clients in Cross-Racial Counseling Relationships, *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, v54 n1 p1-16 Jan 2007

**BALL OF GRIEF**  
A TANGLED "BALL" OF EMOTIONS



# Healing from Trauma



*Nobody can go back and start a new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending.*

~Maria Robinson



# How can we utilize Differing expertise/Sources of Knowledge

An important aspect of [cross cultural competence] is not so much what we learn about other people, but what we learn about ourselves and our reactions to other people.” Dr. Ray Terrell, Miami University

Respect, Responsive, Relevance

## ▣ Different preparation. Not lack of preparation.

- Oral tradition vs. Written tradition
- Improvisation vs. standardization
- Multi-tasking vs. single task activity completion

## ▣ Communication direct vs. indirect commands

- authentic vs. inauthentic questions
- high vs. low context

My Perspective/  
Expertise

- ▣ Clinical
- ▣ Spiritual
- ▣ Personal
- ▣ Cultural
- ▣ Research
- ▣ Community
- ▣ Others?

**Purpose: is to find common ground to work together and achieve collective goals on behalf of the community**

- ▣ How are we alike? Differ?
- ▣ How do we complement each other in our differences
- ▣ What experiences do we have that are universal for us all or at least majority

# Creating A “NEW WE”

Inviting a new kind of social contract.

*“Every system is exquisitely designed to produce the results it gets. If you want to change the results, you have to change the system.”*

*Very little in a system, if anything, is accidental.  
(That’s the bad news AND the good news...if we  
change the systems, we can make a difference.)*

-Paul Batalden, M.D.

2014, Frances E. Kendall, Ph.D.

Four Things We Need to Know about What Systems Are and How They Work Frances



# Creating A community of “Active” learners

**A community of learners:** A group of people who share values and beliefs and who actively engage in learning from one another.

Thus creating a learning-centered environment in which all are actively and intentionally constructing knowledge together.

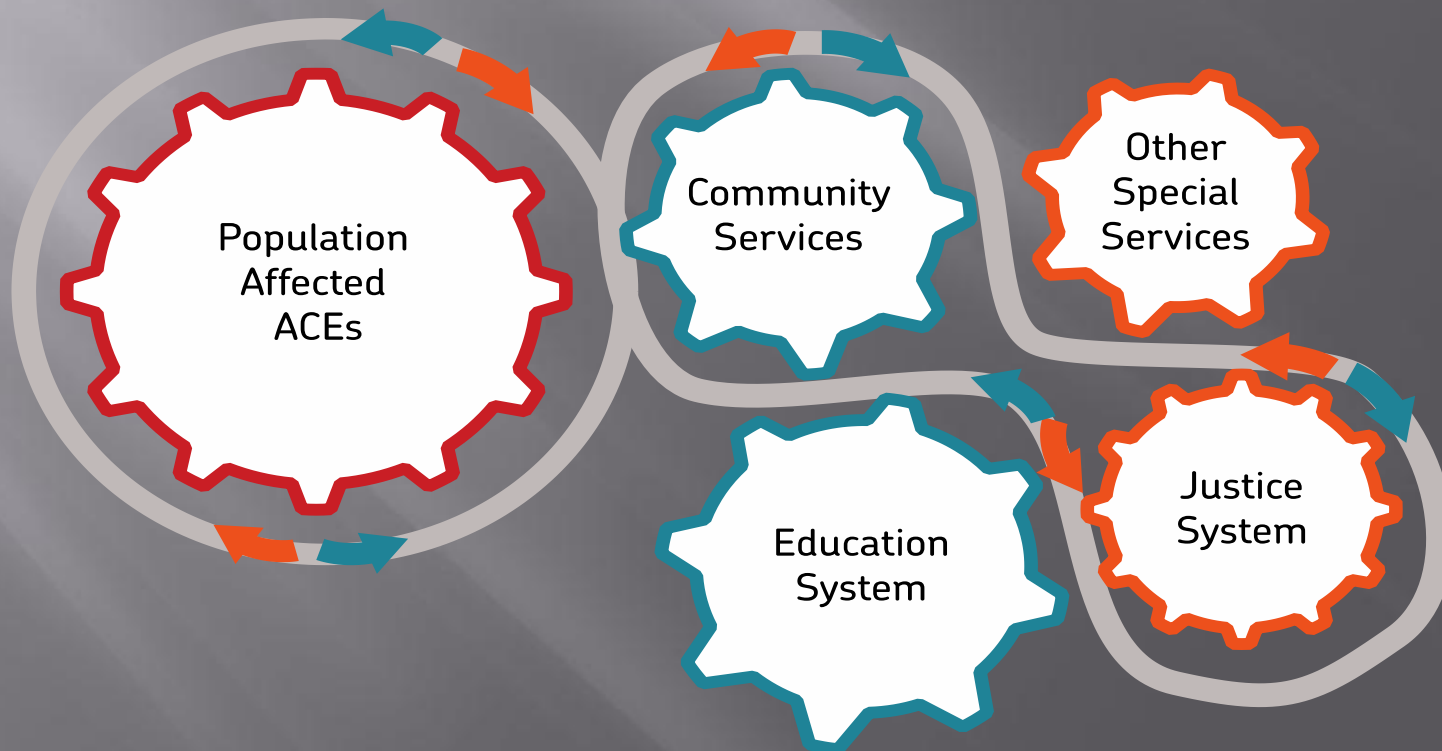
Learning communities are connected, cooperative, and supportive.

Peers are interdependent in that they have joint responsibility for learning and share resources and points of view, while sustaining a mutually respectful and cohesive environment.

While we talk about adversity and we talk about resilience, we're also making sure that we are aware of the fact that what we're inviting is a new kind of social contract.

We are inviting a social contract where the people most affected by adversity are leading the changes in our communities and are recognized as talented experts in how one navigates life, given the experience of early adversity.

## Building Self-Healing Communities



# What do we need to move forward?

Mutual understanding-Capacity to experience commonalities and differences and complexity of both

- How can we help each other to achieve the interests and needs of all?
  - How can we work together to make sure our common needs are met
  - How do we shift/adapt our mindset and behavior?
- 
- ▣ One goal with many voices-how to leverage
    - What are the solutions to meeting our community needs
    - How can we work together to make sure our common needs are met

In order to do that we need to create some space for people to think and act differently. If we want prevention, intervention and interdiction services to be supportive of the leadership of people most affected by ACEs, then we're talking about a very big change in the social contract. This talk is structured in a way that invites that change. The structure is subtle, by design.

Invites and Invent transformation by embedding a trauma informed approach  
ACEs and Culturally Responsive



**Help** *that* **Helps**



## Help that Helps

### Four Resilience Factors that Make a Difference

They are even more powerful when we *Layer Up...*

1. **Feeling social/emotional support and hope**
2. **Experiencing hope and help** (two or more people who give concrete help when needed)
3. **Community reciprocity** in watching out for children, intervening when they are in trouble, doing favors for one another
4. **Social Bridging** – People reach outside their social circle to get help for their family and friends



What does  
community healing  
mean? Look like?

What is our pathway,  
steps to recovery?

What does success  
look like?

What do we need to  
succeed?

Support

**FEELING**

socially & emotionally

**SUPPORTED**

**&**

**HOPEFUL**

*... Always or Usually*  
(vs Rarely or Never)



# Community Resilience

## Community Reciprocity

watching out for children, intervening when they are in trouble, and doing favors for one another



## Social Bridging

reaching outside one's immediate circle of friends to recruit help for someone inside that circle.

# Activity Processing...

## Check-in

What is one thing that you learned about yourself?

What is one thing that you learned about one of your peers?

What is one thing that is staying with you as you leave today?

# RESEARCH

- Documentary: Invisible Scars
- Discover magazine: Grandma's Experiences Leave a Mark on Your Genes (May 2013)  
- See more at: <https://thrivewa.org/work/trauma-and-resilience>
- The State Of Black Children & Families  
Conducted For The Children's Defense Fund On Behalf Of:  
The Black Community Crusade For Children, by Hart Research Associates
- The New York Times Opinionator: Protecting Children from Toxic Stress (Oct. 30, 2013)
- The New York Times Opinionator: Schools that Separate the Child from the Trauma (Nov. 13, 2013)
- The New York Times Opinionator: Teaching Children to Calm Themselves (March 19, 2014)
- This American Life (WBEZ/PRI): Back to School (Sept. 14, 2012)
- Nursing Research and Practice: A Framework to Examine the Role of Epigenetics in Health Disparities among Native Americans (Nov. 19, 2013)