The Effects of Historical Trauma & the Legacy of Mental Health

Within the context of African American History & Culture

Presented By:
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As of 2014 (MHA):

- 13.2% of the U.S. population, or roughly 45.7 million people, identify themselves as Black or African American.
- Adult African American's are more likely to have feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and worthlessness than are adult whites.
- African American teenagers are more likely to attempt suicide vs. white teenagers (8.3 percent v. 6.2 percent).
- African American's are also twice as likely than whites to be diagnosed with schizophrenia.

Of those, over 16% had a diagnosable mental illness in the past year.

That is over 6.8 million people more people than the populations of Chicago, Houston, and Philadelphia combined.

Sources:
**Cycle of Abuse**

1. **Tensions Building**
   - Tensions increase, breakdown of communication, victim becomes fearful and feels the need to placate the abuser.

2. **Incident**

3. **Reconciliation**
   - Abuser apologizes, gives excuses, blames the victim, denies the abuse occurred, or says that it wasn’t as bad as the victim claims.

4. **Calm**
   - Incident is “forgotten”, no abuse is taking place. The “honeymoon” phase.
Events that caused trauma:

• Forced migration
• Slavery & torture (Chattel slavery, mental slavery, discipline)
• Separation of families (removal of male figures)
• Discrimination (and Colorism)
• Medical experimentation, Misdiagnosis, creation of false diagnosis’
• Stolen property
• Dehumanization and Racist Propaganda
• Racial profiling
• Police brutality & Mass incarceration (the “13th” documentary, new Jim crow, new slavery, etc)
• Race based exclusion from health, educational, social and economic resources
• Death

All of which led to multigenerational poverty, limited education, isolation, low self esteem, self hate (and hatred of members of their culture), etc.
Trauma Timeline: Past to Present

**American Slavery**: 246 years
- 1619
- 1700
- 1800
- 1865
- 1900
- 1954
- 2000

**Segregation**: 89 years

Color coding:
- Red: American Slavery
- Yellow: Segregation
- Green: Present
The effects of Historical Trauma manifests itself emotionally and psychologically and is passed down from generation to generation. (Ross)

It presents itself as:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Isolation
- Loss of Sleep
- Substance Abuse
- Anger as coping mechanism
- Discomfort around white people
- Shame
- Fear and distrust
- Loss of Concentration
- Violence and suicide (including DV, physical child discipline, etc)
- Self hatred and anger/hatred toward members of their own group
There ain’t no hope for the youth, and the truth is, it ain’t no hope for the future. And then they wonder why we crazy” – Tupac, rapper
In addition to historical trauma, there are also many cultural stressors that could contribute to the overwhelming stress of being Black in America. These can include but are not limited to:

- stressful family environment
- limited social support
- racial stress / psychological stress due to stressors (micro-aggressions, racial profiling, etc)
- socio-economic status / limited financial support
- religious upbringing
- Dangerous & neglected communities
- Limited education
African American's of all ages are more likely to be victims of serious violent crime than are non-Hispanic whites, making them more likely to meet the diagnostic criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). (MHA)

Yearly statistics consistently show that black children are mistreated and killed at significantly higher rates than white and Latino children. (Patton)

Driving while Black (DWB)
Cycle of Abuse

1. **Tensions Building**
   - Tensions increase, breakdown of communication, victim becomes fearful and feels the need to placate the abuser.

2. **Incident**
   - Verbal, emotional & physical abuse. Anger, blaming, arguing, threats, intimidation.

3. **Reconciliation**
   - Abuser apologizes, gives excuses, blames the victim, denies the abuse occurred, or says that it wasn’t as bad as the victim claims.

4. **Calm**
   - Incident is “forgotten”, no abuse is taking place. The “honeymoon” phase.
African American's account for 37% of drug arrests, but only 14% of regular drug users (illicit drug use is frequently associated with self-medication among people with mental illnesses) — MHA

Is there a correlation between the medicating of young black children and their relationship with drugs as adults?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eI5mE5PBGJg
African American's today are over-represented in our jails and prisons. People of color account for 60 percent of the prison population. (MHA)

Extreme incarceration of black men leads to fewer black men in the home

The 3 largest mental health facilities in our nation are jails
PTSS

a set of behaviors, beliefs and actions associated with or, related to multi-generational trauma experienced by African American’s that include but are not limited to undiagnosed and untreated Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in enslaved Africans and their descendants.
Police Brutality & Social Media Exposure

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpVeUVcFMAU&feature=youtu.be
Cycle of Abuse

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Reasons Why African American’s Don’t Seek Help

“If you are silent about your pain, they’ll kill you and say you enjoyed it”
– Zora Neale Hurston, writer
Mental illness in the African-American community

1 in 5

African-Americans are 20 percent more likely to develop a mental illness during their lifetime than their white counterparts.

1 in 25

Suicide is ranked as the third leading cause of death in black men from ages 15-24.

4 percent of the UT student population is African-American.

Mental Health America; Suicide Prevention Resource Center; Texas Admissions: Student Profile

The Statistics

MENTAL HEALTH AMONG AFRICAN AMERICANS

20% AFRICAN AMERICAN ADULTS ARE 20 PERCENT MORE LIKELY TO REPORT PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS THAN WHITE ADULTS.

SOCIAL PROBLEMS SUCH AS RACISM, DISCRIMINATION AND SEXISM IS CONNECTED TO BLACK WOMEN BEING PRONE TO MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES.

IN 2012, 1 IN 5 (ROUGHLY 20 PERCENT OF) AFRICAN AMERICANS REPORTED HAVING NO HEALTH INSURANCE. COST REMAINS A HUGE ISSUE IN GETTING HELP FOR MENTAL ILLNESS.

SOCIAL STIGMA ASSOCIATED WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IS ONE OF THE PRIMARY REASONS PEOPLE DON'T SEEK HELP.

SOURCE: NAMI.ORG AND NCHS.NLM.NIH.GOV
Because less than 2% of American Psychological Association members are African American, some worry that mental health care practitioners are not culturally competent enough to treat their specific issues.

- This means, African American's seeking help-who would prefer an African American provider will have difficulty finding one (NCBI)
- African American's tend to describe physical symptoms rather than mental symptoms leading to misdiagnosis (NAMI). This is because symptom presentation can differ from what most clinicians are trained to expect
- African American patients rate their physicians' styles of interaction as more participatory when they see African American physicians. (NCBI)

Many African Americans believe that mental health treatment was designed by White people for White people. (Williams)

African Americans worry that professionals may have cultural biases due to exposure to African American's and African American stereotypes that prevent them from providing adequate treatment

African American physicians are five times more likely than white physicians to treat African American patients
Many African American's with mental disorders are unaware that they have a diagnosable illness at all (Williams).

They are even less aware that effective psychological treatments exist for their specific problem. (Williams)

Anxiety about therapy. Many African American's express fears about being involuntarily hospitalized, and are fear being "locked up" or "put away."
Nearly 25% of African American's are uninsured and are also more likely to use emergency and/or primary care specialists.

The financial burden of mental health treatment disproportionately affects African American's due to lower incomes and reduced employment opportunities.
Historically, medicine has used black bodies, without consent, for its own advancement; while, medical theories, technologies, and institutions were used to reinforce systems of oppression.

(thenhill.com)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBwVWrBk_uo
Dysaesthesiaria Aethiopica

Did you know???

The desire to escape slavery, was once classified as a mental illness called Drapetomania.

Drapetomania: A Psychiatric Diagnosis: “Runaway Slave Syndrome”

INVENTED BY
Dr. Samuel Adolphus Cartwright (1793 - 1863)
Physician & Psychiatrist

NEGRI'TUDE

Benjamin Rush
“The reason Henrietta’s Cells were so precious was because they allowed scientists to perform experiments that would have been impossible with a living human.”

The Tuskegee Experiment

Crownsville
A.K.A
“Hospital for the Negro Insane”
Eugenics

**SCIENCE OF RACISM**

**NEGROID SANE CRIMINALS**

**AND NEGROID CIVIL INSANE**

**MOSAIC OF METRIC DIFFERENCES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criminal</th>
<th>Civil Insane</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shorter, broader, higher heads</td>
<td>More pronounced cheekbones, more prominent malar and jaw angles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighter skin color</td>
<td>Fuller cheeks, more wrinkles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More woolly, less frizzy hair</td>
<td>More prominent chin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher, wider and more sloping foreheads</td>
<td>More prominent cheeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thicker eyebrows</td>
<td>More prominent nose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longer, narrower faces and noses</td>
<td>More prominent lips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shorter ears</td>
<td>More pronounced lips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less pronounced antihelices</td>
<td>More pronounced jawbones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less rolled helices</td>
<td>More prominent lower jaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly lighter eyes</td>
<td>More prominent earlobes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less pigmented sclerae</td>
<td>More pronounced earlobes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More inner eyelids</td>
<td>More pronounced forehead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher eye-openings</td>
<td>More prominent browridges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller browridges</td>
<td>More prominent browbones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher, narrower nasal roots, higher bridges</td>
<td>More prominent nose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More downward inclined septa</td>
<td>More prominent nose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinner nasal tips</td>
<td>More prominent nose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thicker integumental and membranous lips</td>
<td>More pronounced lips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More pronounced lip seams</td>
<td>More pronounced lips</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*We don't want the word to go out that we want to exterminate the Negro population.*

Margaret Sanger
Founder, Planned Parenthood

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**ALMOST 80% OF PLANNED PARENTHOOD FACILITIES ARE LOCATED IN MINORITY COMMUNITIES.**

“Abortion is genocide; it’s killing populations. It’s killing generations, and certainly the population that is most impacted by abortion in America is the Black community.”

-Dj Alveda King, niece of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
Almost 85% of African American’s have described themselves as "fairly religious" or "very religious"

And as they did in slavery, many would rather pray their pain away. (Coping mechanism)

Some African American’s even see mental illness as a punishment from God.

African American clients feel as if they are betraying their faith in God by seeking therapy.
Black/African American's hold beliefs related to stigma, psychological openness, and help-seeking, which in turn affects their coping behaviors (PTSS). (MHA)

- Stigma and judgment prevents African American's from seeking treatment for their mental illnesses.
- Privacy & Secrecy (Shame)
- Appearing weak amongst family and friends/social circle.
- Mental health issues are perceived to be “character flaws” and not actual mental health issues within the community.
Studies show African American's are just as much at risk for mental illness as their white counterparts, yet receive substantially less treatment.

Analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data shows that in 2005, African American's were 7.3 times a likely to live in high poverty neighborhoods with limited to no access to mental health services. (APA)
“People in the street going ape s***. Battling depression but nobody wanna say s***”

- Logic, rapper
1. **Cultural Competency for Professionals**

- Gain cultural understanding
- Be Trauma informed
- Be aware of biases/stereotyping based on exposure of African American’s
- Ask clients about their mental health history and familial mental health history
- **Be Transparent:** If expected outcome, number of sessions, and potential goals are clearly outlined in advance, there is little chance of feeling misled or not in control
- Help clients identify stressors and find ways or solutions to manage them.
- Communicate effectively & respectfully
“When you share your truth, and its dismissed, it becomes despair” –Levanya Lewis

- Do not minimize their experiences. Do not discount perceived micro aggressions or race based trauma. Encourage them to speak about it and validate their experiences.

- Implement ACES as a pre-screening practice to measure levels of trauma or “perceived” trauma. Include “Race based” trauma questions.

- Recognize & acknowledge as an added “strategy” how the value of strength manifests itself in people of color.

- Document ALL reported symptoms, and make sure you’re acknowledging, treating and addressing ALL reported symptoms.
2. **Improve Access to Treatment**

- Create Outreach programs & events. Go into the community. Don’t wait for the community to come to you.

- Create & Develop public education campaigns (e.g., mass media), educational presentations at community venues (e.g., Black churches), and open information sessions at local mental health clinics with Community mental health liaisons so that people of the community can ask questions and speak to someone in person.

- Network and build relationships with representatives from the community who can assist in the design, planning, and implementation of services. (NCBI)

- Advocate to make treatment more effective and cost efficient

- Integrate Mental Health w/ primary care – feel more comfortable with familiar doctors, etc

- Advocate for or help create publicly financed programs that provide a network of “safety net providers”

- Create, develop and provide resources about the effectiveness of treatment and the possibility of recovery from mental illness.
Advocate for Increased funding for African American psychologists, and other mental health providers, as well educational incentives to inspire graduating high school students and incoming college students to seek a career in mental health. This would help increase the number of African American's in treatment; as minority clinicians are more likely to see minority patients with more effective outcomes.

It would also help to decrease stigma and encourage others to seek mental and behavioral health care when needed (APA)

Minority psychologists can use their knowledge about the messages that will best resonate with African American's to help increase awareness, as well as provide culturally competent services that tailor to individual needs (APA)
4. Refer People to People, not Practices

Five Protective Factors

PARENTAL RESILIENCE

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

KNOWLEDGE of PARENTING and CHILD DEVELOPMENT

CONCRETE SUPPORT in TIMES of NEED

SOCIAL and EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE of CHILDREN
Evidence Based Practice

“The integration of the best available research with clinical expertise in the context of patient characteristics, culture and preferences.”
(American Psychological Association, 2005)

Usually referring to Empirically Supported Treatments (ESTs)/Evidence Based Treatments (EBTs) “A set of practices that may, or may not include, an EST/EBT and other interventions or supports and services that also contribute to successful outcomes for children, youth, families and consumers.”
(Martinez, 2007)

Practice Based Evidence

Practice based evidence is a set of practices that are unique and inherent in a culture that have proven to be effective based upon community consensus. (Martinez, 2007)

“A range of treatment approaches and supports that are derived from, and supportive of, the positive cultural attributes of the local society and traditions. Practice Based Evidence services are accepted as effective by the local community, through community consensus, and address the therapeutic and healing needs of individuals and families from a culturally-specific framework. Practitioners of practice based evidence models draw upon cultural knowledge and traditions for treatments and are respectfully responsive to the local definitions of wellness and dysfunction……”
(IsAfrican Americans, Huang, Hernandez, Echo-Hawk, 2006)
Everything Belongs, but Examine it’s Appropriateness CAREFULLY

ESTs/EBTs/EBPs/Cultural Adaptations, Practice Based Evidence, CDE all belong, but...

All must be examined for their cultural assumptions/biases in their epistemology, design (cultural worldview), standardization and replication;

Translations are not enough

Proportionately representative sampling of populations of focus are insufficient, need to over-sample

Cultural heterogeneity: US Census/GAO categories are not sufficiently descriptive
Who Defines Evidence?

We Need Other “Measuring Sticks”

1. What if “evidence” was defined broadly and not from one world view or epistemology?

2. What if policy makers, researchers, funders, administrators, key decision makers added other definitions of “evidence” (from other world views) to their repertoire of accepted research, practice and policy and funding criteria?

3. What if “evidence” was also defined from the “bottom up” instead of only from the “top down”
**Last Words**

“Racism is not real to a lot of people, period,” she says, “But what people also don’t seem to get is how [black people] internalize that racism and manifest that suffering because, for so long, we’ve been conditioned to hide it. But it’s real. It marks us everyday.”

– Brittany Packnet, Black Lives Matter activist

- Associated emotions re: slavery are pushed away. The pain and shame associated with being a descendant of an enslaved person for many African American's is not something they can easily discuss or process.

- African American's experience a hyper emotional response (pride, strength, etc) as a coping skill due to historical trauma, which can cause extreme mental stress. It’s important to acknowledge this strength and the resiliency.

- African American traditions need to also be acknowledged, supported and built upon, and their trust gained, in attempts to treat and reduce mental illness and increase mental health.

- For clinicians working with members of the black community, it is important to recognize the depth of feelings regarding mental health.
#ChangeTheStigma
Famous African American's who live with Mental Health Disorders

- Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson, actor
- Alicia Keys, singer
- Janet Jackson, singer
- Jennifer Lewis, actress
- Jesse Jackson, activist
- Solange, singer
- Nina Simone, singer
- Langston Hughes, writer
- Kid Cudi, rapper
- Mariah Carey, singer
- Fantasia, singer
- Brandon Marshall, athlete
- Halle Berry, actress
- Lark Voorhies, actress
- Serena Williams, athlete
- Don Cornelius, show host
- Macy Gray, singer
- Wayne Brady, comedian
Cultural Resources

- Taraji P. Henson’s, “Boris Lawrence Henson Foundation”
- Jada Pinkett’s “Red Table Talk” web series
- The Mother of Black Hollywood – Jennifer Lewis
- The “13th” documentary by Ava Duvernay
- I Am Not Your Negro – James Baldwin & documentary
- www.Blackdoctors.org
- Black Psychiatrists of America
- www.Therapyforblackgirls.com
- www.Blacktherapistsrock.com
- www.BlackTherapistsnetwork.com
- Kill Them Before They Grow: Misdiagnosis of African American Boys in American Classrooms - Michael Porter
1. Youtube:
   • Redbone Instrumental: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xiCZcbxigM
   • Historical Trauma: Context & Effects: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bgw5_xl0Zqk&t=2s
   • Jay Z - The War on Drugs: From Prohibition to Gold Rush | Yes on 64: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=el5mE5PBGJg
   • 13TH | Official Trailer [HD] | Netflix: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V66F3WU2CKk
   • Call in Black featuring @eeeeezzy: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpVeUVcFMAU&feature=youtu.be
   • Get Out (2017) - The Sunken Place Scene (1/10) | Movieclips: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBWVWrBk_uo&t=24s
   • Mahalia Jackson – Precious Lord, Take my hand: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bgw5_xl0Zqk&t=2s
   • Solange – Cranes In The Sky (Lyrics): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qogqro-lg10

2. “Black & African American Communities and Mental Health”: http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/african-american-mental-health


6. Genius Lyrics
   • Tupac – “Keep Ya Head up”: https://genius.com/2pac-keep-ya-head-up-lyrics
   • Logic – “Anxiety”: https://genius.com/Logic-anxiety-lyrics

16. 5factors - https://www.arundellodge.org/5-factors-that-affect-mental-health-in-african-american-communities/
17. Excerpt from The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot, pg. 58