

African Americans and Trauma

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- My only Goal is
to get you to Think Critically
- Disrupt Your Current
Thought Process regarding Trauma
and Racism

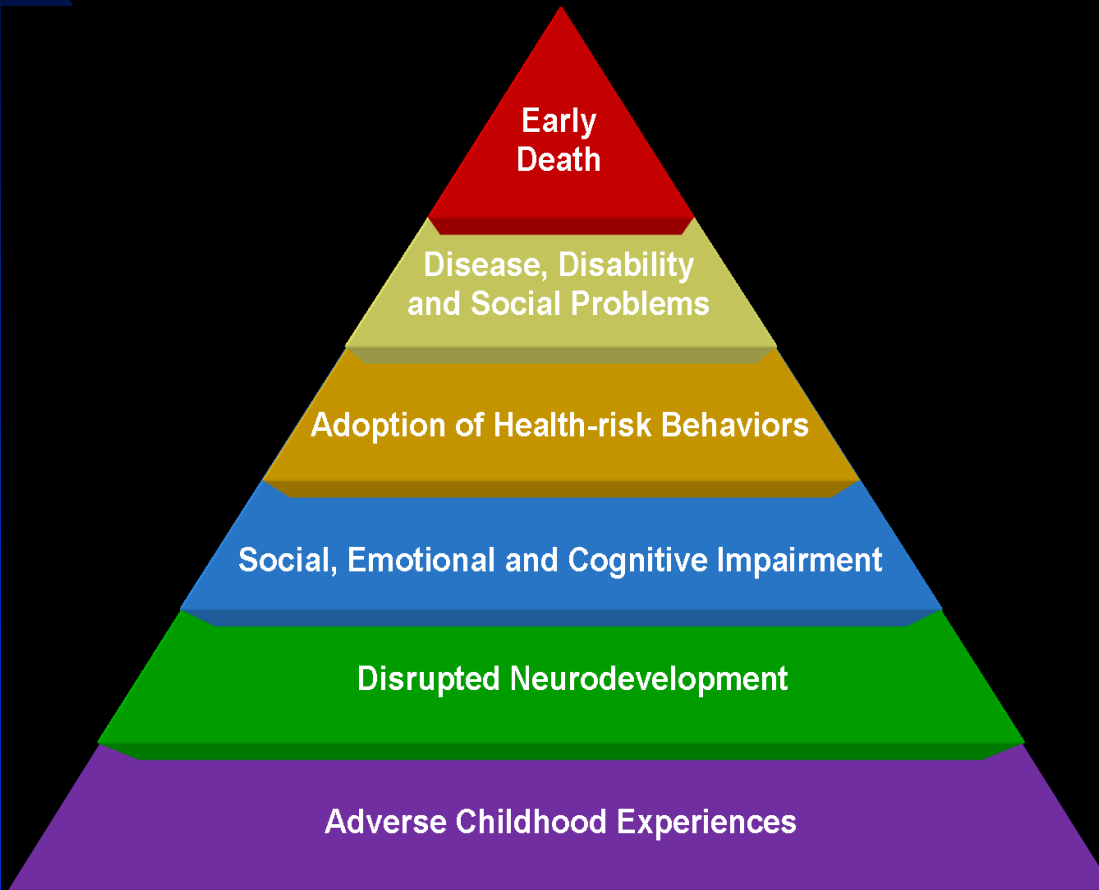


What Is Trauma?

- Quick and Dirty Definition: A Deep Emotional Wound.
- “Prolonged exposure to repetitive or severe events”

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Death



**The Ace
Pyramid**

Conception

HISTORICAL TRAUMA



GROUP OF SLAVE-CHILDREN ON BOARD THE "DAPHNE."

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(From a Photograph by the Author.)

EPIGENETICS

- How the experiences of previous generations can affect who we are and how we behave

Hidden wounds “Trauma”

“Racial oppression is the single most traumatic form of interpersonal beliefs which can kill the spirit, scar the soul, and puncture the psyche”

Different Assumptions of Race and Trauma

- Black people can take care of their own
- “They will get over it”
- This is how it is for Blacks in America
- Better equipped to deal with the trauma

The Impact of Race and Trauma

- Double Jeopardy of Racism and Sexism
- Often not considered in the American plan
- Children observing disrespect toward their parents
- Underlying Institutional Racism
(Dyson, 2006; Boyd-Franklin, 2009)

COVID-19: Double Trauma

- Trauma due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- *Death of Loved Ones
 - *Loss of Extended Family
 - *Loss of homes
 - *Loss of jobs
- * Trauma due to Racism shown on social media

Racism
has a physical
impact on the
body----Here's
how!



Physical Symptoms

- **Stomach aches / ulcers**
- **Rapid heartbeat**
- **Headaches**
- **Chronic Pain**
- **Hypertension**

Emotional Symptoms

- Chronic stress
- Negative feelings
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Anger
- Hopelessness
- Hurt

Religion and Spirituality

- Roles of Religion and Spirituality has change
- Church scandals
- Loss of faith
- Low church attendance by Blacks

Racism-related Psychological Trauma

- It involves negative, rejecting, and/or demeaning societal messages that undermine self esteem
(Butts, 2002)

Psychological Symptoms

- PTSD like symptoms
- Flashbacks
- Nightmares
- Recurrent Experiences
- Hypervigilance

Cautions

- Do not assume that all Black people will perceive racism in a given situation
- Do not assume that a Black person will be comfortable talking about racism particularly in cross-racial situations

Cultural Responses to Treatment

- Stereotypes:

- *for sick or crazy people

- * for White folks

- * for rich folks

- * for weak folks

- *Re-label “therapy” as
“counseling”

Narrative Model

- African Americans are storytellers
- Give people the opportunity to share their stories
- They may need to repeat their stories many times

Resilience Model

- Focus on survival skills and resiliency
- “This is not their first traumatic experience and it won’t be their last.”
- How have they overcome traumatic experiences in the past?

Grief Model

- Death and loss of loved ones
- Loss of home and community
- Unresolved mourning
- Cultural messages to “be strong”
- Guilt and shame
- Loss of dignity

Responses to the Trauma of Racism

- Healthy cultural suspicion
- Feelings of abandonment
- Anger
- Resentment
- Exacerbated by the experiences of racism and disrespect.

Holistic Energy Model

- Need for collective healing
- Alternative resource for helping African Americans through traumatic situations
- Culturally appropriate treatment intervention for African Americans

When a Black Person Raises the Issue of Race or Racism

- Be open
- Elicit the narrative or story about the experience
- Validate the feelings
- In Cross-racial situations, ask how the person feels discussing this issue with a non-Black person

How to Respond to Racism

- Recognize your own feelings
- Ignore the perpetrator
- Give up the ownership of the N_word
- Change your narrative
- Re-evaluate the value of the action

Racism and Trauma in America

- What are your experiences?
- When was your BLACK moment ?

