"People are trapped in history, and history is trapped in them." James Baldwin

“People who fit don’t seek. The seekers are those that don’t fit.” Shannon L. Alder

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder may develop after a person is exposed to a traumatic event like physical or sexual assault, exposure to disaster or accidents, combat or witnessing a traumatic event, can last years. The three main symptoms:

- **Reliving or re-experiencing:** include flashbacks, hallucinations, and nightmares.
- **Avoidance:** of people, places, thoughts, or situations that may remind them of the trauma.
- **Increased arousal:** Being easily startled; Feeling tense or “on edge”; Having difficulty sleeping, and/or having angry outbursts
Intergenerational Trauma

- 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.

- Intergenerational trauma was first observed in 1966 by clinicians alarmed by the number of children of survivors of the Nazi Holocaust seeking treatment in clinics in Canada.

Historical Trauma

- Historical (Collective) Trauma is 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.
  - Historical Unresolved Grief: Grief that has not been expressed, acknowledged and resolved.

- Dr. Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, PhD, conceptualized historical trauma in the 1980's, to address why life for many Native Americans is not fulfilling "the American Dream".

Six Phases

- 1st contact (Colonization 1492-1776)
- Economic Competition: Sustenance loss (physical/spiritual)
- Invasion War Period: Extermination and Refugee symptoms
- Subjugation and Reservation Period (1700s -1943): forced dependency on oppressor
- Relocation/Termination Period (1945-1968) Transfer to urban areas to empty the reservations

"Kill the Indian, Save the Man."
Captain Richard H. Pratt

"The Only Good Indian Is A Dead Indian."
Gen. Philip Sheridan
Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome (PTSS) is a condition that exists as a consequence of centuries of chattel slavery followed by institutionalized racism and oppression have resulted in multigenerational adaptive behavior, some positive reflecting resilience, and others that are harmful and destructive.

Theory of PTSS was developed by Dr. Joy DeGruy as a result of twelve years of quantitative and qualitative research.

"Many believe its not post but continuous."

My cattle at home are better cared for than these unfortunate persons."
— Col. Frank S. Nickerson, U.S. Army

African American Trauma Experience

American Chattel Slavery (1619-1865)

- Chattel Slavery (personal property, bought and sold as commodities or like cattle)
- 1619: First Africans in English Colonies
- Typical slave family was matriarchal in form; mother’s role was far more important than the father’s to master.
- 1808 importing Africans as slaves was banned.
- Breeding farms: boosting the enslaved population.
**Understanding Historical Trauma**

**Jim Crow South (1865-1965)**
- 1865 - 13th Amendment: abolished slavery and involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime...
- Ku Klux Klan: 1865 – six educated Confederate Vets
- 1866 - Convict Leasing: 374 prisoners could go for as little as $5. (single male slave $1200)
- Sharecropping: re-impose a form of slavery
- Lynchings (often included castration) 1882 to 1964, at least 4961 (4,742, south & 219 north).

**“Great Migration” and Ghetto (1915-68)**
- Leaving the farm, share cropping and abuse.
- Menial and industrial manufacturing jobs; segregated housing and employment.
- American Apartheid: sundown towns, racial zoning (1910) and redlining (1937)
- Destruction of Black cities and economic districts: St. Louis, MO (1917); Tulsa, OK (1921); Rosewood, FL (1923)

**Ghetto and Welfare (1968-1975)**
- Welfare rules “no adult men in the home”
- The exodus of low education high income industrial manufacturing jobs and middle class
- Drugs, crime and family disintegration (all inter-related) took a heavy toll on the inhabitants.

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Hyperghetto and Prison (1975-1990)

- **Hyperghetto**: extreme concentration of poverty
- **Mass incarceration**: Blacks make up 50 percent of prisoners incarcerated for drug crimes. Black kids are 10 times more likely to be arrested for drug crimes than white ones — even though white kids are more likely to abuse drugs.
- **Crack cocaine**: impacted women and children.
- Gang violence and concentrated police presence

Institutionalized Generation (1985 – ?)

- Individuals born between the early 1980’s or drug “Crack” Era until now.
- These generations has been enriched with services providers external to family members. Furthering an inferiority and dependent mentality.
- These individuals have developed elements of internalized oppression and extreme level of learned helplessness.

African American Citizenship

1619 - 2016

- **Chattel Slavery**: 1619-1865 (246 Years) no (south) or limited (north) rights
- **Jim Crow and Segregation**: 1865-1965 (100 Years) struggle for full inclusion
- **Citizenship Rights**: 1965-2016 (51 Years) struggle for full inclusion

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TRAUMA RESPONSE

Effects of Historical Trauma

- First Generation
  - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Subsequent Generations – Historical Unresolved Trauma / Survivor Syndrome
  - Guilt, Depression, Anger
  - Psychic numbing
  - Victim identity/death identity
  - Thoughts of suicide
  - Nightmares
  - Preoccupation with trauma
  - Relational problems
  - Physical symptoms including diabetes and other disease associated with high stress hormones

Survival Stress Management

- A process of adapting to stressful situations by reacting without thinking of the consequences of our choices. Resulting in increased stress and/or depression:
  - Judgmental and distorted thoughts and feelings, impatience, exploitation, aggression, abuse and violence directed against one’s self or others.
  - Addictive substances and behavior (i.e., drugs, alcohol, sex, shopping, fast money, gambling, food, video games, etc.) produces a limited sense of relief requires repetitions.
- Loss of a narrative of Resiliency Of Hope.
“History is not about the past. It’s about the present!” – Dr. El-Kati

CURRENT LOOK

- Hyper-masculine identity:
  - a high physical pain threshold
  - poor emotional regulation/Numbness
  - hyper objectification of females and misogyny (dislike of women)
  - sexual prowess
  - Female dependent

- Them often feel socially, economically and educational systems excluded.

- Consistently portrayed in media as a sexualized, primitivist manner or super-masculine that appeal to white audiences, but simultaneously fear them.

African American Men

- Between the ages of 13 to 25
- Attachment issues with previous generations
- Sex for Significance, Security and Belonging and Power
- High-risk behaviors – drugs and alcohol use, gangs, risky sex, etc.
- Homicide and Glorification of death – little respect for life, more praise in death i.e. Biggie and Tupac.
- Rite of passage involves an trauma (incarceration, unplanned for pregnancy, injury, etc.)

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and the Trauma Continues....

- Young black males die from gun violence at a rate 2.5 times higher than Latino males, and eight times higher than white males.
- Intimate partner homicide is the leading cause of death for African-American women ages 15 to 45.
- Blacks make up 15% of the general US population, yet 42% of children in foster care in the United States are Black.

“Fear of the truth of the past blinds future generations of the goal of healing”

OBSTACLES TO HEALING

- Continued institutional racism, oppression and distrust (concerns related to police response, legal system involvement, and agency attitudes)
- Strong cultural stigma attached to mental illness and trauma (“considered a weakness” “faith is enough”)
- Mistrust of health professionals and psychiatry in particular rooted in the form of research projects.
- Lack of culturally competent services and research (historical trauma and racism dismissed as irrelevant)
- Belief that suffering is a part of Black Life
“Change does not come without people in power being willing to be uncomfortable.”
Uncle Big

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

Community/Leadership/Providers

- Acknowledge the Pain to begin the healing
- African American institutions, leadership and clergy to encourage and promote: educate about historical trauma and participation of in mental health services both traditional and non-traditional
- Develop ways of addressing historical trauma (slavery) and its legacy in our work and research.
- Be aware of their trauma and/or beliefs (bias) to not add to the trauma
- Community Leadership, need to role-model the willingness to start their own healing journey.

Compassionate Accountability

Some people we relate to and others we don’t or even repulse us. Doing what is easy can have consequences like...

- Compassion without accountability can encourage chaos.
- Accountability without compassion, complacent, self-satisfying
- Swing back and forth, we are not consistent, fair or clear.

Compassion Accountability: help us seek truth, understanding, forgiveness, justice, humility and leave others empowered without blame and excuses.
“The village that hides the truth cannot expect to heal but to pass on the pain.” Uncle Big