Historical Trauma
The Impact on Communities of Color

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Workshop Objective

- To understand the history of colonization and the impact on people of color
- To understand how trauma that in the past still affects people of color today
- To identify ways to address historical trauma in our service delivery
Historical Intergenerational Trauma

“An event or series of events perpetrated against a group of people and their environment, namely people who share a specific group identity with genocidal or ethnocidal intent to systematically eradicate them as a people or eradicate their way of life.”

Dr. Karina Walters 2012
Impact of War

Indirect Pathways of Transmission
- economic downfall,
- increased family
- burden, diminished
- productivity, social
- exclusion, family
- conflict, and
- compromised
- parenting

Direct Pathways of Transmission
- Conversations
- Silence
- Proximity
- Closeness

Current Situation
- Economic
disadvantage, extra
household
responsibilities,
experiences of
regret, feeling hurt,
getting caught in
family conflict, and
social exclusion
How Do These Affect:

• Native Americans?
• African Americans?
• Holocaust survivors?
• Japanese internment survivors?
• Hispanics/Latinos?
• Asians?
• War refugees?
• Families experiencing intergenerational poverty?
Manifestations May Include:

• Mistrust of health care, legal, and educational systems

• Higher rates of risk behaviors such as alcohol and drug abuse

• Mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and suicide

• Violent behavior, homicide, and domestic violence

• Higher rates of chronic diseases
Historical Trauma

- Historical trauma is the cumulative exposure to traumatic events that not only affect the individual exposed, but continue to affect subsequent generations.

- The untreated trauma in the parent is passed on to the child through the attachment process and implicit or explicit message about the world (i.e., relationship to self, safety).
Trauma Subtypes

• Cultural trauma is an attack on the fabric of a society, affecting the essence of the community and its members

• Historical trauma is the cumulative exposure of traumatic events that affect an individual and continues to affect subsequent generations

• Intergenerational trauma occurs when trauma is not resolved, subsequently internalized, and passed from one generation to the next

• Present trauma is what today's youth are experiencing on a daily basis

We blame youth for showing the symptoms of trying to survive in the violent world us adults fail to change for them’’

Jeremy NeVilles-Sorell
Trauma may result from:

- A direct, personal experience of an event
- Witnessing an event
- Learning about an event
- Being threatened with death
- Experiencing serious injury of self
- Experiencing threat to one's physical integrity
- The death, threat of death, serious injury, threat to physical injury of another
Some cautions about the concept

• It is NOT culturally safe to assume that everyone within a group or community or family has been impacted by historical trauma, or by the same experiences as others

• Can overlook resilience, strength and persistence of culture in Individuals and communities

• The idea of intergenerational trauma can pathologize certain parenting practices, particularly around corporal punishment
Sometimes violence was used as a protective factor

- Harsh punishment of kids because they would be lynched if they acted up
- Parents rather be the ones to issue corporal punishment – sign of “love”
- Aligning behaviors and actions with those with the power was for survival
Individual and social pathology

• Individual pathology is a term used to refer to biological or psychological explanations of criminal or deviant behavior by individuals.

• Social pathology is a term used to describe social factors, such as poverty, old age or crime that bolster social disorganization. At the same time, the term refers to the study of these factors and the social problems they may lead to.
History over pathology

“Behavior was adapted to what was happening at the time, now it’s become maladaptive. Beatings were supposed to save lives. I can’t tell you why you can’t go outside at night, because people wanted to hang you.”

Sam Simmons
What’s the Impact on Us Today?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Society</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(how it affects you personally)</td>
<td>(what my relatives do)</td>
<td>(where we live and what is happening)</td>
<td>(us as a people)</td>
</tr>
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History is Not in the Past

• “Stop blaming me for what happened in the past”
• “You need to get over it/move on”
• “Well, that’s my opinion so let’s agree to disagree”
• “But America is one big melting pot”
• “But what about black-on-black crime?”
• “Why must you always be the victim?”
Trauma Affects where we start

Examples of indicators measuring life course socioeconomic position (Galobardes et al, 2006)
ACEs: The 10 Areas of Trauma

1. Psychological Abuse
2. Physical Abuse
3. Sexual Abuse
4. Emotional Neglect
5. Physical Neglect
6. Loss of a Parent (for any reason)
7. Mother Treated Violently
8. Substance Abuse
9. Mental Illness
10. Criminal Behavior in the Household

The questions are described on the ACE website

www.acestudy.com
Trickle Down Affect

The "genotype" is the genetic makeup of an organism, the phenotype is how genetic and environmental influences come together to create an organism’s physical appearance and behavior.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intergenerational transmission</th>
<th>Multigenerational transmission</th>
<th>Transgenerational transmission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exposure leads to changes in phenotype in children</td>
<td>Exposure leads to changes in phenotype in children and grandchildren</td>
<td>Exposure leads to changes in phenotype in children, grandchildren, and subsequent generations to exposed to initial insult</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Diagram showing the transmission of phenotype across generations](image)
Institutional Responses

No matter what you look like coming in ... 

...the desired outcome is the same
Principles of Trauma-Informed Care

1. Safety
2. Trustworthiness and Transparency
3. Peer Support
4. Collaboration and mutuality
5. Empowerment, voice, and choice
6. Cultural, Historical, and gender issues
Addressing Historical Trauma

**Spiral Model:**

1. Start with people’s experience;
2. Look for patterns;
3. Add new information and theory;
4. Practice skills, strategize, and plan for action;
5. Apply in action.
Conclusion

• What was frustrating?

• What was validating?

• How will this change how you work with boys and men of color?

• Additional comments or questions