Building Wellness and Resilience Among BIPOC Communities: Engaging Community Wisdom

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Resilience Pause

They say beauty comes from a spirit that has weathered many hardships in life and somehow continues with resilience.

Grace can be found in a soul that ages softly, even amid the tempest.

I think the loveliest by far is the one whose gentle heart bears a hundred scars from caring, yet still finds a way to pick up the lamp, one more time, to light the way for love.

Poem by Susan Frybort
Intersectionality: Climate Change & Trauma

COMPLEX TRAUMA & HISTORICAL CONTEXT

"Much of what we see today is the result of history, unaddressed, repeating itself. That is why people need to know the history, to truly confront it and heal from what has gone before us.”

~Isabel Wilkerson

COMPLEX TRAUMA & CLIMATE CHANGE

“But climate change and disasters have been an important ‘threat multiplier’ over many years, exacerbating food insecurity, decimating water reserves, expanding drylands and creating underlying levels of social vulnerability.”

~Ali, 2017
The Murder Felt Around the World!
Collective Healing, Accountability, & Resilience
The Tunnel Experience

Durvasula, 2017
Expanding our thinking...

**SCARCITY**
“...captures the mind......The mind orients automatically, powerfully, toward unfulfilled needs. For the hungry, that need is food. For the busy it might be a project that needs to be finished. For the cash-strapped it might be this month’s rent payment......”

“...costs us, we neglect other concerns, and we become less effective in the rest of life”

**BANDWITH**
“...measures our computational capacity, our ability to pay attention, to make good decisions, to stick with our plans, and to resist temptations.....

By constantly drawing us back into the ‘tunnel’ scarcity taxes our bandwidth, and as a result, inhibits our most fundamental capacities“

(Mullainathan & Shafir, 2014 as cited by Durvasula, 2017)
Cognitive Concept of Bandwidth

Bandwidth is associated with working memory, processing of new information, and elements of executive functioning such as circumspect anticipation of future consequences.

Bandwidth depletions [compromises] processing of new information – as such even the best designed public health campaign which requires people to absorb new information may not work.

The candy by the cash register:
- These bandwidth depletions also make it more difficult to exert behavioral control and health promoting behaviors

Durvasula, 2017
Understanding the Scarcity and Expanding the Bandwidth in BIPOC Communities

Consulting with others in the field (nationally and globally): *Lessons Learned*

Cross-disciplinary collaboration (serving same populations): *Expanding Resources*

Fostering genuine cultural engagement: *Foster Cultural Allies*

  Collaborating with community leaders: *Active Listening before Acting*

  Meet the people where they are: *Literally and Figuratively*

Understanding systemic pressures that impact relational engagement

  Intention versus Impact
What’s at Risk!

"Tell them we're temporarily out of deep concern. Will they settle for shallow compassion?"
Expanding Transformative Resilience

Resilience, Complex Trauma, & Intersectionality in Communities of Color

- Trauma Defined (Social Context, Residuals)
- Historical and Persistent/Contemporary Trauma
- Collective Healing and Balance: *Healing the Village that Heals the Child!*

Working from a Strengths-based Trauma-Informed Approach that is Culturally-Affirming and Culturally-Accountable

- Fostering Provider Resilience
- Promoting Community Cultural Allies (preventive and responsive)
- Implications for how you approach your work: Cultural Humility

PREPARED BY THEOPIA JACKSON, PHD
Resilience: The Personal & The Community

The capacity of a (person/community) to deal effectively with...

- stress and pressure
- cope with everyday challenges
- rebound from disappointments, mistakes, trauma, and adversity
- develop clear and realistic goals
- solve problems
- interact comfortably with others
- hear oneself and others with respect and dignity

Brooks, 2005

**Personal Factors**

- Biological
- Attachment
- Control/Sense of Agency

**Community and Cultural Factors**

- Access to support services; Community networking
- Attachment to the community; Participation in community group
- Community/cultural norms
- Strong cultural identity/ethnic pride

Kelly, 2015
Suspending What We Think We Know. Actualizing Cultural Humility

...as a commitment and active engagement in a lifelong process that individuals enter into on an ongoing basis with (persons), communities, colleagues, and with themselves...a process that requires humility in how we bring into check the power imbalances that exist in the dynamics of communication.

Trevalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998

Lifelong Learning
Self-Reflection
Self-Critique

The most serious barrier to culturally appropriate care is not a lack of knowledge of the details of any given cultural orientation, but the providers’ failure to develop self-awareness and a respectful attitude toward diverse points of view.

Trevalon, 2008
Summary: Both/And Approach and YOU!!!!

It is recommended that effective services take into account the unique experiences of (communities of color) and culturally-congruent (culturally-affirming) healing approaches such as documented in Black psychology and Culturecology (culture is the defining substance of all human action).

Service providers should be able to articulate how such realities are addressed in their work: Cultural Accountability.

Rowe & Webb-Msemaji, 2004
Paradigm Shifts and Mindset

**Importance of Language**
At-potential in at-risk environments versus at-risk populations
Returning Citizens versus Parolees
Displaced Citizens versus Homeless
Persons living with... versus Mentally ill

“*What has happened to you versus what is wrong with you.*”

**Strengths-based Approach: Expanding the Bandwidth**
How to recognize what has already been happening and move from a problem-saturated victim-expert stance to an active collaborative strengths-based approach!

◦ What’s happening with me so I can be there with them?
◦ How do I partner with protective factors *before* climate change adversities?
◦ Intention versus Impact: economic exploitation versus invigoration

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Pathways Forward

Vicarious Resilience
- is the process of (service providers) learning about overcoming adversity from the trauma survivors they work with
- the resulting positive transformation and empowerment in those (service providers) through their empathic engagement with the stories of trauma and resilience of (the persons and communities served)

Collective Healing
- A process that leads to a deeper and fuller engagement with the self, with others, and with the world.

On Becoming in Trauma Work!

Berthold, 2011
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principles of a Trauma-Informed Approach</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safety (<em>emotionally, spiritually, economically)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness and transparency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaboration and mutuality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empowerment</td>
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<td>Voice and choice</td>
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Darryl Turpin, retrieved 2017
Create Trauma Informed SYSTEMS OF CARE

Understand the prevalence and impact of trauma
Promote safety
Communicate with compassion
Earn trust
Embrace diversity
Provide holistic care
Respect human rights
Pursue the person’s strengths, choice and autonomy
Share power

Think Sustainability!

- Cultivate strong interagency and community relationships
- Create opportunities to maximize resources
- Combat stigma and build capacity in the community

Stewart, 2016

Nothing for Us Without Us!
Fostering Cultural Collaborations

Ethnic Psychological Associations

The Association of Black Psychologists, Inc.
- www.abpsi.org

Asian American Psychological Association
- https://aapaonline.org/

Institute for Muslim Mental Health
- http://www.muslimimentalhealth.com/

National Latinx Psychological Association
- https://www.nlpa.ws/

Society of Indian Psychologists
- https://www.aiansip.org/
Fostering Cultural Collaborations

All Healers Mental Health Alliance (2005)

a national network of psychiatrists, faith leaders, social workers, psychologists, other mental health professionals, and allied associates formed an organization

Institute of the Black World 21st Century Black Family Summit and Disaster Relief Task Force

African American Health Alliance and Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Coalition

The Association of Black Psychologists, Inc.

Community Healing Network, Inc.

National Association of Black Social Workers

Black Psychiatrists of America; National Medical Association;

International Association of Black Professional Firefighters
Social Action, Advocacy, & Empowerment

Held weekly telephone conference calls to facilitate responses to the needs of black communities affected by Hurricane Harvey in the Houston, TX area from August-October 2017 along with the Houston Association of Black Psychologists, Houston Association of Black Social Workers, and other community groups which utilized their pre-existing collaborations to obtain grant funding and continue providing for black communities in the Houston area to the present.

Connected black community leaders Port Arthur, TX directly to FEMA to ensure that neglected neighborhoods would receive disaster relief. Weekly conference calls and subsequent connection with a national network of community leaders, activists, and church leaders resulted in the delivery of truckloads of goods including food and essential supplies to black communities affected by the Hurricane Harvey disaster.

Interfaced with community leaders and mental health professionals from the U.S. Virgin Islands to support USVI residents affected by the Hurricanes Irma and Maria. AHMHA members participated in radio shows on USVI to share information on the mental health impact of disaster and to encourage resilience-promoting action.

Coordinated the development of a webinar on mental health and cultural issues of the U.S. Virgin Islands population, through connections with FEMA leaders and SAMHSA, in order to train and increase the cultural understanding of Disaster Distress Hotline counselors from around the country who will field crisis calls from USVI. This webinar is planned for late March 2018.
A Community Based Self-Affirming Self-Help Process

Family-Care, Community-Care and Self-Care Tool Kit: Healing in the Face of Cultural Trauma
(http://www.communityhealingnet.org/resources/)
Informed by the EECsSM and provides information for understanding trauma and suggested responses that are culturally-centered.
Kitchen Table Talks

Effective Cultural Allies
Paul Kivel
(http://www.communityhealingnet.org/resources/)
Offers a menu of resources in fostering effective cultural allies.
Closing Reflections: Expanding the Bandwidth

*To be equal means that someone has to let go of something and someone else has to claim something.*

1. Identify the community wisdom; *know where you are and, in whose house*
2. Planning meetings should be held in the communities to be served; *centering their experiences*
3. Strategic partnerships with communities on the ground; *build upon & learn from community wisdom*
4. Community-partnered social justice projects as core value; *action words*
5. Service providers’ strategic attention to the inherent implicit bias and systems of oppression/racism; *ongoing self-reflection, correction, forgiveness, grace, and accountability*
6. Expanding the cultural representation and acknowledgement; *noting for us without us*
7. Service-leader spirit in invigorating the community – innovative and creative engagement models *meet communities where they are;* [re]teach them to fish
8. Healthy Paranoia (Hardy, 1998); Earning trust. *Just because you have a need to feed does not mean that communities have a desire to be fed!*

PREPARED BY THEOPIA JACKSON, PHD
1. Recall a time when you entered a BIPOC community with good intentions and ‘discovered’ community wisdom that demonstrated or promoted resilience? Lessons from the Field.

2. What would be your do-over?

3. Name at least 2 practical things that we can do to identify, recognize, engage, and/or partner with BIPOC community wisdom?
Life is lived forwards, but understood backwards

~African Proverb

Ella's Song - Resistance Revival Chorus June 19, 2020
CLOSING REFLECTIONS
GROOVIN’ IN COMMUNITY

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