

“WHY FOCUS ON HEALING?”

**engaging
African American
men**

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Objectives:

- ▶ The conference history
- ▶ The link between the historical and intergenerational trauma to current community challenges.
- ▶ The importance of clinicians, the community and clients being aware of the trauma link to improve collaboration and outcomes.

The Conference History

- ▶ Two Black Men
 - One activist (the past)
 - One counselor (now)
 - Both and.....

- ▶ No money

- ▶ June 2009: took it to the community.

Trauma

Trauma is the exposure to extreme stressor(s) of an event that involves actual or perceived threat to ones Health, safety, and wellbeing or witnessing being informed of an event that involves death, injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of another person.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

- ▶ **PTSD** is a type of anxiety disorder. It can occur after you've seen or experienced a traumatic event that involved the threat of injury or death.
 - May occur soon after a major trauma, or more than 6 months after the event. When it occurs soon after the trauma, it usually gets better after 3 months. However, some people have a longer-term form of PTSD, which can last for many years.

Social Traumas

- ▶ **Social Traumas** are caused by experiences with prejudice and discrimination on a personal level as well as cultural and structural inequities based on factors such as race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and disabilities.

Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

- ▶ A history of subjection to totalitarian or oppressive control over a prolonged period (months to years). Examples include hostages, prisoners of war, concentration-camp survivors and survivors of some religious cults, including survivors of prolonged domestic battering, prolonged childhood physical or sexual abuse, and organized sexual exploitation. **Some would say Slavery!**

Collective & Historical Traumas

- ▶ **Collective and Historical Traumas** are caused by events that target a group of people, and the effects are passed down through the generations.
- ▶ **Cultural trauma** involves the destruction of the culture of origin by the disruption of language, economic, sociopolitical, and spiritual systems through oppression and imposition of the ideology of a foreign culture, causing loss of identity, community, and worldview.

The Five Trauma Points

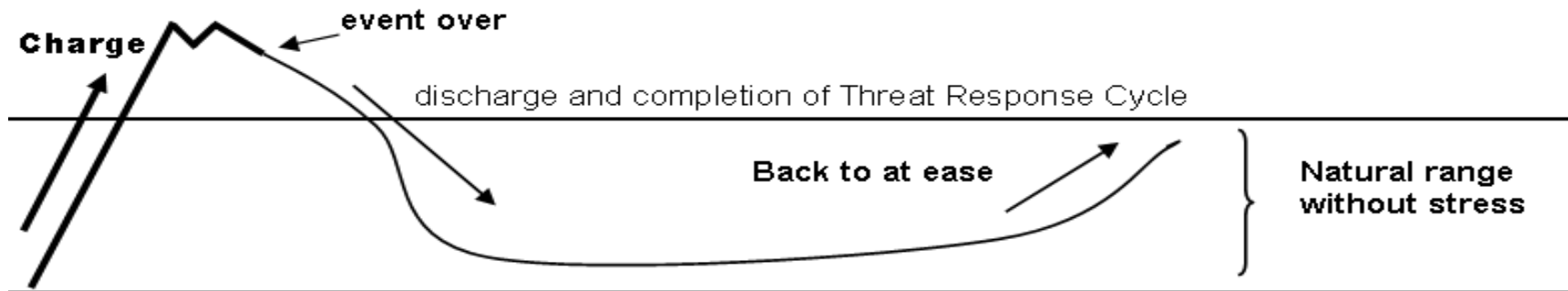
- ▶ **Chattel Slavery (1619–1865)**
- ▶ **Jim Crow (South, 1865–1965)** lynchings, state-sponsored terrorism, the Klu Klux Klan
- ▶ **Ghetto (North, 1915–68)** Northern migration, segmented industrial manufacturing
- ▶ **Ghetto and welfare (1968–present)** – “no adult men in the home”
- ▶ **Hyperghetto, “War on Drugs” and Prison (1975–present)** – \$50 (5 grams of crack) vs \$50,000 (500 grams of power) = mandatory five-year

Trauma and Trauma Response

- ▶ Threat Response Cycle
 - Interruption in Threat Response Cycle
 - Stuck in “Fight or Flight” or Survival Mode
 - Struck in Freeze and Dissociation
- ▶ Survival Stress Management Skills/Coping Styles
- ▶ Some Effects of Social, Collective and Historical Traumas

Threat Response Cycle

Fight or Flight



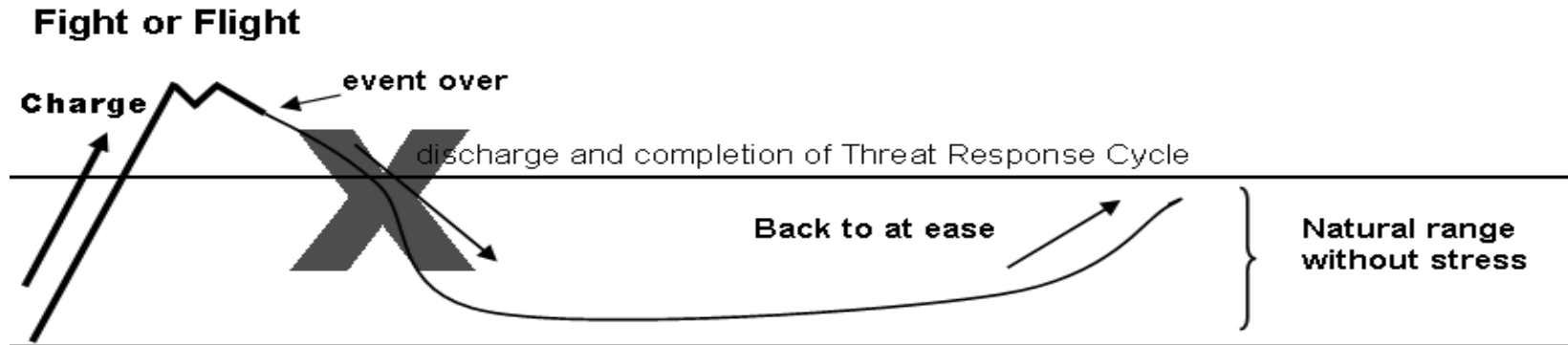
Charge:

- ▶ Muscle contraction
- ▶ Adrenalin and Cortisol secretion
- ▶ Increased heart rate
- ▶ Survival energy production

Discharge:

- ▶ Tingling
- ▶ Trembling
- ▶ Tears
- ▶ Completion of defensive movements

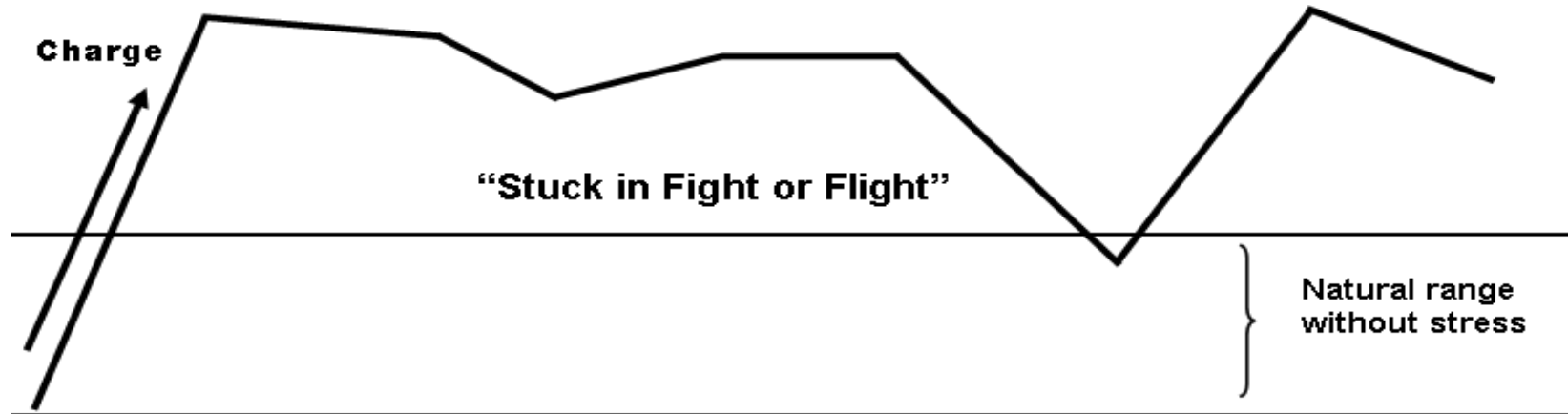
Threat Response Interruption



Some Causes:

- ▶ **Not wanting to feel out of control:** stop ourselves “get a grip (literally)” and “Just get over it,”
- ▶ **Situational priorities:** (attend to a child’s needs)
- ▶ **Ongoing threats** (recurring abuse/violence)
- ▶ **New situations that prompt more Threat Responses:** (denial of traumatic events by others, racial microaggressions)

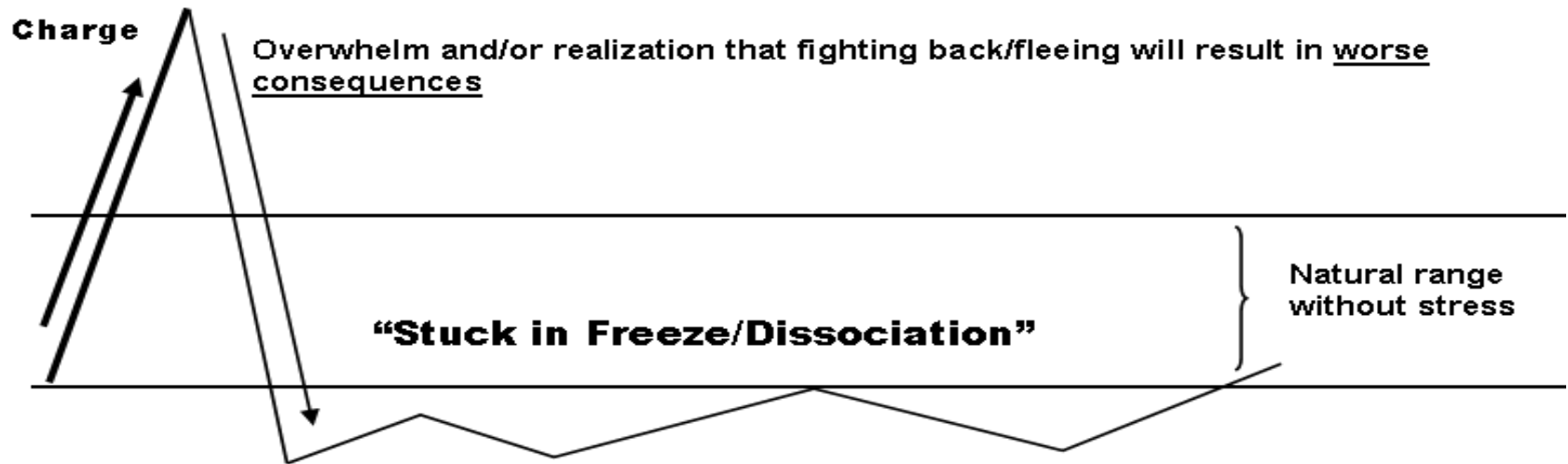
Stuck in Fight/Flight or Survival



Trauma Symptoms include:

- ▶ Anxiety, agitation, hypervigilance, irritability, anger outbursts
- ▶ Difficulty with staying engaged in relationships/jobs/projects
- ▶ Tendency to connect the dots that do not belong together (S/he must be cheating on me," "he is disrespecting me," etc.)
- ▶ Difficulty relaxing, resting or sleeping, insomnia, nightmares
- ▶ **In Children:** Hyperactivity, difficulty sitting still/concentrating, compulsive talking, truancy, runaway, bullying

Struck in Freeze and Dissociation



Trauma Symptoms include:

- ▶ Depression, feelings of emptiness, detachment and difficulty defending self or facing conflicts
- ▶ Inability to connect the dots that are right in front of them (fails to notice child is missing for hours)
- ▶ **In Children:** difficulty processing information, "loner," excessive shyness/fearfulness, clinging

Survival Stress Management Skills/Coping Styles

- ▶ A process of attempting to bring balance or adapting to stressful situations by acting or reacting without thinking of the consequences of our choices, short-term or long-term; immediate satisfaction or instant self-gratification; trying to control the environment:
 - 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, gambling, food, video games, etc.) produces a limited sense of relief requires repetitions.

Some Effects of Historical Traumas

When Stuck in Fight/Flight

- ▶ Having to work hard to manage anger/fear in daily encounters with prejudice, discrimination and lack of equality
- ▶ Conscious/unconscious expectations of being treated unfairly because of one's race, sexual orientation, gender, etc.
- ▶ Distrust/judgment against people in one's own community (i.e., internalized oppression)

Some Effects of Historical Traumas

When Stuck in Freeze/Dissociation

- ▶ Hopelessness/powerlessness and resignation about prejudice, discrimination and inequity (a conscious/unconscious belief that things/people cannot change)
- ▶ A pattern of not speaking up about prejudice, discrimination and inequity followed by a sense of resentment/shame/selfblame
- ▶ Indifference, withdrawal from relationships in one's own community

Promising Practices

- ▶ Healing Generations Curriculum for African American Men
- ▶ Trauma-Informed Approach
- ▶ Thinking for a Change
- ▶ Somatic Healing
- ▶ Taking treatment to the men

Healing Generations Curriculum

- ▶ The Healing Generations Curriculum aims to break the intergenerational cycle of violence by allowing African American Men the opportunity to safely explore the links between different experiences of violence, while building skills to assist them in refraining from violence against women, children, community members or themselves.

Trauma-Informed Approach

- ▶ Trauma-informed care is an approach to engaging people with histories of trauma that recognizes the presence of trauma symptoms and acknowledges the role that trauma has played in their lives.
- ▶ Recognizing that trauma includes physical, sexual and institutional abuse, neglect, intergenerational trauma, and disasters that induce powerlessness, fear, recurrent hopelessness, and a constant state of alert.

Thinking for a Change

- ▶ Thinking for a Change (T4C) is an integrated, cognitive behavior change program for offenders that includes cognitive restructuring, social skills development, and development of problem solving skills.
- ▶ Modified for community use (stories, role play examples, etc.)

Somatic Healing

- ▶ A body-focused therapy for healing trauma.
- ▶ Somatic healing is a process of helping our body's nervous system regulate itself, move through the survival stage of the Stress Response Sequence, and return to the state of ease.

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Taking Treatment to the Men

- ▶ Engaging fathers through cognitive and emotional health focused empowerment group in concert with one to one counseling, 20 minute sessions. (Father Project & AAFS)
- ▶ Emotional Health and Stress management training to help African American men learn better coping methods.
- ▶ Safe places to tell their stories in the community

Intervention and Prevention

- ▶ Community Education/Intervention and Prevention
- ▶ Provider Education/Service Delivery
- ▶ Policies
- ▶ Research

Community Intervention

- ▶ African American institutions, community leaders and health professionals must encourage and promote participation and involvement of African American men in both traditional and non-traditional institutional structures, groups and relationships.
- ▶ Conduct stigma awareness training at faith institutions, community organizations, and primary care settings.

Provider Education & Service

- ▶ Develop and support mental health promotion/intervention initiatives that are specifically geared to African American males.
- ▶ Incorporate Trauma from a cultural perspectives as part of the assessment and treatment process.
- ▶ Increase awareness of connections between chronic diseases, mental health and trauma.

Provider Education & Service

Counseling Staff

- ▶ Educate our patients about what is normal in the aftermath of trauma.
- ▶ Be aware not to add to the trauma with your beliefs (it's just excuse, they should know better.) Compassionate Accountability
- ▶ Be aware of the vicarious trauma as a provider.

Research

- ▶ Increase the representation of people of color in the research in order to develop more culturally effective interventions.
- ▶ Fund research to increase our understanding of the underlying Physical and Mental health effects of racism and other forms of trauma, both acute and chronic.
- ▶ Consider racism as a form of trauma that could account for health disparities.

Questions and Answers

"Hurt people Hurt people"

Instead of "What's wrong with you?" lets ask,

"What happened to you?"

*"Some change is just about being brave enough
to get out the box."*

References & Resources

Movies and Documentaries:

- ▶ **I Am A Man: Black Masculinity in America** The documentary links everyday black men from various socioeconomic backgrounds with some of Black America's most progressive academics, social critics and authors to provide an engaging, candid dialogue on black masculine identity in American culture. produced and directed by Byron Hurt (1989)
- ▶ **Bill Moyers: Circle of Recovery:** In this documentary, Moyers takes a thoughtful look at the recovery process of seven African-American men who are working to overcome drug and alcohol addiction. (1991)PBS
- ▶ **HIP-HOP: beyond beats and rhymes:** The documentary explores the issues of masculinity, violence, homophobia and sexism in hip hop music and culture, through interviews with artists, academics and fans. Byron Hurt (2006)

Websites:

- ▶ Somatic Experiencing®: www.traumahealing.com
- ▶ SAMHSA's National Center for Trauma-Informed Care (NCTIC):
www.samhsa.gov/nctic/
- ▶ The Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC),
<http://www.sprc.org/library/black.am.facts.pdf>

References & Resources

References

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- ▶ Carrillo, Ricardo, Ph.D. (Editor) & Tello, Jerry (Editor) Family Violence and Men of Color: Healing the Wounded Male Spirit (Springer Series: Focus on Men)
- ▶ “Cultural Trauma, Compound Trauma, and Posttraumatic Growth: Relevant Concepts for Survivors of Chattel Slavery, Jim Crow Racism, and Hurricane Katrina” Arthur L Whaley, PhD, DrPH Associate Director of Mental Health Services Research, Hogg Foundation for Mental Health And Professor of Psychology University of Texas at Austin
- ▶ “DEADLY SYMBIOSIS RACE AND THE RISE OF NEOLIBERAL PENALITY” Loïc Wacquant 11 / 2003 Polity Press, 2004
- ▶ “Herman, J. L. (1992(b)). Complex PTSD: A syndrome in survivors of prolonged and repeated trauma. Journal of Traumatic Stress, 5, 377–391.
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References & Resources

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- ▶ Poussaint, Alvin F. & Alexander, Amy (2001) Lay My Burden Down: Suicide and the Mental Health Crisis Among African-Americans. Beacon Press
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- ▶ Roth S, Newman E, Pelcovitz D, van der Kolk B, Mandel FS (1997). "Complex PTSD in victims exposed to sexual and physical abuse: results from the DSM-IV Field Trial for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder". *J Trauma Stress* 10 (4): 539-55. [doi:10.1002/jts.2490100403](https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.2490100403). [PMID 9391940](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/9391940/).
- ▶ The Mental Health of African American Men Fact Sheet, a Community Voices Publication, was funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.