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Early connections last a lifetime

The Realities of Race in the COVID-19 Pandemic

Marva L. Lewis, PhD

Tulane University

Institute of Early Childhood Mental Health

School of Social Work



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Learning Objectives

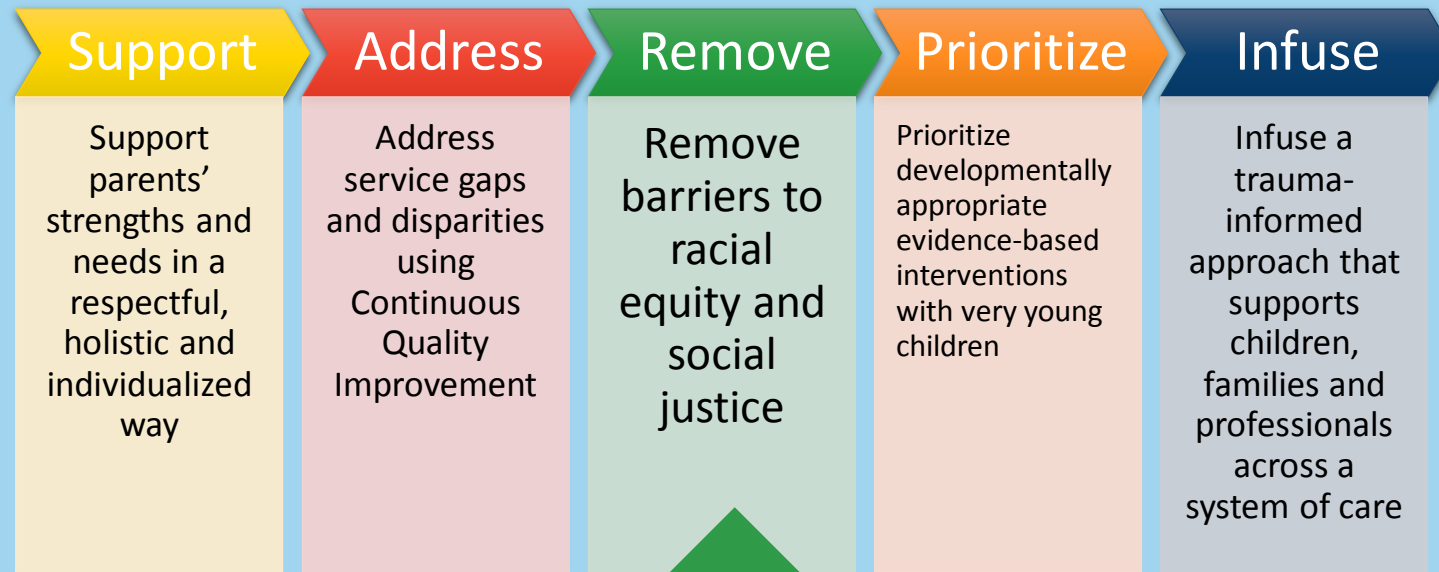
- I. Describe the Infant Toddler Court Team (ITCP) mission and commitment to equity by addressing racial disparities in the foster care system.
- I. List pre-existing race-based, co-morbidity risk-factors of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- II. Use a trauma-informed, culturally respectful approach to identify emotional responses of children and families to the pandemic.
- III. Practice the use of racially sensitive and supportive COVID-19 '*How are you coping?*' questions based on a relationship-based, community partnership approach.



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The National Infant Toddler Court Program (ITCP)

Mission & Principles

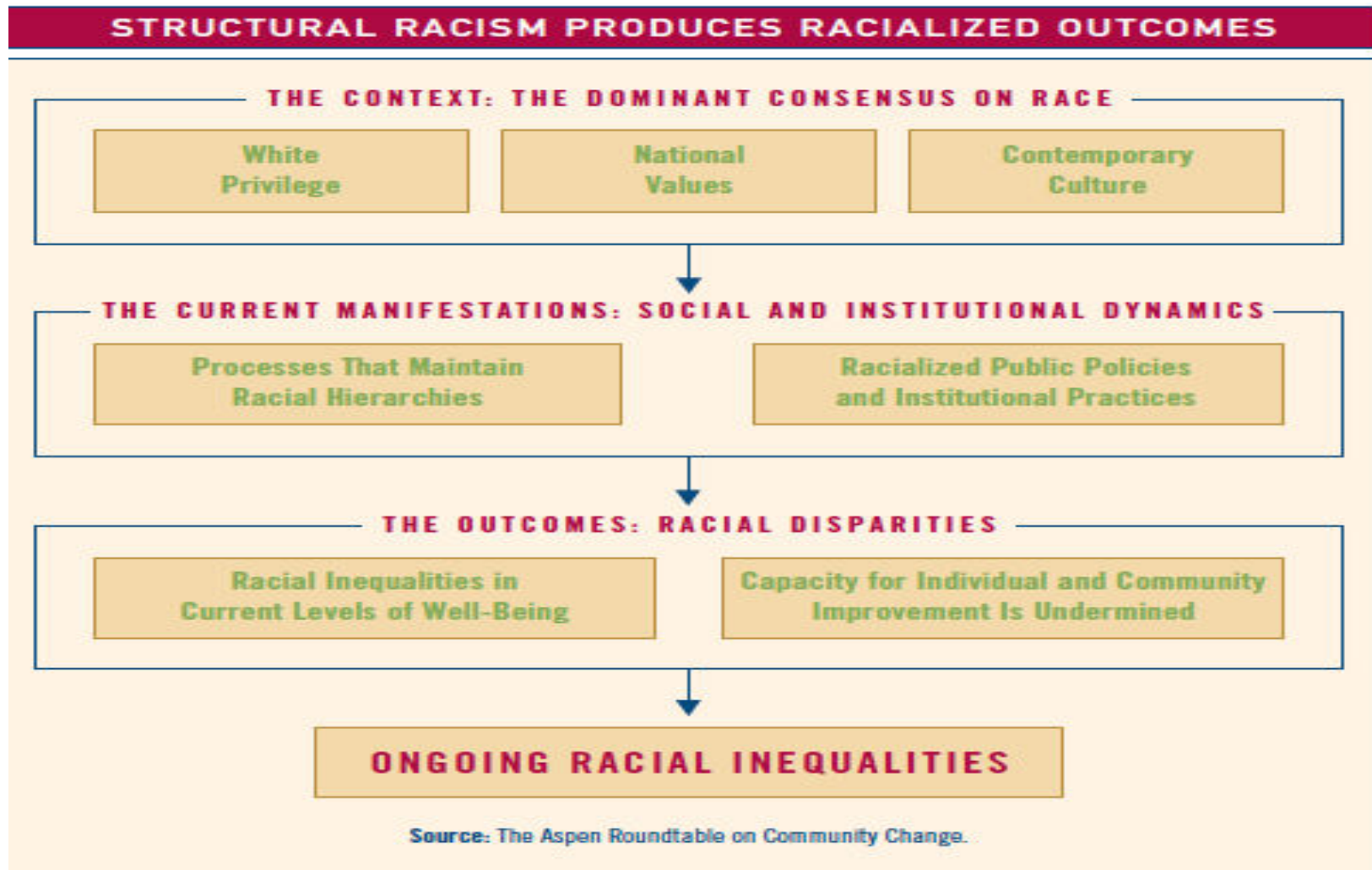


Selected Principles

- Respect and honor family and community strengths, vulnerabilities, and diversity.
- Build genuine relationships based on mutual trust and respect.
- Commit to social justice for all infants, toddlers, and families in their communities.



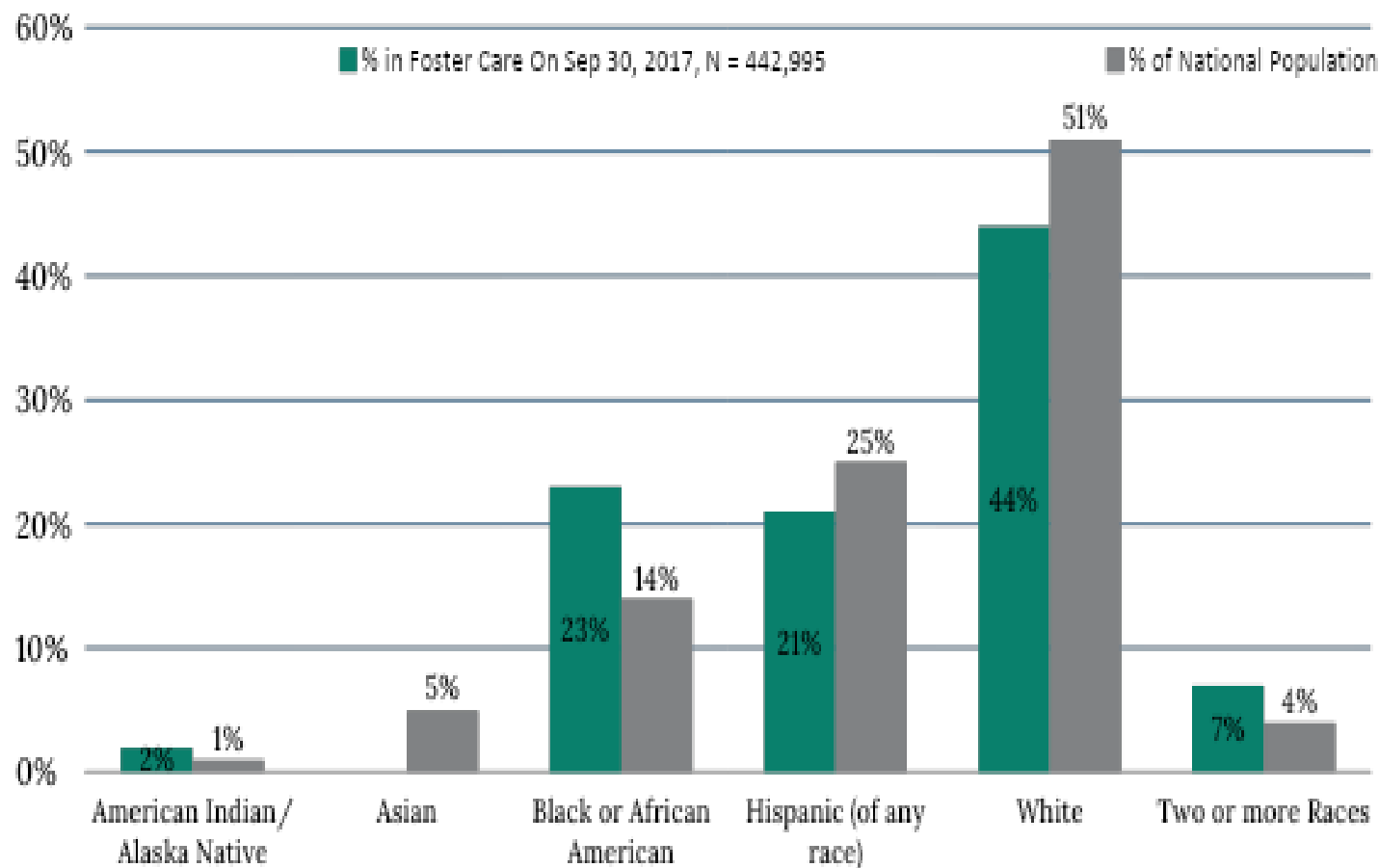
Why is Race a Focus in COVID-19 Pandemic?





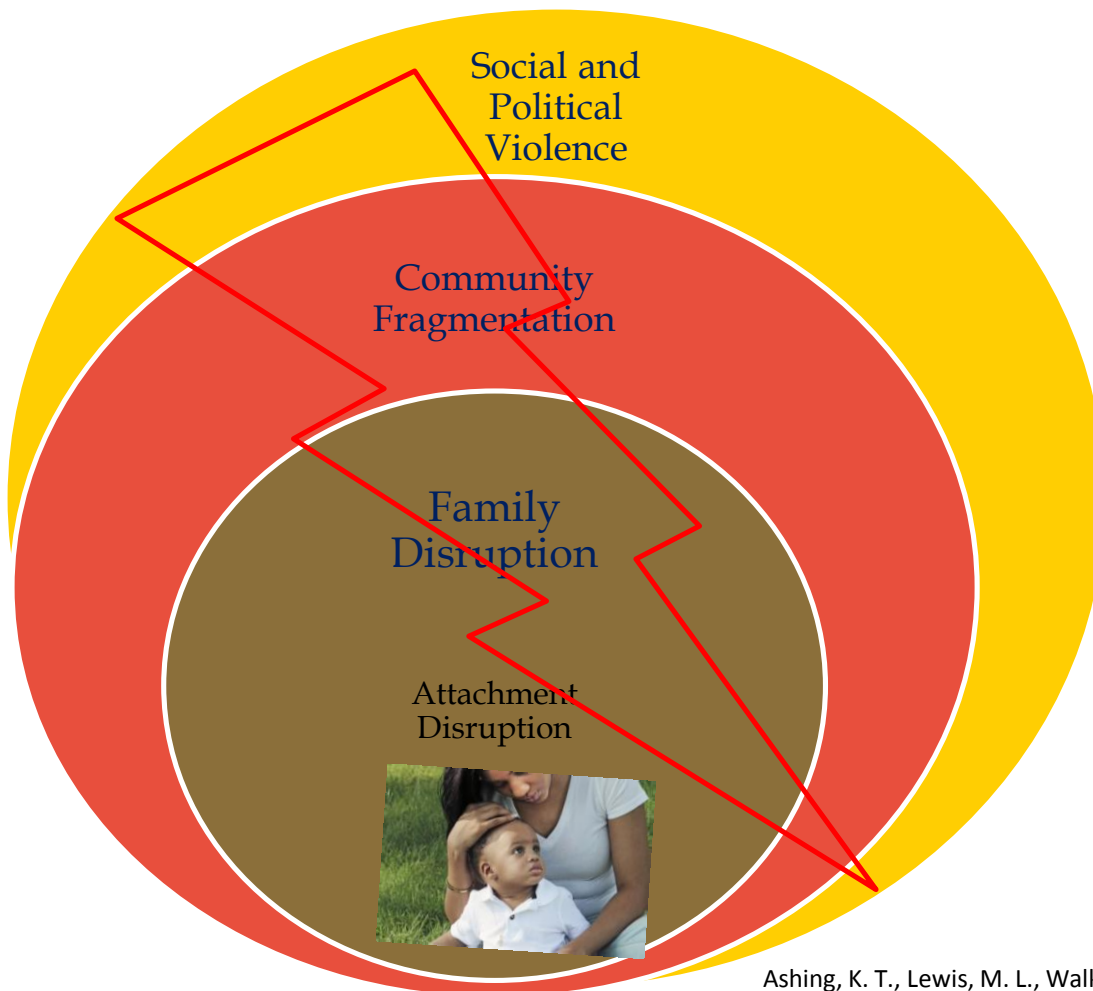
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The Evidence: Disproportionality in Child Welfare





Complex Race-Based Stress and Traumas and Impact on Parent-Child Relationships



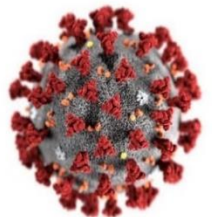
Ashing, K. T., Lewis, M. L., Walker, V. (2017). Attending to Children's Well-being after Witnessing Race-Based Violence. *Journal of the American Medical Association, Pediatrics*. 171 (6), 511-519. doi:10:1001/jamapediatrics2017.0137

The COVID-19 Pandemic and Race.



The Sociological Reality of the Spread of the Virus

Pre-existing co-morbidity
social determinants of health
factors intersect with race to
lead to more risk for
oppressed minority groups
exposed to the virus.





Using
the
Chat box

What examples of COVID-19 and racial disparities do you have within your ITCP site communities and families?



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Realities of Racial Disparities

- Statistically, people of color are more likely to have someone in their family and social net works test positive or die from the COVID-19 virus.
- Regardless of social status or income Black & Brown families are more likely to have sons, brothers, fathers, cousins, nephews, and boyfriends, incarcerated due to structural racism. The spread of the virus to prisons may be a growing yet unrecognized stressor for families of color.
- Ask about a family member who might be working in areas at high risk for exposure to the COVID virus.
 - Military
 - First responders
 - Food service – ‘essential personnel’
 - Hospital staff



The Psychosocial Legacies of Historical Traumas

Consider the intersections of the social determinants of health:

- Race
- Class
- Sexual orientation
- Nationality/ethnicity
- Immigration status





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The Psychosocial Realities of COVID-19 for All

1. Sheltering-in-place
2. Loss of jobs, public transportation
3. Closed schools
4. Lack of day care
5. Access to health care and testing locations
6. Inadequate and uneven leadership

- Family isolation – a major risk factor for Domestic violence & Child maltreatment
- Stress of basic survival - Need for food, rent/mortgage
- Denial/faulty beliefs



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Race & the Psychosocial Realities of COVID-19

1. Sheltering-in-place
2. Loss of jobs, public transportation
3. Closed schools
4. Lack of day care
5. Access to health care, and testing locations
6. Inadequate and uneven leadership

- Inadequate crowded housing, food deserts.
- Disproportionate work in Service area – no insurance, no sick leave or paid time off.
- Co-morbidity Hypertension, diabetes, obesity.
- First responders police officers, hospital roles, nurse, physician to paraprofessional, cafeteria workers, and custodians, service industries, librarians and grocery store clerks.

The Meaning of Racial Disparities and the COVID-19 Pandemic

New COVID-19 Norms

'Sheltering-in-Place'

'The Wuhan Virus'

The New COVID-19 Vaccine'

'Red vs Blue States-The New COVID-19 Vaccine'



Reality of Racial Disparities

Inadequate housing, food deserts, crowded urban settings, highest incarceration of men and women.

Promotes 'us' vs. 'them'
Gives permission to hate.

Access and financial status.

Lack of Federal Guidelines and States action for 'opening up' the states.



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Overwhelming Emotions of Loss in this Pandemic

- Complicated grief patterns
- Shock, grief, loss, anger, rage, helplessness, and feelings of stupor, survivor guilt, racial shame of privilege, may be the array of emotional responses to the unrelenting news of multiple deaths of loved ones, people that you know.





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How many people in your social networks or family have tested positive for COVID-19?



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What can I do?

Empathic Attunement with the Humanity of Diverse People



BE OPEN TO
KNOWLEDGE OF
THE 'OTHER'



LISTEN
COMPASSIONATELY



RESPECT THE
HUMANITY OF
ALL



RECOGNIZE
IMBALANCES OF
POWER



*UNDERSTAND
FAMILIES THROUGH
THEIR EYES; (J. NORRIS,
2018). EMPATHIC
CONNECTION TO SELF
AND OTHERS.*

Build Relationships Based on Cultural Strengths: Celebrations, Rituals & Routines



Routines: Are repeated over time and recognized by continuity in behavior; provide an affective dimension that reinforces a sense of belonging.

Rituals: Involve symbolic communication and expresses "this is who we are" as a family; provide intergenerational continuity.



Talk, Touch & Listen While Combing Hair!® Hair Combing Interaction as a Time for Bonding

(Lewis, 1999, 2021)



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San Diego Caregiver-Child Connections Project (SDC³)



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Culturally-Centered Hair Combing Interactions Support Groups and Research



Nola Butler-Byrd, PhD, PI, Project Director
Kathleen Baca – Monarch School Staff

Ava Gill – MA
Ojore Bushfan -MA
Michelle Rowe-Odom - MA

Butler Byrd, N. M., Rowe-Odom, M. J., Bushfan, O. L., Gill, A., Baca, K., & Lewis, M. L. (2019). Using hair-combing interactions to enhance relationships between Black women and girls impacted by homelessness. *Women and therapy*. DOI: [10.1080/02703149.2019.1622912](https://doi.org/10.1080/02703149.2019.1622912)
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02703149.2019.1622912>

In Israel: Jewish Ethiopian refugees reconnect with their daughters, culture & community (Lewis, 2009)



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Building Empathic Attunement

Racially Sensitive Questions on Coping with the COVID

Always begin with a focus on the family's child.

Question: There is so much going on now in our communities about race. Did you see the recent Sesame Street special about children talking about their fears and worries about police and the protests? What behaviors have you observed in your child?





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Acknowledge Racial Co-Morbidity Risk Factors

*Question: What stresses you out the most with the COVID?
How are you coping with your pressure?*



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Map the Support Network.

Question: *Who helps you? Where do you go for help?
"I've just got to be strong." "I put it in the hands of the Lord...but
I've got to be strong for my kids!"*



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The dual risk and protective factor of cultural support networks.

Question: It must be hard to have a loved-one pass from the COVID and not be able to have a funeral service at your church. Coping. Has your pastor or the Deacons of your church opened services since the COVID-19? Does your church use Zoom? OR Have you been able to stay connected to your church members since the COVID shut down churches?



Listen for hidden historical fears or repressed trauma

- Listen for repetitions of historical fears responses when talking about experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic with racially diverse individuals, families, co-workers and friends.
- Asking the COVID coping questions in different/race same/race communication dynamics of trust, anger, betrayal, rage.
- Be open to hearing coded cover-ups that may be automatic, culturally-grounded responses.

Example: The myth of the 'Strong Black Woman'



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Our Family Matters

COVID QUESTION: *Have any of your family members or friends been infected with COVID-19? How are they doing?*



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Race-Based Trauma Triggers

QUESTION: *Does anything happening with the COVID remind you of other hard times that you, your family, or community experienced in the past?*



Summary: **The Virus of Structural Racism**

- The modern-day structural inequities with origins in historical trauma of targeted groups of people of color impact the fundamental social determinants of life for families: access to healthy food, gainful employment, basic education for their children.
- These same structural inequities now place children, adults, and families of color at high risk for infection, and death from the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020 - A shared trauma

(Sotero, 2006)



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- The need for a public health response to the virus of structural racism that is in part, responsible for the death of a disproportionately high number of people of color from the COVID-19 virus.
- A Public Health response includes Surveillance, Detection, Monitoring and Community Mitigation.



Sotero, M. (2006). A conceptual model of historical trauma: Implications for public health practice and research. *Journal of Health Disparities Research and Practice*, 1, (1), 93-108



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A Public Health Response: **Community Mitigation**

The Public Health Planning Guide to virus defines Community Mitigation measure "incorporating actions and responses means people and community can take to help slow the spread of novel influenza virus"



The Mental Health Needs of People of Color to the COVID-19 Pandemic

There is an urgent need for a public health response to the 'virus' of structural racism that has led to the unprecedented number of death of thousands of people of color. The shock, grief, loss and mourning will reverberate through generations of our families and communities.

- ✓ Please Help- Talk about it these data, these facts.
- ✓ Mitigation begins with a conversation. Ask the COVID-19 loss questions . . . and listen.





Questions & Dialogue

An Invitation to be a Champion for Equity

“Power at its best, is love implementing the demands of justice. Justice at its best, is love correcting everything that stands against love.”

Martin Luther King, Jr. (1967)



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Talking with children about COVID-19

Dr. Gupta shows Elmo how to make a mask.

https://www.cnn.com/world/live-news/coronavirus-pandemic-04-25-20-intl/h_c2ab74b121960ca0322805e005925193

Why we stay home: A free book on COVID for children of color.

http://www.milwaukeeindependent.com/articles/stay-home-free-book-coronavirus-children-color/?fbclid=IwAR1rU6d3ME95NZLnnq9M5hGGU22o69ZWY_lm_0ypMiE_AeJhwKrcCQ8YdW0

“Sesame street on racism, hosted by CNN.” CNN special about race and police violence. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/06/us/cnn-sesame-street-town-hall-racism-trnd/index.html>



Helps and Resources for COVID

Stress and Health Disparities. American Psychological Association.

<http://www.apa.org/pi/health-disparities/resources/stress.aspx>. Accessed July 18, 2017.

Sistah's staying well resource list for Black women and girls:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OWJLapUbqE9uWBSc6N4PCENPuMzs6gt4/view?usp=drivesdk>

[Emerging data suggest that African American groups have experienced a disproportionate burden of illness and death from COVID-19.](#)

Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming. To help cope with stress and support your overall emotional well-being, please visit these resources:

[Community Resources](#)

[The Ubuntu Program for Emotional Wellness](#)



Additional Resources

When are kids old enough to talk about race?

[https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/video/item/when are kids old enough to talk about race](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/video/item/when_are_kids_old_enough_to_talk_about_race)

How to overcome fear of talking to our kids about race?

[https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/video/item/how to overcome the fear of talking to your kids about race](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/video/item/how_to_overcome_the_fear_of_talking_to_your_kids_about_race)



Further reading

Lewis, M. L. (2019). The Intergenerational Transmission of Protective Parenting Responses to Historical Trauma. In (Editors) H. E. Fitzgerald, D. Johnson, D. Qin, F. Villarruel, and J. Norder. *The Impact of Prejudice Youth through Adolescence*, Volume II, Chapter 3. Springer Publishers.

Ghosh-Ippen, C. & Lewis, M. L. (2011) "They just don't get it" A diversity-informed approach to understanding engagement. In J. D. Osofsky, (Ed.) *Clinical Work with Traumatized Young Children*. New York: Guilford Press. Pp. 31-52.

Lewis, M. L. (1996). Trauma reverberates: Psychosocial evaluation of the caregiving environment of young children exposed to violence and traumatic loss. In J. D. Osofsky (Ed.), *Island of safety: Assessing and treating young victims of violence*, (pp. 21-28). April-May, Vol. 16, No. 5, Washington, D.C., Zero to Three, National Center for Clinical Infant Studies.

Sotero, M. (2006). A conceptual model of historical trauma: Implications for public health practice and research. *Journal of Health Disparities Research and Practice*, 1, (1), 93-108

Yellow Horse Brave Heart, M.. (Winter/Spring 2000). *Wakiksuyapi: Carrying the Historical Trauma of the Lakota*. *Disaster and Traumatic Stress Research and Intervention* (Ed.) M. Zakour, Volumes XXI-XXII pages 245-266. Tulane Studies in Social Welfare: Tulane University, New Orleans, LA.