



2020 RACISM AND MENTAL HEALTH SYMPOSIUM

William T. Powell, MS, DMin
Donna H. Barnes, PhD

National Organization for People of Color Against Suicide
(NOPCAS.INC • NOPCAS.ORG • (301)529-4699)

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TOPIC:

**RESOLVING THE EFFECTS OF
RACIAL OPPRESSION ON
APPROACHES TO MENTAL
HEALTH**



WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

This workshop will explore why today's changing environment requires transformative new ways of addressing the mental health needs of African Americans. These needs are uniquely rooted in the generational effects of slavery and post-slavery oppression which have helped to create conditions still visible today. Socio-economic conditions, cultural stigmas and racial distrust in America's healthcare institutions are just a few examples of those conditions. Critically examining the past can help mental health care move forward. This workshop will offer insight into how local institutions and community care organizations can adapt to the needs of our present-day environment.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Explore how the effects of slavery and oppression continue to appear in Black mental health.
- ✓ Identify racial mental health practices.
- ✓ Demonstrate what treatment choices can look like in contemporary environments.

A TIMELY DISCUSSION!!!

Why It's Important To Examine The Original And Ongoing Racial Experience of African Americans In The Conversation About Mental Health.

THE EFFECTS OF RACIAL OPPRESSION ON MENTAL HEALTH: TWO BLACK FEMALE ICONS, ONE HISTORICAL AND ONE CONTEMPORARY



CONTEMPORARY: Former First Lady Michelle Obama said on her podcast Tuesday she's suffering from a "low-grade depression," which she attributes to coronavirus quarantine, the mental health toll of racism and the "hypocrisy" of the Trump administration. "These are not, they are not fulfilling times, spiritually," she told journalist Michele Norris during "The Michelle Obama Podcast."


THE EFFECTS OF RACIAL OPPRESSION ON MENTAL HEALTH: TWO BLACK FEMALE ICONS, ONE HISTORICAL AND ONE CONTEMPORARY




HISTORICAL: SOJOURNER TRUTH

“Isabella had already experienced terrible beatings at the Neelys’, but with the Dumonts she was subject to two kinds of abuse; physical and sexual. Such mistreatment, endemic to slavery North and South, left scars as much psychological as physical.”

p.14



THE SCOURGE OF SLAVERY, JIM CROW, AND OPPRESSION AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT ON AFRICAN AMERICAN ADULTS, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES



Chattel Slavery

- Bought and Sold
- Loss of Family, Culture and Identity
- Beatings, Killings, Family Separation, Rape
- Deplorable Living Conditions

Jim Crow

- Few Rights
- Black Codes
- Public Lynching Events and Prisons
- Locked Out of Normal Socio-Economics

Segregated America

- Schools, Housing, Public Accommodations
- Access to Opportunity
- Systemic Racism

Social and Psychological Effects

- Fears, Anxiety, Mental Illnesses
- Crime, Violence, Addictions, Family Disruption
- Psychological Slavery
- Generational

HOW RESOURCES HAVE BEEN AFFECTED

- Black and White Theology and the Emergence of the Black Church as a Place of Worship, Safety and Socio-Economics
- Funding and Resource Disparities
- Racial Bias Algorithm Used to Manage Health of Populations
- 2019 Prince George's County Health Report



HOW RESOURCES HAVE BEEN AFFECTED



Emergence of Black Church

- Black and White Theology
- The Black Church As Sanctuary
- The Black Church As Mental Health Resource
- Current Trends in Faith and Mental Health

Racial Bias in Algorithms

- Racial Bias in Algorithms Used to Manage the Health of Populations*

Task Force Findings on Black Youth

- Black Applicants More Likely to Propose Research Topics Less Likely to be Funded

Prince George's County 2019 Health Report

- The county lacks adequate resources for significant behavioral health issues.
- Stigma around behavioral health still an ongoing challenge.

*Obermeyer, Ziad; Powers, Brian; Vogeli, Christine; et al, "Dissecting Race Bias in an Algorithm Used to Manage the Health of Populations", *Science*, October 2019, New York, NY.

Mental Health Issues

MENTAL DISORDERS ARE UNDERRECOGNIZED,
MISDIAGNOSED, UNDERTREATED, AND MISTREATED

*When this happens suicide risk
is increased!*

MISDIAGNOSIS OR UNDERDIAGNOSIS

African Americans

- ✓ Overdiagnosis of schizophrenia
- ✓ Underdiagnosis or under-recognition of:
 - Depression
 - Bipolar
 - PTSD
 - ADHD

Primm, A.B. and Lawson, W.B. "Disparities among ethnic groups" in Disparities in Psychiatric Care. Williams and Wilkins, Baltimore, MD 2010, pp 19 -29

AFRICAN AMERICANS: BARRIERS TO HELP-SEEKING

- Concerns about “double” stigma
- Mistrust of health professionals
- Belief that prayer alone can heal
- Belief that suffering is a part of life for Black people, so keep on keepin’ on
- Concerns about addictiveness of medication

WHEN THE PANDEMIC LEAVES US ALONE, ANXIOUS AND DEPRESSED

- Kaiser Family Foundation found nearly half of their respondents said their mental health had been compromised since COVID19
- Our community, however, is in a triple crisis – (1) the pandemic (2) police corruption (3) economic hardship – all which affect the mental conditions – it creates anxiety and depressed moods.
- We talk so much about getting physically sick and not enough about the mental instability of trying to cope with the uncertainty of this pandemic
- They mention that our community is more susceptible to being infected because we have more preconditions – no mention of the precondition generated by fear, loneliness or grief

SUICIDE DURING COVID-19: SURVEY TAKEN BY THE CDC

- Symptoms of anxiety disorder and depressive disorder increased considerably in the US during April – June 2020, according to the CDC
- Black respondents reported increased substance use and serious consideration of suicide in the previous 30 days more commonly than did white and Asian respondents
- Respondents ages 18 -24 (74%) reported seriously considering suicide in the previous 30 days before taking the survey

MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY

- You cannot treat what you do not understand
- You cannot comply to treatment if you do not understand what is the issue
- You will not stay in treatment if you have no idea if it is working

Understanding mental health is key in terms of your treatment. Please ask a lot of questions especially if medication is part of the treatment. Be honest with your physician because they are only going by what you tell them.

IF CONVENTIONAL TREATMENT DOES NOT WORK FOR YOU.....

- Support groups of all kinds are available. Currently, it is easy access now that most groups are being held via ZOOM
- Depression and BiPolar Support Alliance (DBSA) has various chapters and support groups all over the Country. *“Knowing that I wasn’t going through this alone . . . that was my first breakthrough.” –DBSA support group* www.dbsalliance.org
- NOPCAS (National Organization for People of Color Against Suicide (www.nopcas.org))
- Mental Health ministries
- Grief recovery and life enhancement coaches

CONCLUSION



- A. The Special Role for Historical Perspective in Treatment and Planning.
- B. The Funding Disparities Must Be Closed.
- C. Governments and Institutions Like Schools, Churches and Community Organizations Must Welcome New Models for Looking at Mental Health and Must Reimagine New and Bold Approaches to Mental Health.