

Historical Trauma Episode Guide

Focus: The importance of analyzing, understanding, and addressing the historical trauma in the lives of Black boys and men

Presenter: Samuel Simmons, Licensed Alcohol & Drug Counselor

Key Findings

- Historical trauma, the cumulative psychological wounding of a family or group of people, impacts Black boys and men
- When working in communities of color, consider how historical trauma may be shaping thoughts, interactions, and behavioral processes
- The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Questionnaire is not totally relevant to the experiences of Black children
 - Mostly white, middle class participants
 - Cultural trauma is not included in the questionnaire
- Systems creating trauma
 - Childhood sexual abuse is often not discussed
 - Boys are expected to be men and not to “complain”
 - Impact of the criminal justice system on communities
 - Separated parents
 - Violence in communities
 - Foster care

Key Recommendations

- Get people to talk about their current family histories
- Understand how historical, cultural, collective trauma affects the Black community
- Therapists have to get a handle on their own trauma
- Avoid asking “What did you do?” Ask “What happened to you?”
- Black men and boys deserve the compassion and empathy that other people deserve

Resources

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). (2016). Centers for Disease Control. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/>
- Brave Heart, M. H., Chase, J., Elkins, J., & Altschul, D. B. (2011). Historical Trauma Among Indigenous Peoples of the Americas: Concepts, Research, and Clinical Considerations. *Journal Of Psychoactive Drugs*, 43(4), 282-290.
doi:10.1080/02791072.2011.628913
- Leary, J. (2005). *Post traumatic slave syndrome : America's legacy of enduring injury and healing* (Lincoln Center Institute Collection). Milwaukie, Oregon: Uptone Press.