



Addressing Racial Trauma:

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO COPE WITH THE
IMPACT OF RACISM

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MATTERS OF OUR MIND, LLC

Educational Objectives

01

Define racial trauma,

02

Explore harmful US policy intentionally directed at African American communities.

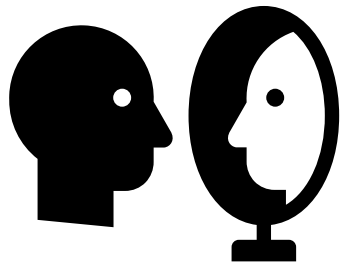
03

Describe three ways in which racial trauma manifest within the African American community.

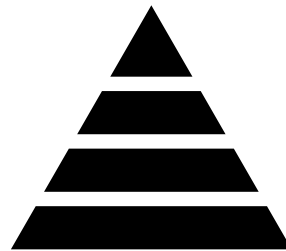
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Identify three effective strategies for addressing racial trauma among African Americans.

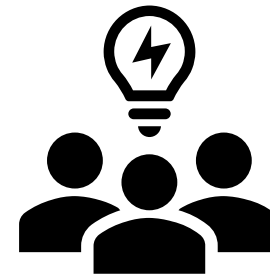
Before We Get Started



Self-Reflective



Think Systemically/Structurally



Collectively



Defining Racial & Historical Trauma

Racial & Historical Trauma

Racial Trauma

Racial trauma, or race-based traumatic stress (RBTS), refers to the mental and emotional injury caused by encounters with racial bias and ethnic discrimination, racism, and hate crimes [1]. Any individual that has experienced an emotionally painful, sudden, and uncontrollable racist encounter is at risk of suffering from a race-based traumatic stress injury [2]. In the U.S., Black, Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) are most vulnerable -Mental Health America

Historical Trauma

“Historical trauma is the cumulative exposure to traumatic events that not only affect the individual exposed, but continue to affect subsequent generations”

-National Resource Center for Reaching Underserved Victims

“An event or series of events perpetrated against a group of people and their environment, namely people who share a specific group identity with genocidal or ethnocidal intent to systematically eradicate them as a people or eradicate their way of life.”

-Dr. Karen Walters, 2012

How Historical Trauma Works

1. Mass trauma is deliberately and systematically inflicted upon a target group by a subjugating, dominant group
2. Untreated trauma in a parent is passed on to the child through the attachment process and implicit or explicit messages about the world (i.e., relationship to self, safety).



Communities that have Experienced Historical Trauma.

1. Native Americans/First Nations
2. Holocaust Survivors
3. Asians
4. Refugees
5. LGBTQ Community



The African American Experience

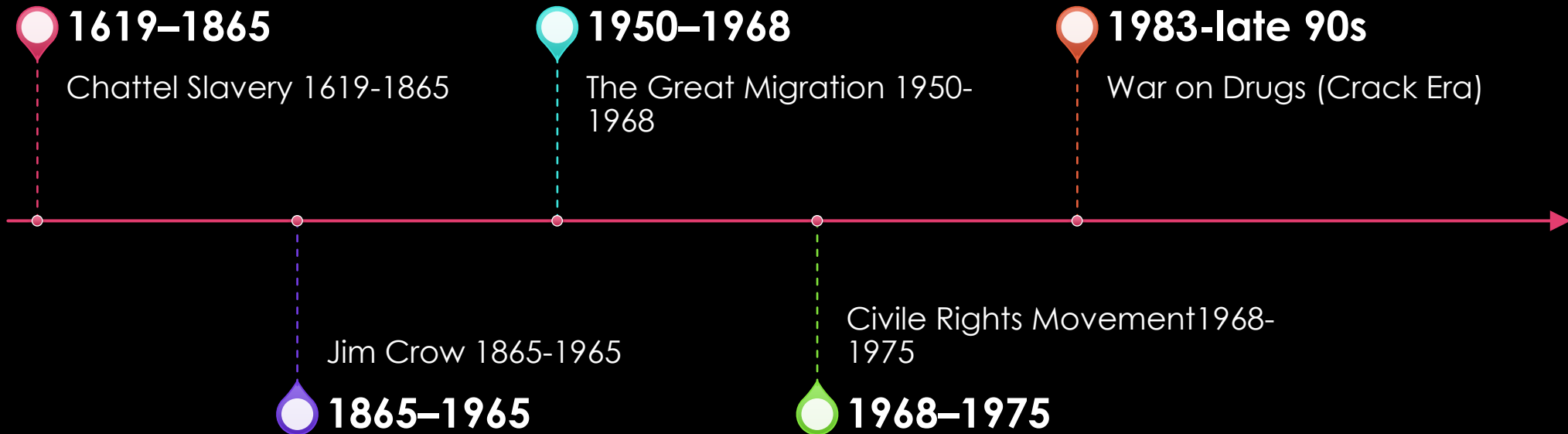
- Brought to America as slaves/chattel slavery
- Brought to America in inhumane and horrific conditions
- Disconnected from African languages
- Disconnected from African religion
- Disconnected from African cultural practices
- Centuries of policies and intentional structures designed to disenfranchise African American and their communities.





“...but slavery
was a long
time ago.”

Historical Trauma in African American Community





The New Jim Crow



Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness

Crack Era Early 80s-late 90s

- ▶ Hyperghetto- Extreme concentration of poverty and underprivileged groups.
- ▶ Crack had a massive impact on black women and families.
- ▶ Concentrated police presence.



NETFLIX

CRACK

COCAINE CORRUPTION CONSPIRACY

OFFICIAL
TRAILER



Oodles O'Noodles Babies

CRIME

'Superpredators' Arrive

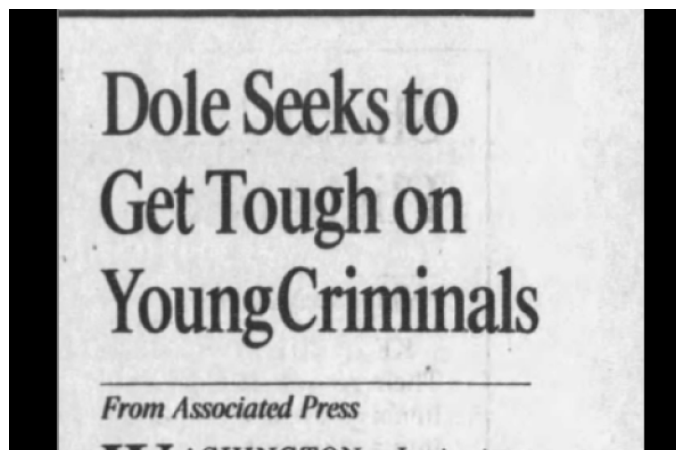
Should we cage the new breed of vicious kids?

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The state's Dept. of Family Services—boys—demands that the boys can't be ment, they're beir juvenile jail, whe with staff and re: people who view of society," says L tha Allen. "It's ou in this case is dea

Criminal-justic the arrival of the : ation of teens so r they'll take violen stand of the fil-

A Narrative is Created.



Young killers remain well-publicized rarity

Superpredators' fail to grow into precast proportions

Gary Marx
TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

The 12-year-old Chicago boy



Epigenetics

Epigenetics is the study of how your behaviors and environment can cause changes that affect the way your genes work. Unlike genetic changes, epigenetic changes are reversible and do not change your DNA sequence, but they can change how your body reads a DNA sequence - CDC





The Impact of Racial Trauma on African Americans.



POST TRAUMATIC SLAVE SYNDROME

America's Legacy Of
Enduring Injury and Healing

by
Joy DeGruy, Ph.D.

Foreword by Randall Robinson

Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome

- ▶ Dr. Joy Degruy, Social Work Researcher is Accredited for the Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome Theory.
- ▶ P.T.S.S. is a theory that explains the etiology of many of the adaptive survival behaviors in African American communities throughout the United States and the Diaspora. It is a condition that exists as a consequence of multigenerational oppression of Africans and their descendants resulting from centuries of chattel slavery. A form of slavery which was predicated on the belief that African Americans were inherently/genetically inferior to whites. This was then followed by institutionalized racism which continues to perpetuate injury.



Maladaptive Behaviors.

“A condition in which biological traits or behavior patterns are detrimental, counterproductive, or otherwise interfere with optimal functioning in various domains, such as successful interaction with the environment and effectual coping with the challenges and stresses of daily life.” –American Psychological Association

Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome

The Ingredients of P.T.S.S.

M: Multigenerational trauma together with continued oppression

A: Absence of opportunity to heal or access the benefits available in the society

P: Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome.



KEY PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOR REFLECTIVE OF P.T.S.S.:

Vacant Esteem

Marked Propensity for Anger and Violence

Racist Socialization and Internalized racism

Vacant Esteem

- ▶ “The state of believing oneself to have little or no worth, exacerbated by the group and societal pronouncement of inferiority.”
- ▶ Suicidal ideation manifesting through reckless life-threatening behaviors



Ever Present Anger

- ▶ Resides just below the surface
- ▶ “Seemingly innocuous incidents become potentially dangerous for no apparent or rational reasons.”



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Racist Socialization

- ▶ Internalized racism: When you believe about yourself what your oppressor believes about you.
- ▶ “White, you alright. Brown, stay around. Black. Get back”



Examples of Racist Socialization

- ▶ Colorism
- ▶ Beauty Standards
 - ▶ Hair
 - ▶ Facial Features
- ▶ Degradation of Black Women
- ▶ Villainization of Black Men



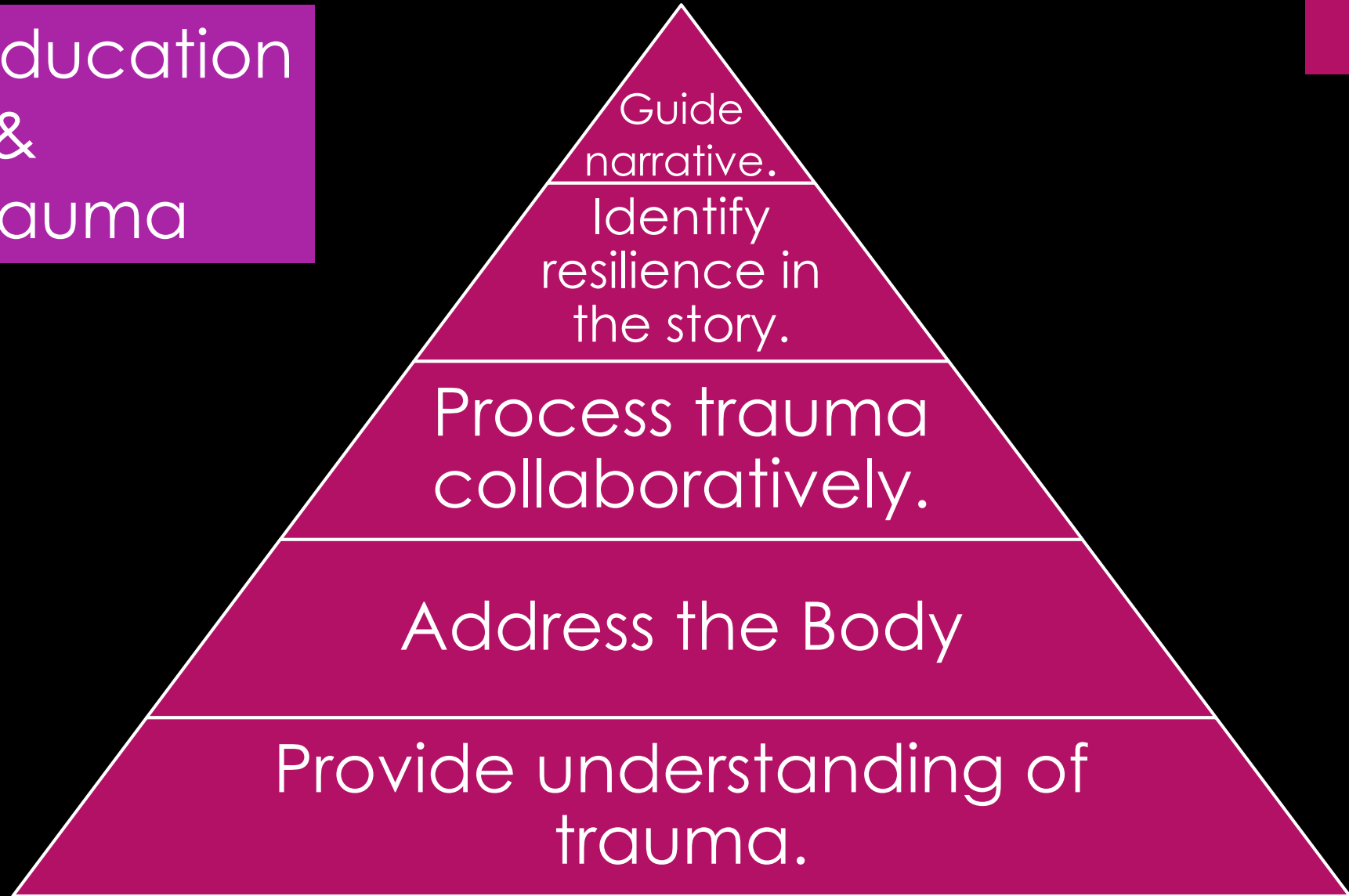
A close-up photograph of a chessboard with a checkered pattern. In the foreground, a white king piece lies on its side on a light square. Behind it, several dark wooden pieces stand upright: a king, a queen, and two pawns. The background is softly blurred, showing more of the board and pieces. A semi-transparent purple banner with a pink rectangle on the right is at the top.

Effective Strategies to Address Racial Trauma



The Framework: Psychoeducation & Trauma-Informed Care

Psychoeducation & Racial Trauma



Adverse Childhood Experiences



1. Address Childhood Trauma.

PHILADELPHIA ACE STUDY QUESTIONS

CONVENTIONAL ACES	EXPANDED ACES
Physical Abuse	Witnessing Violence
Emotional Abuse	Living in Unsafe Neighborhoods
Sexual Abuse	Experiencing Racism
Emotional Neglect	Living in Foster Care
Physical Neglect	Experiencing Bullying
Domestic Violence	
Household Substance Abuse	
Incarcerated Care Provider	
Mental Illness in the Home	

Kaiser vs
Philadelphia

ACE AND HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION

Table 8. Indicators of Household Dysfunction by Race

	White	Black
Substance abusing household member	30.7% (n=241)	37.8%** (n=286)
Mentally ill household member	26.2%** (n=206)	20.1% (n=152)
Witnessed domestic violence	13.2% (n=104)	20.7%*** (n=157)
Household member in prison	6.9% (n=54)	15.9%*** (n=120)

Notes: *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001, Chi-square

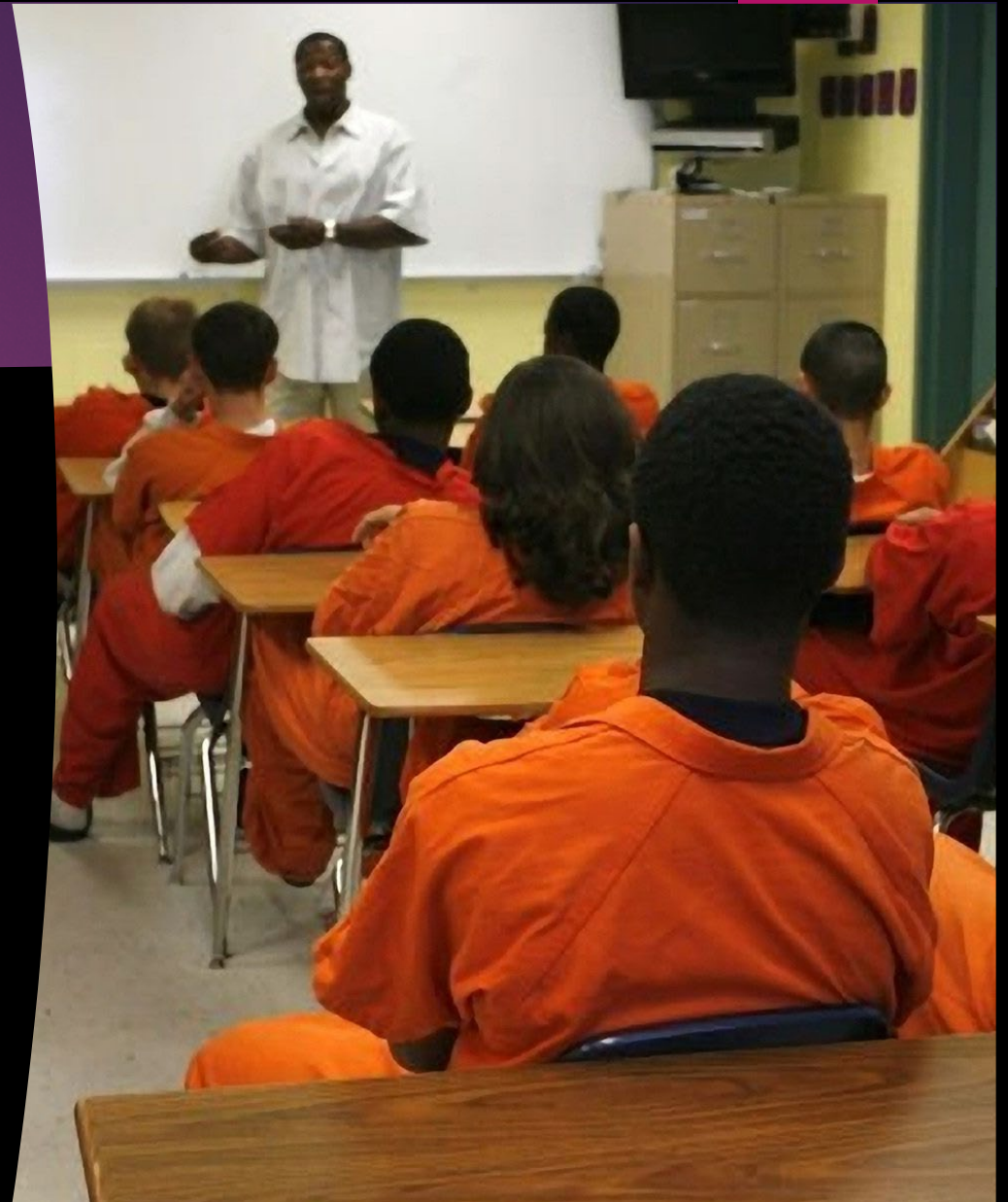
Data Source: Philadelphia Urban ACE Survey, 2013

Data Prepared by: The Research and Evaluation Group at PHMC



2. Show Value through Relationship.

“According to Bellis et al. (2018), one trusted adult can make a significant difference to help build resilience in young people with adverse childhood experiences...Regardless of the intervention or program, the evidence consistently indicates that young people respond to interventions when they believe the staff are interested in their wellbeing and can build trusting relationships with them (Robertson et al., 2006).”



Relationship Building through Empathy

- ▶ **“Empathy is an important element of any therapeutic relationship, and worth the investment of time and effort required to do it well and consistently”- Robert Elliot**



What is Empathy?

- ▶ Empathy is not “given” it’s co-created.
- ▶ “Empathy entails individualizing responses to particular patients. We found significant heterogeneity in the empathy–outcome association, pointing to the value of personalization and clinical judgment.”
- ▶ “Therapists should neither assume that they are mind readers nor that the client’s experience will match their experience of the client. Empathy is best offered with humility and held lightly, ready to be corrected.”



Core Elements of Relationship Building.

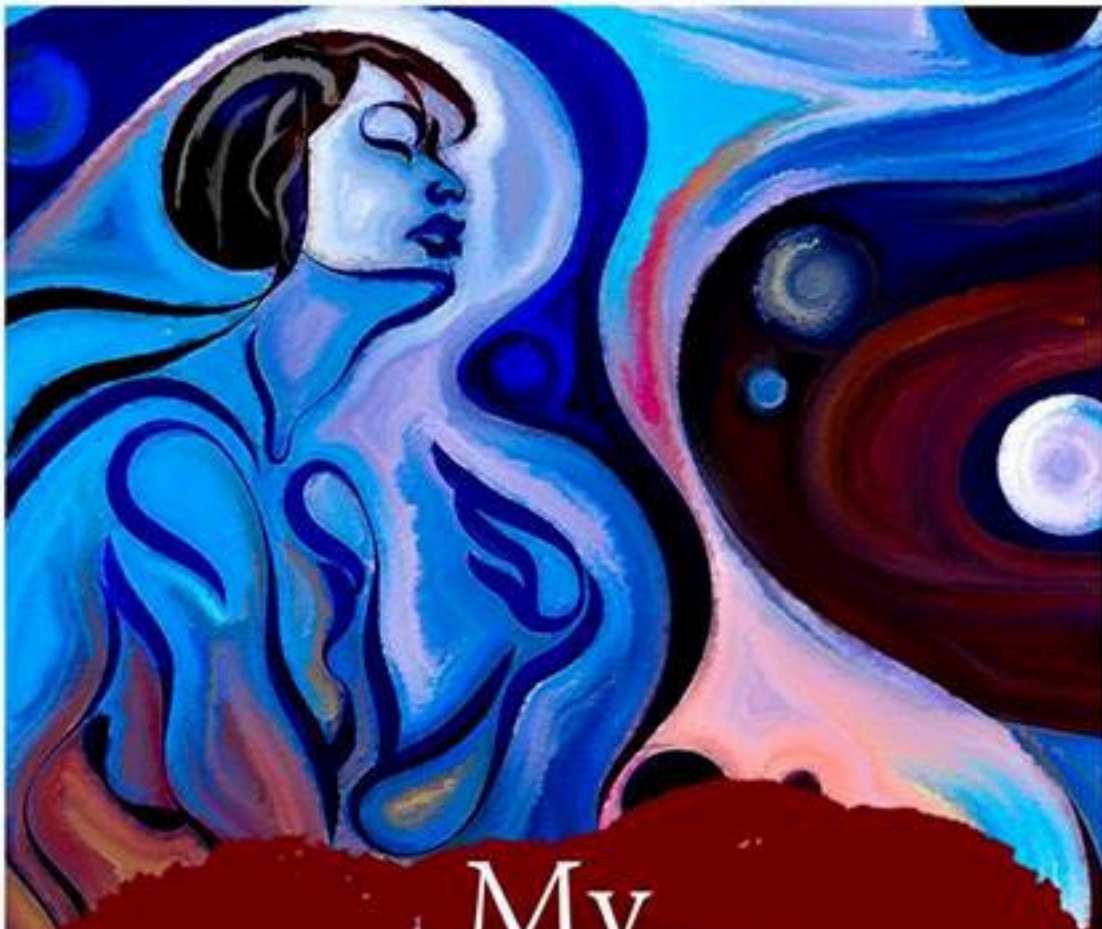
1. **Co-production** Outcomes emerge as results of interactions between staff and young people. This is dependent on the engagement of young people and the capacity of staff to create and sustain these relationships.

2. **Purposeful conversation** Involves focusing staff interactions on building and expanding the communication efforts and strengths of the young people, in which listening and paying attention is a conscious, deliberate and continuous activity but one that has the potential to be a powerful therapeutic intervention.

3. **Assessment Refers** to judgements staff make when they are gauging how a young person is reacting and feeling in the moment or more formal, explicit, transparent and structured processes that may utilize standardized measures and tests.

4. **Dialogue** Is at the heart of non-formal learning (which can help build social and emotional competence) rather than authority and instruction.

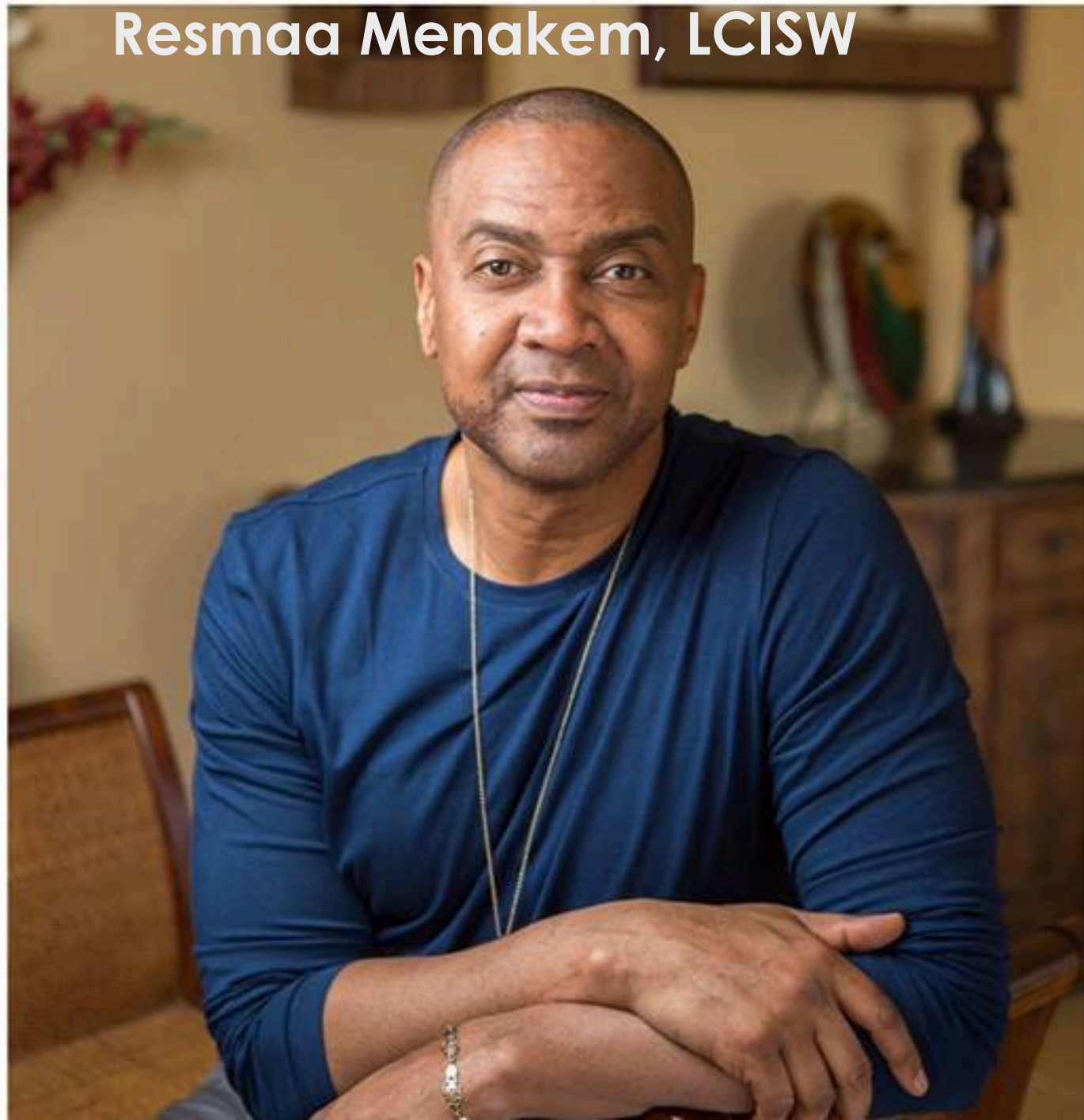
5. **Teachable moments** Occur when, for a variety of reasons, a young person may be more open and receptive than usual. In these moments, staff can model positive behaviors in their everyday interactions with the young people.



My Grandmother's Hands

*Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to
Mending Our Hearts and Bodies*

Resmaa Menakem, LCISW



3. Address the Body

"Racism is a visceral experience...It dislodges brains, blocks airways, rips muscle, extracts organs, cracks bones, breaks teeth. You must never look away from this."





FOX 9
WHDH-TV
www.fox9.com

#VoteusForChange

“To Heal Trauma, Work with the Body”

- ▶ “Trauma is the un-discharged energy that gets trapped in the body as a result of a shocking and/or life-threatening event in which the victim is unable to either fight back or flee the situation. In other words, our ability to respond is overwhelmed and something in us shuts down.” -Babette Rothschild



THE BODY KEEPS THE SCORE

BRAIN, MIND, AND BODY
IN THE HEALING OF TRAUMA



BESSEL VAN DER KOLK, MD







4. Building Resilience through Narrative

Resilience Defined

- ▶ Psychologists define resilience as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress—such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors. As much as resilience involves “bouncing back” from these difficult experiences, it can also involve profound personal growth. —APA



Disrupt the Narrative

Steps to helping your client rewrite their story

1. Help the client identify moments in their life where they exhibited resilience.



Help them to identify their resilience as a strength/tool which can be utilized as a coping strategy.



Prepare the client for triggers and collaborate with them on how to utilize the resilience/strengths when they arise.



You Have the Key!



The End

Contact Information



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Sources

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