Barriers and Risk Factors for Black LGBTQ+ Youth: Suggestions for Improving their Lived Experiences

Jessica Henry, Ph.D. and Danielle Busby, Ph.D.
Black Mental Wellness

May 2, 2023, 12:00 PM

SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

MHTTC
Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

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The purpose of the MHTTC Network is technology transfer - disseminating and implementing evidence-based practices for mental disorders into the field.

Funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the MHTTC Network includes 10 Regional Centers, a National American Indian and Alaska Native Center, a National Hispanic and Latino Center, and a Network Coordinating Office.

Our collaborative network supports resource development and dissemination, training and technical assistance, and workforce development for the mental health field. We work with systems, organizations, and treatment practitioners involved in the delivery of mental health services to strengthen their capacity to deliver effective evidence-based practices to individuals.
Our services cover the full continuum spanning mental illness prevention, treatment, and recovery support.

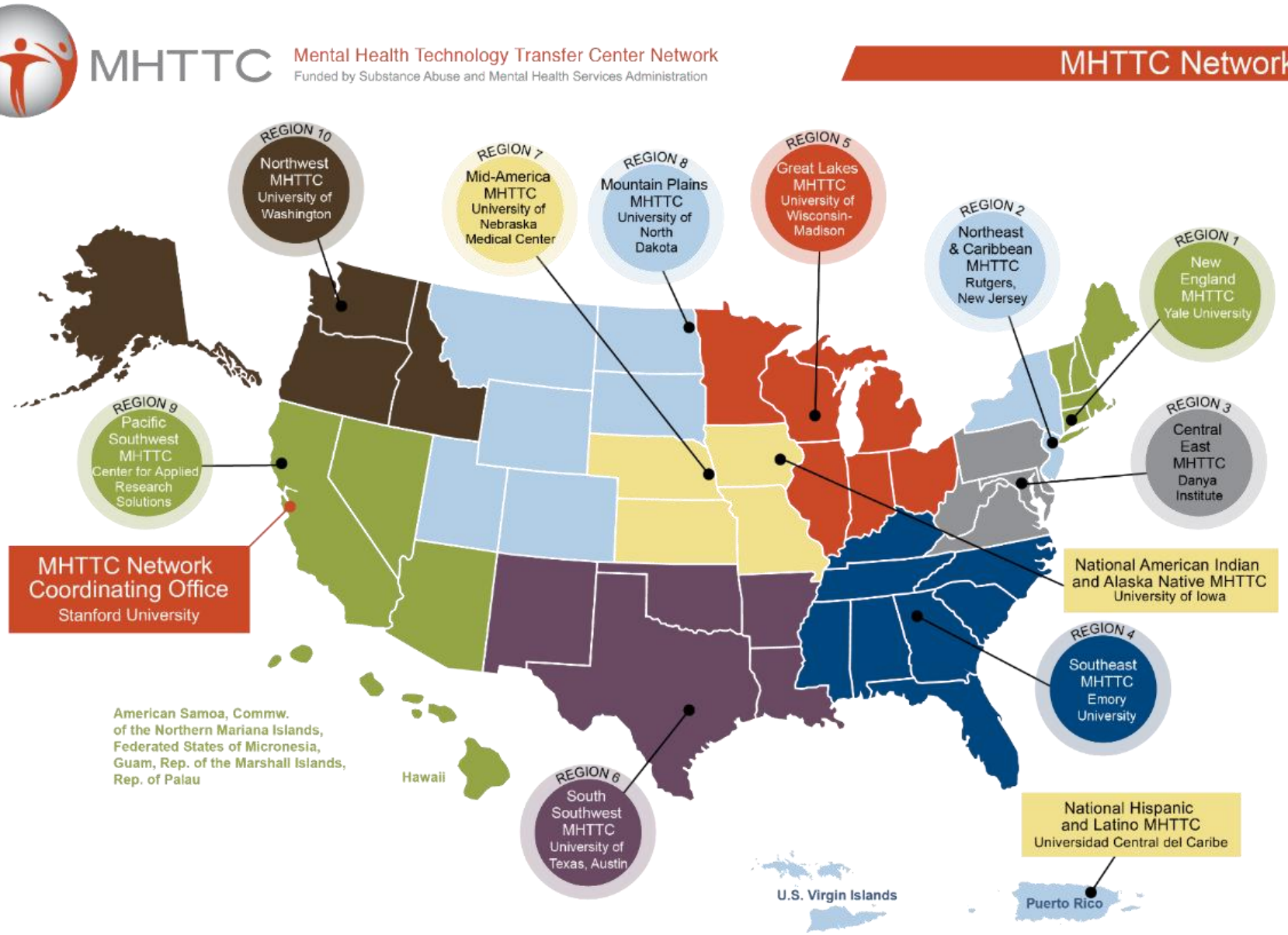
SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

The MHTTC Network uses affirming, respectful and recovery-oriented language in all activities. That language is:

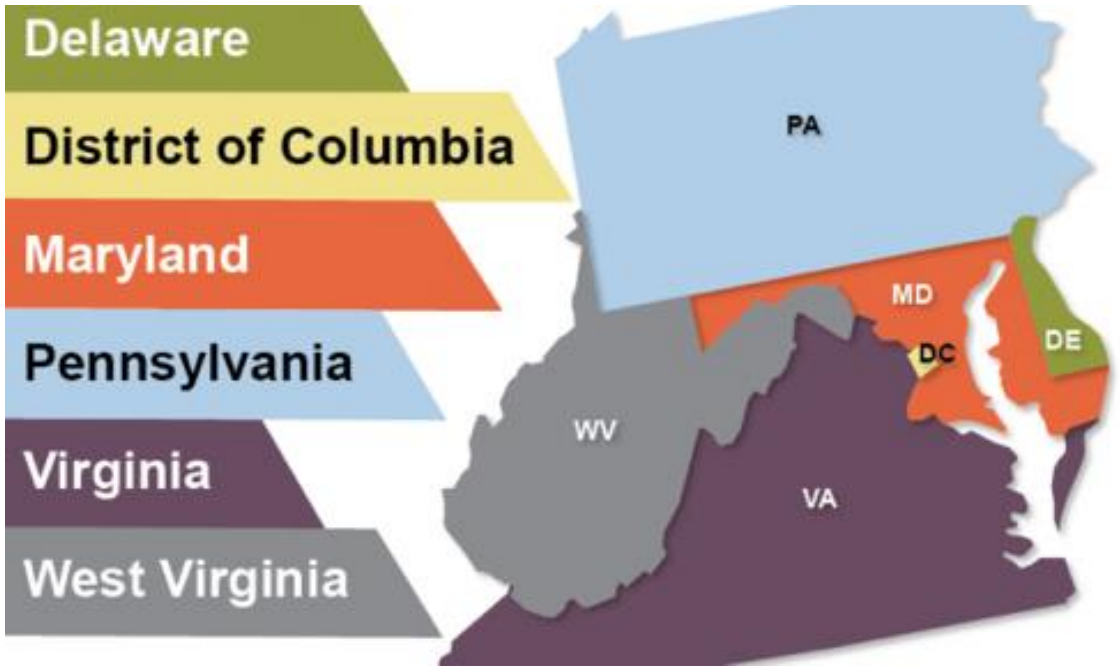
- Strengths-based and hopeful
- Inclusive and accepting of diverse cultures, genders, perspectives, and experiences
- Healing-centered and trauma-responsive
- Inviting to individuals participating in their own journeys
- Person-first and free of labels
- Non-judgmental and avoiding assumptions
- Respectful, clear and understandable
- Consistent with our actions, policies, and products

Adapted from: https://mhcc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Recovery-Oriented-Language-Guide_2019ed_v1_20190809-Web.pdf

MHTTC Network



Central East Region 3



Central East (HHS Region 3)

MHTTC Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network

Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Acknowledgment

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At the time of this publication, Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon, Ph.D, served as Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

The opinions expressed herein are the views of the authors and do not reflect the official position of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), SAMHSA. No official support or endorsement of DHHS, SAMHSA, for the opinions described in this document is intended or should be inferred.

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Presented 2023

Evaluation Information

- The MHTTC Network is funded through SAMHSA to provide this training. As part of receiving this funding we are required to submit data related to the quality of this event.
- At the end of today's training please take a moment to complete a **brief** survey about today's training.

Evaluation Link

Black Mental Wellness, Corp.

- **Dr. Nicole L. Cammack:** President & CEO
- **Dr. Danielle R. Busby:** Professional Relations & Liaison
- **Dr. Dana L. Cunningham:** Community Outreach & Engagement
- **Dr. Jessica S. Henry:** Program Development & Evaluation

Black Mental Wellness, Corp.

The Mission of Black Mental Wellness

- To provide information and resources about mental health and behavioral health topics from a Black perspective
- To highlight and increase the diversity of mental health professionals
- To decrease the mental health stigma in the Black community

Black Mental Wellness website

Join Us for the remainder of the series!

June 6, 2023: **Black Youth Suicide: Exploring a Public Health Crisis and the Role of Racial Trauma**

All webinars will be held from 12-1 EST

Objectives

1. Understand how the intersection between race and sexual/gender identity increases the risk of mental health concerns and suicide for Black LGBTQ+ youth.
2. Identify barriers that prevent Black LGBTQ+ youth from accessing care.
3. Identify at least 2 strategies to create change and/or support Black LGBTQ+ youth.

- STOP when you notice heightened emotions
  - **S**low Down
  - **T**ake some deep breaths
  - **O**bserve what you are feeling in your body
  - **P**rocess and proceed

Social Determinants of Health

The conditions in the environments in which people are born, live, learn, work, play and age that impact a wide range of health, functioning and quality of life outcomes.

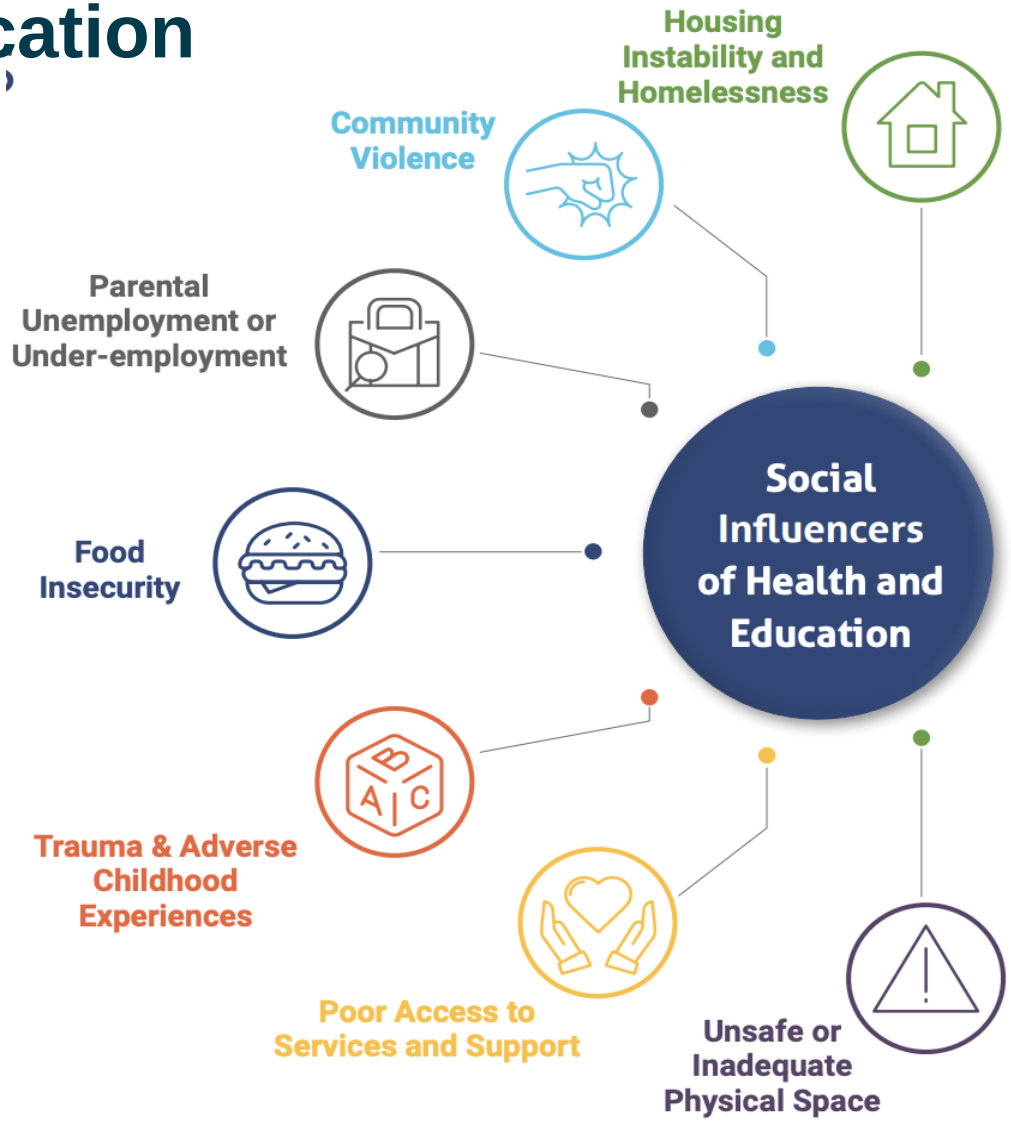
(Healthy People, 2020)

SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH ALLIANCE
The National Voice for School-Based Health Care

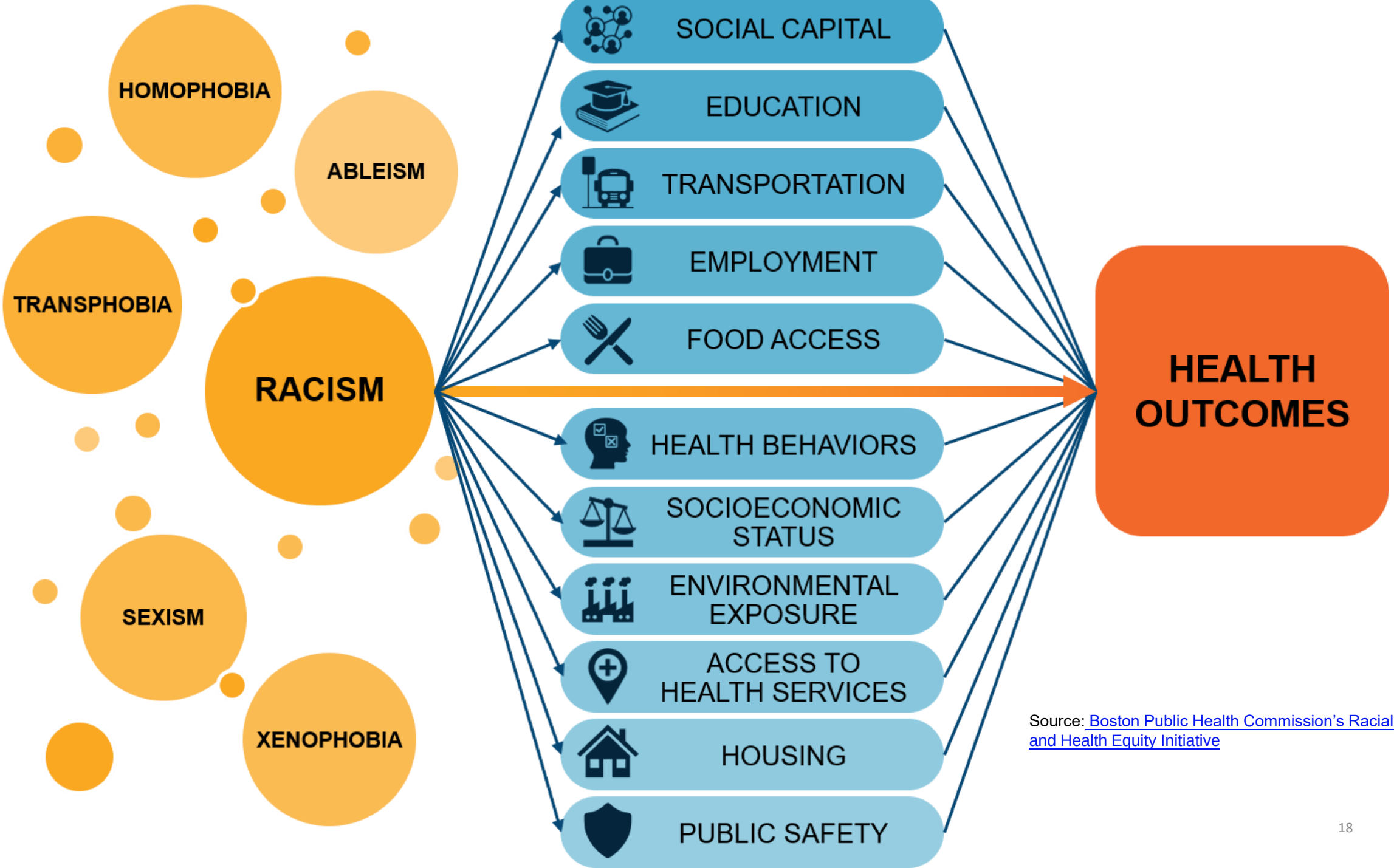
NCSMH
NATIONAL CENTER FOR SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH

Social Influencers of Health and Education

- SIHE are rooted in the social determinants of health
- A *child's health status* and *educational achievement* are influenced by multiple factors, many of which are external to the individual
- Often experienced disproportionately by race and ethnicity and contribute to health inequities, learning disruptions, and opportunity gaps



National Quality Initiative



Source: Boston Public Health Commission's Racial Justice and Health Equity Initiative

HEALTH DISPARITIES

38% of Black LBGTQ adults feel that their medical providers are uncomfortable with their sexuality.

LGBTQ POC were twice as likely as whites to report experiencing physically rough or abusive treatment by medical professionals.

LGBTQ individuals who have disclosed their sexual orientation to their health providers are more likely white than African American or Latino.

The consequences of racialized homophobia in healthcare are that ethnic minority LGBTQ individuals have internalized stigma linked to their sexual orientation and may be more likely to engage in sexual risk behavior and less likely to talk openly about their sexual behavior with health care providers.

VIDEO

Layered Identities: Life At the Intersection of Race, Gender, & Mental Health

Taken from --
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_GGt6iU4YoE&feature=emb_logo

Mental Health Concerns for Black LGBTQ+ Youth

Mental Health Challenges Amongst Black LGBTQ+ Youth

- Although sexual and gender minority (SGM) adolescents and young adults (AYA) comprise 9% of the total U.S. AYA population, they account for 36% of suicide attempts, a percentage that increased from 2009 to 2017
  - Over this same period, Black AYA were the only AYA racial group for which suicide attempts increased.
- 44% of Black LGBTQ youth seriously considered suicide in the past 12 months, including 59% of Black transgender and nonbinary youth.
- 55% of Black LGBTQ youth reported symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder in the past two weeks, including 70% of Black transgender and nonbinary youth.

Mental Health Challenges Amongst Black LGBTQ+ Youth (cont.d)

- 63% of Black LGBTQ youth report symptoms of major depressive disorder including 71% of Black transgender and nonbinary youth.

- Self-harm was reported in 44% of Black LGBTQ youth, including 61% of Black transgender and nonbinary youth.

- 49% of Black LGBTQ youth reported wanting psychological or emotional counseling from a mental health professional in the past 12 months, but not being able to get it.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality

- Intersectionality is an **analytic framework** that addresses how **interlocking systems of power** impact those **who are most marginalized in society.**

- Taking an **intersectional approach** means looking **beyond a person's individual identities and focusing on the points of intersection that their multiple identities create.**

- The term was coined by black feminist and legal scholar **Kimberlé Crenshaw** to describe **how individuals with multiple marginalized identities** can **experience multiple and unique forms of discrimination** that **cannot be conceptualized separately.**

Black SGM Youth + Suicidal Risk

- Suicidality is inequitably pronounced among **Black SGM AYAs for whom SI is over 44%, and SA is over 30%,** compared to 19% and 8% in the general population, respectively

- Recent research suggests that **Black SGM adolescents are at higher risk of suicide attempts than white SGM, Black heterosexual, and white heterosexual** adolescents who do not face comparable intersectional stigma

Black SGM Youth + Suicidal Risk (cont.d)

- **State-level racist and heterosexist policies were associated** with interpersonal suicide risk factors, including perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness, **as well as STBs for Black sexual minority (SM) communities, but not white SM communities**

- Emerging evidence suggests that these **anti-SGM policies** may be **inequitably enforced in, and affect suicidality among, Black SGM communities**

Barriers that Prevent Black LGBTQ+ Youth from Accessing Care

Barriers - Health Care

- LGBTQ+ POC were twice as likely as whites to report experiencing physically rough or abusive treatment by medical professionals.
- 38% of Black LBGTQ+ people feel that their medical providers are uncomfortable with their sexuality.
- White LGBTQ+ people are more likely to disclose their sexual orientation to their health providers than Black or Latino LGBTQ+ people.

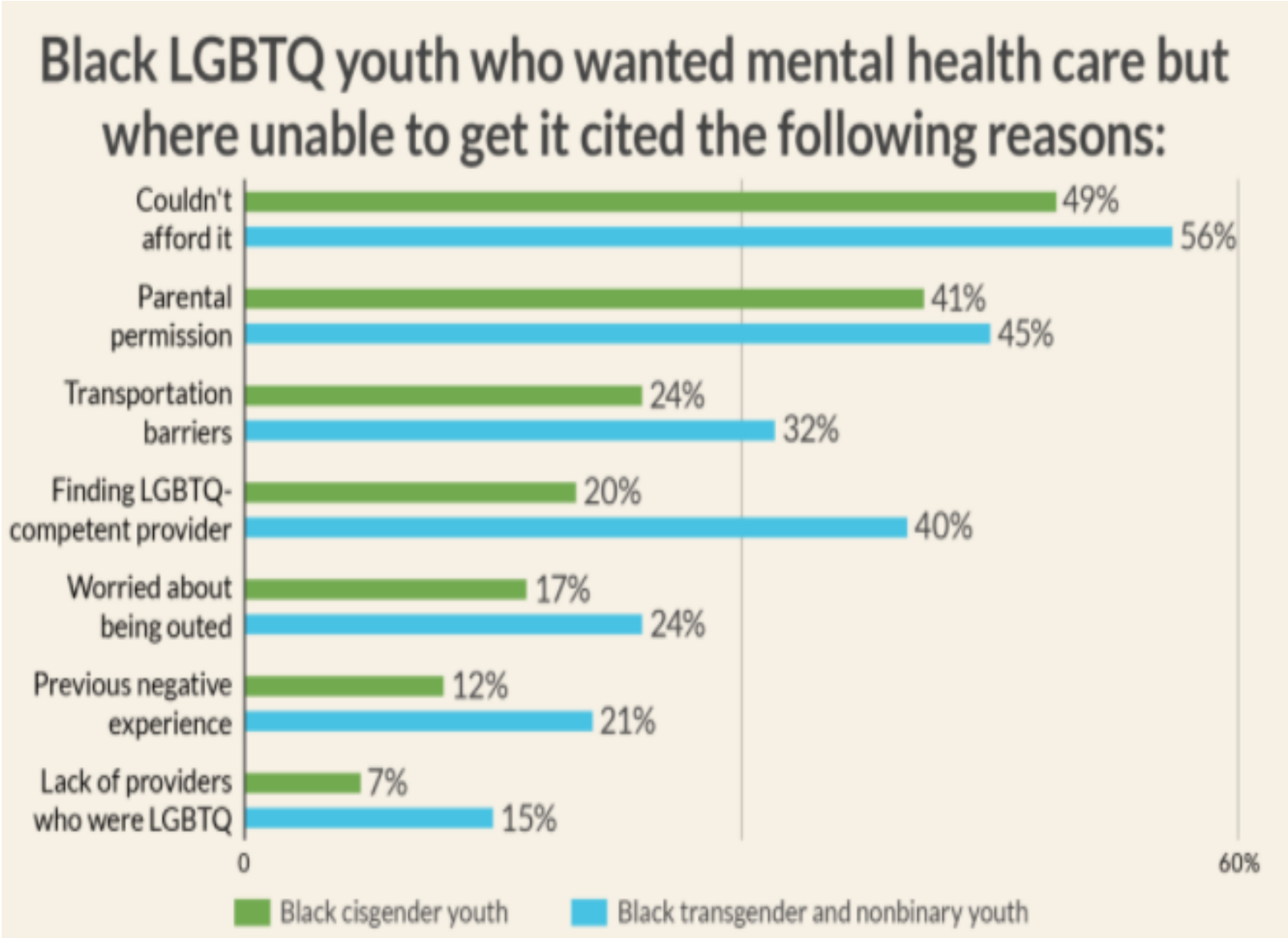
Barriers – Mental Health Care

- Black LGBTQ+ youth receive mental health care less frequently than their white peers for several reasons rooted in stigma.

- Black LGBTQ+ youth and adults are less likely to receive culturally competent mental health treatment from providers.
  - In fact, only 10% of Black youth reported feeling comfortable discussing their LGBTQ+ concerns with a counselor because of the limited understanding that counselors may have regarding their intersecting identity experiences.

- Black LGBTQ+ youth encounter fewer self-identified safe spaces or LGBTQ+ affirming environments.
  - More than 51% of Black LGBTQ students feel unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation, 40.2% because of their gender expression and 30.6% because of their race or ethnicity.

Barriers To Care



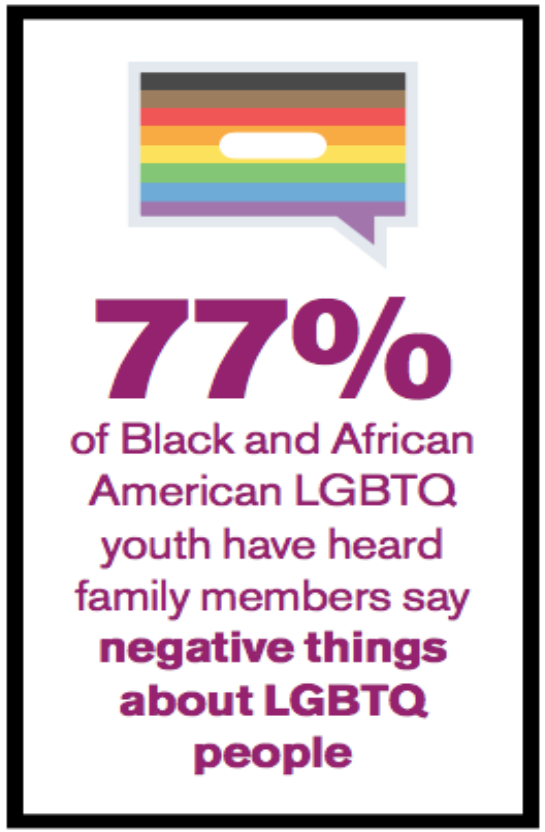
Additional Barriers

- Black LGBTQ+ youth and adults experience greater structural discrimination and oppression, bullying, harassment, and violence.

- Black LGBTQ+ youth encounter public policies that lack discrimination protections.
  - Homelessness
  - Incarceration
  - Schools/Graduation rates

- Black LGBTQ+ youth and adults report less support from family, friends, and peers.

Importance of Family



"I have discussed my sexuality a bit with my family, but it is not quite a comfortable topic yet. Me coming out to my family was met with mixed reviews; they were accepting, but they also still feel like it's just hormonal changes or something."

CASE EXAMPLE

Scenario: Shantelle, a 17-year-old Black transgender female, became homeless at the age of 15, after her parents discovered her future plan of receiving hormone therapy. As a result of her homelessness, it was difficult for her to attend school and graduate on time with her classmates. While other youth who experienced financial hardships received support from staff and teachers, she noticed that most administrators and staff were reluctant to offer support or assistance in transportation to and from school and appeared less understanding of her circumstances, and at times blamed her for not living at home with her family. Shantelle recognized that she was struggling with depression and attempted to receive therapy at the youth homeless shelter where she lived. Shantelle eventually discontinued therapy services due to not feeling heard or seen by her therapist. She stated that she did not believe that her therapist understood or was willing to recognize her unique experience. Despite Shantelle's challenges, she is excited and passionate about graduating from high school and going to college and getting her degree in psychology.

Work together to review the scenario and identify and discuss the following:

1. What were the various barriers and challenges that Shantelle experienced that impacted her daily functioning and future goals?
2. Do you think Shantelle experienced discrimination and how so?
3. How do you think nondiscrimination laws could have protected Shantelle?
4. Discuss the likelihood of Shantelle seeking mental health support now or in the future?
5. How should we begin to help Shantelle?

Ways to Support Black LGBTQ+ Youth

Protective Factors

- 82% of Black LGBTQ youth reported at least one supportive person in their life.
- Black transgender and nonbinary youth who reported high family support had lower rates of attempted suicide.
- 82% of Black LGBTQ youth report access to at least one in-person LGBTQ-affirming space.
- Black youth who had access to at least one LGBTQ-affirming space attempted suicide at 50% lower rates compared to Black LGBTQ youth without access.

Community Agencies

How can you support?

- Provide education to your staff on the harmful effects that discrimination can have on Black LGBTQ+ people.
- Identify and follow through on consequences for discriminatory behavior.
- Policy makers, educators, and community members are encouraged to evaluate and reform policies and procedures.
- Clinicians in the community can help LGBTQ+ individuals process their experiences with discrimination, bullying, harassment, and violence.
- Create LGBTQ+ inclusive and affirmative environments.

Educators, Clinicians, & Family Members

How can you support?

- As educators and clinicians, it is important to provide psychoeducation to the community and family on the benefits of supporting Black LGBTQ+ people.

- As a parent it may be beneficial to attend family therapy with your family member who identifies as LGBTQ+, to better understand their unique experiences.

- Parents and family members could also support their family member who identifies as LGBTQ+ by learning more about their experiences and the LGBTQ+ community and attending events specific to this population.

Shifting Mental Health Field

Decrease barriers to mental health care access (e.g., school-based mental health services, cost)

Develop a pipeline to diversify the field and actively recruit and retain mental health providers of intersecting identities

Receive regular continuing education training and information on the intersection between race and racism and anti-LGBTQ+ attitudes while reflecting on one's own biases

Clinicians can identify and create additional mental health services and resources (e.g., groups and mental health referrals) that are culturally appropriate for this population

Graduate programs should provide additional trainings on this specific population to increase cultural competence for providers who encounter Black LGBTQ+ youth in mental health treatment facilities

Policy Makers & Legal Representatives

How can you support?

- LGBTQ nondiscrimination protections should be comprehensive and inclusive in order to ensure equal opportunity in the daily lives of all LGBTQ people.

- It is vital that the text of nondiscrimination laws explicitly include protections based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

- Employment protections are a vital component of any statewide nondiscrimination law.

Resources

Suicide Prevention Resource Center

Mental Health & Wellness Organizations

- Black Mental Wellness
- Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective
- Melanin and Mental Health
- Mental Health America
- Rest for Resistance by QTPOC Mental Health
- South Asian Sexual & Mental Health Alliance
- The Steve Fund
- Trevor Project
- We R Native

Treatment & Resources

- American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors and Therapists
- Ayana Therapy App
- Asian Pacific Islander Desi American Therapist Directory
- Black Virtual Therapist Network
- GLMA Provider Directory
- LatinX Therapy
- National Queer and Trans Therapists of Color Network
- Therapy for Black Girls
- Psychology Today
- The GLBT National Resource Database

Therapy Resources

Open Path Psychotherapy Collective (Affordable Therapy)

The LoveLand Foundation (Vouchers for Therapy)

Black Men Heal
Black Men Heal is a nonprofit that provides FREE mental health treatment-both individual and group therapy to Men of Color.

Therapy for Black Kids
Dedicated to helping Black parents raise healthy kids in the 21st century.

Therapy Resources (cont.d)

Therapy for Black Men

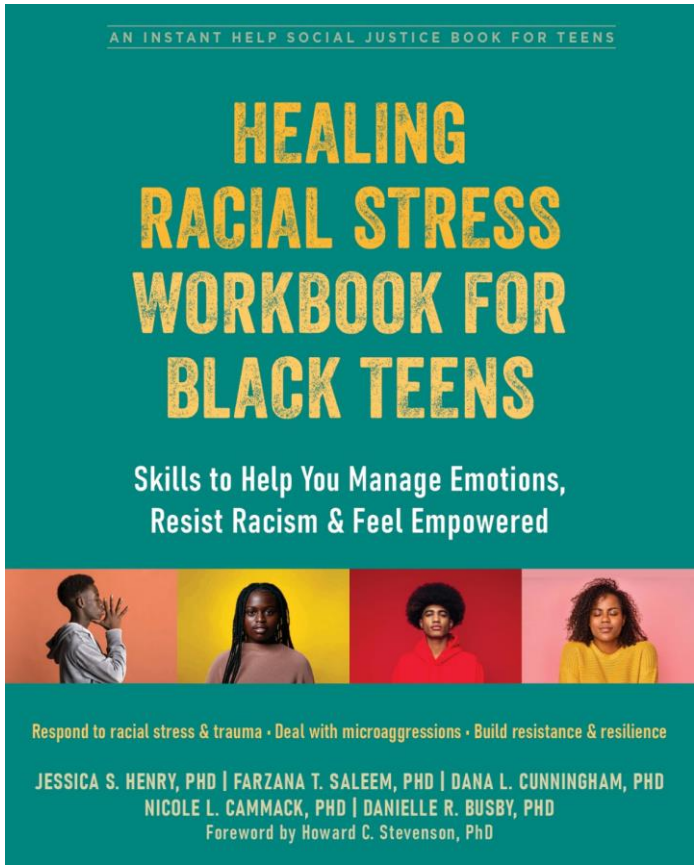
Aims to break the stigma that asking for help is a sign of weakness through a directory of close to 600 therapists throughout the US trained to provide judgment-free, multiculturally-competent care to Black men.

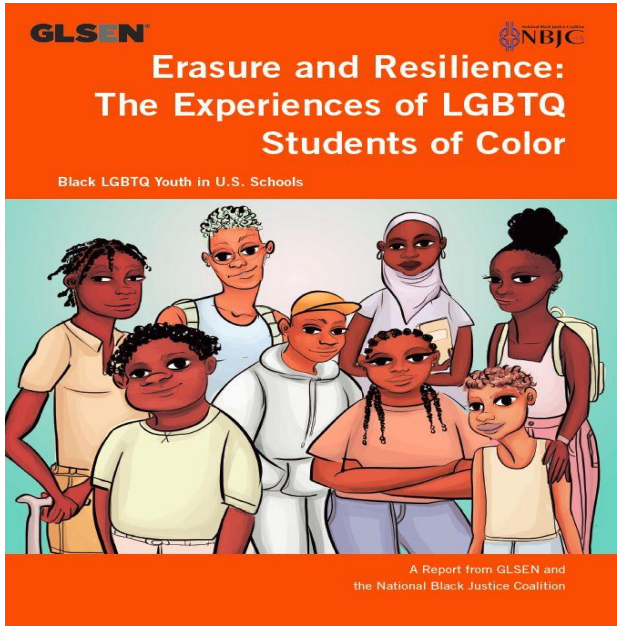
The Trevor Project

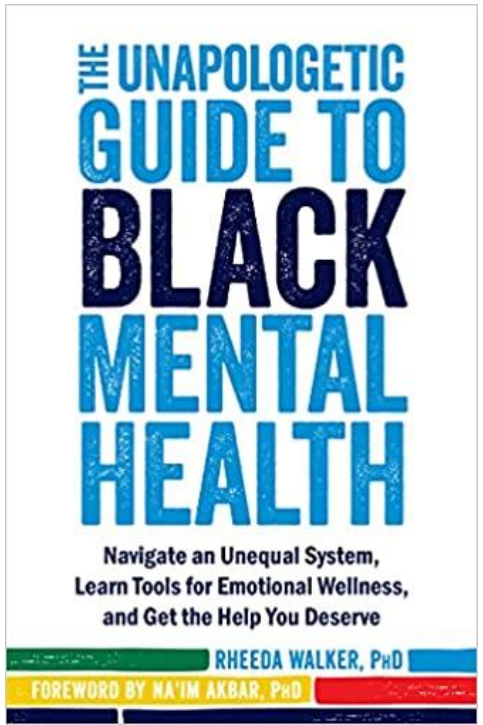
The Trevor Project's mission is to end suicide among LGBTQ young people.

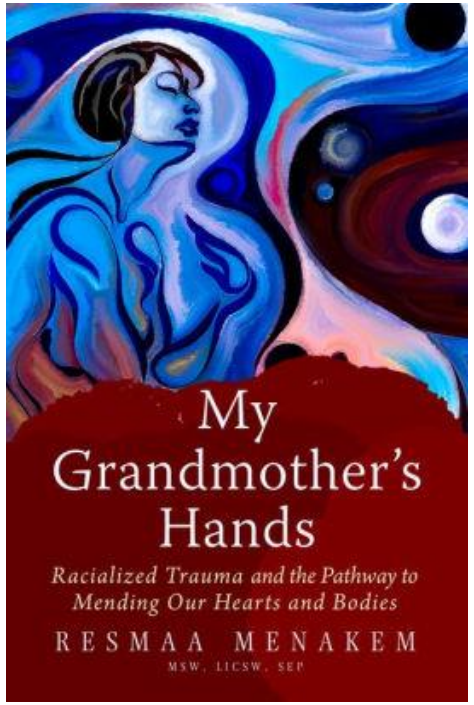
YBMen Project

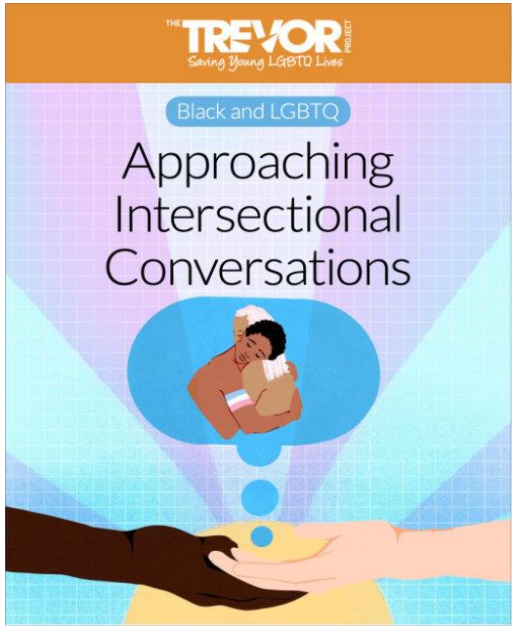
This culturally-sensitive, age-appropriate, and gender-specific program uses a private social media group (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, etc.) to provide mental health education and social support to young Black men by using information and prompts from social media and popular culture (e.g., YouTube videos, photos, lyrics, and current headlines).

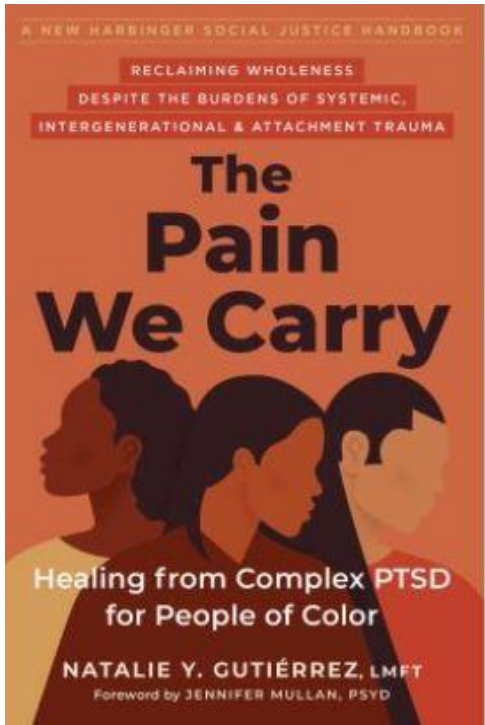

AN INSTANT HELP SOCIAL JUSTICE BOOK FOR TEENS
HEALING RACIAL STRESS WORKBOOK FOR BLACK TEENS
Skills to Help You Manage Emotions, Resist Racism & Feel Empowered
Respond to racial stress & trauma • Deal with microaggressions • Build resistance & resilience
JESSICA S. HENRY, PHD | FARZANA T. SALEEM, PHD | DANA L. CUNNINGHAM, PHD
NICOLE L. CAMMACK, PHD | DANIELLE R. BUSBY, PHD
Foreword by Howard C. Stevenson, PhD


GLSEN
NBJC
Erasure and Resilience: The Experiences of LGBTQ Students of Color
Black LGBTQ Youth in U.S. Schools
A Report from GLSEN and the National Black Justice Coalition


THE UNAPOLOGETIC GUIDE TO BLACK MENTAL HEALTH
Navigate an Unequal System, Learn Tools for Emotional Wellness, and Get the Help You Deserve
RHEEDA WALKER, PHD
FOREWORD BY NA'IM AKBAR, PHD


My Grandmother's Hands
Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies
RESMAA MENAKEM
MSW, LICSW, SEP


THE TREVOR PROJECT
Saving Young LGBTQ Lives
Black and LGBTQ
Approaching Intersectional Conversations


A NEW HARBINGER SOCIAL JUSTICE HANDBOOK
RECLAIMING WHOLENESS
DESPITE THE BURDENS OF SYSTEMIC, INTERGENERATIONAL & ATTACHMENT TRAUMA
The Pain We Carry
Healing from Complex PTSD for People of Color
NATALIE Y. GUTIÉRREZ, LMFT
Foreword by JENNIFER MULLAN, PSYD

For More Information

Black Mental Wellness Website

Email

Dr. Danielle Busby: DrBusby@BlackMentalWellness.com

Dr. Jessica Henry: DrHenry@BlackMentalWellness.com

Social Media

Black Mental Wellness

Black Mental Wellness

Questions

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Register

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If you missed the March 1st Webinar:

Social Influencers of Health & Suicide in Black Youth, watch here.

If you missed the April 4th Webinar:

Shame and Stigma: Re-imagining Masculinity and Strength for Black Boys watch here.

Appreciation

Contact Us

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MHTTC Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

a program managed by

THE DANYA INSTITUTE

Central East MHTTC website

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