

Understanding the Significance and Impacts of Historical Trauma in the Black Community

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Overview

Slavery and injustice are not only physical, but in the mind. Researchers across the world have documented the significant impact of historical trauma among diverse groups of people. With focus on the Black Community in America, social workers and students can begin to understand the historical trauma this population faces.

Learning Objectives:

- Participants will understand historical trauma as a theoretical perspective.
- Participants will become aware of the impacts of historical trauma on families, with focus on the Black American community.
- Participants will have real life examples of the impacts of historical trauma within the Black American community.

What is Trauma?

Trauma is a disordered psychic or behavioral state resulting from severe mental or emotional stress or physical injury. The symptoms of trauma include anxiety, fear, anger, shame.

What is Historical Trauma?

A cumulative, intentional, massive trauma, affecting a specific group carried across generations.

- Historical trauma is caused by severe levels of trauma from oppression, poverty, dislocation, war, etc.
- Manifests itself emotionally and psychologically.

Historical Trauma Impacts

- Adverse Childhood Experiences
 - Internalized Oppression
- Family Stress; Child Abuse and Neglect; Substance Abuse; Infant Mortality Rate; Mental Health Challenges; Domestic Violence

Symptoms of Historical Trauma



History of Blacks in America

- 6 to 7 million Black human beings were forced to migrate to America in 18th Century.
- Slave owners sought to make the Black community dependent on them through the practices of the Willie Lynch doctrine
- Emancipation Proclamation of 1863
- Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Mass Incarceration 1980-2015

Evidence of Historical Trauma

Forced Migration; Dehumanization; Environmental Racism; Mass Incarceration; Lynching; Police Brutality; Discrimination; Medical Experimentation; Torture; Forced Labor

What Can You Do?

- Build relationships
- Engage in diversity
- Be aware of your ethical responsibilities, values and ethical standards as Social Work Professionals

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