Welcome!

Thanks for joining us! We’ll begin shortly.
WELCOME
MODERATOR

Moderated by
Brian Anderson, LPC, CSAC
Reston Behavioral Health Outpatient
Program Manager
Fairfax-Falls Church CBS
AGENDA

- Welcome
- Housekeeping
- History and Partnerships
- Introductions
- Presentation
  - Mental Health Stigma in Black Communities: Shifting the Narrative
- Panel Discussion
- Q&A
- Closing Remarks
HOUSEKEEPING

- If having trouble hearing with your computer speakers, please call in.
- Under the “Audio” tab, click on the phone call option to get the phone number.
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Icons

- Arrow Icon - Allows you to minimize or maximize your control panel.
- Microphone Icon - If red, you are muted. If green you will be able to speak. You will be muted until the presenter unmutes you.
- Window Icon - Allows you to maximize or minimize the presentation screen.
- Raise Hand Icon - If you have a question use this icon to get the presenter’s attention.

- If you have any questions or comments, please type them into the “Questions” pane.
HISTORY
PARTNERS
INTRODUCTIONS
PANELISTS

Otis Williams III, Ph.D.
Chair and Associate Professor
Dept. of Counseling
Bowie State University

Randl Dent, Ph.D.
Health Equity Scholar
Fitzhugh Mullan Institute for Health Workforce Equity
George Washington University
#SafeSpaceDigDeep

A Safe Space to Dig Deep: Mental Health and Wellness in the Black Community

June 30, 2020
MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY

Randl Dent, Ph.D.
Health Equity Scholar
Fitzhugh Mullan Institute for Health Workforce Equity
George Washington University

#SafeSpaceDigDeep
A Safe Space to Dig Deep: Mental Health and Wellness in the Black Community

June 30, 2020
Mental Health Stigma in Black Communities: Shifting the Narrative

Randl Dent, PhD
A Safe Space to Dig Deep: Mental Health and Wellness in the Black Community
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What is mental health stigma?

What can mental health stigma look like in Black communities?

Where did mental health stigma come from?

How does stigma impact our ability to get needed mental health care?

How can we combat stigma?

Ending Affirmation
When we say mental health stigma, what do we mean?

- **Mental Health stigma (MH stigma)** is the negative reactions that people may experience after revealing they have a mental health disorder or have sought help for their mental health
  - *Public Stigma*

- **Private Stigma** is rooted in how people view themselves for seeking treatment or experiencing mental health issues
What can mental health stigma look like in Black communities?

- “We don’t suffer from mental illness.”
- “I’m strong enough to handle it on my own”
- “Our ancestors have been through much worse.”
- “Keep it inside the family”
- “If I go to therapy, I don’t have enough faith.”
Where did stigma come from in Black communities?

- **“Immunity Hypothesis”** (1700s-1840s) stated that enslaved people of African descent could not experience mental illness because they did not have the “stresses of profit making” (examples: owning property or voting).

- **“Exaggerated Risk Hypothesis”**- is the claim made by the 1840 census that free Black people experienced *higher* rates of mental illness.
  - Physicians were encouraged to argue that *Black people had more and different mental health issues from White people.*
    - *Drapetomania* (i.e., the disease causing enslaved Africans to run away)
    - *Dysaethesia aethiopica* (i.e., a disease affecting both the mind and body and causing lethargy and lesions)
Mental Health Stigma grew in Black communities from a warranted mistrust of mental healthcare

- Ultimately, medicine and diagnoses were weaponized against us and used to “pathologize a human instinct for freedom and dignity” to uphold slavery as necessary and even beneficial to Black Americans.

- Black people have a warranted mistrust of mental and medical healthcare systems.
  - *Tuskegee Study*
  - *Henrietta Lacks*
  - *Exploitation of Black people in early mental health institutions (i.e., asylums)*
What can mental health stigma look like in Black communities?

- “We don’t suffer from mental illness.”
  - Stems from immunity hypothesis

- “Keep it inside the family.”
  - Stems from misdiagnosis and overdiagnosis historically and in the present
  - Meant to be protective but may not be anymore.

- “Our ancestors have been through much worse.”
  - This is absolutely true, but that does not mean we don’t experience trauma from racism and oppression that is happening in the present-day.
What can mental health stigma look like in Black communities?

■ “I’m strong enough to handle it on my own.”
  - We are a strong and resilient people. We know this!
  - “Strength still needs support”
    -- Therapy for Black Men

■ “If I go to therapy, I don’t have enough faith.”
  - “I don’t believe that you can always use a spiritual antidote to a mental or emotional problem. I think you have to treat what is hurting with what is necessary to get better.”
    -- Bishop TD Jakes
How does stigma impact our ability to get needed mental health care?

- When Black people have concerns about mental health stigma, they delay or avoid treatment for their mental health issues.

- Mental Health Stigma may prevent us from getting the help we need.
Why should we combat mental health stigma narratives in our communities?

- We, as Black people, deserve to live **healthy full lives** in which we are **safe, valued, and affirmed**.

- Taking care of ourselves and our mental health is an **ESSENTIAL** part of living a healthy, full life.
How can we shift the narrative about mental health?

In our communities:

- Dispel myths about mental health and therapy
- Normalize talking about your mental health and seeking help with your loved ones
- Talk about it as if you were talking about going to a physical wellness visit
How can we shift the narrative about mental health?

In mental healthcare systems:

■ Access to quality appropriate and culturally responsive mental health care

■ Building trust with Black communities

■ Community-based treatment options

■ Models of care that center Black experiences

■ Create a pipeline of training Black mental health professionals and hiring them into the field AND leadership positions.
Ending Affirmation

• As a Black person, I deserve to live a healthy, full life in which I am safe, valued and affirmed.
Questions?

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A Safe Space to Dig Deep: Mental Health and Wellness in the Black Community

June 30, 2020
Q₁. How does stigma impact inequities in health outcomes in black communities compared to other races and white communities?
Q₂. What is the historical and very current impact of racism on the mental health in the Black community?
Q3. Discuss the recent incidents of police brutality & violence.
Q4. What can we do, individually and collectively, to bring about meaningful and long overdue change to improve outcomes in the lives of our Black community?
THANK YOU