

Art students, on April 8, at Lehman College, CUNY, in the Bronx, sketching an Olmec Head replica – the original, pre-dating Columbus' arrival to the "New World", is in Mexico.

# Considering the Whole Person: Contexts for LGBT Peoples of Color Mental and Behavioral Health Treatment

By  
Antoine B. Craigwell

**DBAM**

*Raising Awareness, Changing and Saving Lives*

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID  
**NATIONAL COUNCIL**  
FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
*Healthy Minds. Strong Communities.*

## Today's Presenter



### **Antoine Craigwell**

Founder, President and CEO  
DBGM, Inc.

# Contexts for mental health treatment for Black and peoples of color.

We'll look at:

- Slavery (historical and contemporaneous manifestations);
- Racism's effect;
- Trauma (intergenerational, contemporaneous, and vicarious);
- Cultural contexts (thinking, biases and approaches); and
- Incorporate LGBTQ+ language - pronouns



# Audience Poll

How prepared do you feel to treat/work with LGBTQ people of color in behavioral health settings? (5 - very prepared, 1 - not prepared)

- 1 – not prepared
- 2
- 3 – neutral
- 4
- 5 – very prepared



Charlestown, July 24th, 1769.

TO BE SOLD,

On THURSDAY the third Day  
of AUGUST next,



A CARGO

OF

NINETY-FOUR

PRIME, HEALTHY



NEGROES,

CONSISTING OF

Thirty-nine MEN, Fifteen BOYS,  
Twenty-four WOMEN, and  
Sixteen GIRLS.

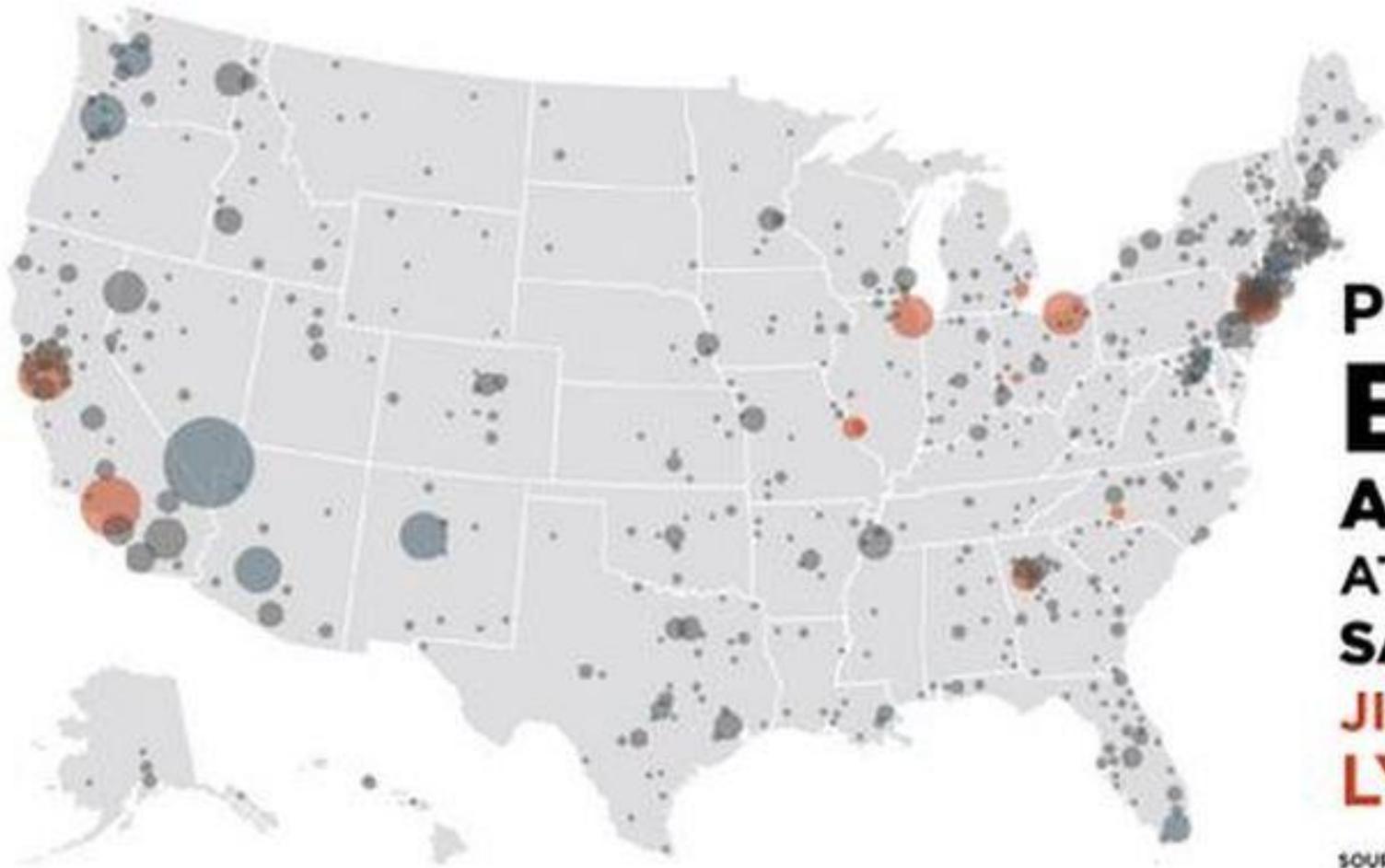
JUST ARRIVED,

In the Brigantine *DEMBIA*, *Francis Bare*, Master, from SIERRA-  
LEON, by

DAVID & JOHN DEAS.



National Memorial for Peace and Justice (aka Lynching Memorial), Montgomery, Alabama



**POLICE *KILL***  
**BLACK**  
**AMERICANS**  
**AT NEARLY THE**  
**SAME RATE AS**  
**JIM CROW ERA**  
**LYNCHINGS.**

**2000-2014** INCOMPLETE FEDERAL DATA ON POLICE KILLINGS  
INSUFFICIENT FEDERAL ACTION TO STOP THEM

**SOURCE:**  
"Mike Brown's shooting and Jim Crow lynchings have too much in common. It's time for America to own up," *The Guardian* 08/25/14  
<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/aug/25/mike-brown-shooting-jim-crow-lynchings-in-common>

Source: *The Guardian*, Aug. 24, 2014



# Types of Trauma Impacting Mental Health

## Intergenerational Trauma

- Slavery, separation and racist eras
- Joy DrGryu, Ph.D. – Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome

## Trauma's Neurological Effects

- Freud's "repetition compulsion"
- Jung's "consciousness returns as destiny", "Collective Unconscious"
- Bessel Van Der Kolk pre-frontal cortex "speechless terror"
- Stress-related cortisol flooding hippocampus and amygdala – in infants and children

## Trauma's Community Effects

- Children experience less sleep
- Affected attention and learning abilities
- Risk behaviors – depression, suicidal ideation

## Maternal Trauma

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Stress Response Systems (SRS)
- Autonomic Nervous System (ANS)
- Hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis
- Maternal Stress during pregnancy – Respiratory Sinus Arrhythmia (RSA)

## Contemporaneous Trauma

- Urban Trauma with civilian/social PTSD
- Separation (**incarceration**)
- **Police Killings**, detentions, arrests
- Vicarious Trauma
- Physical, sexual, psychological and emotional abuse
- Economic Trauma – food racism, wage earning, racism in education, racism in employment
- Healthcare and Mental Health Care Trauma – disparities in care, therapists not culturally sensitive
- Legal Trauma – glaring disparities in justice for Blacks compared to Whites – prosecutions and judgements
- Identity Trauma – voting rights, LGBTQ+ rights, denial of self

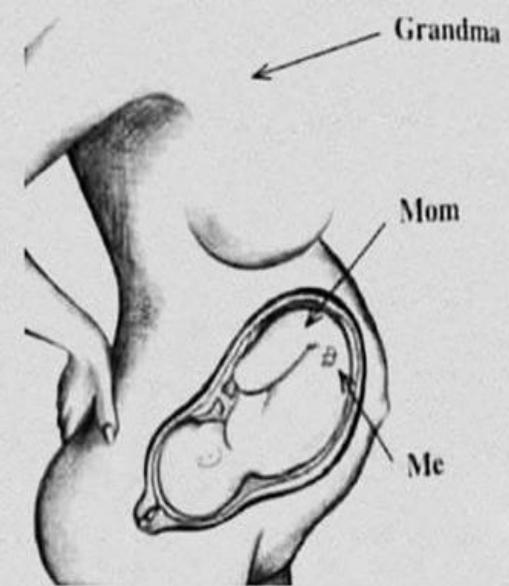


“The way an impala jumps influences its unborn child.” – the Tsonga People in Chibuto, Mozambique.

## Maternal Transgenerational Trauma

"...maternal history of childhood abuse predicts hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis functioning in her offspring. These findings are consistent with life course theory, which posits that health trajectories are influenced by recent events and reflect cumulative exposure, suggesting that consideration of both current stressors and experiences across a mother's lifespan are needed to understand intergenerational health disparities. An infant's developing ANS, and therefore future self-regulation and mental health risk, are likely influenced by a combination of a mother's experience of prenatal stress and her own earlier exposures to adversity."

"Thinking Across Generations: Unique Contributions of Maternal Early Life and Prenatal Stress to Infant Physiology", co-authored by Sara Gray, Ph.D., et. al.

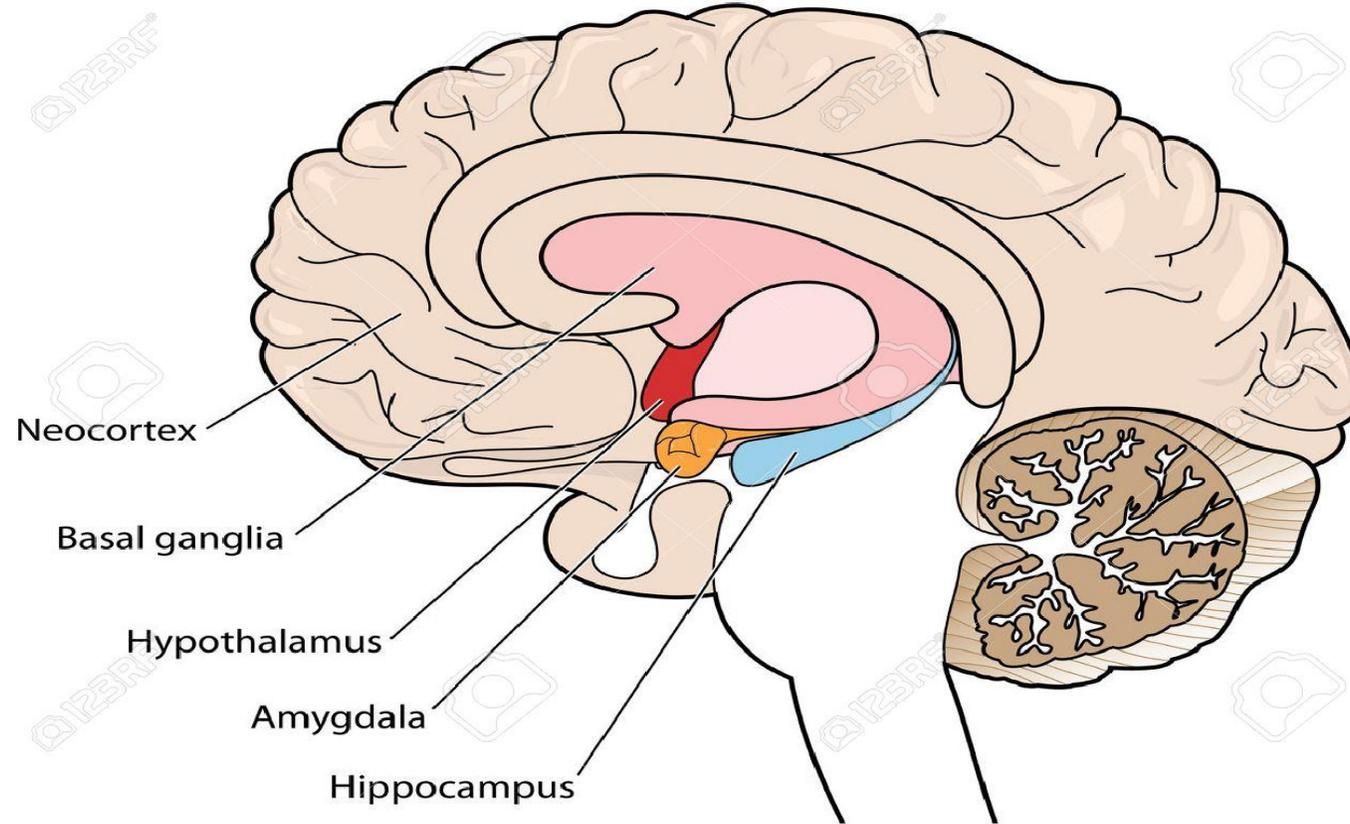


This is so amazing.. Did you know that your grandmother carried part of you inside her womb? But how? Well, a female fetus is born with all the eggs she will ever have in her lifetime. So when your Grandmother was carrying your Mother in her womb, you were a tiny egg in your Mother's ovaries. The three of you have been connected for a very long time Women are amazing!



# Contemporaneous Trauma

“Living With Neighborhood Violence May Shape Teens’ Brains”, by Darby Saxbe, Ph.D., *The Conversation*, June, 2018





**Dr. Thema**

@drthema



Childhood trauma can lead to an adulthood spent in survival mode, afraid to plant roots, to plan for your future, to trust, to let joy in.

It is a blessing to shift from surviving to thriving. It is not simple but there is more than survival.

“Let's raise children who won't have to recover from their childhoods.”

— Pam Leo



“Thinking about your mental health, which includes stress, depression and problems with emotions, how many days during the past 30 days would you say your mental health was ‘not good’?”



# Signs you are healing from trauma

- ~ You are aware of your triggers and patterns
- ~ You are not as easily and intensely triggered
- ~ Quicker return to your normal state after you've gone into fight/flight/freeze
- ~ Your emotional intelligence has improved
- ~ Feelings of powerlessness and helplessness change into confidence, worthiness and inner strength
- ~ Selfsabotage, shame and guilt are diminishing
- ~ Feelings of being stuck turn into realisation that taking a step forward is possible



SOULDIPITY COACHING

Her children were sold. Her men were lynched. She was raped. But she fought on and she's still fighting. #TheBlackWoman

# The Black Woman



## Approaches

Breaking the cycle involves:

- **First**, recognizing and acknowledging, if White, that a Black or person of color is human – in all aspects, no differences;
- **Second**, incorporate a Black or other person's culture, that is, their ancestral and intergenerational history – what were the traumas experienced by the person's immediate forebears?
- **Third**, looking at the trauma they experienced from birth to their current presentation, "What are some of the things that happened to you, as far back as you can remember to now, and how have you been affected?"

# A Mother Speaks About Her Son – Nigel Shelby



## Some Factors Affecting Black Gay Men's Mental Health

Coming from interviews and from the film, "**You Are Not Alone**", the following six themes emerged as psychosocial and sociocultural factors contributing to the mental health destabilization impacting Black gay men, and led to depression, suicidal ideation and attempts:



## Some Factors Affecting Black Gay Men's Mental Health

- ❖ **Acceptance by family and friends** at an early age – need to examine the sociocultural factors which drive acceptance; research tells us a child's parents acceptance early in their lives, are able to become better and well adjusted members of the family, community and society;
- ❖ **Effect of sexual abuse** – the trauma leading to the biopsychoneurological rewiring, reliving this trauma every day as if it just happened and afraid to tell others for fear of not being believed or accused of encouraging the abuse;
- ❖ **Religious influenced homophobia** – churches continue to preach hatred against sexual orientation and gender identity, which leads to ostracism – whether self or forced by family, including many LGBTQ+ who are evicted from their homes;

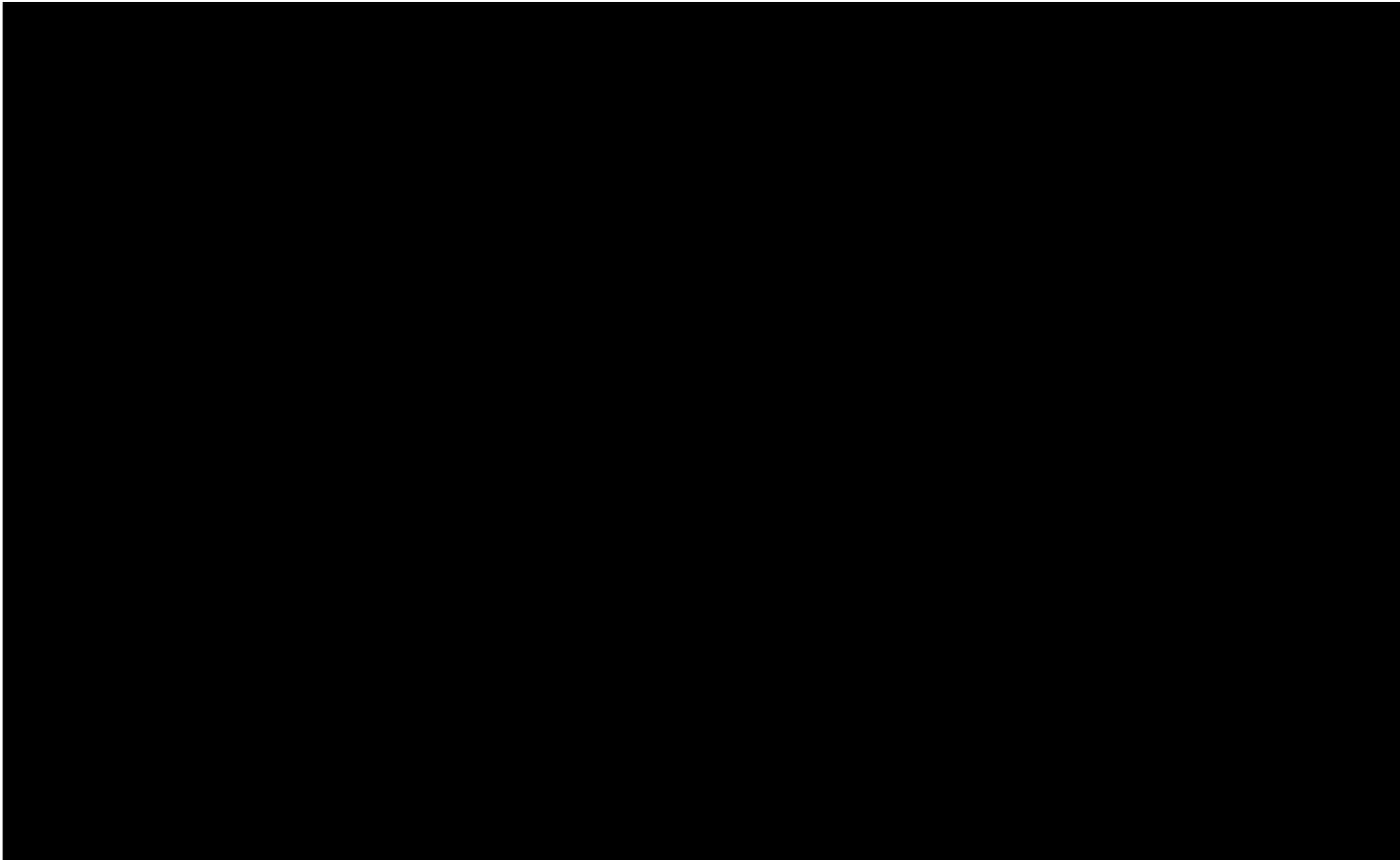


## Some Factors Affecting Black Gay Men's Mental Health

- ❖ **Contracting HIV** and the readjusted lives that come with an infection, including the additional burden of secrecy, fear of judgement and further ostracism (being Black, gay, and HIV+), and the mental health effects of an HIV diagnosis, which wreaks havoc on the infected person's (undiagnosed and or diagnosed, but untreated) neurological system;
- ❖ **Effect of bullying**, including **Cyber-bullying**, which reinforces society's shame, stigma and discrimination
- ❖ **Growing old as a Black gay man** – twice victimized, returned to closets for survival in old age



# From the documentary "You Are Not Alone"



# Recognizing Culture's Role in Mental Health

- Mental Health professionals recognizing that the Western European Freudian psychoanalytic paradigm isn't a one-size-fits all to address mental health
  - Need to recognize and approach mental health from the perspective of the person's own culture and beliefs, for example, pibloktok – described by 19<sup>th</sup> century European Arctic explorers of the Inuit as "culture-bound psychoses" or "culture-bound syndromes", which the DSM-V classified as a dissociative trance disorder with a distinctive cultural expression, an involuntary state of disassociation that is found in several cultures around the world.
- Culture and social environment can shape, even predict, common mental disorders, such as depression and anxiety.
  - **W. E. I. R. D.** – **W**estern, **E**ducated, **I**ndustrialized, **R**ich, and **D**emocratic

# RELATIONSHIPS?



Panda



Monkey



Bananas

# Treatment

- W.E.I.R.D – Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic.
- Embracing, undertaking and including one's culture/ethnic background into treatment/identification with the client



# what's the deal with PRONOUNS?

Don't assume! Just ask "What are your pronouns?" when you meet someone and introduce your own.

<b>They</b> They walked the dog.	<b>Them</b> The dog licked them.	<b>Their</b> Their dog is so cute.	<b>Theirs</b> Is that dog theirs?	<b>Themselves</b> They went by themselves.
<b>Ze/Zie</b> Ze ate a cookie.	<b>Hir</b> Can I bake hir a treat?	<b>Hir</b> Hir favorite is funfetti.	<b>Hirs</b> The cookie is hirs.	<b>Hirself</b> Hir made it hirself!
<b>She</b> She likes to cut hair.	<b>Her</b> Ask her to cut yours!	<b>Her</b> Her hair is adorable.	<b>Hers</b> That comb is hers.	<b>Herself</b> Did she dye it herself?
<b>Xe</b> Xe loves to drink tea.	<b>Xem</b> Give xem a mug.	<b>Xyr</b> Xyr choice is mint.	<b>Xyrs</b> The kettle is xyrs.	<b>Xemself</b> Ow, xe burned xemself!
<b>He</b> He is a singer.	<b>Him</b> Invite him to the show!	<b>His</b> His songs are catchy.	<b>His</b> Is that one of his?	<b>Himself</b> He wrote it himself.
_____	_____	_____	_____s	_____self* * and many more!

“ But it's hard to remember and change what pronouns I use for you! ”

Everyone makes mistakes! Using the right pronouns for a person affirms their identity.

Continue to make an effort to change your behavior, and don't make a huge deal out of each slip-up.



**NYU** LGBTQ Student Center

[NYU\\_LGBTQ](#)  
[NYU LGBTQ STUDENT CENTER](#)  
[LGBTQ.STUDENT.CENTER@NYU.EDU](mailto:LGBTQ.STUDENT.CENTER@NYU.EDU)

KIMMEL CENTER FOR UNIVERSITY LIFE  
60 Washington SQ. SOUTH, SUITE 602  
NEW YORK NY 10012

FOR MORE INFO ON THESE EVENTS, VISIT:  
[bit.ly/nyulgbtqcalendar](http://bit.ly/nyulgbtqcalendar)



## *10 Things You're Actually Saying When You Ignore Someone's Gender Pronouns:*

1. I know you better than you know yourself.
2. I would rather hurt you repeatedly than change the way I speak about you.
3. Your sense of safety is not important to me.
4. Your identity isn't real and shouldn't be acknowledged.
5. I want to teach everyone around me to disrespect you.
6. Offending you is fine if it makes me feel more comfortable.
7. I can hear you talking, but I'm not really listening.
8. Being who you truly are is an inconvenience to me.
9. I would prefer it if you stopped being honest with me.
10. I am not an ally, a friend, or someone you can trust.

# Reference (resource materials)

- “How to Get Away with Murder”, ABC Television drama Season 4, Episode 13 – Annalise Keating portrayed by actress Viola Davis, presents the case of Lahey v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania before the US Supreme Court;
- “Racism and Mental Health”, American Psychiatric Association blog post, October 2017;
- “It Didn’t Start With You: How Inherited Family Trauma Shapes Who We Are,” Mark Wolynn, July 2016;
- Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome, by Joy DeGruy, Ph.D.;
- “The way an impala jumps influences its unborn child,” Tsonga people of Chibuto, Mozambique;
- “Thinking Across Generations: Unique Contributions of Maternal Early Life and Prenatal Stress to Infant Physiology”, co-authored by Sara Gray, Ph.D., et. al.; *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, Vol 56, Issue 11; Nov 2017;
- “What Are the Transgenerational Consequences of Maternal Childhood Adversity and Maternal Stress During Pregnancy?”, James Leckman, MD, Ph.D., editor, commenting on Gray, et al article;
- “Police killings and their spillover effects on the mental health of b[B]lack Americans: a population-based, quasi-experimental study”, Jacob Bor, Atheendar S. Venkataramani, David R Williams, Alexander C Tsai, *Lancet*, June 2018;
- “Living With Neighborhood Violence May Shape Teens’ Brains”, by Darby Saxbe, Ph.D., *The Conversation*, June, 2018;
- “How Indirect Violence Gets Under a Child’s Skin – and Into the Brain”, by Rod McCullom, *UnDark*, August, 2018;
- “Age-Related Racial Disparity in Suicide Rates Among US Youths from 2001 through 2015”, the *Journal of American Medicine*, May, 2018;
- “How Knowledge about Different Cultures is shaking the foundations of psychology”, Nicholas Geeraert, *The Conversation*, March 2018;
- “The Weirdest People in the World?”, Joseph Henrich, Steven Heine and Ara Norenzayan, *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 2010;
- “Nutritional Medicine as Mainstream in Psychiatry”, Jerome Sarris and Alan C. Logan, et al, *Lancet*, 2015

**IN MY MIND:  
OVERCOMING BARRIERS;  
CREATING OPPORTUNITIES**



**A PEOPLE OF COLOR  
MENTAL HEALTH CONFERENCE**

Oct 10 & 11, 2019  
The New School, 65 Fifth Ave, NYC

**EN MI MENTE:  
SUPERANDO BARRERAS;  
CREANDO OPORTUNIDADES**



**UN CONFERENCIA DE  
PERSONAS DE COLOR SOBRE LA SALUD MENTAL**

Oct 10 & 11, 2019  
The New School, 65 Fifth Ave, NYC

# Questions & Comments



Gratitude to Tom Hill and the team at the National Council for Behavioral Health.

**THANK YOU** for tuning in, listening, and for your questions and comments.

For more information, contact Antoine Craigwell at

[Info@DBGM.org](mailto:Info@DBGM.org)

