

A Safe Space to Dig Deep

Mental Health and Wellness
in the Black Community

#SafeSpaceDigDeep



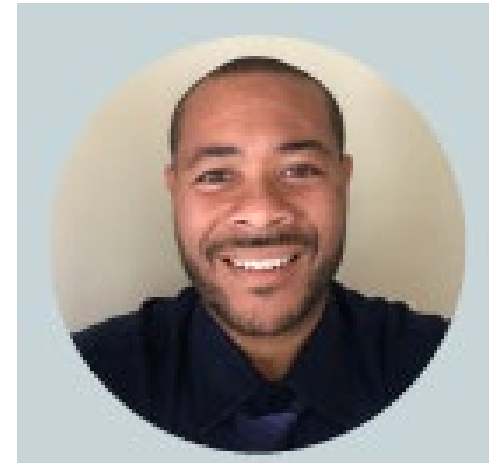
Welcome!

Thanks for joining us!
We'll begin shortly.

WELCOME

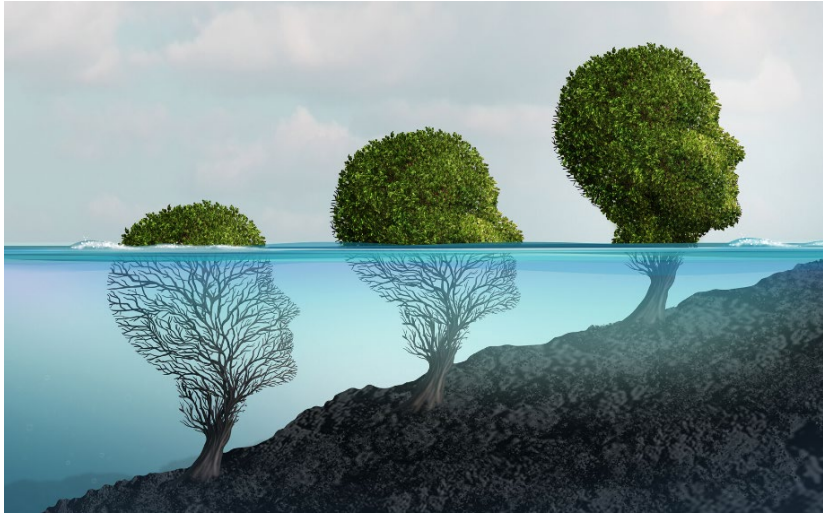


MODERATOR



**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



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HISTORY





PARTNERS



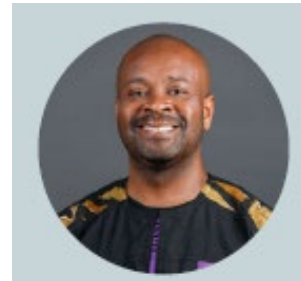
FAIRFAX COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF
FAMILY SERVICES



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

PRESENTATION



MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY



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

Mental Health Stigma in Black Communities: Shifting the Narrative



Randi Dent, PhD
A Safe Space to Dig Deep: Mental Health
and Wellness in the Black Community
June 30, 2020

Agenda



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)
 - *Dysaesthesia 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?

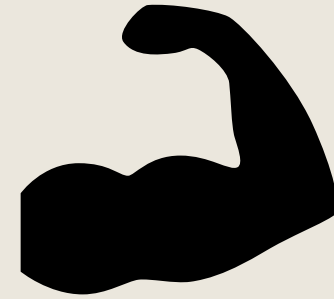
- **“We don’t suffer from mental illness.”**
 - *Stems from immunity hypothesis*
- **“Keep it inside the family.”**
 - *Stems from misdiagnosis and overdiagnosis historically and in the present*
 - *Meant to be protective but may not be anymore.*
- **“Our ancestors have been through much worse.”**
 - *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.

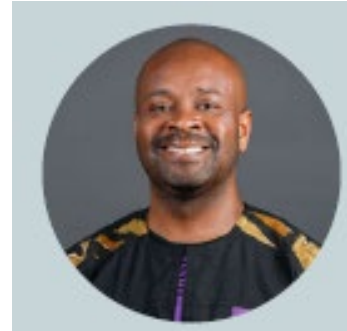
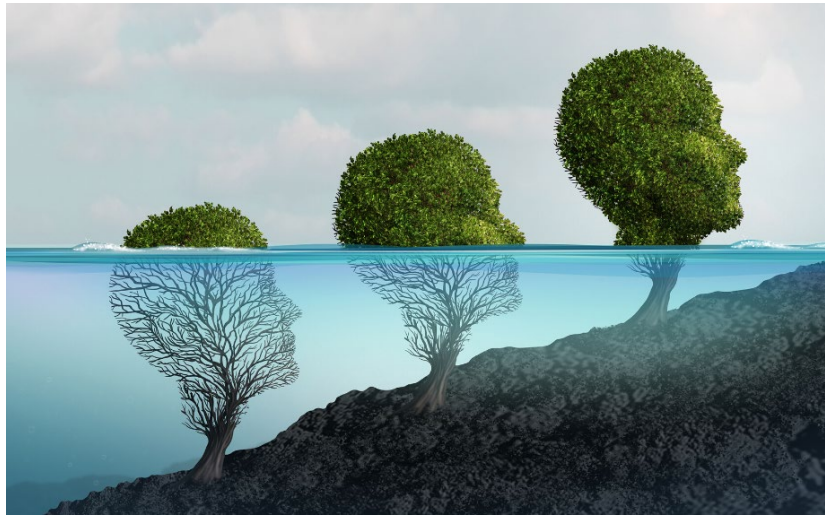




Ending Affirmation

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

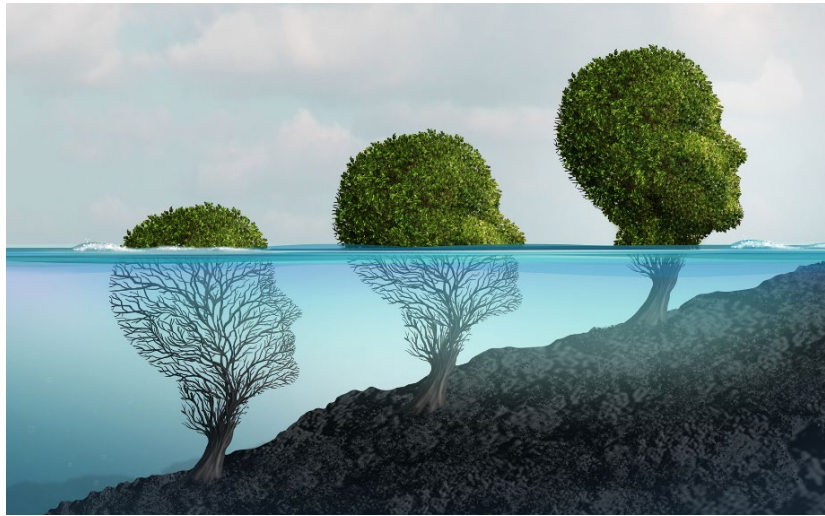
PANEL DISCUSSION



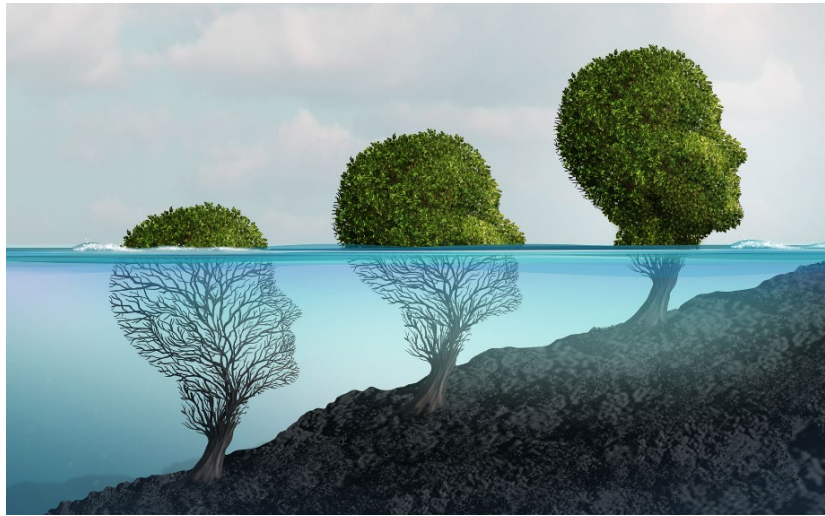
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Q1. How does stigma impact inequities in health outcomes in black communities compared to other races and white communities?



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?

Q & A



CLOSING REMARKS



THANK YOU





PARTNERS



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