The Complex Trauma of

2020

CURRENT EVENTS

0

## Stressors of Today

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Social/Physical Distancing | Worries about job duties, holding employment, financial constraints | Anticipation about the future…how long this will continue? Lack of control over the situation |
| Constant doom and gloom (i.e. social media, news, etc.) | Working All the time | Everyone's in a different boat |
| Merged rolls and constant multitasking (employee, parent, spouse, managing families, schooling) | Social Unrest | Tough conversations with youth about world uncertainties |

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**What do we ultimately do?**

Doing it in a trauma informed way

How can you express to my agency that more needs to be done?

There is so much information out there and conflicting. Hard to know what is best.

Navigating complex emotions in a volatile environment

Cultivation of an approach to dialogue that does not demonize or demean people with differing perspectives.

Lack of shared experiences. Agency staff do not reflect culture or diversity of community

Navigating a productive response in a very complex time

my personal opinion vs agency

Knowing that systemic change is bigger and slower than what is being demanded right now makes it difficult to feel effective.

2

# Boiling the Ocean

3

## What is Trauma?

**Definition (SAMHSA Experts 2012) includes**

**three key elements**

*Individual trauma results from an* **event** *, series of events, or set of circumstances that is* **experienced** *by an individual as overwhelming or life-changing and that has profound* **effects** *on the individual's psychological development or well-being, often involving a physiological, social, and/or spiritual impact.*

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5

# Intergenerational (Historical) Trauma

"Cumulative emotional and psychological wounding, over the lifespan and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma experiences."

Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 2003
Rethinking Historical Trauma:  Narratives of Resilience
Aaron R. Denham, 2008



*Historical Trauma and Cultural Healing*, University of Minnesota Extension
http://www.extension.umn.edu/family/cyfc/our-programs/historical-trauma-and-cultural-healing/

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# Intergenerational/Historical Trauma Events


Genocides


Slavery


Pandemics


Massacres


Prohibition/destruction of cultural practices


Discrimination/Systemic prejudice


Forced relocation

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## Survival Mode Response

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## Trauma Shapes Beliefs



We do not see things the way they are.

We see them as we are.

➢Worldview

➢Spirituality

➢Identity

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9

# Impact of Trauma on Behavior Triggers

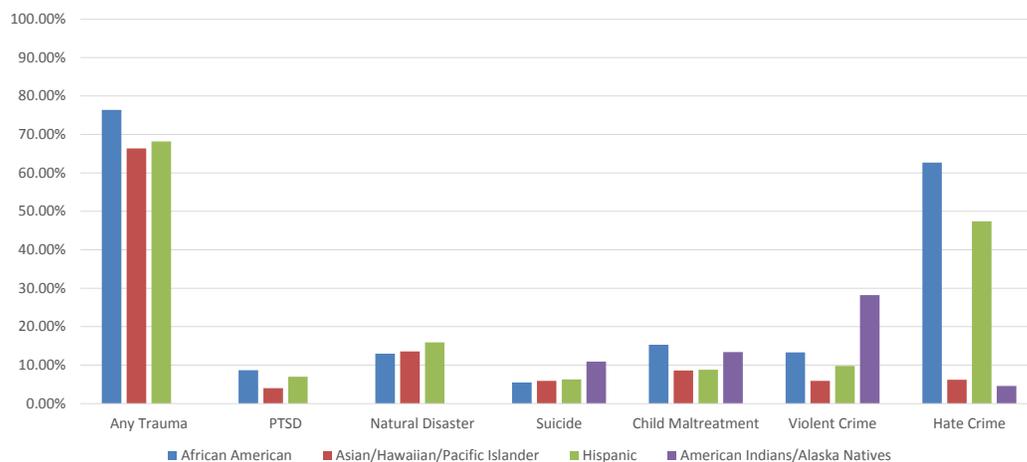**External reminders of traumatic event**
- *Smell*
- *Sound*
- *Sight*
- *Touch*
- *Taste*

**Internal reminders of traumatic event**
- *Emotions*
- *Thoughts*

10

# Common Types of and Prevalence Estimates for Exposure to Traumatic Stressors



Llamas, J. (2006). Trauma and posttraumatic stress disorder in ethnic minorities. American Psychological Association, 6(4), 337–344.

11

## Impact of Trauma on Minority Populations and SDoH

- Minority populations are exposed to higher rates of trauma and are less likely to receive adequate mental health treatment due to service barriers and the lack of culturally informed treatment providers (Turner et al., 2016).

- There are numerous identified barriers for minority communities in accessing the broader healthcare system such as:
  - Limited insurance coverage
    - More than half of uninsured U.S. residents are people of color
  - Logistical barriers
    - People with limited resources may find it more difficult to take time off of work, secure child care, or finding appropriate transportation
  - Linguistic and cultural differences
    - Particularly for immigrant populations—can result in breakdowns in communication that lead to poorer health outcomes
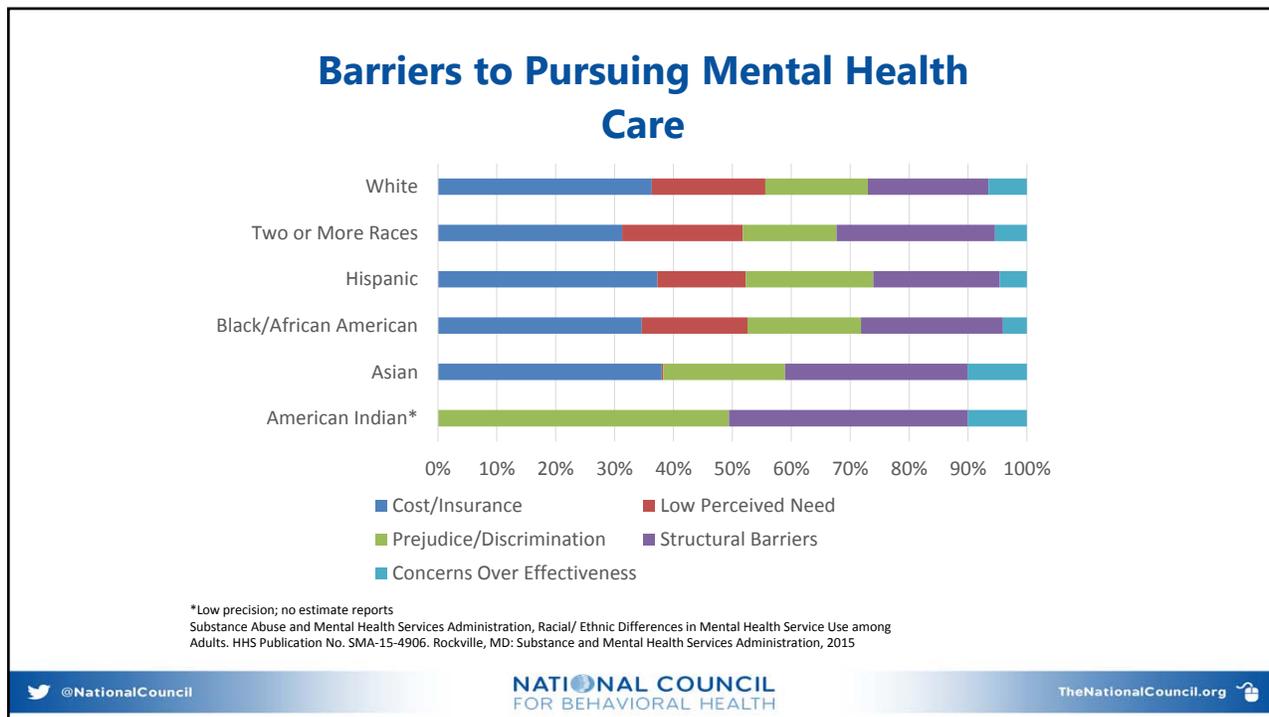
Llamas, J. (2006). Trauma and posttraumatic stress disorder in ethnic minorities. American Psychological Association, 6(4), 337–344.
https://nursing.usc.edu/blog/discrimination-bad-health-minority-mental-healthcare/

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## Behavioral Health Disparities for Minority Populations

- According to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) racial and ethnic minority groups in the U.S. are
  - Less likely to have access to mental health services
  - Less likely to use community mental health services
  - More likely to use emergency departments
  - More likely to receive lower quality care

- African American consumers are diagnosed with psychotic disorders at a rate of **3 - 4** times higher than White consumers

- Latino American/Hispanic consumers are diagnosed with psychotic disorders on average approximately **3** times higher than White consumers
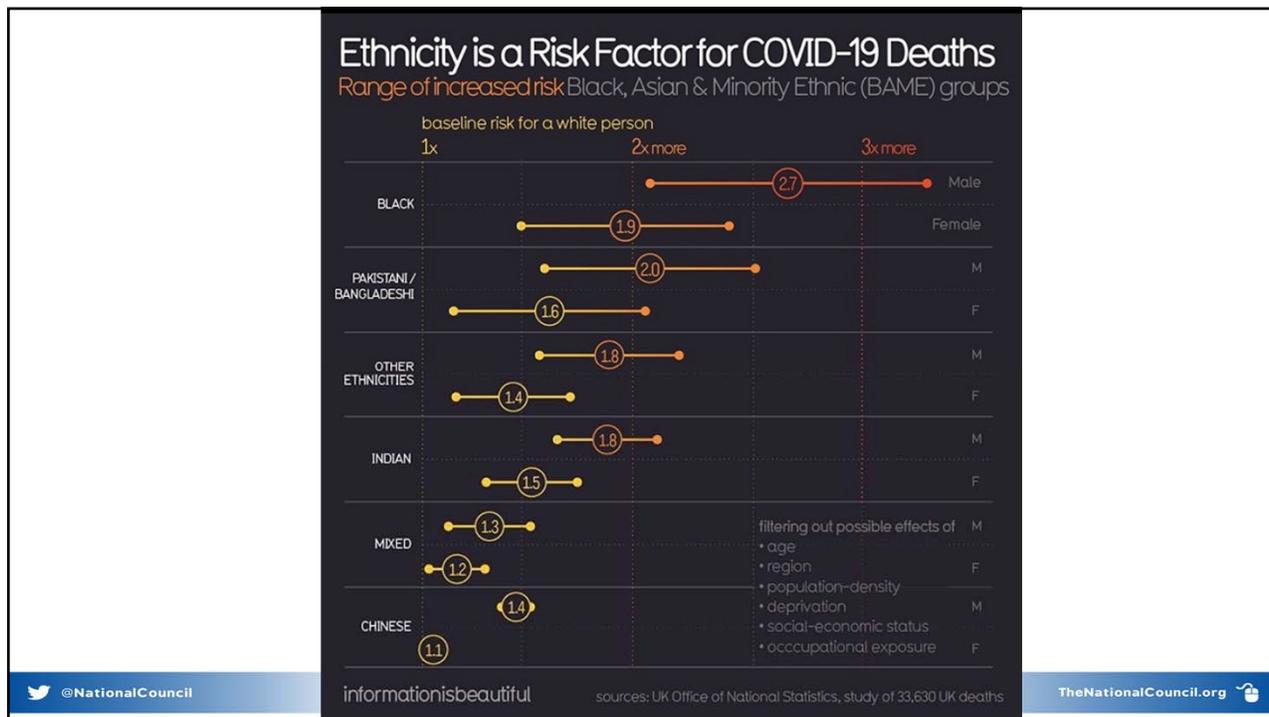
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## Barriers to Pursuing Mental Health Care



*Low precision; no estimate reports
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Racial/ Ethnic Differences in Mental Health Service Use among Adults. HHS Publication No. SMA-15-4906. Rockville, MD: Substance and Mental Health Services Administration, 2015

14

## Common COVID-19 Stressors

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns
- Difficulty concentrating
- Loss of income, finances being challenged/stretched
- Changes in routine and structure of daily activities
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs
- Isolation and loneliness

15

16



17

18



19

## Community Crisis Response

- Fear and Anxiety
- Sadness
- Grief
- Anger
- Guilt
- Regret
- Change in behavior
- PTSD/Depression



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| Trauma-Informed | Resilience-Focused |
|---|---|
| **REALIZES** the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery | **IDENTIFIES** programs and best practices proven to build resiliency at both individual and systemic levels |
| **RECOGNIZES** the signs and symptoms of trauma in individual and systemic levels | **INOCULATES** the system culture from the effects of stress and trauma *proactively* rather than reactively by having a strategic plan |
| **RESPONDS** by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures and practices | **INSTILLS** a shared vocabulary and skills for resiliency into every aspect of the life of the system |
| **RESISTS** re-traumatization | **IMPROVES** the health of the entire system by promoting restoration, health and growth in ongoing ways |

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## Value of Cultural, Historical, Gender Specific Issues



**Culture is**…the shared values, traditions, arts, history, folklore, and institutions of a group of people that are *unified by* race, ethnicity, nationality, language, religious beliefs, spirituality, socioeconomic status, social class, sexual orientation, politics, gender, age, disability, or any other cohesive group variable. *Singh, 1998*
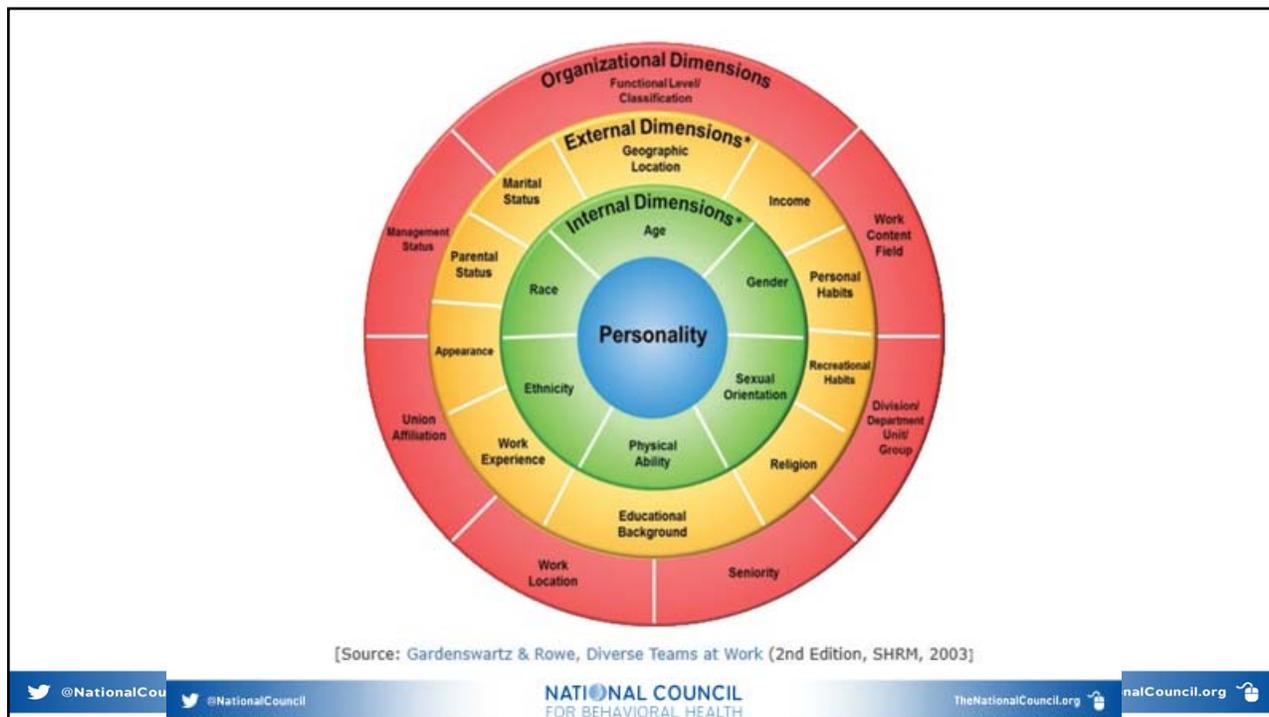
**Culture is**…the communication and interaction guide of any cohesive group of people *Sockalingam, 2019*

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## Intersectionality



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[Source: Gardenswartz & Rowe, Diverse Teams at Work (2nd Edition, SHRM, 2003)]

24

# Cultural Humility

*Cultural Humility* is another way to understand and develop a process-oriented approach to competency.

"the ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented (or open to the other) in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the [person]"
Hook et al, 2013



Aspiring to develop partnerships with people and groups who advocate for others

Lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and self-critique

Desire to fix power imbalances where none ought to exist

-Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998

25

26



## Seven Steps to Identify and Address Implicit Bias

Step 1 • Recognize that you have biases

Step 2 • Identify what those biases are

Step 3 • Dissect your biases

Step 4 • Decide which of your biases you will address first

Step 5 • Look for common interest groups

Step 6 • Get rid of your biases

Step 7 • Be mindful of bias kick back

https://www.cookross.com/docs/UnconsciousBias.pdf

27

## Tips for the Times

| Show | Communicate | Recognize | Encourage | Check in |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Show empathy and be available**: | **Stay connected with communication and meeting tools:** | **Recognize the impacts of current events:** | **Encourage self-care:** | **Check in with Work Life Solutions services:** |
| Understand that employees are likely feeling overwhelmed / anxious about circumstances related to the virus AND the social unrest. | Options like WebEx or Teams for regular check-ins and to allow individuals to connect with one another "face-to-face." | Be aware of significant changes in your team member's personality or work product, it may be a sign that a person is struggling. | This is a great time to encourage employees to take time to care for themselves. | Include all relevant website links and phone numbers for both the Work Life Solutions and health plans in employee communication |

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28

## We need to have...
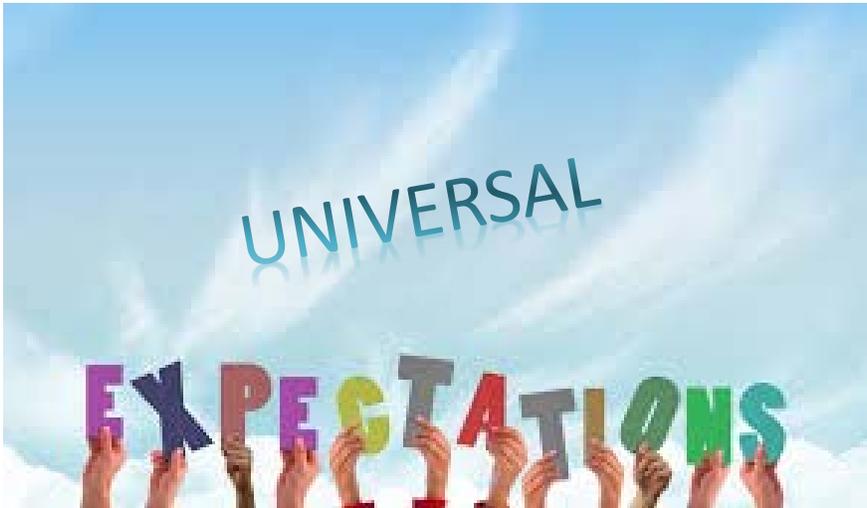


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# Organizational Considerations

| Physical Safety | Psychological Safety | Social Safety | Moral Safety |
|---|---|---|---|
| The sense of being protected from COVID-19 exposure | Addressing the anxieties and fears of being able to take care of oneself | Addressing the frustration, anger, guilt from the current social unrest | • Addressing the **hypocrisy** that is present, both **explicitly and implicitly** |

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# The "DO's" for Physical Safety

| Wash | Your hands / Avoid touching your face |
|---|---|
| Follow | Guidelines, policies and procedures related to illness, cleaning and disinfecting, for using face coverings in public spaces, work meetings and travel |
| Clean and disinfect | Frequently touched surfaces including keyboards, phones, handrails and doorknobs. |
| Stay Home | If you are sick |
| Inform | Your supervisor if you have a sick family member at home with COVID-19. |
| Avoid | Using other employees' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. If necessary, clean and disinfect them before and after use. |

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## The "Don't Forget To Do's" for Psychological Safety

- **Know what to expect of yourself.** You may experience a variety of emotions after returning to work, which is normal.

- **Continue to take care of yourself.**

- **Take care of your children and your family.**

- **Seek help if you need to.** If your feelings are too much to bear, seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

- **Mental health problems**—in general and in response to a major event such as the pandemic—are common, real, diagnosable and treatable.

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32

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## Safety and Respect: Creating a Socially Safe and Secure Environment for EVERYBODY
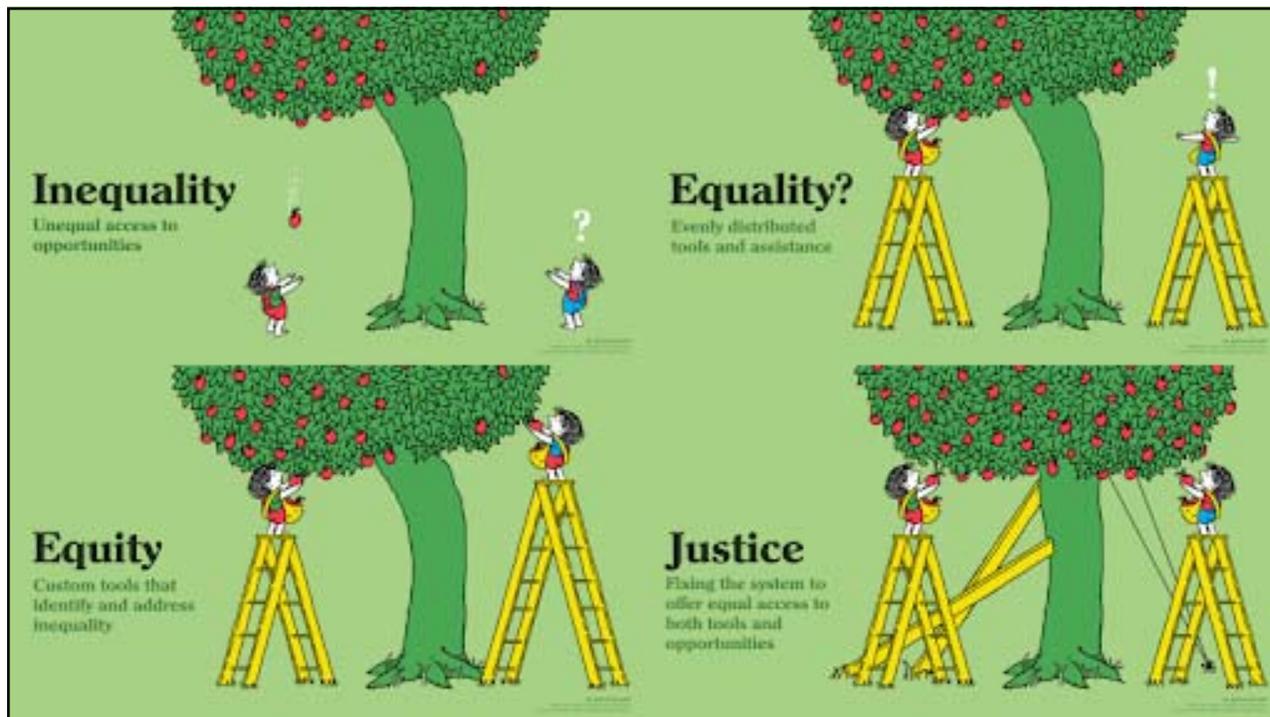
We need to create a mutually respectful interpersonal climate that fosters safety, trust, choice, collaboration, and empowerment
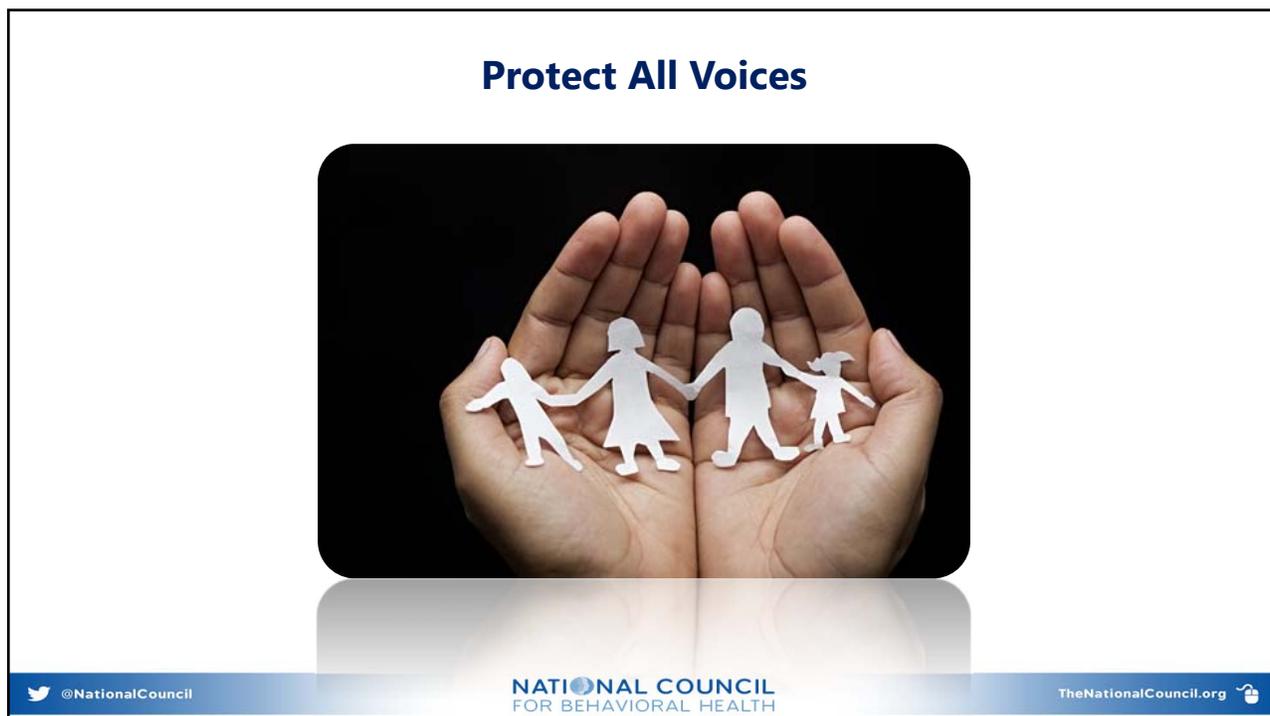
*"Mistakes made here often."*

You Will Make Mistakes....
.... Learn From Them

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33

34



35

## Moral Safety

The never-ending quest for understanding how organizations function in the healing process

- An attempt to reduce the **hypocrisy** that is present, both **explicitly and implicitly**
- A morally safe environment struggles with the issues of **honesty and integrity**

-Bloom, 2013

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36

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# Moral Injury

Shay definition: Moral Injury is 1) the violation of what is right by 2) someone in authority 3) in a high stakes situation. This kind of moral injury correlates to betrayal and rage and to higher rates of co-morbidity with PTSD (Jordan, 2017).

**Brock Definition:** Moral injury is a response to trauma when a person or group's existing core moral foundations are unable to justify, process, and integrate trauma into a reliable identity and meaning system that sustains relationships and human flourishing. It results from:

A. Being betrayed by people and/ or institutions that should have been trusted to be moral and do the right thing;

B. Committing, witnessing, imagining, or failing to prevent acts or events that can be judged as harmful or evil and that violate foundational social and ethical rules;

C. Being involved in events or contexts where violations of taboos or acts of harm leave one feeling contaminated by evil or "dirty;" or

D. Surviving conditions of degradation, oppression, and extremity.

https://www.voa.org/moral-injury-center/pdf_files/moral-injury-identity-and-meaning

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## Examples

- Supervisor refers to your female coworker as "always angry about something."
- A supervisor says "All lives matter! What's wrong with them?"
- A client refuses to work with a staff member because of their race.
- Supervisor in reference to client of color says "they're like that, what can you do?"
- Your workplace leadership is all Caucasian men and women who decide they do not need a DEI committee as they don't think it's an issue for their organization as they "don't see color"
- Client tests positive for COVID-19 and goes to work due to fear of not being able to provide for family.

**Relation of PTSD to Moral Injury**

| PTSD | BOTH | MORAL INJURY |
|---|---|---|
| "Startle" reflex | Anger | Sorrow |
| Memory loss | Depression | Grief |
| Fear | Anxiety | Regret |
| Flashbacks | Insomnia | Shame |
| | Nightmares | Alienation |
| | Self-medication with alcohol or drugs | |
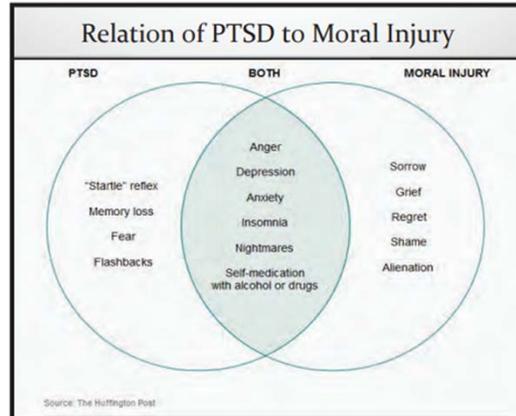
Source: The Huffington Post

*The above diagram created by William Nash, M.D., USN ret., Greater Los Angeles VA*

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## The "DO's" for Moral Safety

- Integrity
- Responsibility
- Honesty
- Tolerance
- Compassion
- Peace & Justice
- Universe

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# ABC's of Community Response

| Acknowledge | Build | Create | Develop | Expand |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Acknowledge history and be specific and accurate** | **Build community** | **Create safe space for open, honest, dialogue and education** | **Develop plans of action to dismantling systemic racism** | **Expand beyond diversity, equity and inclusion to engagement and justice** |
| As a country we are grappling with the result of hundreds of years of systemic racism and violence against people of color. | Ask what people need. Share options. Encourage collaboration, mutuality, empowerment, voice, choice, trustworthiness, safety (physical, psychological and social) | Hold space for different experiences and journeys. Allow for non-people of color to examine their role in combating racism. | Ask yourselves what is your vision for a new system and develop an action plan for dismantling what is for what you want in the future | Examine your systems and external impact. Assess where you are on the racial equity journey ad get clear on how you serve to advance engagement and justice |

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40

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# National Council Resources

- National Council's COVID-19 Resource Page

- TI-ROC Climate of Equity Assessment

- Harvard University – Project Implicit: Implicit Bias Tests

- Scaffolding Anti-Racism Resources

- National Council TIRO Equity Community of Practice

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# Other Resources

- https://www.voa.org/moral-injury-center/pdf_files/moral-injury-identity-and-meaning

- https://portlandmeansprogress.com/readiness-assessment

- https://alliancetoendhunger.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/SAW-for-HFC-10-Racial-Equity.pdf

-  https://racc.org/wpcontent/uploads/buildingblocks/foundation/CCC%20-%20Tool%20for%20Organizational%20Self-Assessment%20Related%20to%20Racial%20Equity.pdf

- https://www.raceforward.org/practice/tools/workforce-development-racial-equity-readiness-assessment

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42