

# Legacy of Trauma: Context of the African American Existence

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# My Goal for Today



- My only Goal of the day is to get you to Think and Think Critically
- Disrupt Your Current Thought Process.
- About yourself, Your Family, Young People You Know, Your Job, Your Communities, and Social as a Whole

# Not My Goal Today

- Make you feel Bad
- Shame You
- Blame You
- Attack You

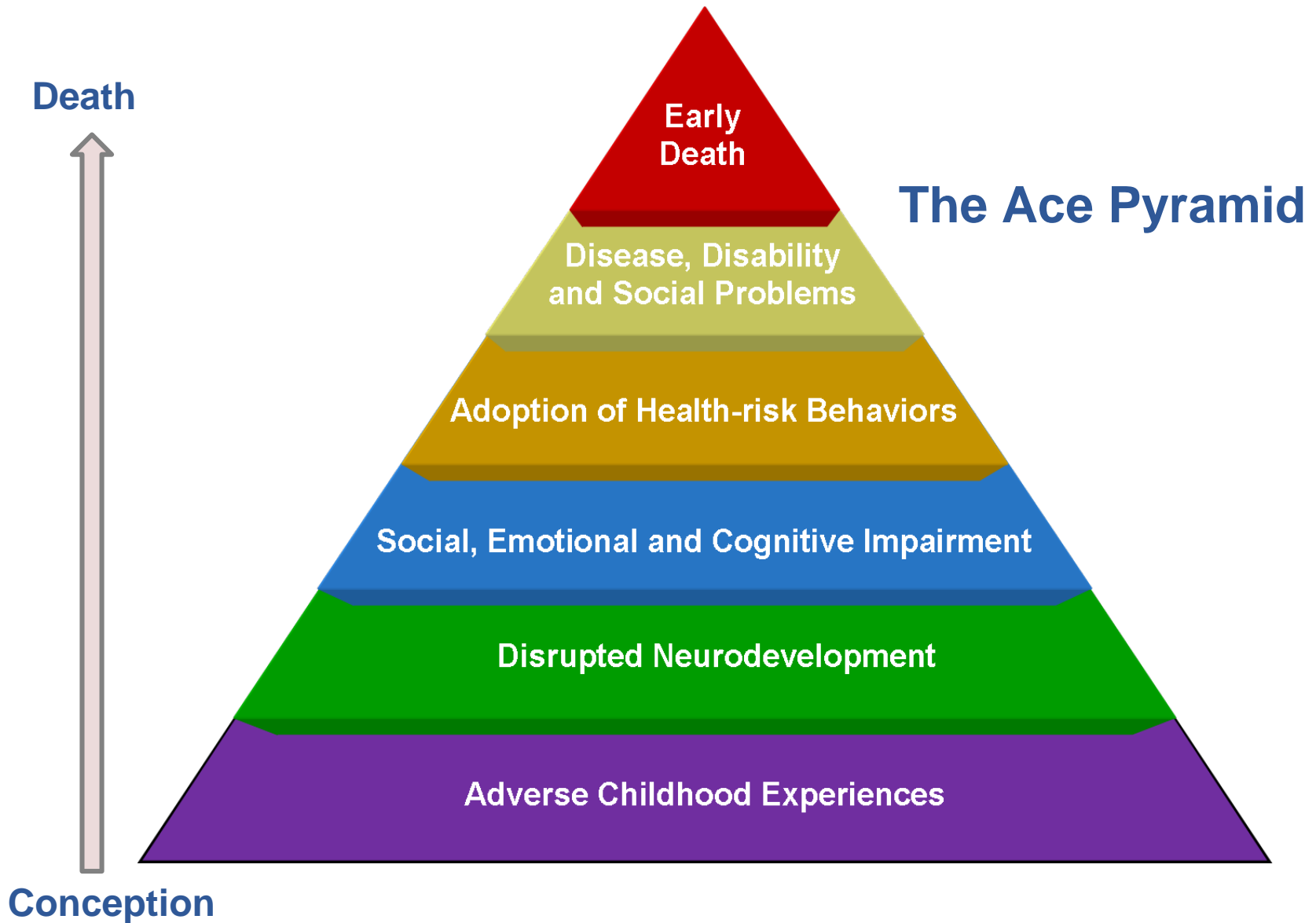
However, Some may feel “**triggered**” after this workshop

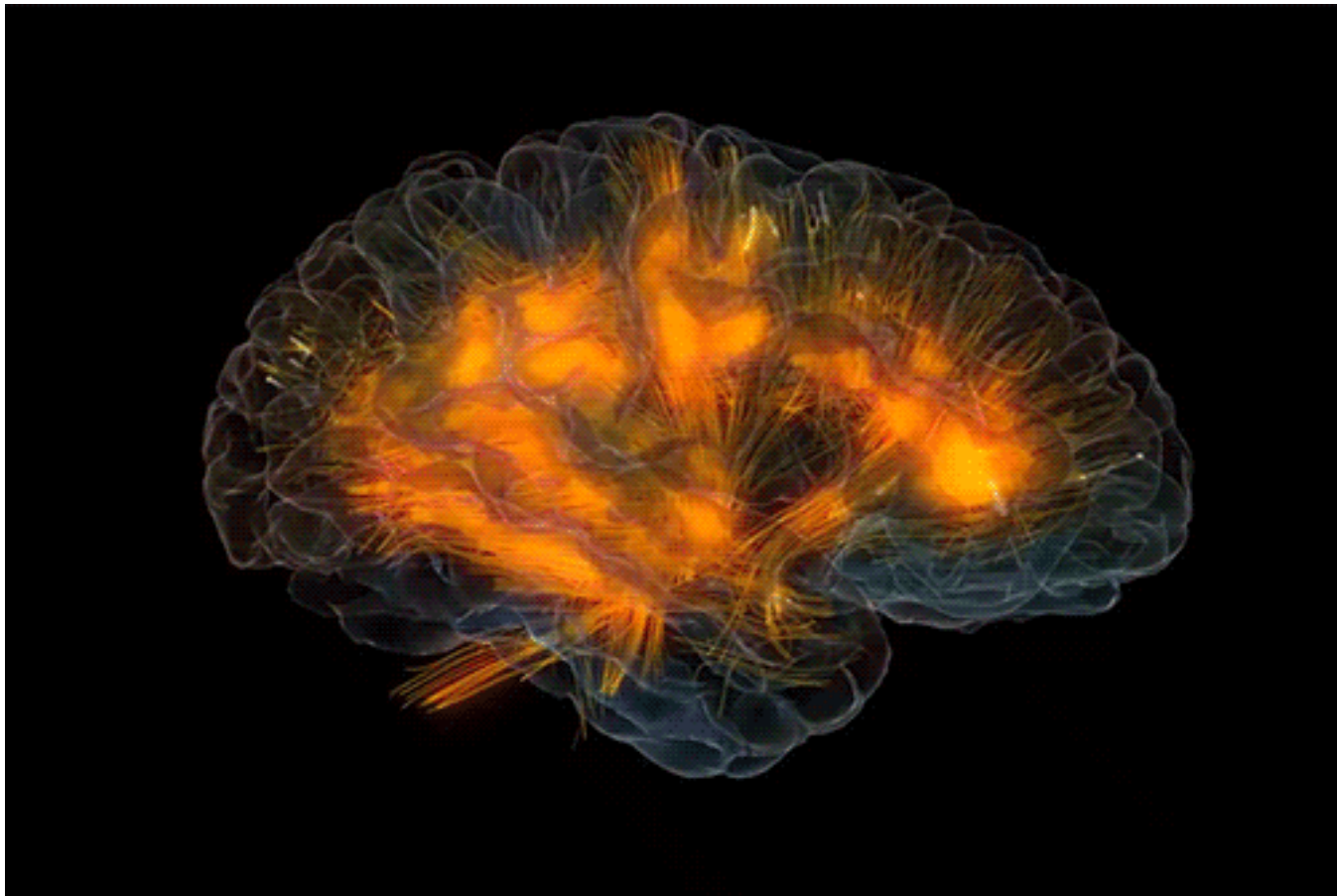


# What is Trauma???

- Quick and Dirty Definition:  
**A Deep Emotional Wound.**
- Toxic Stress (come from Toxic Environments)

# Adverse Childhood Experiences





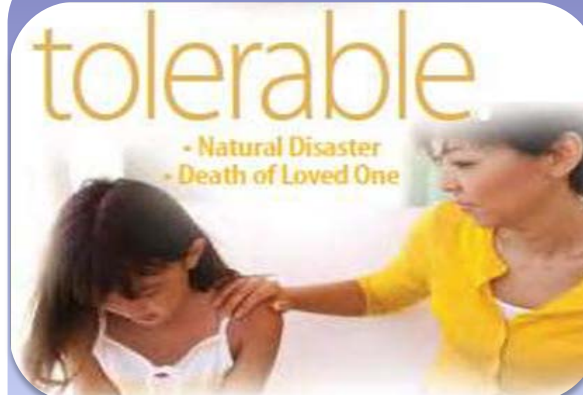
Toxic stress  
Brain development

# TOXIC STRESS DAMAGES TO THE BRAIN



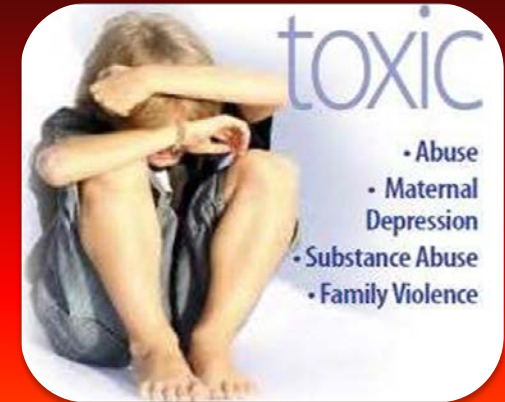
## Positive stress response

- Normal and essential part of health development
- Brief increases in heart rate and mild elevations in hormone levels



## Tolerable stress response

- Activities body's alter system to greater degree
  - If activation is time-limited and buffered by relationships with adults who can help child adapt – ok



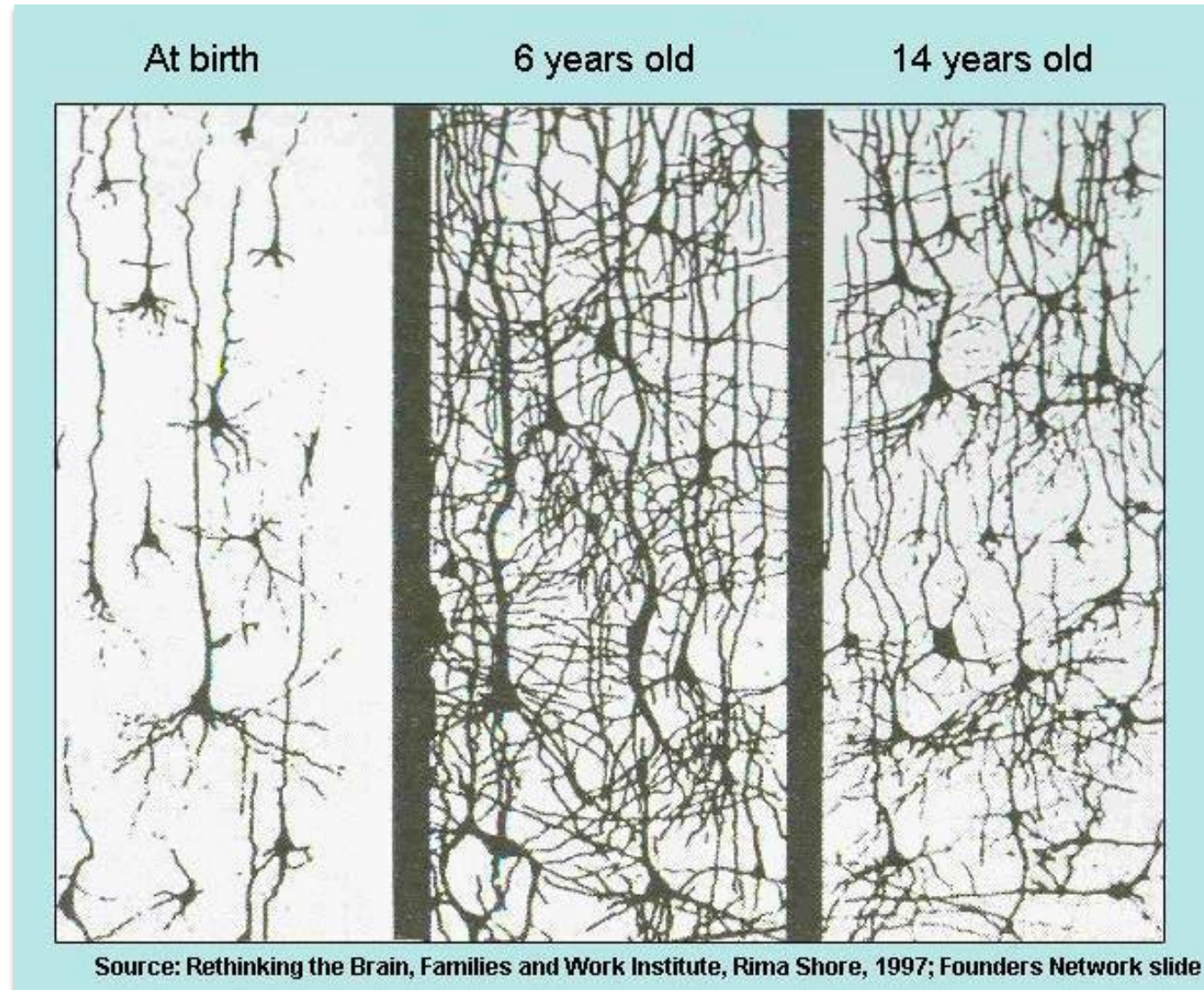
## Toxic stress response

- Strong, frequent and/or prolonged adversity
  - This type of response can possible disrupt typical development



# Synaptic Density Pruning

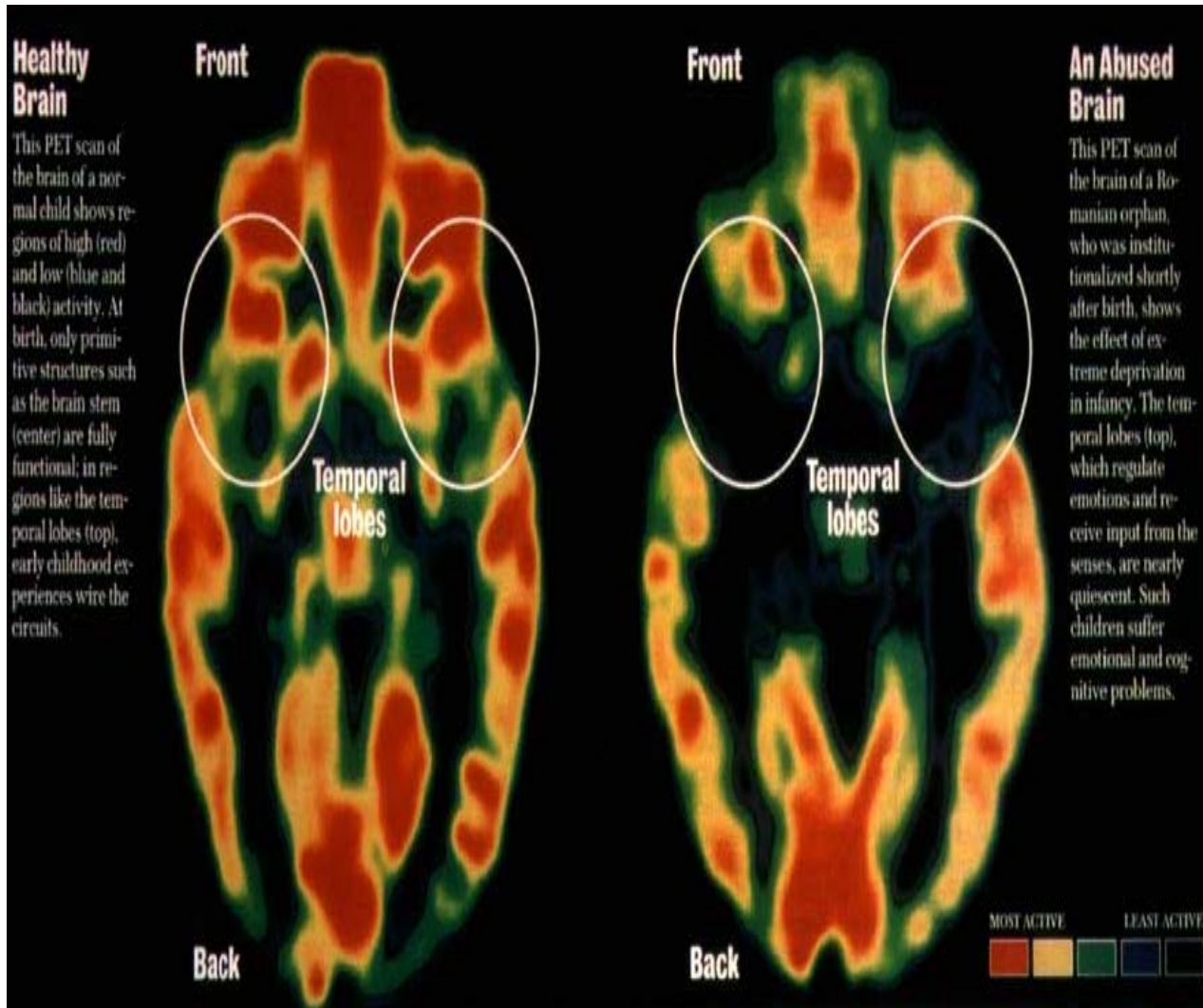
**Process Of Pruning** - At age 14 you will notice that there are now fewer connections between the brain cells than there were at age 6. This is because the least "experienced" connections tend to withdraw at about the time of puberty.





# Toxic Stress and The brain

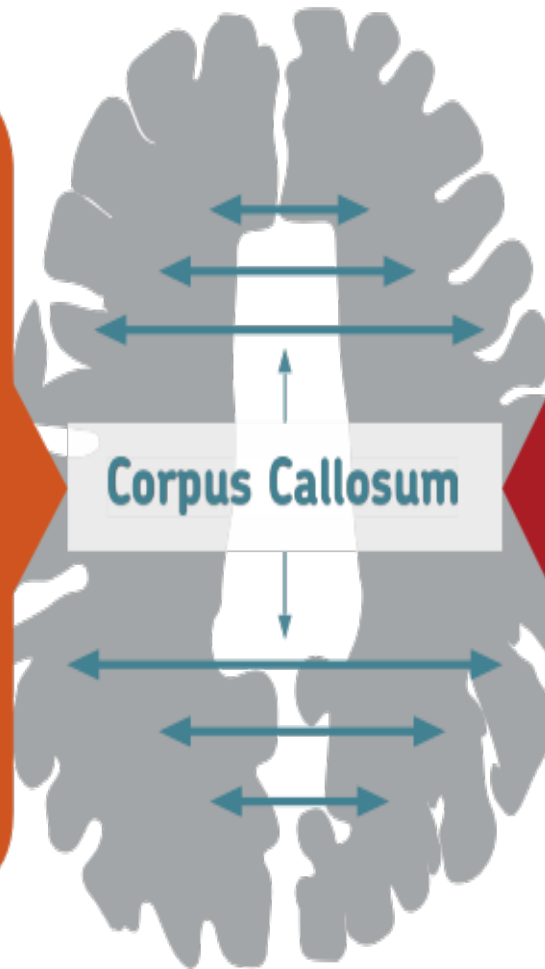
- This slide shows positron emission tomography (PET) scan graphics of the temporal lobes in a healthy and abused brain.
- Children with damage to this part of the brain **suffer severe emotional and cognitive problems** as well as have difficulty in making and/or sustaining **positive relationships**



# The Corpus Callosum

## LEFT HEMISPHERE

Spatial Patterns  
Math Calculation  
& Fact Retrieval  
Grammar &  
Vocabulary  
Processing Routine  
Situations



## RIGHT HEMISPHERE

Visual & Auditory  
Processing  
Prosaic Language  
Facial Perception  
Processing Novel  
Situations

# Epigenetics

## EPIGENETICS

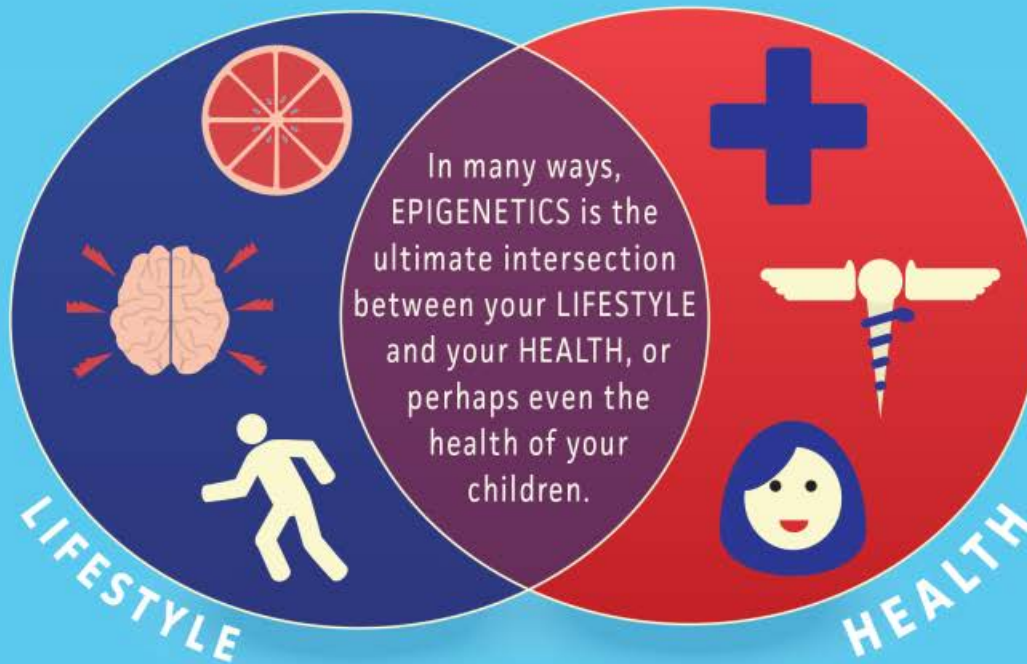
How the experiences  
of previous  
generations can  
affect who we are



*“epi-what?”*

# EPI-GENETICS!

A relatively new field, that's causing quite the buzz in the scientific community



**EPIGENETICS** tells us how certain lifestyle factors such as **DIET, STRESS, & EXERCISE** can *change* the way your genes are “expressed”. Interestingly, these changes appear to add up to affect things like **HEALTH, RISK for DISEASE, & GENERAL WELLBEING.**

*which are actually the same things  
you've always know are important*

## **BUT EPIGENETICS TELLS US MORE**

**YOUR LIFE EXPERIENCE  
SHAPES WHO YOU ARE  
AND HOW YOU GROW**



**AND THE METHYLATION PATTERNS  
SHAPED IN YOUR DEVELOPMENT  
LAST A LIFETIME, OR LONGER**

We're learning that epigenetic changes may be passed down from parent to child, directly affecting genes that control risk for conditions such as obesity, diabetes, anxiety, & depression.

# HISTORICAL TRAUMA



GROUP OF SLAVE-CHILDREN ON BOARD THE "DAPHNE."

(From a Photograph by the Author.)

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# Historical Trauma

“History is not about the past. It’s about the present!” – Dr. El-Kati





## HISTORICAL TRAUMA - 2

- **Historical Trauma** is an example of intergenerational trauma. It's caused by events that target a group of people. Thus, even family members who have not directly experienced the trauma can feel the effects of the event generations later.
- Dr. Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, PhD, conceptualized historical trauma in the 1980's, as a way to develop stronger understanding of why life for many Native Americans is not fulfilling "the American Dream".





# P.T.S.S.

- Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome is a condition that exists as a consequence of centuries of chattel slavery followed by institutionalized racism and oppression have resulted in multigenerational adaptive behavior, some positive reflecting resilience, and others that are harmful and destructive.
- Theory of **P.T.S.S.** was developed by Dr. Joy DeGruy as a result of twelve years of quantitative and qualitative research.



# AMERICAN CHATTEL SLAVERY

## (1619-1865)

- Chattel Slavery** (personal property, bought and sold as commodities or like cattle)
- 1808 importing Africans as slaves was banned.
- A typical slave family was matriarchal in form, for the mother's role was far more important than the father's and many times fathers names was omitted from birth records.

# JIM CROWism (1865-1965)

Duluth, MN  
June 15, 1920



- 1865 - **13th Amendment /Slavery Abolished**
  - either slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime...
- 1866 - **Convict Leasing**
- **Sharecropping**: attempted to reimpose a thinly disguised form of slavery.
- 1866 - **Ku Klux Klan**
- **Lynching (often included castration)**  
1882 to 1964, at least 4,742 in southern states and 219 in northern state.

# “GREAT MIGRATION” AND Urbanizing Blacks (1915-68)



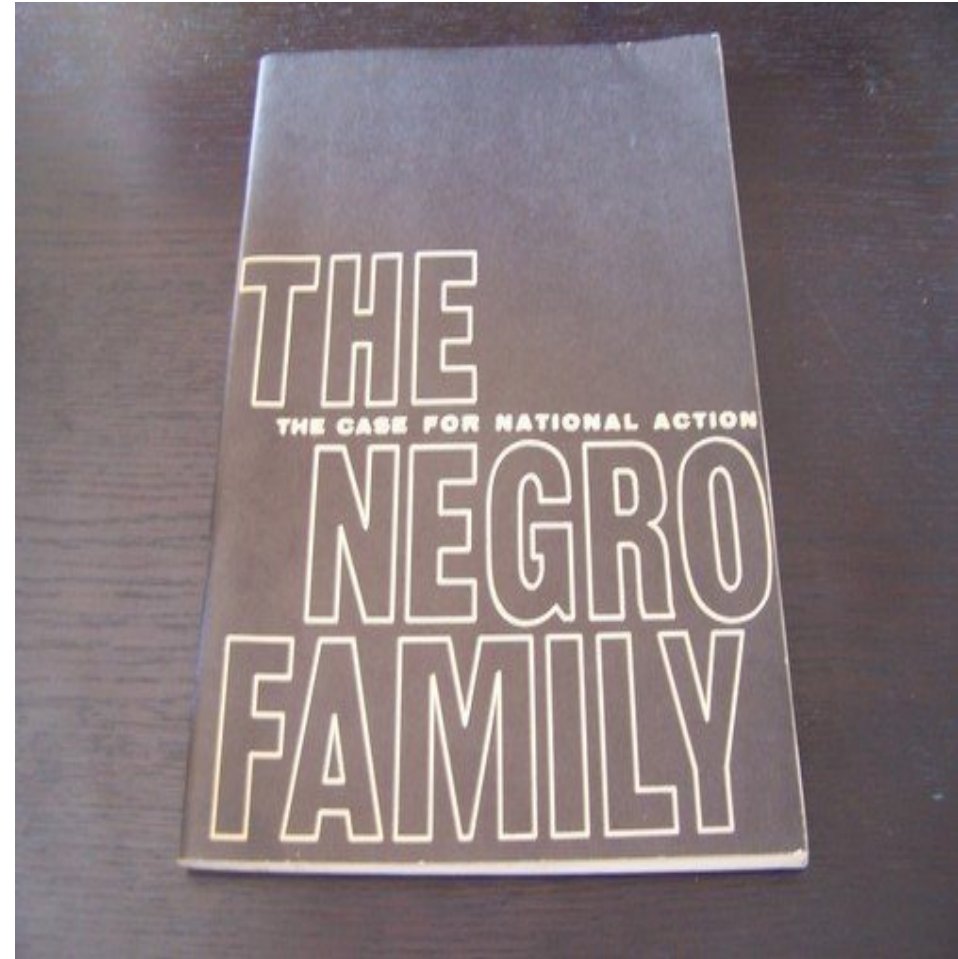
- They were leaving the farm, share cropping and the abuse.
- Menial and industrial manufacturing jobs; segregated housing and employment.
- **1919 “Red Summer”** 13 days of racial violence on the South Side of Chicago, 23 blacks and 15 whites dead, 537 people injured, and 1,000 black families homeless.

# GHETTO AND WELFARE (1968-1975)

- **Welfare rules** “no adult men in the home.
- Decrease in low education industrial manufacturing jobs.
- Drugs, crime and family disintegration (all inter-related) took a heavy toll on the inhabitants of the inner city.
- The exodus of jobs and middle class

In 1960 22% of African American children lived with single parents. In 1968, rose to 31.4%, by 2011, doubled to 64% percent (U.S. Census Bureau). Current report it has tripled to 72%.

# The Moynihan Report



# The Moynihan Report

- Originally published: 1965
- The Negro Family: The Case For National Action was written by Daniel Patrick Moynihan, an American sociologist serving as Assistant Secretary of Labor under President Lyndon B. Johnson of the United States.

# The Moynihan Report - 2

## Key Findings

- Black People have never been accept into the "American Dream"
- The Matriarchal system does not work within the American (Western) System
- Black Men Must have Employment
- Repairing The Black Family is key





# HYPERGHETTO AND PRISON (1975-1990)



- **Hyperghetto** extreme concentration of poverty and underprivileged groups.
- Blacks and whites use and sell drugs at about the same rate, but blacks are 20 times more likely going to Jail.
- **Drugs had major impact on the women and children.**
- Concentrated police presents.



# INSTITUTIONALIZED GENERATION (1985 –Now)

- Generation developed after the crack era. Born from the mid 1980's to present.
- Enriched with services providers external to family members.
- Creating an **inferiority** and **dependent** Culture.
- Element of internalized oppression and extreme level of learned helplessness.

## System Examples:

- Child protection
- Foster Care
- Welfare Social Work
- Juvenile Corrections
- Jails and Prisons

# Institutionalized Generation

## Elements

Individuals born between the early 1980's the drug "Crack" Era until now.

These generations has been enriched with services providers external to family members. Furthering an inferiority and dependent mentality.

These individuals have developed tendencies that do not allow them to maintain self-sufficiency, accountability, and responsibly for one's self and family.

## Behaviors/thoughts/Concepts

- **"I will have my social worker get me a job"**
- **"The teacher is supposed teach my child to read"**
- **"At least in jail I get 3 hots and a cot"**
- **"I am just happy I woke up this morning"**
- **"I don't know"**
- **Let go and let God handle it."**

**HISTORY**

**INTERNAL**

**EXTERNAL**

**Bias**

**Privilege**

**Internalized  
Racism**

**POWER  
AND  
ECONOMICS**

**Interpersonal**

**Institutional**

**Structural**

**CULTURE**

**IDENTITY**

# What are we Seeing Now?

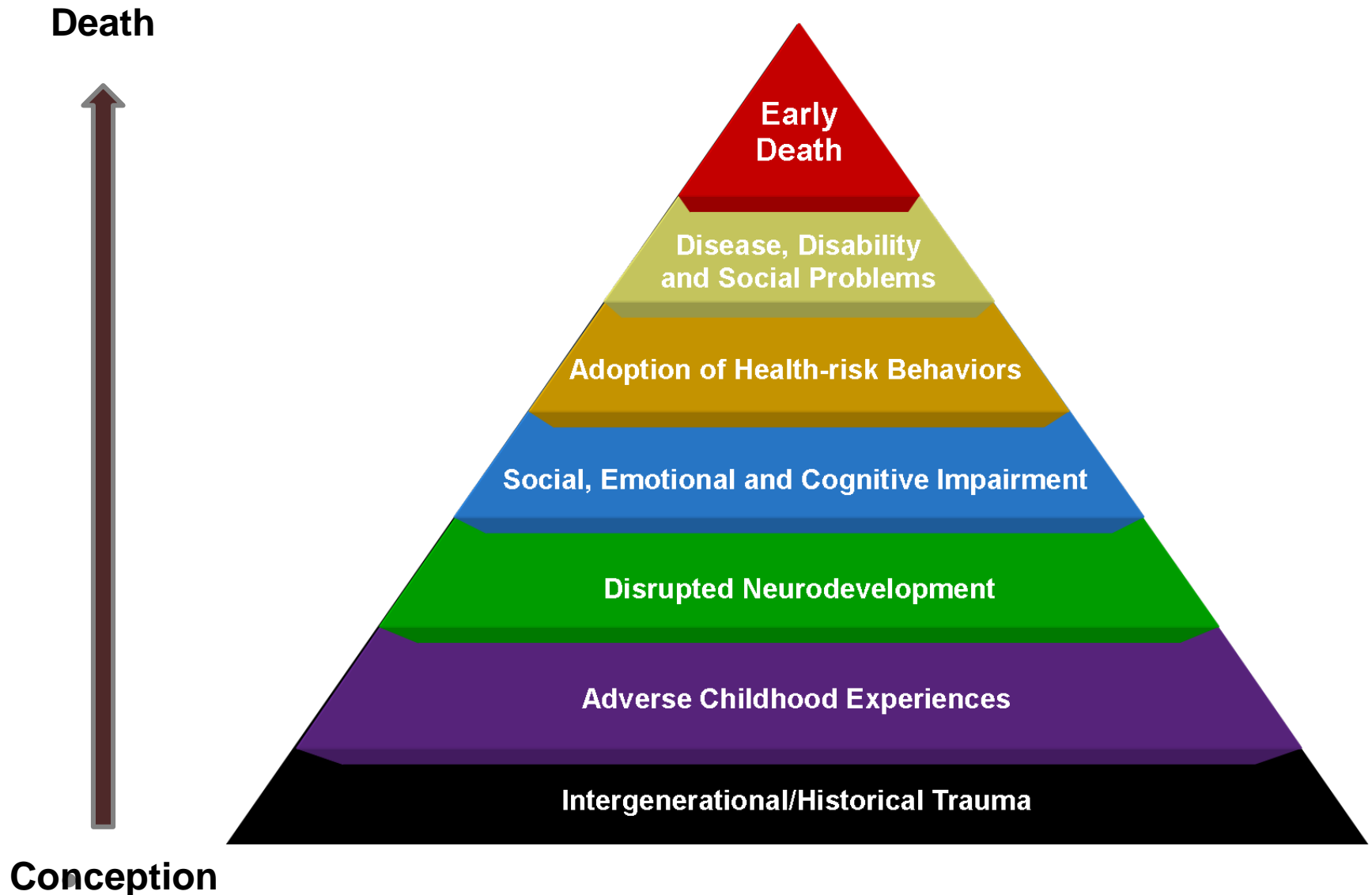
- **The "New Jim Crow"** - High numbers of Mass Incarceration (both males and increasingly females). Orange is the New Black anyone???
- **Help Not Needed** - High Levels of unemployment
- **ADHDamn!!!** - High number of black child being over diagnosed with ADHD and O.D.D.
- **Throw-Away Children** - High Levels of children in foster care, adoption, transitional housing etc.
- **Fragile Family Dynamics** - Everybody is somewhere other than home.



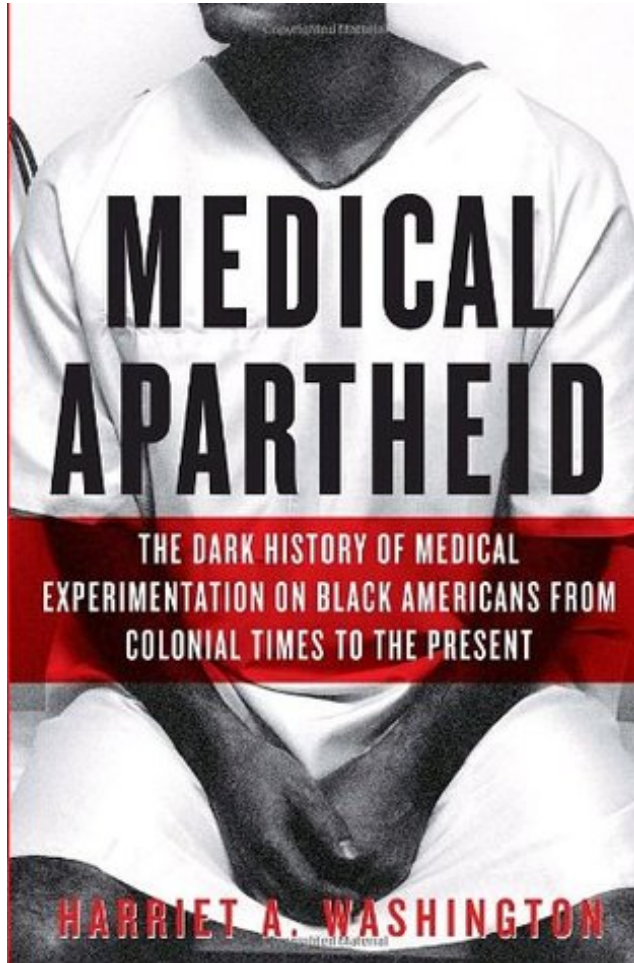
# The **Trauma** is Passed **Generationally**

- “ Hurt People, Hurt People” ...” If they do not hurt themselves!”
- Violence people are not Born...They are Breed. But Why???
- We live in a Violent, Bully Society.

# ACEs + Historical Trauma



# How Historical Trauma is Connected to Infant Mortality



The infant mortality rate among black infants is 2.4 times higher than that of white infants, primarily.

African Americans had almost twice the sudden infant death syndrome mortality rate as non-Hispanic whites, in 2013.

African American mothers were 2.3 times more likely than non-Hispanic white mothers to begin prenatal care in the 3rd trimester, or not receive prenatal care at all.

There is a historical trauma connected to the medical African Americans.

We have had horrific things happen to us and our children from the medical system.





How to incorporate this into your work???



# Shifting Our Thinking

“Human beings are ruled by ideals” –  
Dr. El-Kati



# Universal Goal



- **Security**: Not just safety, but also having comfort.
- **Significance**: Being Able to identify your own worth.
- **Belonging**: A sense of connections with others in your relationships, family, social circles, friends, community, and society.

# Emotional and Social Intelligence



# Trauma Effects both our Social and Emotional Intelligence

- **Hearing** - Missing what people are actually saying to us.
- **Communication** - being not assertive enough or too assertive
- Our ability to take **Risk** – “I aint going to try that because...”
- Keeps us in our **Comfort Zone**.

# Cultural Responsive Approach to Infant Mortality

1. **Stress Reduction** for the mother.
2. Develop **Positive Support Networks** for the mothers and fathers (if present)
3. **Co-Parenting** (No matter the relationship status)
4. Early introduction to **Prenatal Care**



# 3 key factors for resilience

1. A **strong parent-child relationship**, or, when such a relationship is not available, a surrogate caregiving figure who serves a mentoring role.
2. **Good cognitive skills**, which predict success and lead to rule-abiding behavior.
3. The **ability to self-regulate** attention, emotions, and behaviors.

## Building resilience after trauma

# It's a **Systematic** Problem

- Intergenerational Trauma is systematic issues. Therefore, a systematic solution is necessary.
- In the community, we must be honest and change our **thoughts, speech, and actions** in order to not become traumatized or further traumatize someone else.





# CHANGE is up to US



It is shaped by our thoughts, our conversations, the way we relate with one another in relationships, in families, and in communities.

# **Ask Me Anything!**

## **Contact Information**

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# Information & Resources

- ACE Study findings and information - [www.acestudy.org](http://www.acestudy.org) or [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- National Scientific Council on the Developing Child at Harvard University - [www.developingchild.net](http://www.developingchild.net)
- Academy of Pediatrics - [www.brightfutures.aap.org](http://www.brightfutures.aap.org)
- National Center for Trauma-Informed Care – [www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/nctic](http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/nctic)
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network – [www.nctsnet.org](http://www.nctsnet.org)
- Center for the Study of Social Policy -Information on Strengthening Families and Protective Factors – [www.cssp.org](http://www.cssp.org)
- Center for Injury Prevention and Control – [www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention)

# References & Resources

## Movies and Documentaries:

- **HIP-HOP: beyond beats and rhymes:** produced and directed by Byron Hurt (2006)
- **The Slavery by Another Name:** based the book *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II* by Pulitzer-Prize winning Douglas A. Blackmon (2012) PBS Programming

## Websites:

- Somatic Experiencing®: [www.traumahealing.com](http://www.traumahealing.com)
- SAMHSA's National Center for Trauma-Informed Care (NCTIC): [www.samhsa.gov/nctic/](http://www.samhsa.gov/nctic/)
- The Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC), <http://www.sprc.org/library/black.am.facts.pdf>

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# References & Resources

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