



Reimage Black Youth Mental Health

Nov. 16, 2023



Welcome

Anna Lynn & John Eshun

Mental Health Promotion team,
Child and Family Health Division



Agenda

Welcome

Introducing the Office of African American Health

MDH Commissioner Dr. Brooke Cunningham

Keynote speaker Dr. Mavis Sanders

Guided mental well-being activity

Session break

Agenda, cont.

Small group discussions

Brooklyn Bridge Alliance for Youth &
RBYMH Advisory Council updates

Small group discussions

Closing panel discussion

Wrap up



Office of African American Health

Scottie Carter, J.D.

Assistant Director, Center for Health Equity and
Center for Health Data

Interim Director, Office of African American Health





Welcome, cont.

Dr. Brooke Cunningham

MDH Commissioner







Keynote speaker

Dr. Mavis Sanders

Senior Research Scholar of
Black children and families, Child Trends



Protective Communities for Black Children and Youth: A Focus on Mental Health

Mavis Sanders



Introduction



- Senior Research Scholar of Black Children and Families
- Former Professor of Education
- Research Focus: Education Reform; School, Family, and Community Collaboration; and Black Student Achievement

Content

Research Priority on Protective Community Resources (PCRs) for Black Children and Families

The Link Between PCRs and Mental Health for Black Children and Families

Efforts to Reimagine and Build Protective Communities for Black Children and Families

Background

Goals:

- Build understanding of the diversity of Black children and families
- Contextualize their experiences within systems and institutions
- Produce evidence to inform policies and practices that promote the well-being of Black children and families

Approach:

- Racial equity approach that is intersectional, asset-based, and culturally responsive

3 Steps to Identify Research Priorities:

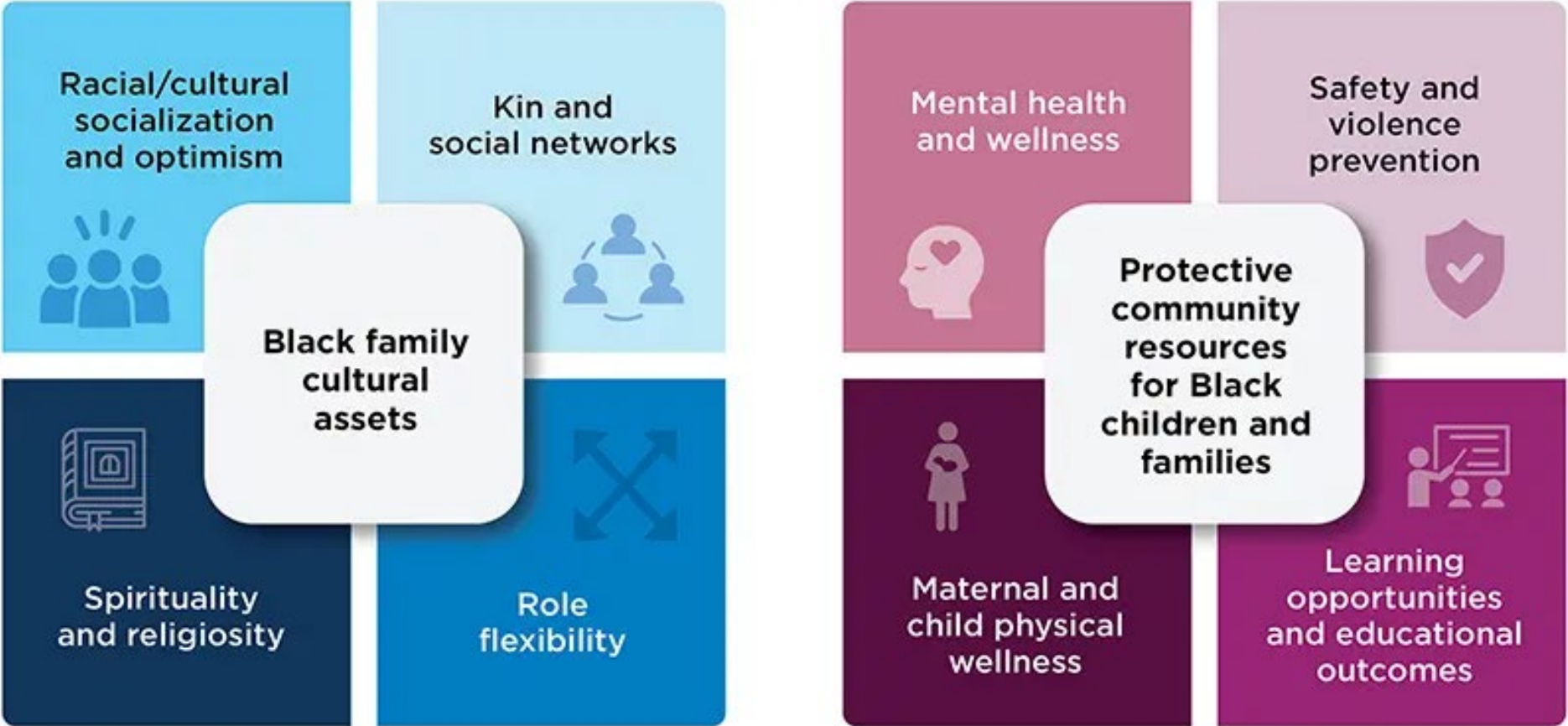
- Review existing knowledge-base
- Engage community stakeholders
- Identify organizational strengths and resources



[Brief: An Applied Research Agenda on Black Children and Families to Advance Practices and Policies that Promote their Well-being](https://www.childtrends.org/publications/an-applied-research-agenda-on-black-children-and-families-to-advance-practices-and-policies-that-promote-their-well-being)
(<https://www.childtrends.org/publications/an-applied-research-agenda-on-black-children-and-families-to-advance-practices-and-policies-that-promote-their-well-being>)

Mavis Sanders, Chrishana Lloyd, Sara Shaw

Priorities for Child Trends' New Applied Research Agenda on Black Children and Families



What are Protective Community Resources?

Protective Community Resources: Community-level characteristics or assets that buffer the effects of risks and that support positive social, emotional, and physical development for children and youth.

POSITIVE ROLE MODELS AND MENTORS

An evaluation of the Pathways and Scholars program emphasized forging lasting, trusting ties between youth and positive adult role models contribute to successful outcomes.

NEIGHBORHOOD COHESION

Connection to one's neighborhood was protective against engagement in *nonviolent* delinquent or criminal behavior for all adolescents

COMMUNITY AMENITIES

NSCH data show a statistically significant association between Black adolescent flourishing and access to four neighborhood amenities (e.g., libraries, recreation centers, parks, sidewalks)

The Need to Focus on Protective Community Resources for Black Children and Families

The Unique Positioning of Black Children and Families

~49%

of all families with children who are homeless are Black families ([National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2023](#))

~60%

of Black children, ages 6 to 17, do not live in communities with all four of the following amenities: sidewalks, parks, libraries, rec. centers ([ChildTrends 2020-2021](#))

6 X

Is the greater likelihood that Black children, ages 12 to 17, will be killed by a policeman than White children ([2003-2018, Children's National Hospital](#))

~54%

Black families have an unmet demand for after school programs for their children ([After School Alliance, 2022](#))



A legacy of racial injustice
and violence has limited
Black children and
families' access to
protective communities

The Antebellum Period

Chattel Slavery in the US: ~1619-1865



Radical Reconstruction and the “Seven Mystic Years:” 1866-1873



Accomplishments:

- Black family reunification
- Establishment of Black churches
- 2,000 African American men served in political office (15th Amendment in 1870)
- Creation of the South's first state-funded public school system

The Rise of Domestic Terrorism: Jim Crow and the Black Codes: 1877-1964



- From Here to Equality (p. 166)
1877--1895, 53,000 Black people were killed by acts of terrorism
- [NAACP](#): 1882—1968, 72% of all reported lynchings were of Black people
- Precursors: Black men casting ballots, labor disputes, and resentment toward WWI veterans-Red Summer 1919

Continued Violence Against Black Communities in the Post-Civil Rights Era



FBI's Hate Crime Statistics (2020):

- **8,263 hate** crime incidents against 11,126 victims
- **62%** of victims were targeted because of the offenders' bias toward race/ethnicity/ancestry
- Anti-Black hate crimes continue to be the largest bias incident victim category, with **2,871** incidents (or **55%**)

Racial violence in the US is tied to economic violence (i.e., any act or behavior that causes economic harm to an individual or group: it can take the form of property damage, restricting access to financial resources, education, or the labor market).

The History of Racial and Economic Violence in the United States

Lack of compensation for stolen wealth in Black communities

(i.e., reparations, even for [Tulsa terrorism victims](#) 1921, OK judicial decision, 2023)

Black Neighborhood Ruptures

due to [1950s US Highway Construction](#)

1930's (New Deal) to 1968

Redlining and Systematic Disinvestment in Black Neighborhoods

ONGOING DISCRIMINATION IN BANKING SERVICES AND LENDING PRACTICES

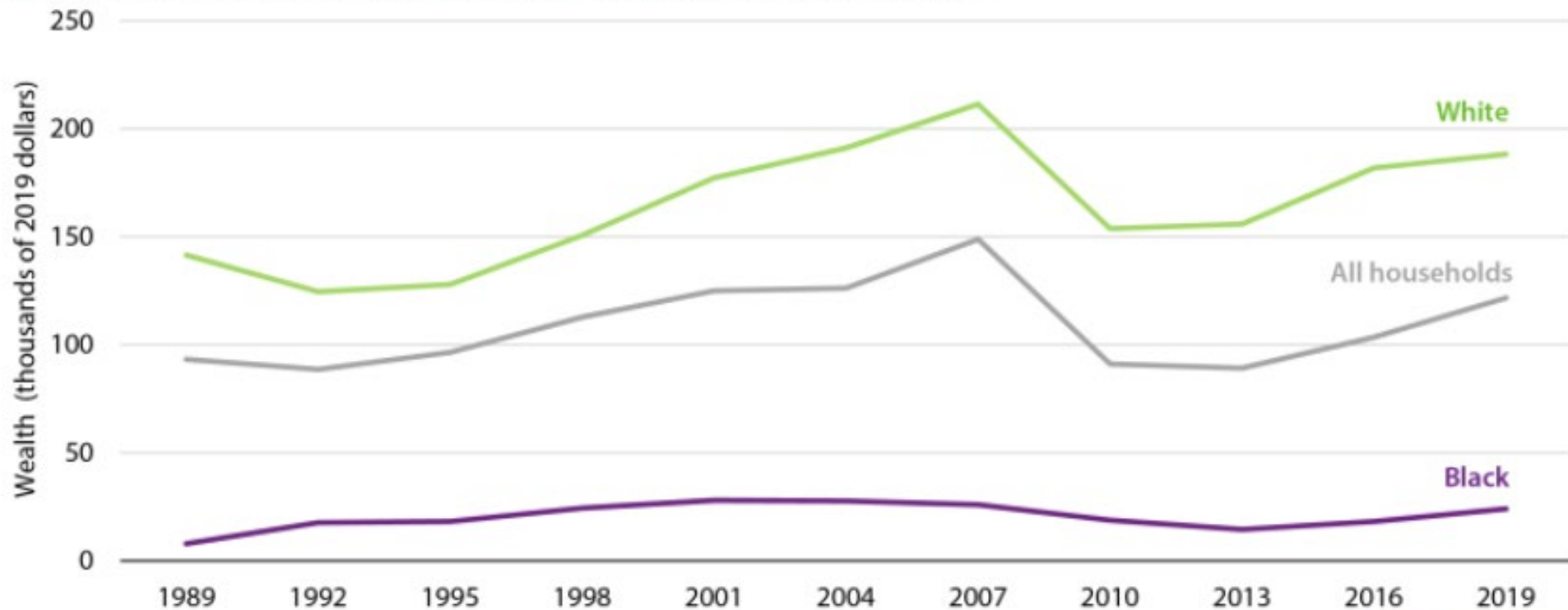
Biased Appraisals and the Devaluation

of Housing in Black Neighborhoods

Economic Violence and the Black Wealth Gap

FIGURE 1.

Median Wealth for Black and White Households, 1989-2019



Source: Survey of Consumer Finances 1989-2019.

Note: Wealth refers to the differences between assets and debt for a household head. Race is that of the survey respondent.

Racial and Economic Inequality
Affect Mental Health and Well-Being

Racial and Economic Inequality Affect Mental Health and Well-Being - 1

Between 2005 and 2016, 20.1% of low-income women suffered from depression compared with 12.0% of medium income and 5.0% of high-income women. The highest probabilities of being depressed were **in Black Non-Hispanic women** and Hispanic women (12.0%), and then in White women. [Hossein Zare,^{1,*} Adriele Fugal,² Mojgan Azadi,³ and Darrell J. Gaskin⁴ 2022](#)



Racial and Economic Inequality Affect Mental Health and Well-Being - 2

“[R]acism-related stress may be transmitted from caregiver to child through the influences on the caregiver’s mental health and parenting stress.” [Dr. Jacquelyn Taylor, PhD, PNP-BC, FAHA, FAAN, Helen F. Petit Professor of Nursing and Founding Director of the Center for Research on People of Color at Columbia University School of Nursing, New York. 2022](#)



Racial and Economic Inequality Affect Mental Health and Well-Being - 3

“When children experience racial discrimination, their mental health may be impacted first. ...Basically, kids feel bad, which leads to depression and anxiety. And depression and anxiety can then lead to physical health problems down the road.”

[\(Dr. Ashaunta Anderson, Children’s Hospital, Los Angeles, 2020\)](#)



Investing in protective community resources is one way to invest in Black children and families' mental health and well-being.



Research on Protective Community Resources, 2012-2022



A Bibliographic Tool on Protective Community Resources for Children and Youth

Black Children & Families Nov 2 2023



Protective Community Resources Associated with Positive Mental Health Outcomes for Children and Youth

Community cohesion and support

Supportive relationships with school staff

Positive peer support

COMMUNITY SAFETY

#172 STUDIES ON PCRs

School connectedness

Neighborhood amenities

Engagement in community-based activities

Neighborhood collective efficacy

Community-based interventions

Community role models and mentors

Protective Community Resources and Mental Health Outcomes for Black Children and Youth



Black Children and Youth Can Benefit From Focused Research on Protective Community Resources

By: Mavis Sanders,
Dominique N. Martinez,
Shana E. Rochester,
Jennifer Winston

For example:

- Riina (2021) found that neighborhood social cohesion mitigated the effects of parental intimate partner violence and associated internalizing problems and externalizing problems from childhood through adolescence (ages 6 to 18) for boys and girls across race and ethnicity.
- Mason et al. (2019) found that positive peer networks moderated the effects of depression on substance use among a sample of 248 mostly Black (88%) 13- and 14-year-old adolescents in Richmond, Virginia.
- Sanders et al. (2023) using 2020-2021 National Survey of Children's Health data found a statistically significant association between flourishing—a condition of mental well-being associated with positive personal and social functioning—and the availability of neighborhood amenities for Black adolescents (ages 12-17).

A Focus on Neighborhood Amenities as Protective Community Resources: The Case of REBUILD-Philadelphia

- Rebuild Philadelphia (\$400-500 million/72 Sites: Beverage Tax Funds)
- Rebuild Philadelphia and Workforce Development



To learn about Rebuild-Philadelphia from Community Engagement Director, Amanda Colon, visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pQYiVI-b494>

The Role of Research in Achieving Protective Communities for Children and Families

- Review existing knowledge to synthesize general findings and important knowledge gaps.
- Evaluate performance (particularly internal and external benchmarking) and impact (defining objective and valid indicators).
- Facilitate learning that is more systematic and objective, and that can be valuable to help break through cognitive blocks.”

Reimagining Protective Communities for Black Children and Families

“These are places, these protective communities, where OGs [older individuals with extensive expertise or life experience] can school young Gs and young Gs can school OGs. It is a conversation across generations, and respect across generations ... This is a place where “being Black is not a risk,” it's an asset. This is the place where freedom dreaming takes place, not “spirit murdering,” when you can envision anything you want to be and be actualized in that because people believe you.”

Ronald Walker, Former Executive Director and Founder, Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color

Final Thoughts...

For too many Black children and families, protective communities are a historical and contemporary aspiration--part of a dream deferred. But collectively, we can change this. This is a historical moment for Child Trends. It is an opportunity to be part of a larger movement toward justice, and to be in partnership with individuals like you who are engaged in the hard work of transforming communities and the nation.

Thank you for your time and attention!

Questions



Guided well-being exercise

Drake Powe

Skellegnese LLC



Session break

Return to your seat
by 2:50 p.m.

Healing and well-being are fundamentally political not clinical . . .well-being is a function of the control and power young people have in their schools and communities.

- Shawn Ginwright, Ph.D.

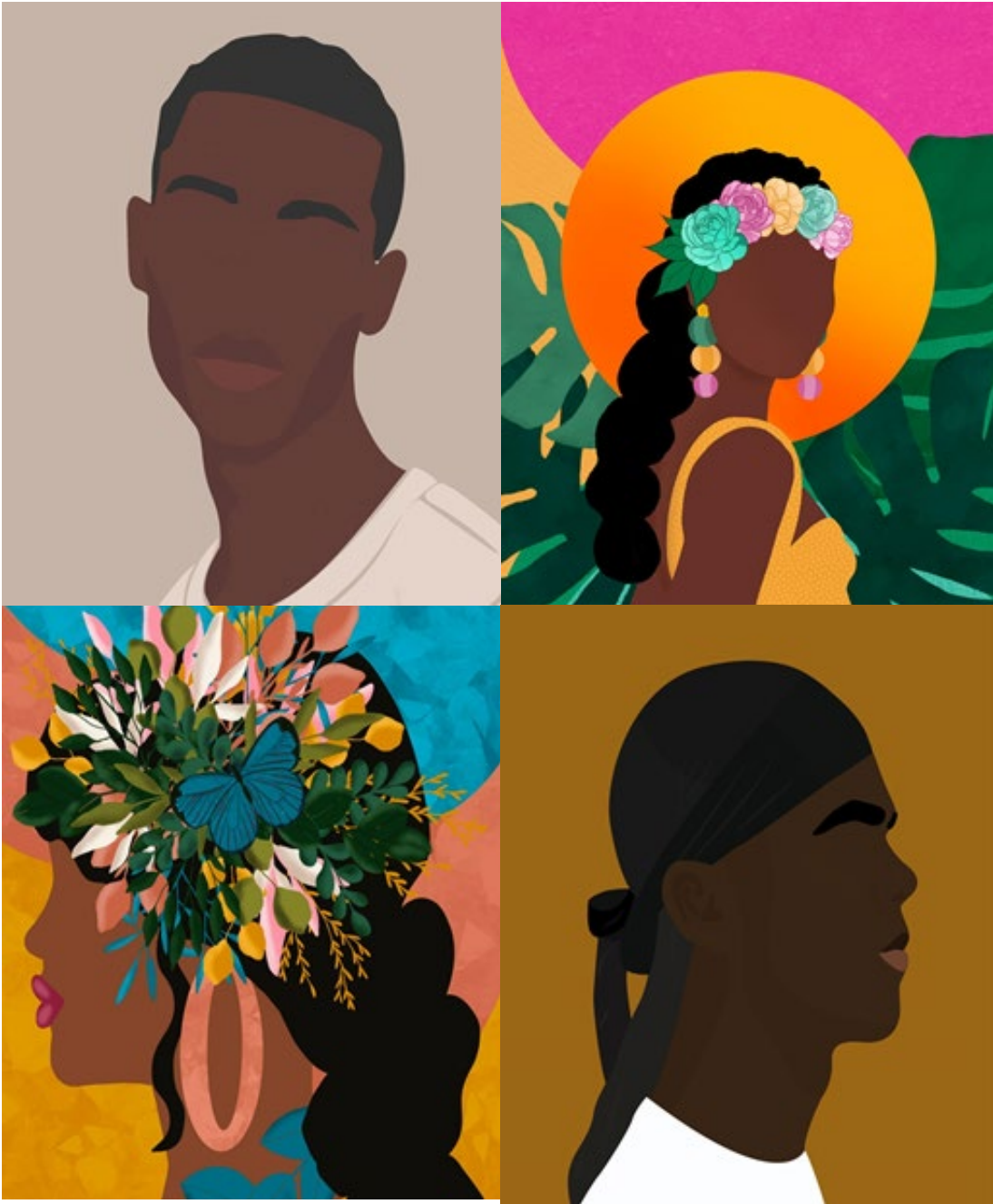
Ginwright, S (2018). The Future of healing: Shifting From Trauma Informed Care to healing Center Engagement. Medium (www.medium.com/@ginwright/the-future-of-healing-shifting-from-trauma-informed-care-to-healing-centered-engagement-634f557ce69c)

Small group discussions - 1

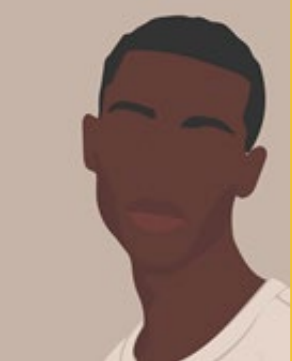
- What stood out for you?
- In what ways have community resources impacted your well-being?
- In what ways do you see local community resources impacting the well-being of Black youth in your community today?
- Where are the gaps in current policies or local community resources to elevate Black youth mental health?
- What action steps can we take to prioritize investment in community resources that support Black youth mental health? What are the barriers?

RBYMH Advisory Council experience

- **Rachel Warren**, Brooklyn Bridge Alliance for Youth
- **Yaya Cochran**, Intentions
- **Dorborwulu Cooper**, Anoka-Hennepin Schools



Reimagine
Black Youth
Mental Health



The RBYMH Initiative is working to...

- Shift the narrative.
- Strengthen the ecosystem.
- Change the conditions.

**...through a collective action approach
to policy change that is...**

- Black-centered.
- Youth-led.
- Community-driven.

Reimagine Black Youth Mental Health Initiative

Collaborate and Confront the Challenges

Mobilize the ecosystem to show up and share power. Create the space and infrastructure to support change.

Unpack the layers of the diaspora, mental health, and harm done.

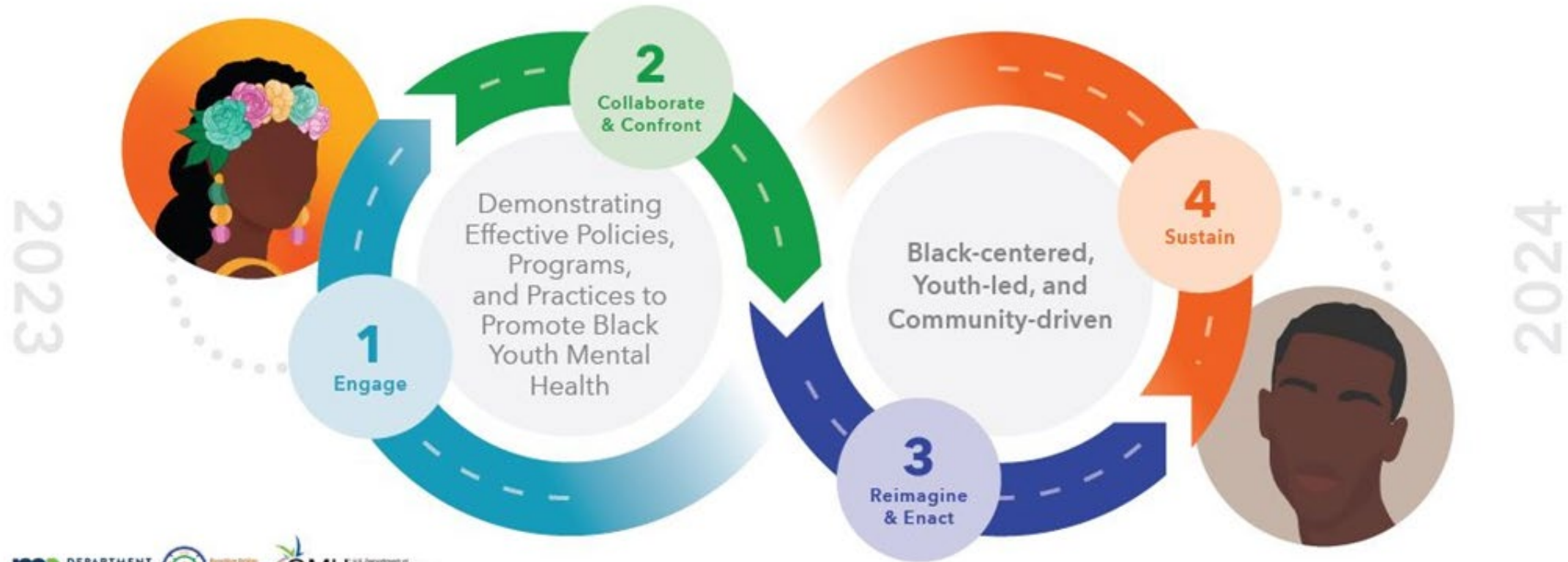
Shift narrative from anti-Black to Black-centered; from deficit-based to honoring the strengths and good in Black people; from numbness towards Black pain to the loving Black Joy.

Sustain What Works

Amplify our learnings with those most impacted, those responsible for change, and champions throughout the ecosystem.

Build a plan for accountability in continuing what works.

Activate (all youth, parent, community) champions to advocate for sustainability.



Engage Black Community & Define the Ecosystem of Support

Build Black youth, parent and community partner advisories to drive, shape, and lead this work.

Model and practice health, healing, and wellbeing as a collective to expand shared experiences that can be drawn on to shape change.

Establish the foundation for relationships between people at various levels of decision-making power that impact Black youth.

Reimagine and Enact a New Approach in a Safe, Transparent, and Protective Way

Facilitate reimagining and craft what change looks like, feels like, and requires.

Pilot 1-3 approaches in three different settings that best change conditions that harm, accelerating Black youth wellbeing.

Assess the effectiveness of our changed approach.



Building the Collective(s) for Collective Action

Advisory Council

The Process:

- ❖ **A “more than once” approach for as long as it takes.**
- ❖ **Honoring the contributions and experiences of folks as they are.**
- ❖ **Black-centered means Black-centered (in its fullness).**
- ❖ **Unlearn and learn... reimagine and remember.**
- ❖ **Creating something that is healing so that we can do healing work.**

Building the Collective(s) for Collective Action - 1

What happens when we create capacity for the collective to name their favorite parts about themselves?

We must model the knowing and loving of ourselves.

We must model the vulnerability it takes to be known and loved.

What we speak to and about ourselves reflects what is in our heart.

What we speak to and about ourselves teaches others what they can speak to and about us.

- There is power in knowing and loving ourselves collectively; and speaking out loud about it.
- Our well-being depends on what we know, love, and speak to ourselves and each other.
- We must never fail to remind ourselves that we are inherently good, beautiful, and doing meaningful things.



Building the Collective(s) for Collective Action - 2

What stories are we holding deep inside that are untold and uncovered because we are too exhausted?

We can tap into healing when we rest.
Our liberation is deeply connected to healing.
We need each other in more ways than we are allowed to believe.
This work is about radical community care.

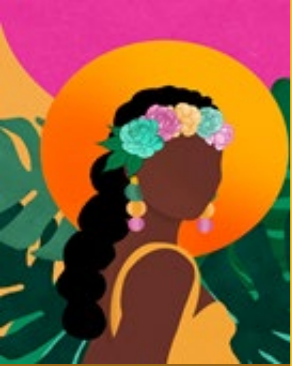
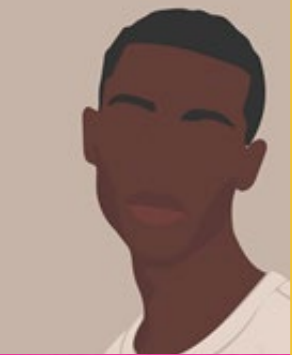
- Rest is a meticulous love practice.
- Rest is holding space for our memories, our micro histories, and all the things that make us human and divine.
- Rest disrupts the lie that we aren't doing enough.
- The legacy of exhaustion stops with me. I trust the Creator and my Ancestors to always make space for my gifts without needing to work myself into exhaustion.

Building the Collective(s) for Collective Action - 3

Black Youth Space

The Process:

- ❖ Don't make them like us!
 - ❖ Do it their way.
- ❖ Rest and joy hold space for truth telling.
- ❖ Recruitment vs Relationships.
- ❖ Believe that every moment is part of the movement forward.





Learning to Support and Share Power

Youth-led doesn't mean adults do nothing.

Collective action is intergenerational.

- ❖ **Securing funding that puts young people in a position to know what's possible**
- ❖ **Showing up to experience WITH**
- ❖ **Visioning and creating collectively**

Doing *Well* Work

Reflections from an Advisory Council member.

Yaya Cochran, Executive Director, Intentions



The Black Joy Project

An effort to create a substantive portfolio of relationship-based research rooted in transparency, mutuality, healing, and wellness.

- ❖ Defines Black Joy and highlights the centrality of it in informing policy change
- ❖ Compliments existing research that centers deficit and disparity

15 Black Joy Interviews

Black Joy Retreat

Literature Review



[Black Joy Retreat Video](#)



The Summit

“I’ll remember not feeling like I need to fit in a box.”

“I felt safe here.”

“They made me feel comfortable with my own experiences.”

THE RESULT.

In partnership with four school districts...
200
Black youth participated in the Summit.



The Ripple Effect

Reflections from an Advisory Council member.

*Dorborwulu Cooper,
Student Advisor,
Jackson Middle School*



Small group discussions - 2

- What did you hear?
- What inspires you about power sharing/capacity building with Black youth and communities?
- What challenges have you encountered to moving towards collective action with community leaders in your work?
- What action steps can be taken consistently support and share power with Black community leadership?

- **Brittany Wright**, Governor's Children's Cabinet
- **Dr. Tolulope Monisola Ola**, Restoration for All, Inc.
- **Jeannine Erickson**, Hope Community
- **Mayor Hollies Winston**, City of Brooklyn Park
- **Keenan Jones**, Wayzata Public Schools

Please complete closing survey
summary of today's discussion.

Thank you

References

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