

Trilogy of Trauma - Epilogue: Black Men ~ Suffering in Silence

“If you are silent about your pain, they’ll kill you and say you enjoyed it.” Zora Neale Hurston

On Saturday, June 15, 2019, the BMHA held its Trilogy of Trauma session for Black men. Presenters with backgrounds in clinical psychology, family therapy, mental health counseling and transformational healing techniques, delivered special, unique life-affirming and healing messages to the community of Black men that were present at the session. It was truly one of those critical and safe places where Black men could reflect, process some of their emotional feelings and learn how to best address their mental health and well-being.

The men present at the session realized that it doesn’t make a man weak to acknowledge the fears he has about providing for his family, or the anxieties he has about existing in a world in which Black men are devalued...it’s simply realistic. It became very clear from the conversation that Black men can work through these fears and worries by talking with other men, whether they are friends, fathers, siblings, **therapists**, or soon-to-be new friends in group therapy or other supportive spaces. These are spaces where we can heal. Although they require a bit of risk of exposing one’s emotional vulnerabilities, it is well worth it, because on the other side of that risk is less anxiety, less depression, and less stress.

There was a call from the men present, and from many other Black men throughout the City, for more sessions and more healing opportunities for Black men. The BMHA is giving serious consideration as to what should come next to invest in and support safe spaces that would allow Black men to open-up, unpack and address the influences of historical/contemporary trauma, toxic stress, chronic depression, thoughts of hyper-masculinity, and overwhelming exposure to violence that negatively affects their mental health and psychological well-being.

Following, are session-related, but also post-session thoughts, tips, tools and resources that we hope will be of benefit to those Black men that no longer wish to suppress the pain and continue to suffer in silence.

For Black Men That Have Been Told to “Man up” -Even Through Their Darkest Times

By: Richard A. Rowe, BMHA Project Consultant

We must tell each other as Black men how much we mean to each other. There is no weakness in that. Only strength, self-care, self-affirmation, self-preservation, and power. Given what we've been through, and are going through, our mental health and well-being must become a top priority.

So, Black men, we encourage each of you to hold onto the following:

1. **Before you can love and heal others, you must love and heal yourself.**
2. **Given what we've been through and given our pain, it's okay to cry. In fact, we should “holla” and scream! Let's stop suffering in silence. Dismantling structural racism is exhausting and can be life-threatening.**
3. **You/we are here for a reason. Find your “WHY” and the “WAY” will follow. Our women and children are depending on us to love, value and protect them 24/7/365!**
4. **Read more and take care of yourself as if your life depends on it, because it does.**
5. **Showing and sharing your emotions isn't a sign of weakness.** Paying attention to how we feel helps us become more in tune with our mental state of being. Relating to your emotions is not synonymous with being weak or inferior,
6. **Your mental health matters.** You can't “work yourself” out of your mind. Emotional trauma is very real and worthy of our time. We've been through a lot. You have the right to seek and receive therapy. And, even though our women and families care about us, **OUR MENTAL HEALTH IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY!**
7. **Never consider giving up or giving in! Your life is precious, and you deserve to live – so we must dream and thrive — despite the odds.**
8. **You are a descendent of kings.** We need all Black men and young Black men on deck to help build, maintain and protect our kingdom. Don't opt out, especially not now.
9. **“Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.”**
James Baldwin
10. **“Someday” is TODAY.** Write that book, do a “TED Talk”. Write that Op-Ed piece. Tell another Black man, a Black woman and a Black child/youth that you love them - often and always.

Organizations in Baltimore City that are Committed to Black men and Young Black men

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Center for Urban Families
(410) 367-5691
jjones@cfuf.org

Darryl Green
Deep Forgiveness
(443) 739-3260
info@deepforgiveness.com

Cameron Miles
Mentoring Males in the Hood
410-852-8013
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Charles Smith
Choo Smith Youth Empowerment
(443) 863-7474
info@chooyouth.org

Changa Bell
The Black Male Yoga Initiative
Tel: 443-597-7217
chilechanga@gmail.com

Damion Cooper
Project Pneuma
443-851-1697
theprojectpneuma@gmail.com

Fanon Hill
Strong Art, Strong Youth: Youth
Resiliency Institute
fanon@youthresiliencyinstitute.org

One Hundred Black Men, Inc.
4413 Liberty Heights Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21207
Email: net100md@aol.com
410-664-6726

Andre Turner
Boys Coming of Age (BOAC)
Manhood Development and Training
(410) 262-8471
turnerdre@aol.com

“If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” --African Prover

Important Web Sites for Black Men

Local

Black Male Yoga Initiative	www.bmyi.org
Black Mental Health Alliance	www.blackmentalhealth.com
Center for Urban Families	www.cufu.org
Dare To Be King	www.daretobeking.net
What Ever It Takes Black Men	www.whateverittakesblackmen.com

National

African American Images	www.africanamericanimages.com
Black Male Achievement	www.blackmaleachievement.org
Black Men's Health Project	www.blackmenshealthproject.org
Black Men's Health Initiative	www.bmhi.org
Black Doctor	www.blackdoctor.org
Black Fatherhood Project	www.blackfatherhoodproject.com
Concerned Black Men	www.cbmnational.org
Fatherhood	www.fatherhood.gov
Office of Minority Health	www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov
Schott Foundation	www.schottfoundation.org
State of Black America	www.soba.iamempowered.com
Third World Press Foundation	www.thirdworldpressfoundation.org
100 Black Men	www.100blackmen.org

Online Resources

American Psychiatric Association www.healthyminds.org

Black Psychiatrists of America www.bpainc.org

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration www.samhsa.gov/index.aspx

National Association of Black Social Workers www.nabsw.org/mserver

National Institute of Mental Health www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/index.shtml

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

The Association of Black Psychologists www.abpsi.org

Black Mental Health Alliance www.blackmentalhealth.com

National Alliance on Mental Health www.nami.org

Brighter Tomorrows Start Today www.bstservices.com

Reading List for Black Men

1. Akbar, Na'im. (1984) *Chains and Images of Psychological Slavery*. Jersey City: New Mind Prod.
2. Akbar, Na'im. (1991) *Visions for Black Men*, Tallahassee, FL: Mind Productions & Associates, Inc.
3. Cress-Welsing, Frances. (1990) *The Isis Papers: The Keys to The Colors*. Third World Press, Chic.
4. Madhubuti, Haki R. (1990) *Black Men: Obsolete, Single, Dangerous?* Chic: Third World Press.
5. Madhubuti, Haki R. (2002) *Tough Notes: A Healing Call for Creating Exceptional Black Men*, Chicago: Third World Press.
6. Porter, Michael, *Kill Them Before They Grow: The Mis-diagnosis of Black boys in Public Schools*, African American Images, Chicago, Ill.
7. Vanzant, Iyanla. (1996) *The Spirit of a Man: A Vision of Transformation For Black Men and the Women Who Love Them*, New York: Harper Collins.
8. Michelle Alexander. (2010, 2012), *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. The New Press, New York
9. Leary, J. D. (2005) *Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America's Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing*. Portland Or. Uptowe Press
10. Coates, Ta-Nehisi (2015), *Between the World and Me*. New York: Spiegel Grau / Rando House
11. Williams, Terri. (2008) *Black Pain: It Just looks Like We're Not Hurting*, New York: Scribner
12. Kunjufu, Jawanza, Dr., *Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys*, Vol. I, II, III, & IV. African American Images, Chicago, Ill.
13. Haley, Alex (1964), *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. Ballantine Books, NY.
14. Smith, Mychal, D. *Invisible Mn: Got the Whole World Watching* (2016), Nation Books, NY
15. Winbush, Raymond, A. *The Warrior Method* (2001), Harper Collins, NY



Newspaper Headlines That Should Concern All of Us about The Psychological Health Black Men and Boys

Report: Life expectancy for Black men lower than any other group

Ayana Jones Tribune Staff Writer / Mar 15, 2019

Lagging Life Expectancy for Black Men: A Public Health Imperative

M. Jermaine Bond, PhD and Allen A. Herman, MD, PhD / Am J Public Health. 2016 July;



Am J Public Health . 2011

20-Year Gap In Life Expectancy Between Richer, Poorer Areas Of Baltimore

By Devin Bartolotta July 6, 2017 at 7:36 pm

Broken Dreams and Financial Illusions: The Secret Depression of Black Men

Dr. Marcus Bright, Contributor Scholar and Activist
05/24/2017 07:20 pm ET | Huffington Post

1.5 Million Missing Black Men

By JUSTIN WOLFERS, DAVID LEONHARDT and KEVIN QUEALY APRIL 20, 2015
For every 100 black women not in jail, there are only 83 black men. The remaining men – 1.5 million of them – are, in a sense, missing.

Black men/young men and Mental Health: Too Many Black men/boys are suffering in silence.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, suicide is the third cause of death among African-American males between ages 15 and 24, behind homicide and accidents.