

Current examples of affected groups: African Americans, Native Americans, refugees and etc

There are several ways of transmitting stress and trauma on to the next generation. The specific ways I want to highlight are:

- Inheritance
- Representation
- Lack of cognizance of the need for mental health care

When speaking of inheritance, we are looking at the family as a whole . Learned behaviors exhibited by the adult figures within the house are usually the highest triggers. Growing up in their youth or young adult years, people often recall the emotional stressors endured by the adults. Any type of abuse (physical, drug, sexual even emotional abuse) typically does NOT go unseen by children and teens in the household. Therefore, when it is not addressed directly, it can easily be mistaken as a tolerable environment which creates a chain of events that usually causes later trauma. This also falls in line with representation of family blood lines.

Finally, lack of cognizance of the need for mental health care is what I can relate to the most.]. The generations before us tend to over look, is that holding in those simple questions we had or witnessing the anxiety our own parents had from simply trying

to provide for us OR not having the answers causes it's own trickle down affect.

All 3 Focus Group brief:

Michigan, Texas and Georgia were the focus behind our research.

We focused more on the metro areas due to the fact that this highly populated areas have the most people of color.

15 Youth/Young Adults: 13 years old-25 years old

15 Parent: 36 years old-58 years old

Each participant was compensated with a \$20 visa gift card. Lunch and refreshments were provided.

A few quoted statements from our young adults:

“Yeah, I def think my moms decisions had a big effect on me and my siblings. I don't fault her for the struggle but sometimes I wish she was just a little more selfish and did something for herself, you know? She was a great mom, but she was raised to ride the wave. Work for whatever she was paid, not her worth. I wanted her to complete more things...Like finish her last year of college..instead of putting up with mess and settling for less.” -age 22 years old/no kids/Detroit, Mi

“Yeah my pops, he walked out on us. I remember it like it was yesterday. I was only 6 years old but 15 years later it still haunts me. My mom went through a lot after he left. Drugs, abusive boyfriends, job loss and we were even homeless at one point until my grandmother took us in. My mom got treatment and went back to school. But by that time, I was in the streets because that’s all I knew. What got me out, was—seeing my mom triumph her addiction and putting us in a better position. The streets don’t love NOBODY. So when my mama got it together that encouraged me to do what I had to.” -age 21 years old/no kids/Detroit, Mi

“It was like I had no choice, but to follow in their footsteps...my parents and my older siblings. My father and brothers were big time drug dealers and that’s what they wanted for me. My mom devoted her life to my dad. She graduated from an HBCU with high honors and threw her dreams away when she got pregnant by my father. Her mother did the same thing. It killed her—my grandmother. She got caught up and became a casualty in gun violence. Those experiences...made me tough though. Once I joined sports in high school, got a guidance counselor and saw what life could be like for me? It was fire lit under me. I got a full ride scholarship to 5 HBCUs. I knew my worth. But it wasn’t easy. I would be lying if I said my environment didn’t play an obstacle. If I didn’t have an escape, I probably wouldn’t have been sitting here with y’all right now.” -age 24 years old/1 child / Detroit, Mi

FAMILIES OF COLOR more susceptible to trauma? Well we can derive from our research that it's from:

- Lack of resources-families living at or below the poverty line
- No advocacy -encouraging youth and young adults to give back to the communities they grew up in. By give back we mean pour knowledge into the youth
- Lack of ample opportunities – better education systems and more community centers
- More local organizations partnering with the state and national level agencies

Lived experience is and has been providing accurate data for research more so than data MANIPULATION (statistics). As most of us know, one of the hardest things about correlating the need for mental health is getting accurate REAL TIME data. Placing trained recorders in our communities (through needed funding) the record data accurately in REAL time. This also gives an opportunity for job opportunities in the communities affected while allowing people to be involved.

In addition to our focus groups, we conducted what we have call Living Room link ups..which we coined this term for “common grounds” for community members to voice and express their concerns

To quote a few of the parents we spoke to statements:

“Today’s generation is different, they have more help. Society has made it a trend to become a teen mom WHILE also being school. I didn’t have that chance.” -age 49-mother-Detroit, Mi

“In my day you do what you need to—to provide...if I had known that I could have asked for help, I would have. People see you being a single parent and think you chose this, but that’s far from the truth. I was in school. My parents stopped paying for my tuition back in the early 2000s. So what do you do, when you can pay for your tuition? Get a job right. I couldn’t even afford books. So I did what my mother did, got a man that could support me. But it came at a price of giving up my education and my life. If I knew better, I would have done better.”-age 51-mother-Houston, TX

“The thing is, as a mother, I did everything right— I thought..had a good job..sent her to the best schools. When me and her father divorced, I sent her to a therapist because that what the books say. She was failing grades, getting into relationships and starting a path I didn’t like. I partially blame myself for her becoming a teen mom but programs like this..where you all come talk to us and seeing black women who come from our struggle, makes it worthwhile. How can I expect someone who doesn’t come from our background know how I feel or what I need?”-age 45-mother-Detroit, Mi

If trauma can be passed down through generations so can healing....which is such a powerful statement. We have to be able to change the narrative of our family communities...

*refer to presentation for Policy Recommendations