

August 24, 2020 TIC Lunch & Learn Discussion Notes

Dr. Joy DeGruy: *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome*

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=37evWT5ZUYA>

- 1) According to Dr. Joy Degruy, what are some of the significant consequences of a society that does not understand the historical and generational trauma experienced by descendants of Black slaves?
 - Quote by Dr. Degruy, “Without the proper lens you cannot help” – One of the oathe’s many take when working with or within a community is “Do No Harm” yet harming is being done when service providers lack proper information and knowledge of historical oppression
 - Continued retraumatization
 - Disproportionality in our service sectors
 - Creates an ineffective dance between an uninformed service provider and client, compromising the value and effectiveness of the support

- 2) Do you agree that Whites think of the impact of trauma on Blacks, differently than trauma experienced by other groups, such as Jewish holocaust survivors or Native Americans? If so, why do you think that is?
 - Quote by Dr. Degruy, “I believe our [black people] very presence produces dissonance”

Yes. Whites can’t relate as easily to those who look different than us; More distant past (“I’m not responsible for this...Get over it” mentality)

- 3) How does the ACEs model fall short in addressing the Black experience?
 - The CDC-Kaiser Permanente Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study was conducted at Kaiser Permanente from 1995 to 1997 with two waves of data collection. Over 17,000 Health Maintenance Organization members from Southern California receiving physical exams completed confidential surveys regarding their childhood experiences and current health status and behaviors. Over 70% of the individuals that took the survey were White.
 - ACEs only addresses personal adversities. Does not touch on historical/generational or environmental factors or on the ongoing impact of retriggering events/conditions.

- As a result of institutional racism, Blacks may have a higher number of ACEs, but they also have these other factors overlaying the ACEs and exacerbating them.

4) What are some ways that Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome impacts the perspective and behavior of Blacks in America?

- As with any trauma, they can be retriggered by current actions and conditions (fight, flight or freeze reaction) – and these reactions may be misinterpreted or misunderstood by those around them.
- Poor self-image – Blacks may begin to see themselves as the world sees them.
- Lack of identity

5) How might we in the helping professions begin to address this trauma and play a part in the healing?

- Educate ourselves and our community!!!
- Take responsibility for and advantage of gaining knowledge through educational opportunities.
 - There are many excellent books out there to start with. In addition, to Dr. Joy Degruy's work, here are some others:
 - *Stamped from the Beginning* (or *Stamped* – which is an easier to read adaptation) by Ibram X. Kendi
 - *How to Be an Anti-Racist* by Ibram X. Kendi
 - *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo
 - *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander
 - *Waking Up White: And Finding Myself in the Story of Race* by Debby Irving
 - Also, *13th* is an excellent Netflix documentary about the 13th Amendment.
- Build relationships; Support and collaborate with Black-led groups and organizations
- Have courageous conversations to confront racism and discrimination when we encounter it.
- Take active steps to ensure our organizations are welcoming and safe for ALL. (consider materials in our lobbies and offices; policies; forms; hiring practices; training opportunities)
- Recognize and understand that not only does success hinge in part on a client who wants to change but also a client that feels comfortable with the provider they are working with

