

Historical Trauma

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Rebecca Ramirez, PhD, MMSD Building Bridges program



Welcome and Inclusion



I am

The image shows the words "I am" written in a dark brown, brush-stroke style font. The letter "I" is a single vertical stroke with a slight curve at the bottom. The word "am" is written in a cursive, brush-like script. The entire text is centered on a white rectangular background.

Outcomes for Today

- ❖ Explore the concept of historical trauma
- ❖ Consider application of personal learning in your life and place of work



Agenda

Welcome and Inclusion

Outcomes and Agenda

What is Historical Trauma? What is its impact and how do we heal from it?

Closing and Evaluation



Essential Questions

What is belonging?

What is the spiritual meaning of belonging?

From what are we liberating ourselves?

What role do we play in our own oppression due to a lack of knowledge?

Four Pillars: Addressing the Aftermath of Historical Trauma

Facing Historyresearching, acknowledging, and sharing personal, family and community histories of race with openness and honesty

Making Connections.....connecting to others within and across racial lines in order to develop and deepen relationships

Healing Wounds.....exploring how we can heal together through dialogue, reunion, ritual, ceremony, the arts, apology and other methods

Taking Action.....actively seeking to heal the wounds of racial inequality and injustice and to support racial reconciliation between individuals, within families, and in communities

Trauma and Culture



What is Trauma?

- Extreme distress
- Overwhelms ability to cope
- Subjective experience
- Helplessness, vulnerability, fear
- Effects continue in the aftermath of the experience

(Elizabeth Hudson)

Adverse Childhood Experiences are more common than we realize.

Household dysfunction

■ Substance abuse	27%
■ Parent separation/divorce	23%
■ Mental illness	19%
■ Battered mother	13%
■ Incarcerated household member	5%

Abuse

■ Psychological	11%
■ Physical	28%
■ Sexual	21%

Neglect

■ Emotional	15%
■ Physical	10%

- 17,000 people surveyed, 78% reported 1 or more

Data from Centers for Disease Control

Trauma Types

Type 1: **Single incident trauma event** (*car accident, physical/sexual assault*)

Type 2: **Ongoing trauma exposure, developmental trauma**
(*chronic disruptive or chaotic environments*)

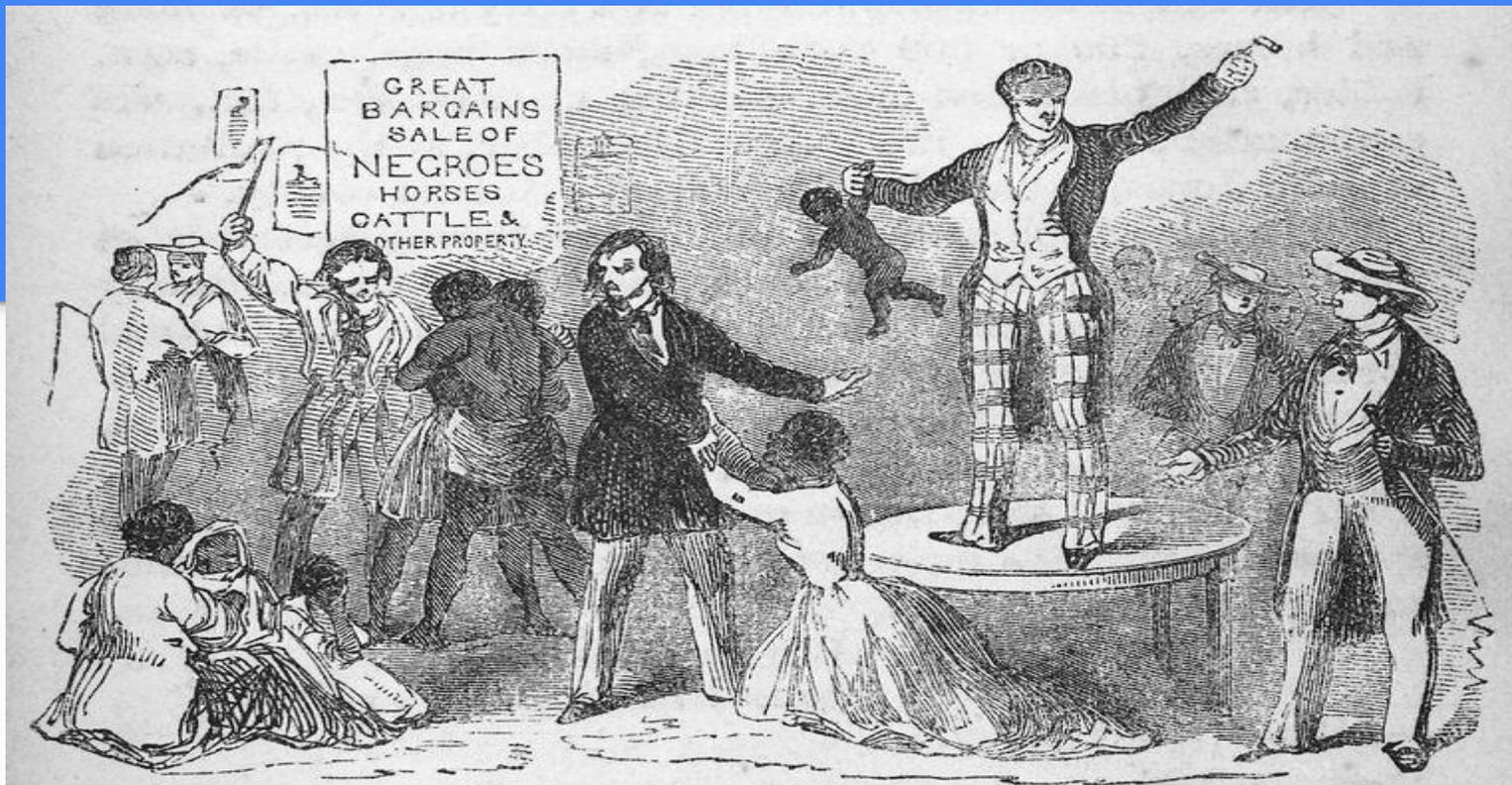
Type 3: **Historical/Intergenerational Trauma**

(*catastrophic group events*)

Historical Trauma

- Collective, cumulative emotional wounding across generations resulting from cataclysmic events.
- Events target not just individuals but whole collective communities.
- Trauma held personally across generations.

Even those who have not directly experienced the trauma can feel the effects generations later.



Husbands, Wives, and Families sold indiscriminately to different purchasers, are violently separated—probably never to meet again.



Historical/Intergenerational Trauma

Types of Historical Trauma: Long term massive colonialism, slavery, war, genocide, and interment,

Impacts: self-esteem, acculturation, ethnic identity

Examples:

- Boarding Schools
- Slavery
- Holocaust

Historical Trauma in America

“America’s history is inextricably bound to this racist ideology (white superiority/other inferiority). From the codifying of slavery, to the belief in its “Manifest Destiny”, to the treatment of “illegal immigrants”, many of America’s actions continue to conflict with its creed that “All men are created equal.”

Dr. Joy DeGruy

Symptoms of Trauma

- intense psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event
- physiological reactivity on exposure to internal or external cues
- marked diminished interest or participation in significant activities
- feelings of detachment or estrangement from others
- restricted range of affect
- sense of foreshortened future

Historical Trauma

*“The worst thing you can do to a people is
rob them of their memory.”*

Intergenerational trauma -----adaptive/survival coping----social learning of symptoms----Normalize Behavior-----”Culture”

[Historical Trauma and Cultural Healing](#)

Microlab: National Equity Project

(Speaking and Listening Practice)

What is one reaction, idea or question that was generated by what you've just learned.....

- Ethnic minority children tend to be over-represented in many of the areas cited as risk factors.

Poverty alone can exacerbate the experience of trauma due to lack of access to resources, safe environments, and social isolation.

Culture and trauma have a profound bidirectional influence on each other. Culture shapes attitudes toward traumatic experiences as well as how children and families respond to –and recover from – trauma exposure.

Current Implications

- *Childrearing practices*: extreme ways of raising children to be submissive and docile have led to vacant esteem
- *Conceptualization of Children of Color*: not allowed to be children, sexualized, size, not innocent
- *Parenting*: use of corporal punishment, not wanting to birth a boy child

Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome



[Dr. DeGruy Presentation](#)

Multigenerational trauma together with continued oppression and absence of opportunity leads to Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome

How Trauma and Resilience Cross Generations

Rachel Yeluda: Epigenetics, branch of biology studying how environmental signals are translated into gene expression: [How Trauma and Resilience Cross Generations.](#)

Dr. Richie Davidson: UW-Madison Center for Healthy Minds, 2013

[*Increasing body of research showing rapid alterations in gene expression associated with even short periods of mindfulness practice*](#)

Healing from Historical Trauma

- Traditional Practices/Cultural Healing: cultural healing is connecting people to their cultural identity through understanding traditions, customs and practices: sweat lodges, pow wows, Wiping of the Tears, rites of passage
- Ethnic Identity Work: specific counseling/teaching around the development of a positive ethnic self and its incorporation into the larger self identity
- Individual/Family/Community empowerment
- Honest dialogue around race and racism

Example: Coming to the Table

The story of Betty and Phoebe Kilby

Wit, Will & Walls by Betty Kilby F



Circle: A Trauma-Informed Practice

When walking through the field of diversity, pebbled with mistake-making opportunities, our “secret power” is compassion. Turned inward, self-compassion can help soothe the voice of the inner critic that judges harshly and tends to dwell on errors and missteps, preventing us from moving forward.

~~~Shakil

CIRCLE



# Resources

## [Dr. Joy DeGruy - Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome](#)

- [Trauma and Epigenetics: Rachel Yehuda: How Trauma and Resilience Cross Generations \(Onbeing podcast\) and How mindfulness meditation affects your genetic expression:](#)
- [Whitney Plantation Slave Museum](#)
- [Native American Boarding Schools](#)
- [Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation: Kellogg Foundation](#)
- [Coming to the Table](#)
  - **(Through [four interrelated practices](#) rooted in [Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience](#) and racial justice through a [Restorative Justice](#) lens, **Coming to the Table** is a movement and community that is transforming and healing the lives of many.**

# Resources

- Excerpts from [Deep Diversity: Overcoming Us vs. Them](#) by Shakil Choudhury
- [Historical Trauma and Cultural Healing: multiple resources from the University of MN](#)
- Video: [Historical Trauma and Cultural Healing](#)

## Mindfulness, Equity, Implicit Bias:

- [Can Mindfulness Reduce Racism?](#)
- [Can Mindfulness Help Defeat Racism?](#)
- [Mindfulness and Racial Bias: Resources for Deeper Understanding](#)
- Connection of self-awareness, mindfulness practice and racial bias: PP 41-45 in [Deep Diversity](#)

# MMSD Trauma Modules

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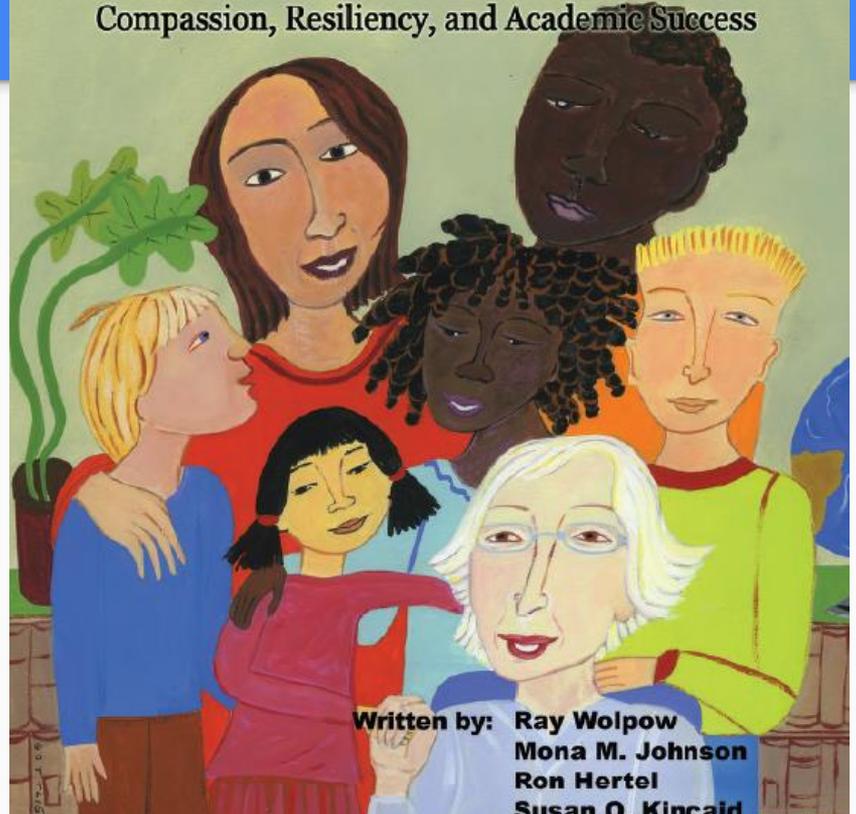
[9 Module 9: Trauma-Informed Disciplinary Practices](#)

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# The Heart of Learning and Teaching:

Compassion, Resiliency, and Academic Success



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