

**Trauma-Informed
Race-Sensitive Work:
How do you actually do
it?**

**Dr. Yodit Betru, LCSW,
MSW**

Introduction

- **My journey in understanding trauma, racial consciousness, and race-based stress**
- **Why it took so long to get here**
- **The journey continues**



Goals

- **Provide current frameworks and lexicon in race-conscious work**
- **Provide context and understanding of race-based stress**
- **Share practical guides, tools, and interventions**
- **Things to consider for next steps and future work**



Race work and why it matters

- You cannot understand the social, cultural, and political structures and social problems in the U.S without understanding race and racism
- By design, race and racism are meant to be invisible, the norm, and something not to notice or discuss
- Americans have a push and pull relationship with race-consciousness because it requires deep-level change





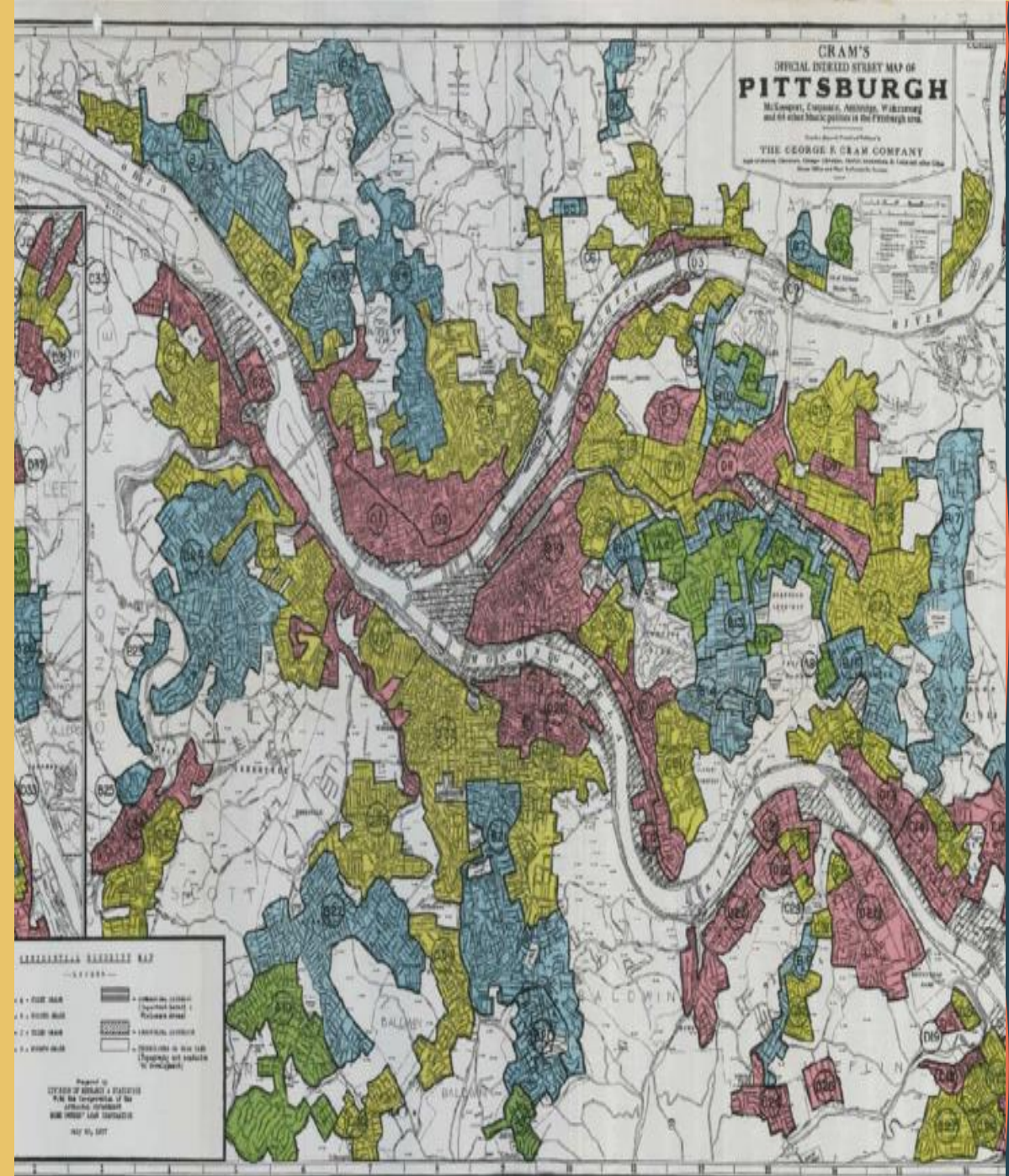
Your relationship with race and racism matters

How visible and invisible it is to you matters in your personal and professional life

- Race socialization happens to everyone
- It's only a matter of time when it happens to you
- You can become the racialized object
- Being racialized can rob you of your humanity

Racism: Not just about attitude

- Systemic and structural
 - Residential segregation
 - Immigration policies
 - Education
- Cultural
 - Devaluing Blackness while stealing from it
 - Over-policing of POC
- Inter/intra
 - Hostile or non-inclusive work environments
 - Micro-aggressions
 - Harassment
 - Discrimination





How do you become racialized in the United States ?

White racialization, Janet Helms

- **Contact**, colorblind space
- **Disintegration**, understands membership
- **Reintegration**, feels pressured by others not to notice racism
- **Pseudo-independence**, has intellectual understanding of unfairness of whiteness, not feeling
- **Immersion/emersion**, actively seeking to re-define, asking "who am I racially," takes responsibility for racism
- **Autonomy**, understands whiteness, actively anti-racist

Black Racial Identity Formation (William Cross)

- Pre-encounter
- Encounter
- Immersion
- Internalization/ Commitment



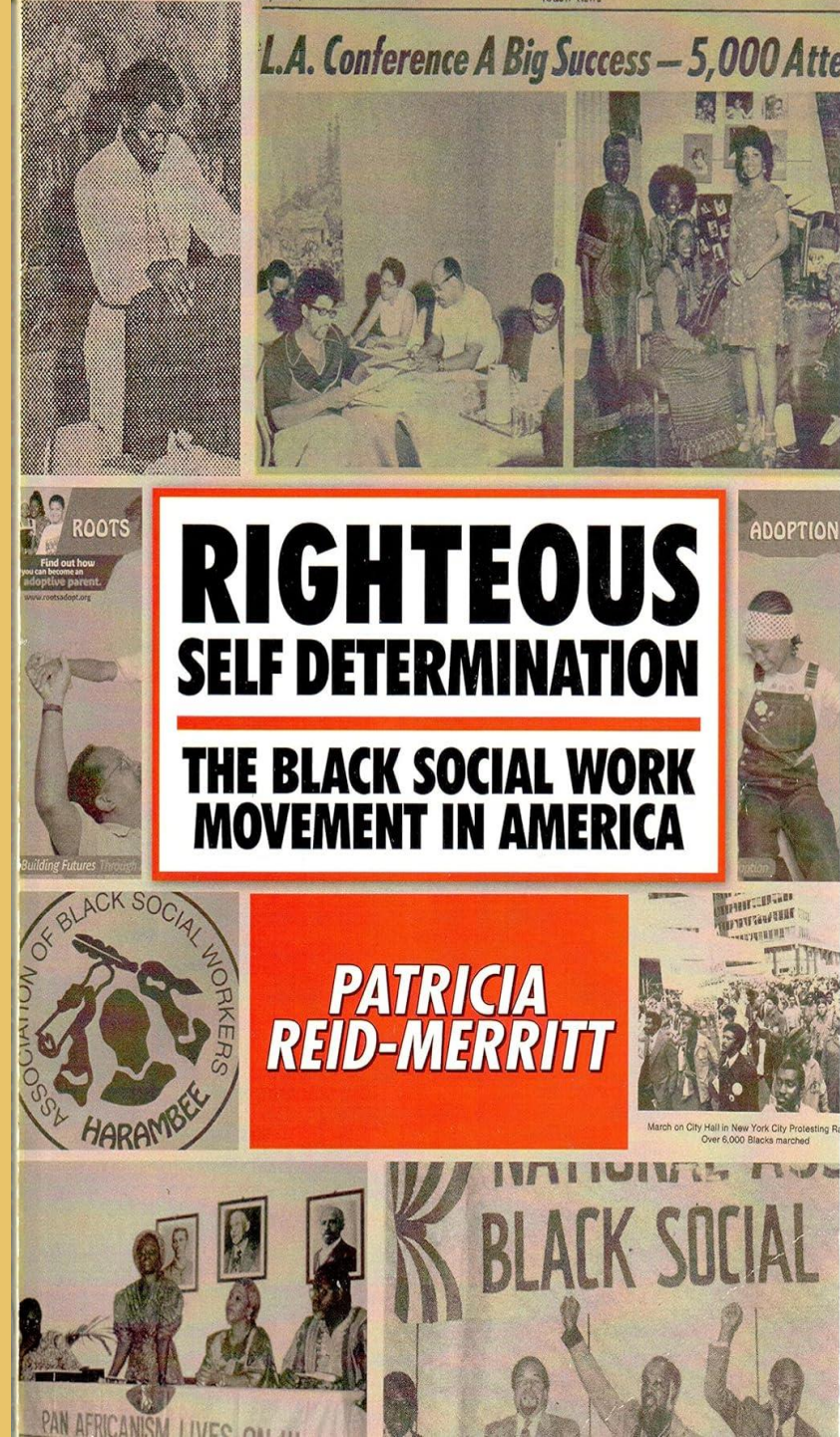
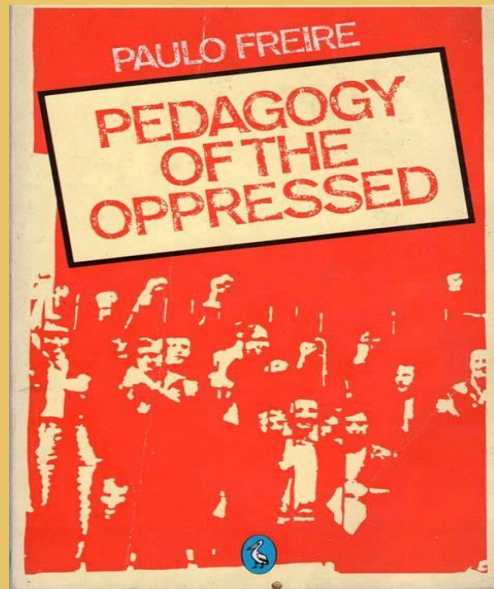
What does this mean?

- **White folks can walk around having color-blind attitudes about race**
- **Folks of color must contain racism**
- **Color of fear**



Scholarship in race-informed work

- Black social workers used collective and mutual aid models
- Black psychologists centered the perceptions, values, and voices of Black people
- Liberatory consciousness process of personal change



Lexicon on race work

- **Cultural competence**
- **Cultural responsiveness**
- **Cultural humility**
- **Social justice**
- **Anti-racist**
- **Liberatory consciousness**
- **Healing-centered practice**



Race and stress

- Stress and trauma studies gain major attention in early 2000
- Stress studies recognize harm by nature or interpersonal interaction
- No recognition of racist incidents as source of trauma

Yang 2018

PTSD across diagnostic manuals

Classification	Definition of traumatic event
DSM-III	"a stressor that would be markedly distressing to almost anyone ... and is outside the range of usual human experience"
DSM-III-R	"The most common traumata involve either a serious threat to one's life or physical integrity; a serious threat or harm to one's children, spouse, or other close relatives and friends; sudden destruction of one's home or community; or seeing another person who has recently been, or is being, seriously injured or killed as the result of an accident or physical violence."
ICD-10 (World Health Organization 1992)	"[PTSD] arises from a delayed and/or protracted response to a stressful event or situation (either short-lived or long-lasting) of an exceptionally threatening or catastrophic nature, which is likely to cause pervasive distress in almost anyone (for example, natural or man-made disaster, combat, serious accident, witnessing the violent death of others, or being the victim of torture, terrorism, rape or other crime)."
DSM-IV	"The person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others. The person's response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror."
DSM-5	"The person was exposed to death, threatened death, actual or threatened serious injury, or actual or threatened sexual violence as follows: (one required) 1. Direct exposure. 2. Witnessing, in person. 3. Indirectly, by learning that a close relative or close friend was exposed to trauma. If the event involved actual or threatened death, it must have been violent or accidental. 4. Repeated or extreme indirect exposure to aversive details of the event(s), usually in the course of professional duties (for example, first responders, those collecting body parts or professionals repeatedly exposed to details of child abuse). This does not include indirect non-professional exposure through electronic media, television, movies or pictures."

Table reproduced from Yehuda et al. 2015, *Nature Reviews Disease Primers*

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Tell Me Why It Hurts

How Bessel van der Kolk's once controversial theory of trauma became the dominant way we make sense of our lives.

By Danielle Carr

Race and stress models

- **Stress adaptation model (Carter)**
- **Values conflict model**
 - **Conflict between collective vs. meritocracy**
- **Victimized system model**
 - **Racism riggs the health and wealth of POC**
 - **Form alternate/informal systems of survival**
- **Post-traumatic slave syndrome (DeGruy)**



Race-based traumatic stress

- Emotional pain and psychological injury from encounters with racist acts, discrimination, and racial avoidance
- Racial-stress that overwhelms ability to cope
- Racial trauma - PTSD caused by racism
- Chronic racial micro-aggression leads to racial battle fatigue
- All of this gets under the skin



Injury of race-based stress and trauma

- Arousal, avoidance, intrusion, and change in cognition
- Hypervigilant
- Deny or minimize to manage intense reaction
- Internalize, self-blame, shame, or blame POC
- Physical complaints



How do you engage, assess, and intervene in race-conscious and trauma-informed ways?

- The work starts with you
- What is your understanding of race-socialization?
- Address race and racism in your realm of influence
- Live a diverse life
- Don't make it weird



Engagement

- **Understand why folks of color are hesitant to engage and respectfully invite them into collaborative work**
- **Understand the idiom of distress or ways they talk about problems**
 - Problems
 - Issues
 - Concerns
 - Hurting
 - Struggling
 - Dealing with something
 - Breakdown
 - Healing



Assessment

- **Have a holistic view of clients, consider an intergenerational practice model**
- **Have a true strengths-based approach to your assessment questions and responses (don't relegate it to one question)**
 - Assess for hopes and dreams
 - Assess for how flexible family roles are and role and strength the kinship bonds
 - Assess for cultural and spiritual resources
- **Think of the person's family and identity in expansive and multi-generational ways**
- **Write about the client in a full humanistic manner; this reduces stigma**
- **Assess for racial identity and racial encounter**



Assessment tools

- **Ask about how people identify racially and do not be color-blind (See color!)**
- **FICA spiritual assessment tool (Puchalski, 1996)**
 - **What is your faith or belief, how important is it to you, do you have a faith community, and how can we address this in our care of you**
- **Cultural genogram**
- **Cultural Formulation Interview (APA, DSM-5-TR)**
- **Everyday Discrimination Scale (Williams, Jackson, & Anderson 1997)**
- **Trauma screener- Life Events Check List (Gray, Hsu, & Lombardo, 2004)**



Daily Discrimination Scale Questions

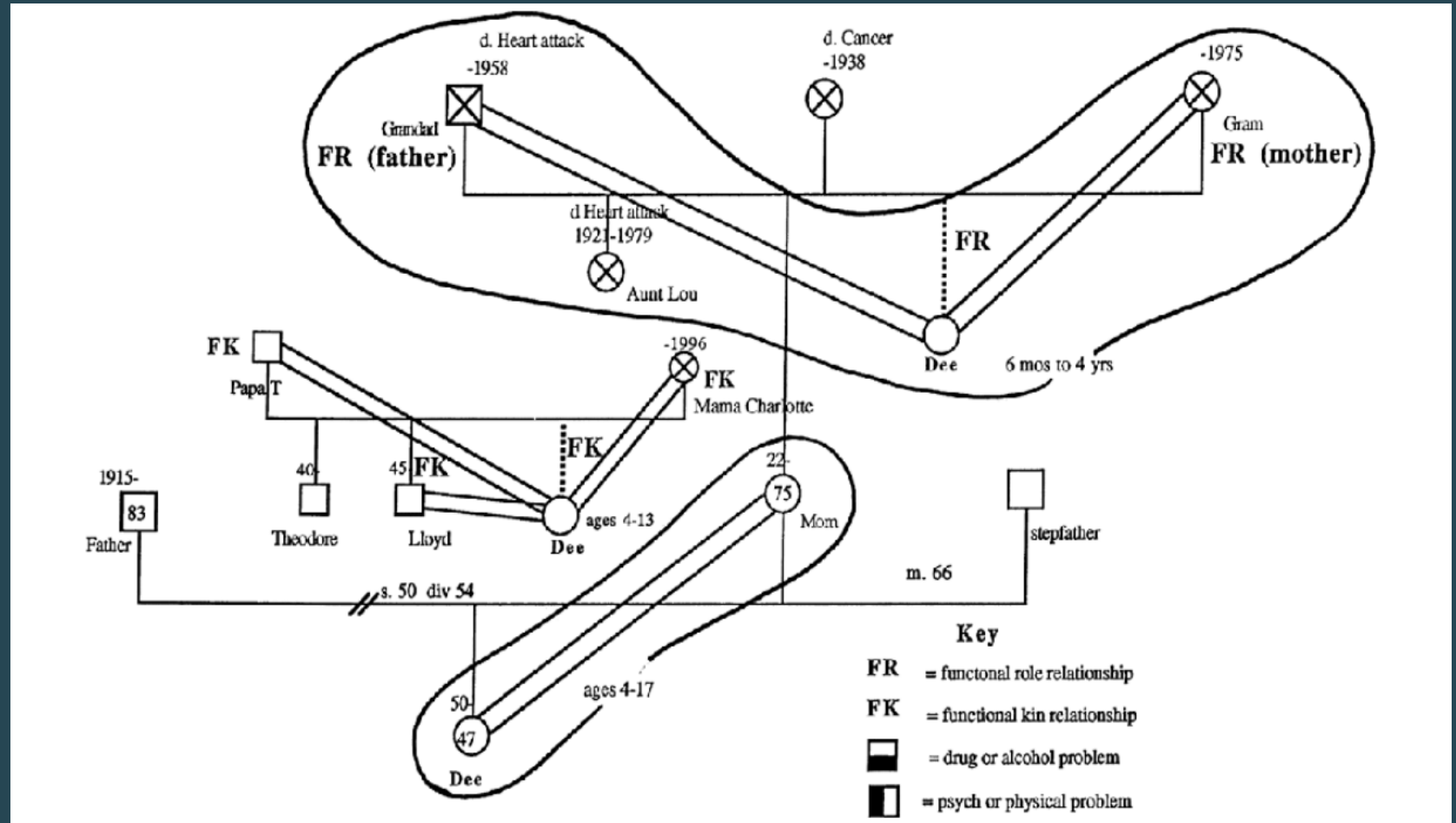
1. You are treated with less courtesy than other people.
2. You are treated with less respect than other people.
3. You receive worse service than other people in restaurants or stores.
4. People act as though they think you are not intelligent.
5. People act as though they are afraid of you.
6. People act as though they think you are dishonest.
7. People act as though they are better than you.
8. They call you names or insult you.
9. You are threatened or assaulted.

Recommended answer categories for all items: • Almost every day
• At least once a week • A couple of times a month • A couple of times a year
• Less than once a year • Never

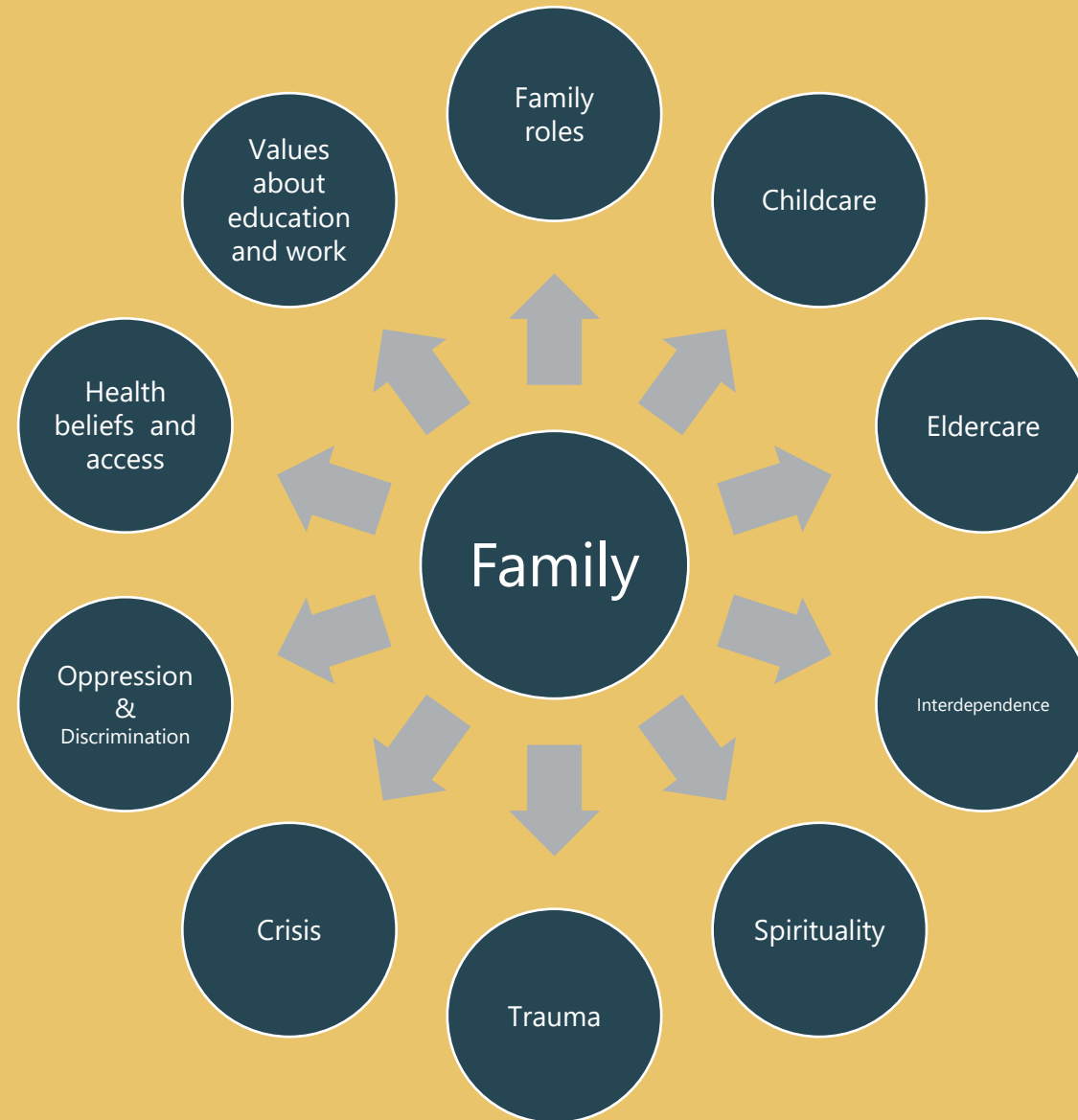


SAMPLE GENOGRAM

Watts-Jones, D. (1997).
Toward an African
American genogram.
Family Process, 36(4), 375-
383.

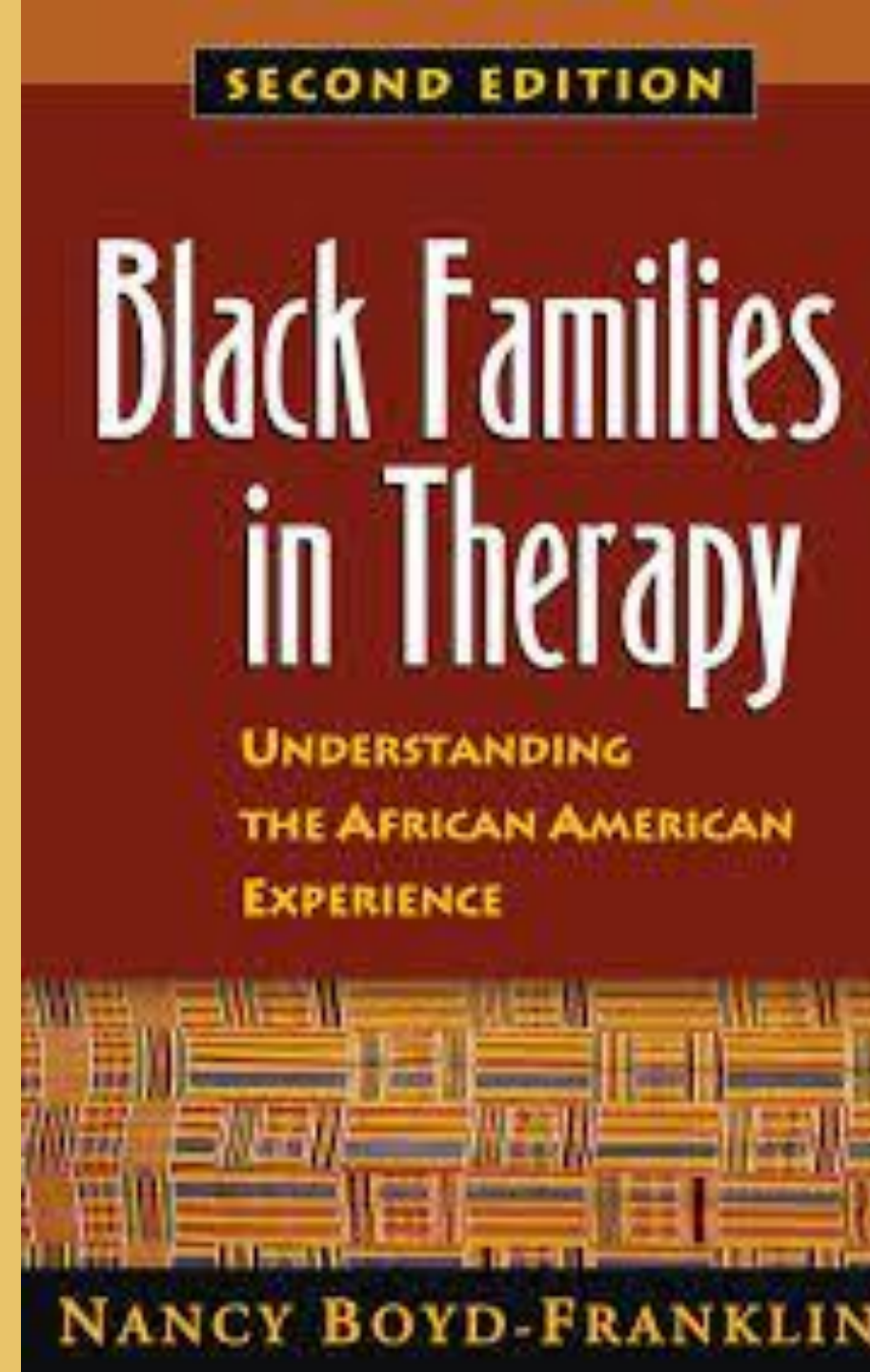


Sample Culturagram



Interventions and models that are holistic

- Use intergenerational practice model
- Solution focused therapy
- Narrative therapy
- Afro-centric interventions (include group interventions)
- Ethnic-Racial Socialization



Ethnic/Racial Socialization

Most common forms of racial socialization for parents

- **Cultural socialization (Pride)**
- **Preparation of bias/Bias socialization (Hands on wheel)**
- **General distrust**
- **Egalitarianism (You are equal)**

Benefits of racial socialization

- **Mental health**
- **Academic performance**
- **Increased social emotional skills**



Evidence on race socialization

- EMBRace helps Black families address racial stress and trauma in their lives while promoting familial bonds and positive coping strategies after racial encounters.
- Parenting While Black , Pittsburgh based



Affirming Interventions

- **Connect people to affirming communities (you should know about them)**
- **Foster sense of belonging**
- **Help them get economic power**
- **Help people gain a sense of optimism, being productive, and having agency**



Intervening when there is racial harm and trauma

- **Ask how the person appraised the situation-**
 - How did the person metabolize, understand the racialized incident
 - Did it get internalized?
 - Did it get minimized?
- **Ask this happen because of your identity or status?**
- **How did you cope with the event?**
- **How did others perceive the event and did they ascribe racial**
- **What can be done about the event?**



Institutional Work

Understand	Understand the structural systems that promote racism
Identify	Identify strengths in how people have coped with racism and racist policies
Advocate	Advocate for equal access and quality care
Activism	Get involved in politics and implementation

Healing Centered and Affirming Practices (Ginwright, 2018)

- **Ask what is going right and well, not just what happened to you**
- **Engage political and clinical issues**
- **Be asset-driven and not just symptom-driven**
- **Engage in dreaming and liberatory practice where you introduce hope and wellness**

Liberatory Consciousness

The process of change that is personal and political (Friere, 1993)

- **Awareness:** noticing what happens
- **Analysis:** actively thinking about what should happen
- **Action:** deciding what needs to be done
- **Accountability/allyship:** interrupting the patterns of oppression



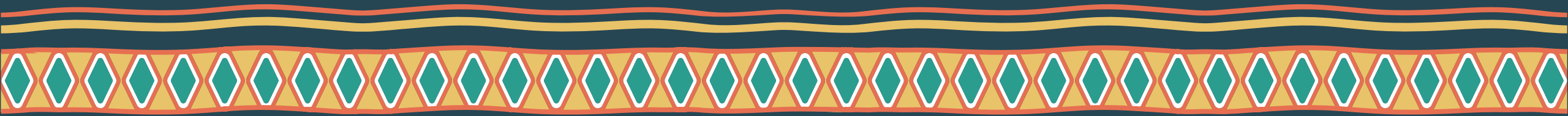
Lean into joy

- A Black person's self-identity is "grounded in particular political history and present situations of violence and vulnerability" (Micaeli, 2007)
- Joy comes despite the history
- Joy imagines and creates a world in which the denied freedom and visibility is negated through imagination and lived stories

Liberatory practices and theories are woven into black joy narratives



Questions & Comments





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