

Health Disparities in Reproductive and Sexual Health



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Prevalence of Violence

- 1 in 6 U.S. women and
- 1 in 33 U.S. men

Will be sexually assaulted during the course of their lives.

These are reported cases.

Non-consensual & consensual sexual behavior

1. Influences

- Self efficacy
- Intent to use condoms and contraceptives consistently
- Regular medical care
- Vulnerability to be abused or battered (revictimization)
- Substance abuse

2. HIV-positive women, regardless of ethnicity, are 2½ times more likely to report sexual and physical abuse than HIV negative women with comparable demographics (Wyatt et al, 2002)

3. 1 in 3 HIV negative women reports CSA

4. 1 in 4 HIV positive African American and Latino men report CSA (Williams, Wyatt et al., 2007)



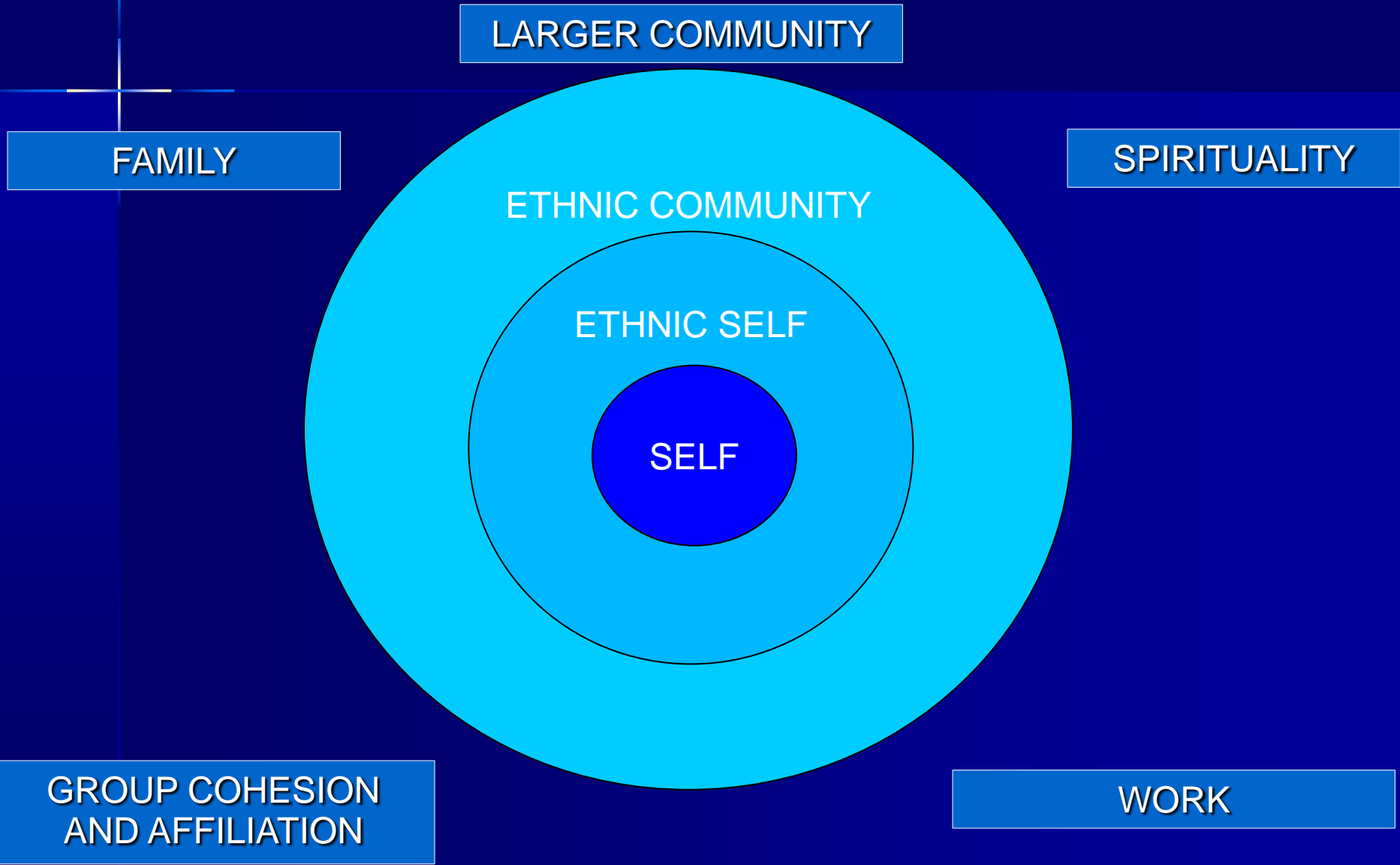
Trauma & Its Effects

1. Shame, guilt, fear, terror
2. Dysregulation of sex and mood extremes
 - ❖ Abstinence/Celibacy
 - ❖ Highly sexualized behaviors
 - ❖ Maladaptive Coping, Substance abuse, sex work
3. Drop out – fight or flight

7 Distinguishing Factors

- What distinguishes African American women from other ethnic/cultural groups with regard to Trauma Informed Interventions that address IPV?
 1. Structure of Relationships
 - Fewer men to women than any other group
 2. Cumulative Trauma (PTSD) and stress over time
 3. Generational Poverty
 4. Under education
 - Poorer quality schools
 5. Health Disparities
 - Access
 - Treatment
 - Acceptability of services (paranoia)
 6. Lack of Cultural Congruence
 - Relevance—the right messenger & the right message
 7. Perceived Worth
 - Targeted messages of deviation

Sociocultural framework



LARGER COMMUNITY

FAMILY

SPIRITUALITY



ETHNIC COMMUNITY

ETHNIC SELF

SELF

GROUP COHESION AND AFFILIATION

WORK

Facilitators of Disparities

There is no one African
American Community

Kamile's Ancestry



Kamile



Facilitators of Disparities On a Societal Level

A History of Oppression

1. Externalizes self control
2. Normalizes violence even within families
3. Contributes to family breakdown
4. Increases healthy paranoia regarding health, medical adherence, and medical mistrust
5. Increases fear of the establishment

Environmental and Social Influences: Macro Assaults

Girls who listen to degrading music in which:

- Women are depicted as sex objects
- Men are sexually insatiable
- Sex is inconsequential

were 2 times as likely to engage in early sex as other girls (Rand Corp, 2006) who did not listen to degrading music

The Media's Role

Disparities in Reproductive Health

**If a woman has been traumatized,
media can re-victimize her –
For Example:**



THATSABORTION.COM

THE MOST DANGEROUS PLACE FOR AN AFRICAN AMERICAN IS IN THE WOMB.

Over 37% of Missouri's abortions are performed on African Americans, who comprise 12% of our population.

MissouriLife.org

- Campaigns like these:

- Instill guilt in all women who may not have had control over their ability to plan or avoid sex
- Reinforce stereotypes that women are not able to be responsible for their bodies

■ Campaigns like these

- Send the message that there is something toxic about African American women's bodies especially their wombs
- Overlook the effects of interpersonal violence or forced/coerced pregnancies on symptoms of depression, PTSD, and substance abuse

IPV and Sexual Health

IPV and Risks for Sexually Transmitted Infections

- In a study of 848 unmarried, African American women ages 18-29 who sought care at Kaiser
 - Physical or sexual abuse
 - Partner related condom barriers
 - Having an older partner

Increased the likelihood of contracting an STI (chlamydia, gonorrhea or T, vaginalis) engaging in other risky behaviors



Facilitators of Disparities

**Findings from Center for
Culture, Trauma, and Mental
Health Disparities (NIMH,
Wyatt, PI)**



Facilitators of Disparities

- We examined predictors of symptoms of depression and PTSD in a sample of over 550 low income African American and Latino men and women and found:



Facilitators of Disparities

1. The most consistent predictors were:
 1. Racial/ethnic discrimination
 2. Chronic stress burden (e.g.)
 1. Losing your home
 2. Community violence
 3. Unemployment



Facilitators of Disparities

2. Experiences of trauma (sexual and physical) make a smaller, but significant contribution to symptoms of PTSD and depression.

These factors are not addressed in most trauma informed interventions or asked about in a therapeutic context

Facilitators of Disparities

Disparities in Diversity of Investigators

Regarding RO1s:

- Asian Americans are 4 percentage points

AND

- African Americans are 13 percentage points less likely to receive NIH investigator-initiated research funding

Compared to Whites

- Controlling for background variables, Black applicants remain 10 percentage points less likely than whites to be awarded NIH research funding

Facilitators of Disparities

Are Issues of Violence and Trauma being Addressed in Current Research?

Facilitators of Disparities

Recent Findings:

- HTPN (HIV Prevention Trials Network) 052 with 1750 HIV sero-discordant couples in 13 cities and 9 countries

One Study Exclusion Criteria:

"Any condition that , in the opinion of the site investigator, would make participation in the study unsafe"- Cohen, McCauley & Gamble 2012

Raise questions

Did “unsafe” practices include

- rape?
- coerced pregnancy – forced reproduction?
- interpersonal domestic violence?
- forced prostitution? Forced marriage? Of one or both partners?

Action Plan

Re-train Health Providers to:

1. Identify and screen for histories of sexual and physical violence and trauma
2. Provide appropriate care or refer women (and men) to other trained professionals or programs

Action Plan

Revise licensing requirements and continuing medical education

State license exams should include of violence and trauma prevention linking to PTSD, Depression, and other mental health challenges

Action Plan

- **Health care facilities** (including jails and prisons) need to include comprehensive programs that address women's:
 - **Sexual health**-the knowledge and care of the body to avoid disease transmission (e.g., STD/HIV, cancer)
 - **Reproductive health**-the care of female reproduction and the right to make decisions within the context of her well being.

Healing Our Women

- NIMH funded program (Wyatt,PI) with an intervention for HIV positive women with histories of sexual and physical violence
 - Piloted with primarily
 - African American
 - Latina
 - White Women
- In English and Spanish

Healing Our Women

- The 11 week intervention addresses symptoms of PTSD and depression and teaches skills to minimize them
- Implemented in Los Angeles, New York, and currently tested with HIV negative women ages 15-62 at Project Street Beat of Planned Parenthood, NYC
- Training held in 8 states and under consideration at NREPP, SAMHSA

Wyatt, et.al., 2004, 2011

Action Plan

Prioritize

Implementation studies of evidence-based interventions for women who experience violence in rural and urban community settings.

Future Policy

- Affordable healthcare should include services for survivors of violence and trauma.

Action Plan

Minority investigators need to be funded in equal numbers compared to other groups to conduct research

Change is Real Now.



Just as most of us still can't believe our eyes, just think how every young black boy in America now sees himself, for the rest of his life, with the election of someone who's hair looks like his...brings tears to your eyes. That's why we have to save them now from destroying themselves.

This a recent photo of a little boy visiting the White House. He wanted to feel Obama's hair because he wanted to know if the President's hair felt just like his. Obama obliged. Priceless.



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