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Black Boys & Men: Changing the  
Narrative

1

MY OBJECTIVES:

- **Explain** Why It Is Important For Practitioners To Have A Critical Awareness Of **The Dynamics And Nuances Of Racist And Unfair Treatment In The United States**
- **Explain** How **Race-Related Trauma And Stress Can Impact** The Lived Experiences Of **Black Males And Boys In The United States**
- **Describe** Indicators That Are Associated With **Race-Related Stress And Trauma**

2

## AUTHORING THEIR NARRATIVES



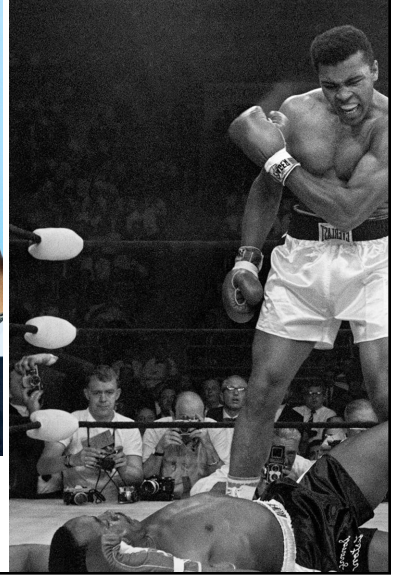
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## Narratives: Multiple Self-States

- We Are **Not Monolithic**
- We Show **Many Forms Of Masculinities**
- We **Have Different Ideas** About Life And **The World-At Large**
- Recognition Of **How The “White Gaze”, Bias And Stigma Frame The Lived Experience Of Black Men: Driving While Black, Birding While Black---Shopping While Black---Living While Black**
- Adapt To And Contend With The Noted Realities**
- Cognitive Dissonance and Daily Living**

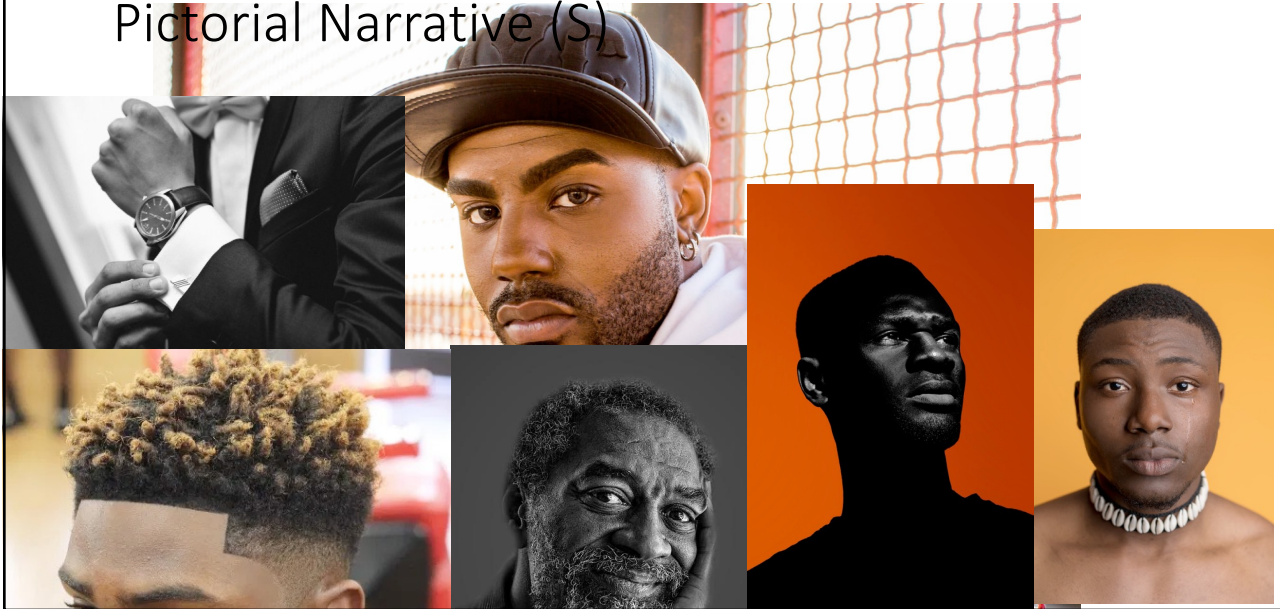
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# Narratives are Spoken, Written and Pictorial Accounts of Socio-Cultural-Political-Psychological Events!



5

## Pictorial Narrative (S)



6

## THE ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE of SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE (Germaine and Gitterman, 1995)

- ❑ **GOODNESS OF FIT—ADAPTATION, ADJUSTMENT and COPING**
- ❑ **POOR FIT—MALADAPTATION**

- ❑ **PERSONAL EFFICACY (Bandura, 1997)** can be viewed through the lens of the Invisibility syndrome and Cool Pose.
- ❑ **SELF-EFFICACY (Bandura, 1997)** is linked to having a sense of personal agency—unemployment and underemployment undermines this psychological domain.
- ❑ **Employment Discrimination** is an outgrowth of oppression, a significant problem that thwarts Black men's ability to take care of themselves and their families.
- ❑ **RACISM, DISCRIMINATION**, and the **PERCEPTIONS** that these men have poor work ethic are factors, which hinder their ability to secure viable employment.
- ❑ **PHYSIOLOGICAL FACTORS**—Chronic exposure to racism induces excessive anxiety in African American men, making them susceptible to such illnesses as stroke, heart ailment high blood pressure (Krieger and Sidney, 1996).

7

## Narrative Truths About Black Men and Boys: An Ecological Perspective

- “People are afraid of black men. If it is a choice of a black man or black woman to do the job I think that an employer would take a black woman. But, if I were going to hire for job I would take a black woman over a black man because of this situation and then also I would be less afraid of a black woman. I would say, well, maybe he's got a criminal record, but he's—or I would just be a little apprehensive” (Wilson, 1997). A quote from an executive director of an inner-city charity .

8

## Narrative Truths About Black Men and Boys: An Ecological Perspective Contd.

### *The Invisible Syndrome* (Franklin, 1999).

There are several dynamics elements of the invisibility syndrome paradigm that represent the intrapsychic process in feeling invisible. For example, as a result of a given racial slight or cumulative encounters with them, (a) one feels a lack of recognition or appropriate acknowledgment; (b) one feels there is no satisfaction or gratification from the encounter (it is painful and injurious); (c) one feels self-doubt about legitimacy—such as “Am I in the right place; should I be here?; (d) there is no validation from the experience—“Am I a person of worth?”—or the person seeks some form of corroboration of experience from another person; (e) one feels disrespected (this is led to by the previous elements and is linked to the following); (f) one’s sense of dignity is compromised and challenged; (g) one’s basic identity is shaken, if not uprooted (p.764).

9

## COOL POSE PARADIGM (Majors and Mancini, 1992).

### **BLACK MEN AND BOYS Use Of External Behaviors To Manage Anxiety, Stress And Depression**

External Presentations are Linked to **Men’s Psychosocial Positioning of Self  
and Others**

- o Dress
- o Walk
- o Speech
- o Actions and Interactions
- o Affective and Cognitive Capacities
- o Masking

10

## COOL POSE PARADIGM CONT

- ❑ **ADAPTIVE and MALADPATIVE** Qualities Regarding **COOL POSE**
- ❑ **FOSTERS RESILEINCE** that serves to counter at least in part, the **DANGERS** that **BLACK MALES** encounter on a **DAILY BASIS**
- ❑ **COOL POSE** is designed to render the **BLACK MALE VISIBLE** and to **EMPOWER HIM**
- ❑ **COOL POSE (Being COOL, SWAG)** is an **EGO FUNCTION FOR BLACK MEN and BOYS**

11

## RACE-BASED STRESS



12

## Race-Based Stress (Carter, 2015)

### Pernicious Elements of RACE-Based Stress

- ❖ Police Killings and Brutality
- ❖ Over Policing
- ❖ Racism/Social Injustice
- ❖ Poverty
- ❖ Lack of Opportunity
- ❖ Microaggression
- ❖ Stop and Frisk
- ❖ Existing and Thriving While Black (The Talk and Its Psychological Implications)

13

## RACE-BASED STRESS AND TRAUMA

- PROLOGED EXPOSURE TO RACE-INDUCED MALTREATMENT: DISCRIMINATION AND LACK OF INCLUSION AND BELONGING IN ALL DOMAINS OF ONE'S LIVED REALTY**
- COMPROMISED REGULATORY BEHAVIORS AND FEELINGS**
- HAVING FEELINGS OF INTRUSIONS (RE-EXPERIENCING) AVOIDANCE (NUMBING) OF STIMULI ASSOCIATED WITH THE TRAUMA, AND INCREASE AROUSAL OF VIGILANCE (CARTER, 2015)**
- SHARED/COLLECTIVE TRAUMA EXPERIENCE**

14

## CHANGING THE NARRATIVE (Carr's 1992, Aymer, 2016)

**Who Has Authored The Narrative (s)?**

**Re-authoring The Narrative**

**Post-Trauma and Empowerment**

**The Development of Critical Consciousness and Double Consciousness  
(Dubois,1953)**

**New Construction of Self via Validating, Exploring, Respecting  
Building On Their Strengths**

15

## Takeaways

- ✓ **Clinical Work** with **Black men Boys** can be useful in light of their **toxic exposure to racial oppression**
- ✓ **Ambivalence** about and/or **resistance to therapy** should be **understood** in the context of their **social/cultural reality**
- ✓ **Integrating** a **variety** of practice strategies that are **culturally relevant** can enhance practice
- ✓ **Black men** and **Boys must contend** with **multiple existences** specific to gender, race, racism and their personal constitution
- ✓ A **complex psychosocial** picture of these men will emerge once these overlapping factors are acknowledged
- ✓ And the delivery of **clinical services** should be reflective of the **psychological contours of these men's functioning**

16



# QUESTIONS!!!

