“African American Community Healing and Resistance through Storytelling: C-HeARTS”

Tracy Dace, DREAAM House
Ruby Mendenhall, University of Illinois
HEALTH DISPARITIES
Promoting Local and Global Health Equity

SYNERGIZING HEALTH SCIENCES:
WHAT WE DO

CATALYZE
We CATALYZE health research by identifying common interests and strengths at Illinois.

CONNECT
We CONNECT investigators and labs with clinical partners and resources, for greater collaboration.

SUPPORT
We SUPPORT research projects and studies from novel ideas to successful collaborations.

ENGAGE
We ENGAGE local and global communities in participatory health sciences research and through outreach.

I ILLINOIS
IHSI | Interdisciplinary Health Sciences Institute
In 1966, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr stated “Of all forms of discrimination and inequalities, injustice in health is the most shocking and inhuman”.

Health disparities are large, persistent, and intergenerational.
African American Community Healing and Resistance through Storytelling: C-HeARTS

Community Healing & Resistance through Storytelling (C-HeARTS) Collaborative

Health Disparities Seminar Series – Interdisciplinary Health Sciences Institute
October 22, 2018
Acknowledgement of American Indian Racial Trauma

Optional Land Acknowledgement Statement Suggested by Native American House

We would like to begin today by recognizing and acknowledging that we are on the lands of the Peoria, Kaskaskia, Piankashaw, Wea, Miami, Mascoutin, Odawa, Sauk, Mesquaki, Kickapoo, Potawatomi, Ojibwe, and Chickasaw Nations. These lands were the traditional territory of these Native Nations prior to their forced removal; these lands continue to carry the stories of these Nations and their struggles for survival and identity.

As a land-grant institution, the University of Illinois has a particular responsibility to acknowledge the peoples of these lands, as well as the histories of dispossession that have allowed for the growth of this institution for the past 150 years. We are also obligated to reflect on and actively address these histories and the role that this university has played in shaping them. This acknowledgement and the centering of Native peoples is a start as we move forward for the next 150 years.

Office of the Chancellor Land Acknowledgement Statement
C-HeARTS Collaborative Members

- Ruby Mendenhall (Associate Professor, Sociology and African American Studies; Assistant Dean of Diversity and Democratization of Health Innovation, Carle Illinois College of Medicine)
- Nkechinyelum Chioneso (Assistant Director of Public Engagement, Psychology/PSC)
- Shardé Smith (Assistant Professor, Human Development and Family Studies)
- Helen Neville (Professor, Educational Psychology and African American Studies)
- Carla D. Hunter (Associate Professor, Psychology)
- Robyn L. Gobin (Assistant Professor, Kinesiology and Community Health)
- Shandra Summerville (Cultural and Linguistic Competence Coordinator, Champaign County Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Boards)
- Henry Radcliffe III (Digital Storyteller Producer)
- Tracy D. Dace (Founder & Chief Visionary Officer, DREAAM House)
We are Grateful to our Community and University Partners and Sponsors
ILLINOIS
IPRH | Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities
Sponsors

- Antoinette Burton, Ph.D.
- Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural Center
- City of Champaign
- DREAAM House
- OSF Heart of Mary Medical Center
- Parkland College
Sponsors

- UIUC College of Applied Health Sciences
- UIUC Department of African American Studies
- UIUC Department of Human Development and Family Studies
Sponsors

• UIUC Department of Kinesiology and Community Health
• UIUC Department of Psychology
• UIUC Department of Sociology
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• UIUC Department of Urban and Regional Planning
• UIUC School of Social Work
Overview

• Challenges and Promises of Land-Grant Institution
• Racial Trauma – Gun Violence
• DREaaM House
• C-HeARTS Framework
• Focus Group Themes
• Digital Stories
• Community Think Tank & Dialogue
• Community Meeting
1862 Morrill Act Land-Grant Mission

- Revolutionary - democratized public higher education
- Pathways for (mostly White) farmers and industrial workers to attend universities
- Take new knowledge and enhance how people work, live, learn and stay healthy.
- Passed into law during Civil War that, in large part, was to determine if African Americans would remain enslaved or become citizens of a more equal society.
1914 Smith-Lever Act and Cooperative Extension

George Washington Carver

Bridge: Jesup Wagon

Women, Men & Children

C-HeARTS

Voices of Community Healing

Citizen Scientists
Citizen Science

Tina Phillips and colleagues (2014) define citizen science as “the engagement of volunteers and scientists in collaborative research to generate new science-based knowledge.”

Darlene Cavalier (2016), co-editor of *The Rightful Place of Science: Citizen Science*, defines citizen science as “Members of the general public who are participating in scientific research not as guinea pigs or funders, but by conducting experiments, making observations, collecting data, and engaging their minds to tasks beyond the reach of today’s best computers...They believe that research and discovery should be accessible and useful” (p. vi)
Considerations

The Danger of a Single Story TED Talk – Chimamanda Adichie

Maya Angelou: Silent for 5 years
Barack Obama: Black Male, Obama

Are they strong or are they vulnerable?

Not: What’s wrong with them?
But: What happened to them?
Shots Fired: I AM A CHILD
Chicago

• Between 2008 – 2014, about half of all homicide victims in Chicago were under 18 years of age.

• During the weekend of August 3, 2018 in Chicago, 74 individuals, ranging from 11 to 62 years of age, were shot; 12 died, two of the murdered were 17 years of age.
Shots Fired: I AM A CHILD
Urbana-Champaign

Eight Cities in Downstate Illinois (last 3 years)

100 People killed from gunfire
500 wounded

Urbana-Champaign

June 2018 – 50 shootings
June 2017 – 35 shootings
CORE PROGRAM COMPONENTS

• STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math)
  • Provided after school five days per week during the school year

• Summer Jumpstart and Enrichment
  • Four-week program sessions to provide academic interventions, enrichment and social recreation

• Mentoring (Individual and Group-based)

• Sports (Flag Football, Soccer, Basketball, and Baseball)

• Family Engagement (parent education and empowerment, support groups, and social engagement)
C-HEARTS BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK
Figure 1. C-HeARTS Framework
Community Healing Components

Justice

Three Psychological Dimensions

Storytelling & Resistance
Justice

• A moral ideal
• A guiding principle
• Aim to increase optimal well-being within three spheres of life:
  – Personal
  – Interpersonal
  – Organizational
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Justice</th>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Interpersonal</th>
<th>Organizational</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase social bonding and commitment to each other</td>
<td>Build trust and resist interpersonal distrust</td>
<td>Develop new community narratives</td>
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<tr>
<td>More smiling and less crying</td>
<td>Resist negative cultural narratives from society; counter stereotypes</td>
<td>Have control over resources and are able to meet community needs</td>
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Storytelling and Resistance

Cultural Behaviors

Storytelling
- Rich oral tradition

Resistance
- Effective healing
- Defy systems of injustice
- Pursue acts of self-determination
Psychological Dimensions

Critical Consciousness
- Empower
- Organize
- Advocate

Collective Memory
- Trust
- Remember
- Decolonize

Connectedness
- Understand
- Validate
- Nurture
GUN VIOLENCE AND COMMUNITY HEALING

Focus Group Themes
Effect of Gun Violence on Community

Numbing
- "People feeling like the justice system doesn’t care."

Cycle of Violence
- "We’ve become numb; normalizing gun violence. It’s repetitive and numbing."
- "People losing the victim and the perpetrators. People growing up without parents."
- "It’s like you killed my cousin, I’m going to kill your cousin."

Community Stagnation
- "Maybe the community is not motivated. Go-to list for each event but it’s not working."
- "Now the community is experiencing over-policing – dampens creativity and imagination."
Meaning of Community Healing

A Village

“We got to come together. The high people in the community needs to come down off their pedestals.”

Lending Yourself

“People need freedom to get what they need without fear of ulterior motives.”

“Everyone should be a mentor.”

“How do we become part of the restoration? By lending our time, talent, and other things.”

Agency

“Needs conscious acknowledgement that you have a problem in order to heal.”

“Healing needs to be self-determination.”
Necessary Actions for Healing

Investment in Community
- “With community groups, we bring young people, but we need to have parental participation at the table.”
- “Education; integrating community with UIUC.”

Critical Action
- “Community has to take initiative; take control of community.”
- “Finding the need and addressing the need, not the things around the need.”
PRESENTATION OF DIGITAL STORIES
HENRY RADCLIFFE

Stephanie Tucker
Donald Stewart
Sidron Johnson
Tamika Davis
Sundiata Cha-Jua
VOICES OF COMMUNITY HEALING DIALOGUE

COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELLNESS FAIR
Community Think Tank & Dialogue

• What does the term “community healing” mean to you?

• What needs to happen for your community to heal?

• What does community healing look like?
What is community healing?

“Everyone coming together (churches, neighbors, community services and children).”

“Everyone understanding how others would be hurting and everyone seeking healing for all.”

“A place where we respect one another … without violence.”

“A place where I can feel myself.”

“Having a place for the youth to go.”

“It means coming together to bond in a safe space and heal community-wide trauma.”

“Community healing is a collective interest and pursuit toward health and wholeness.”

“Making the community better!” and “Coming together”

“Getting to know people you don’t usually associate with and Listening!”

“Hopeful and empower[ing]”

“Healing from crime and deaths. More love”
How can we practice community healing?

“Finding time to help and head the youth”.

“[By continuing to] dialogue among community, legislatures and academics”.

“Tell my truth!”

“[By] listen to needs and contribute according to my area of skills/work”.

“Create a safe space for youth programs promoting health, leadership and healing
Open hearts, Open minds”.

“Start a community garden”

“Listen. Drive. Therapeutic massage, somatic experiencing, handy man stuff”

“Embracing others. Remembering the village.”

“[By addressing the] generational gap. [We] need new ways to communicate how to become open with each other”

“It would be nice if we had community healing”

“Better leadership. More love. Understanding of each other.”

“Dialogue and hearing each other’s heart.”
Questions and Answers