

Integrating Resilience Building and Trauma Informed Approaches with Cultural Humility in Communities of Color to Address Climate Change.

Brenda Ingram, EdD, LCSW

Consultant & Trainer, Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care

Director of Clinical Services, Peace Over Violence

Learning Objectives

1. Recognize and analyze the intersectionality of trauma in communities of color.
2. Integrate the skill set of cultural humility into practice to build community resilience.
3. Describe strategies to implement in organizations and communities to reduce the impact of climatic adversity, e.g., leadership development
4. Develop an action plan that integrates resilience building and trauma informed approaches with cultural humility.

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Intersectionality

- A term coined by feminist civil rights activist and law professor Kimberle Crenshaw in 1989.
- Overlapping or *intersecting* social identities and related systems of oppression, domination, or discrimination.
 - Intersectionality is the idea that multiple identities intersect to create a whole that is different from the component identities.

Intersectionality

- Using an intersectional analysis framework can help to understand how systemic injustice and social inequity occur on a multidimensional basis.
- The multiple oppressions in a society, such as racism, sexism, ableism, ageism, classism, homophobia, etc. do not act independently of each other.
- Since laws and policies tend to be one-dimensional, or only address one marginalized identity at a time, the overlapping oppressions or intersections get ignored.

Climatic Adversity, Trauma and Communities of Color

- Climate change threatens human health and well-being from increased extreme weather events, wildfires, decreased air quality, threats to mental health, illnesses transmitted by food and water, and diseases spread by carriers such as mosquitoes and ticks.
- One major outcome of climatic adversity is overwhelming stress which can create traumatic responses in individuals, families and communities.

Climatic Adversity, Trauma and Communities of Color

- Besides the traumatic impact of climate change, such as extreme weather events, floods, droughts, hurricanes, tornados, etc. there are secondary impacts.
- The physical and psychological impacts of climate change are linked, communities with outdated infrastructure are often more vulnerable to the psychological impacts of climate change.

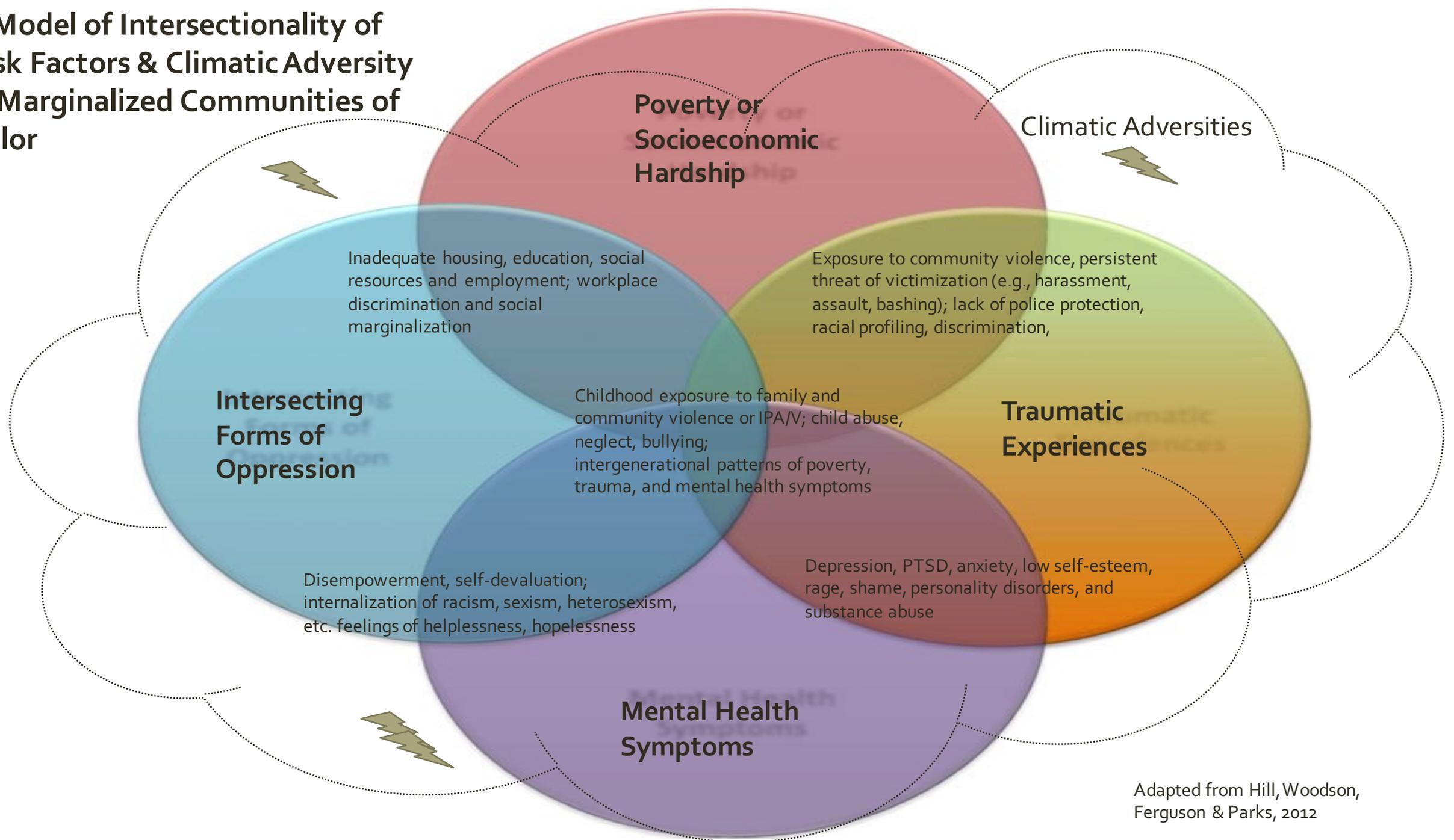
Climatic Adversity, Trauma and Communities of Color

- It is believed that due to intersectionality in communities of color, the impacts of climatic adversity will increase more traumatic responses which interfere with mental health and well-being and fuels more community disengagement.
- Lower levels of social cohesion and connectedness, greater social inequalities, lack of trust between community members and institutions, and other factors will increase vulnerabilities which can lead to traumatic responses.

Climatic Adversity, Trauma and Communities of Color

- In addition to physical vulnerabilities, communities are less resilient when they are weakened by social stressors.
- There are factors which are linked to elevated vulnerability to climate impacts.
- All of these factors leave individuals and communities with fewer physical and emotional resources to deal with climate change impacts.

A Model of Intersectionality of Risk Factors & Climatic Adversity in Marginalized Communities of Color



Adapted from Hill, Woodson, Ferguson & Parks, 2012

Trauma- Informed Care

- A transformative response to this accumulation of traumatic events lies in the integration of trauma informed care, cultural humility, resilience building, intersectional analysis, and leadership development.
- The guiding principles of trauma-informed care are:
 - Connect – Focus on Relationships
 - Protect – Promote Safety and Trustworthiness
 - Respect – Engage in Choice and Collaboration
 - Redirect (Teach and Reinforce) – Encourage Skill-Building and Competence (Hummer, V., Crosland, K., Dollard, N., 2009)
 - Understand-- The neurobiology of trauma

Trauma- Informed Care

- Trauma Informed Care says “Do no harm”, in other words don’t re-traumatize and do what is necessary to protect people from further traumatic experiences.
- That is not always easy to do if you are not aware of the ways that intersectionality works to render you blind to its existence.
- Certain communities have inherent privileges that work to reduce traumatic impacts while other communities have more vulnerabilities that increases traumatic impacts

Understanding Culture's Impacts

- **What was the last species on earth to recognize the existence of water?**
- In the United States, cultural diversity has primarily been associated with race and ethnicity, but diversity is taking on a broader meaning to include the sociocultural experiences of people of different genders, social classes, religious and spiritual beliefs, sexual orientations, ages, and physical and mental abilities.
- Culture impacts how people exhibit symptoms of distress , the use of coping mechanisms, social supports, and willingness to seek care.

Understanding Culture's Impacts

- Cultural and social factors, such as poverty, racism, and other forms of discrimination, may impact mental well-being.
- Help-seeking behaviors and types of support services utilized vary by culture, and cultural minorities are underserved in the current social services system.
- Cultural factors also impact social service providers. These factors contribute to how service recipients are treated. In addition to the culture of service recipients, overall service delivery is impacted by the culture of both providers and organizations.

Cultural Humility

- When working with communities of color, or other marginalized communities that tend to have more vulnerabilities and less privileges, it can be a challenge to engage them in the change process.
- Cultural humility is the process of developing competence in working with communities of color. It includes a set of skills:
 - Ongoing self reflection, humility
 - Working to end power imbalances
 - Working to change structural inequalities and increase social justice

Cultural Humility

- Ongoing self reflection and learning
- The first step in the process of becoming culturally competent is self awareness.
 - On a sheet of paper list 5 cultural groups that you belong to and something about that group makes you proud and something that makes you sad about that group.
 - Take 5 mins.
 - We will share in small groups for 10 mins.

Bias and Discrimination

Bias is an inclination to present or hold a partial perspective at the expense of (possibly equally valid) alternatives. Anything biased generally is one-sided, and therefore lacks a neutral point of view. Bias can come in many forms. Stereotypes represent a form of bias.

- Explicit vs Implicit Bias

Discrimination is the act of using biases to govern behavior; the prejudicial treatment of an individual based on their membership - or perceived membership - in a certain group or category.

It involves the actual behaviors towards groups such as excluding or restricting members of one group from opportunities that are available to another group.

Cultural Humility

- A framework for moving us toward equity.
- It is a philosophy that addresses the role of **power and privilege** in a system, as well as the imbalanced power of voice and power to make decisions (i.e., the power **over** and the power **to**).
- Addressing power imbalances:
 - Community members are the “experts” on their lived experiences
 - Creating time and space for sharing personal stories, worldviews, approaches to trust building, team building, and community dynamics
 - Authentic communication without defensiveness, nonjudgmental, seeking to learn and understand vs. pushing an agenda, not a discussion or debate
 - Shared-decision making, ability to change/flexibility

Cultural Humility

- Organizational accountability
- How do we engage our institutions in self-reflection and hold them accountable to change any systemic oppressions through policy analysis and advocacy?
- It is not enough for the individual practitioner to be self-aware and correct individual power imbalances
- The practitioner has to advocate for equity and social justice at institutional and societal levels
- Build relationships with individuals and organizations that advocate for the betterment and social justice.

Using the Intersectionality Paradigm

- Due to the multiple risk factors of intersectionality, one way to reduce vulnerability to climatic adversity is to increase protective factors.
- These protective factors would include adequate access to socioeconomic supports (e.g., employment and education), social justice and community resources, mental health services, as well as personal empowerment.

Using the Intersectionality Paradigm

- Acknowledging social inequities and injustices.
- Addressing intersectionality by eliminating structural oppressions, e.g., policies, practices, laws, etc.
- Increasing access to resources, e.g., infrastructure, mental health services, employment, healthcare, education, etc.
- Working to empower community residents
- Teaching about the trauma of intersectionality and trauma responses.
 - Teaching about trauma at the individual and community levels.
 - Teaching skills that help with physiological reactions of trauma

Resilient Communities

- Resilience is the capacity to bounce back.
- For a community to be resilient, its members must put into practice early and effective actions, so that they can respond to adversity in a healthy manner.
- If residents, agencies, and organizations take meaningful and intentional actions before an event, they can help the community reestablish stability after the event.

Adversarial or Post Traumatic Growth in Communities of Color

- The theme of “strength from adversity” is a central concept in resilience, yet the empirical evidence remains mixed.
 - Self-perception versus actual positive behavioral change
 - It is unclear to what extent a person’s subjective feelings of growth are linked to positive behavioral changes.
 - Self-perception of growth is linked to higher well-being and when connected to behavioral change even greater benefit occurs.
 - In other words, taking action matters in building resilience and reducing the impact of trauma

Building Resilience in Communities of Color

- Strengthening resilience in a community is vital to survival from climatic threats that impact mental health and well-being
- The more protective factors in a community the better the resilience of that community
- Individual and community indicators (protective factors) of well-being that support resilience (Full-Frame Initiative, 2013)
 - Access to relevant resources
 - Mastery
 - Safety
 - Social connections
 - Stability
- Assess the community's protective factors
 - How would you enhance the protective factors?

Building Resilience Through Leadership Development

“Leaders are not successful in spite of their setbacks; they are successful because of them.”

- Resilient Leaders:
 - “Being present” to confront adversity and accept reality
 - High level of self-awareness and empathy
 - Take courageous action, not controlled by fears
 - Openness and ability to listen
 - Honesty and integrity
- Engaging Youth and Young Adults to become leaders

A Servant Leadership Model to Build Resilience

- Servant leadership shares foundations with what has been practiced in communities of color:
 - The value of community consensus, ethics, and empowerment of followers for betterment.
 - Putting group interests ahead of individual interests
 - Emphasize relationship building
 - Shared sense of collectivism (Hao, 2016)

A Community Action Plan for Leadership Development

- Organize a diverse group of community members (15-20 persons) who are interested in the well-being of their community, e.g., youth, seniors, women, men, workers, etc.
- Train individuals to become advocates on building community resilience by teaching leadership skills, climate change, public speaking, intersectionality, trauma and trauma informed care, resilience, self-care, conducting community research and analysis, etc. (40 hours)

A Community Action Plan for Leadership Development

- The advocates engage in dialogue about concerns and design a way to survey the community about their greatest needs and the barriers to well-being for their community.
 - Community agencies provide technical support.
- Once that needs assessment is done, the advocates devise a strategy to implement change or address these needs, e.g., policies, practices, etc.
- Implement the decided action plan and strategies to maintain enforcement
- Evaluate the outcomes as determined by the advocates

Community Leaders

The expansion of leadership:
Empowering community
members to participate in
decision-making and problem-
solving.

Community Action Plan

- How do you begin?
- Take about 10 minutes to discuss at your table or with your neighbor how you might start the process of building resilience in your community?
- What resources would you need?
- What partnerships would you want to develop? What stakeholders would you include?

Contact Information

- Brenda Ingram, EdD, LCSW
 - Consultant and Trainer
 - Brenda.ingram4@Verizon.net
 - Director of Clinical Services,
 - Peace Over Violence
 - www.peaceoverviolence.org
 - Brenda@peaceoverviolence.org