START THE WORK:
Addressing the Trauma African American Students Experience in California’s Public Schools

• Mechale Murphy, Principal
• ELK GROVE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Establishing Common Language

Racial trauma or race-based traumatic stress, is the cumulative effects of racism on an individual's mental and physical health. It has been linked to feelings of anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideations, as well as other physical health issues.

Transgenerational Trauma is trauma that is transferred from the first generation of trauma survivors to the second and further generations of offspring of the survivors.

IMAGE CREDIT: https://cbiworld.org/conferences/
Establishing Common Language

• Epigenetics
  • Study of heritable changes in gene expression
  • Do not involve changes to the underlying DNA sequence — a change in phenotype without a change in genotype — which in turn affects how cells read the genes.
  • Epigenetic change is a regular and natural occurrence

IMAGE CREDITS:
https://learn.genetics.utah.edu/content/epigenetics/inheritance/images/DirectExposure.jpg; data:image/jpeg;base64,/
African American Girls Are Six Times More Likely Than White Girls to Get Suspended

Rates of out-of-school suspension by race and gender for the 2011-2012 school year

The Data and the Impact

High School School Suspension Rates by Race

- Black: 44.9%
- Latino: 22.2%
- American Indian: 15.5%
- White: 13.1%
- Asian American: 4.4%

Image Credit: https://sites.google.com/site/marisacraighedur6324/edur-6324-projects/data-inquiry
Disproportionality in Special Education

MYTH: All minorities are overrepresented in special education.
FACT: Compared to white students, black and American Indian students are overrepresented, Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander students are underrepresented.

MYTH: A large percentage of black and American Indian students are in special education.
FACT: Overall rates are slightly higher. White=12.1%; American Indian=13.1%; Black=14.2%.

MYTH: Hispanic students are overrepresented.
FACT: Hispanic students are slightly underrepresented.
The Data and the Impact

IMAGE CREDIT: https://sites.google.com/site/marisacraigedu6324/edur-6324-projects/data-inquiry
SCHOOL IS AND ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCE FOR MANY AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN

http://sonomacounty.ca.gov/CAO/Public-Reports/Legislative-Program/Adverse-Childhood-Experiences/
THE CHALLENGES

THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY
• Community resistance toward addressing mental health care
• The stigma
• Community lacks education about mental health care (make it a subject areas)

CALIFORNIA PUBLIC EDUCATION
• Failure to ban oppressive school practices in California Education Codes
• Lack of professional learning for teachers and administrators on implicit bias and the impact on decision making
• Apathy---not enough people of color in education
SOLUTIONS
SOLUTIONS TARGETING PUBLIC EDUCATION

• Including course requirement for California teaching candidates in mental healthcare and the implicit bias that “recycles” oppressive practices
• Professional learning hours required for renewal of your teaching credential specifically on mental healthcare and transgenerational trauma
• Site leaders trained in the California Education Codes for discipline—California has no requirements for assessing the knowledge of school leaders prior to putting them in charge of students
• State policy that is practice requiring public education to have mental healthcare therapists that serve students and families----services that are not hampered by bureaucracy
• Principals who are vigilant about who is on that campus and what occurs on campuses----principals as student advocates!
“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It’s not.”

Dr. Seuss, The Lorax
ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What do I need to learn about from this presentation? Where do I need to build my professional knowledge?

Who are colleagues who will join me in the work?

In my current capacity, what can I do to advocate for increase mental health support for African American students and their families?