



# Culturally Relevant Frameworks For Black Student Wellbeing

OFFICE OF GENERAL EDUCATION

BLACK HISTORY MONTH WEBINAR SERIES

FEBRUARY 19, 2024

# Upcoming Webinars



2/29- Beyond Diversity Philosophy: An Introduction

Join one, some, or come to all!

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Celebrating Black history means learning Black history!

# Grounding

- This research is based solely on Black people, their histories, and their experiences.
- Please take note of “what-about” statements and questions for your own edification, but do not enter them into conversation.
- The term Black is purposefully and intentionally used.
- This entire presentation will center Black people.

# Notes on the State of Virginia

“They seem to require less sleep. A black after hard labour through the day, will be induced by the slightest amusements to sit up till **midnight**, or later, though knowing he must be out with the first dawn of the morning. They are at least as brave, and more adventuresome. But this may perhaps proceed from a **want of fore-thought, which prevents their seeing a danger till it be present**. When present, they do not go through it with more coolness or steadiness than the whites. **They are more ardent after their female**: but love seems with them to be more an eager desire, than a tender delicate mixture of sentiment and sensation. **Their griefs are transient.**”

-Thomas Jefferson

# Origins of the War on Drugs

“ The Nixon campaign in 1968, and the Nixon White House after that, had two enemies: the antiwar left and Black people. You understand what I’m saying? We knew we couldn’t make it illegal to be either against the war or Black... But by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and Blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities... We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know that we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did.”

- John Ehrlichman, Chief Domestic Advisor to Richard Nixon



How might the  
Jeffersonian perspective  
show up in the 21<sup>st</sup>  
Century?

Pathology of  
Blackness

The Myth of  
Black Intellectual  
Inferiority

# Jefferson in the 21st Century

Black Intellectual Inferiority Myth (Perry, 2003)

Achievement Gap Typologies (Love, 2004)

“Fix the [Black] student” Ethos

Suspicion of competency (Cromartie & Hinnanti-Crawford, 2021)

Unreasonable service expectations (Hills, 2019;  
Ladson-Billings, 2008; Wilson, 2012)





# Student Encounter



# Black Student Mental Health By The Numbers

20% more likely to suffer from a mental health condition

34% reported feeling so depressed it was difficult to function

40% experience mental health issues

50% report no mental health education before coming to college

75% reported not sharing feelings of the difficulties during their first year in college



# Black Mental Health Considerations

These numbers (experiences) increase in Black students in STEM.

These numbers (experiences) are equivalent to those of Black staff and faculty in higher education.

If intergenerational transmission of culture can occur, intergenerational transmission of trauma can also occur.

Intergenerational trauma take many shapes and forms and the impacts can be very similar between generations.

Black Mental Well-being has never been the focus of social systems.

# Causes of Mental Health Issues

- Money/ Finance
- Social pressure to achieve
- Systemic Racism
  - Historical and **Intergenerational Trauma** (Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 1980)
  - **Weathering** (Geronimous, 1992)
  - **Racial Battle Fatigue** (Smith, 2004)
- Mental Health Seeking Behaviors
- Environmental Factors (Black/Af. American students at PWIs)

# Starting Places And Approaches

One size fits all approach- Westernized perspectives

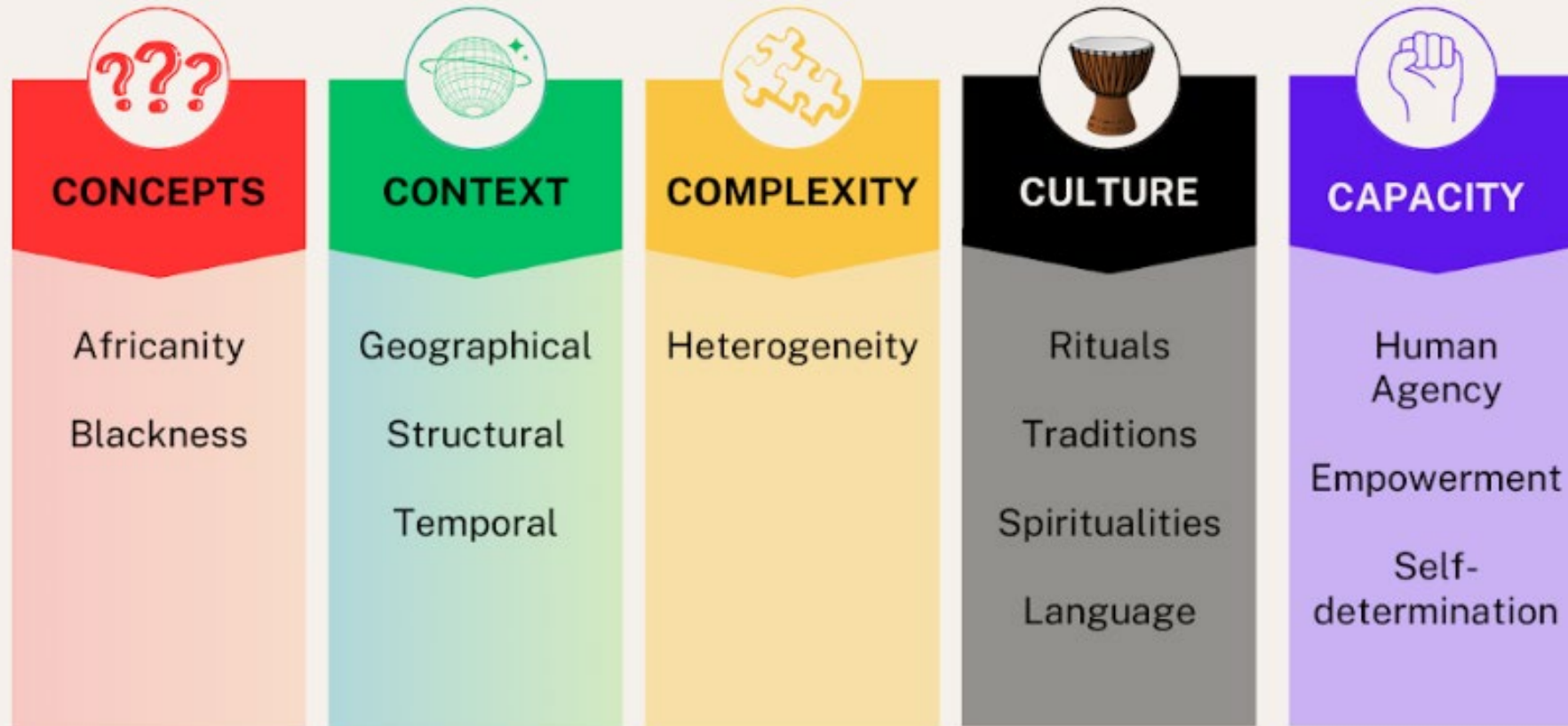
Conceptualizations of Mental Health is not expansive or inclusive of Black communities

Representational diversity does not make relevant services and support

Mental health issues ensconced within stereotypes and tropes

The need for Culturally Specific and Centered Approaches (Afrocentric Epistemologies)

# UNDERSTANDING “THE BLACK EXPERIENCE”



Nadine V. Wedderburn, Ph.D.

Wedderburn, N. V., (2023). Understanding the black experience. Washington, D.C.: HHMI. (Under contract)

# Afrocentricity and Afrocentric Epistemologies

“The mode of thought and action in which the centrality of African interests, values, and perspectives predominate. It is the placing of African people in the center of any analysis of African phenomena... (Asante, 2003).”

Academic and social approach to scholarship and social phenomena that seeks to understand the experiences of people of Africa and the African Diaspora by centering African/African Diaspora people, culture, and ideas as the authority (Pellerin, 2012).

Asante, M. K. (2003). *Afrocentricity: The theory of social change*. Chicago, IL: African American images.

Pellerin, M., (2012). Benefits of afrocentricity in exploring social phenomena: Understanding afrocentricity as a social science method. *The Journal of Pan African Studies*,v5(4) pp. 149-160.



# Ubuntu

Interconnectedness

Interdependence

Community

Humanity

Nguni Bantu: I am because we are



“**Community** is the spirit, the guiding light of the tribe, whereby people come together in order to fulfill a specific purpose, to help others fulfill their purposes, and to take care of one another. The goal of the community is to make sure that each member of the community is heard and is properly giving the gifts they have brought to this world.

***Without this gift, the community dies. And without the community, the individual is left without a place where they can contribute. The community is that grounding place where people come and share their gifts and receive from others.”***

# THE SPIRIT OF INTIMACY



ANCIENT AFRICAN  
TEACHINGS IN  
THE WAYS OF  
RELATIONSHIPS

S O B O N F U S O M É

“This is a teacher who can help us put together so many things that our modern Western world has broken.”

**ALICE WALKER**, author of *The Color Purple*

# Revisiting Our Student Encounter



tonyamichelle 1d

Stay the course young lady! Most colleges have free tutoring and I decommend talking to your professors about your grades and seeing if there is anything you can do to lift your grade in those classes. You'll need to earn at least a 3.2 to qualify for most internships and other dope programs on campus. I'm praying for you! I loved my HBCU. Howard was the best thing that ever happened to me! ❤️



2 likes Reply



pixs2\_gales01 2w

Lord lay your hands on this young lady as she walks in Your light to reach her goal of becoming an HBCU graduate. In your name we pray. Amen



2,892 likes Reply

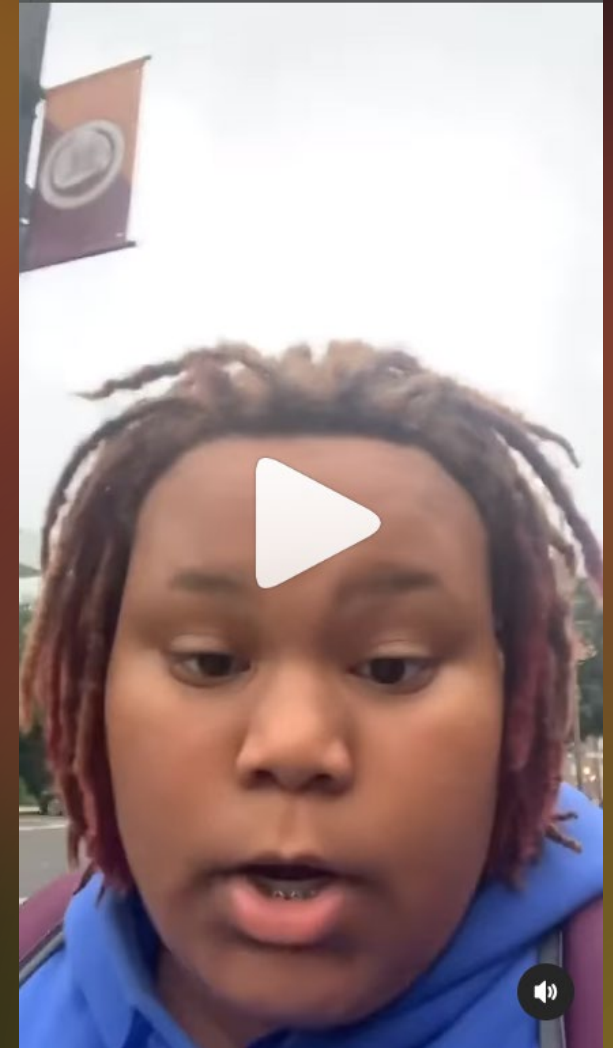


kingphoenikks 3d

She aint lie 😂😂😂 but I know she can handle it just by the way shes talking and able to laugh about it. Shes still going to class and she understands that you HAVE to go to class. She's not satisfied with low grade's so she'll keep pushing for her 100. I think shes gonna be just fine ❤️❤️❤️



1 like Reply



# BHM Challenge

Move from independence/ individualism to a community mindset.

- Understand the climate that you work in (classroom, office, department, etc.)
- What is the regional, institutional, departmental history as it relates to Black communities?
- Do you your own work, attend aggressively to your own mental wellbeing
- Is it imposter syndrome or a typical reaction to race-related stress? Institutional structures?
- How might your own biases prevent us from seeing the need/lack of mental wellbeing systems in our spaces?

As you make connections, evaluate and share your progress within community. Put it into action!

*If you want to go fast, go alone...*

*If you want to go far, go together...*

African Proverb



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