

# SOUL SPACE NEWS

African American Technical Assistance Project

Soul Space supports the use of evidence based approaches, yet embraces and preserves the culturally inclusive approach of storytelling to give a voice to where we've been and inspires us to future community defined innovations

## Welcome to our Inaugural Issue of Soul Space

**ONTRACK PROGRAM RESOURCES** is pleased to present the first quarterly newsletter of the African American Technical Assistance Provider for the **CALIFORNIA REDUCING DISPARITIES PROJECT** (CRDP). Soul Space is specifically designed to share relevant research and resources, make meaningful connections, address obstacles, share opportunities and deepen relationships that lead to action, solutions, justice and healing for African American communities, service providers and public agencies. The goal of the knowledge management approach is to support efforts to reduce mental health disparities.

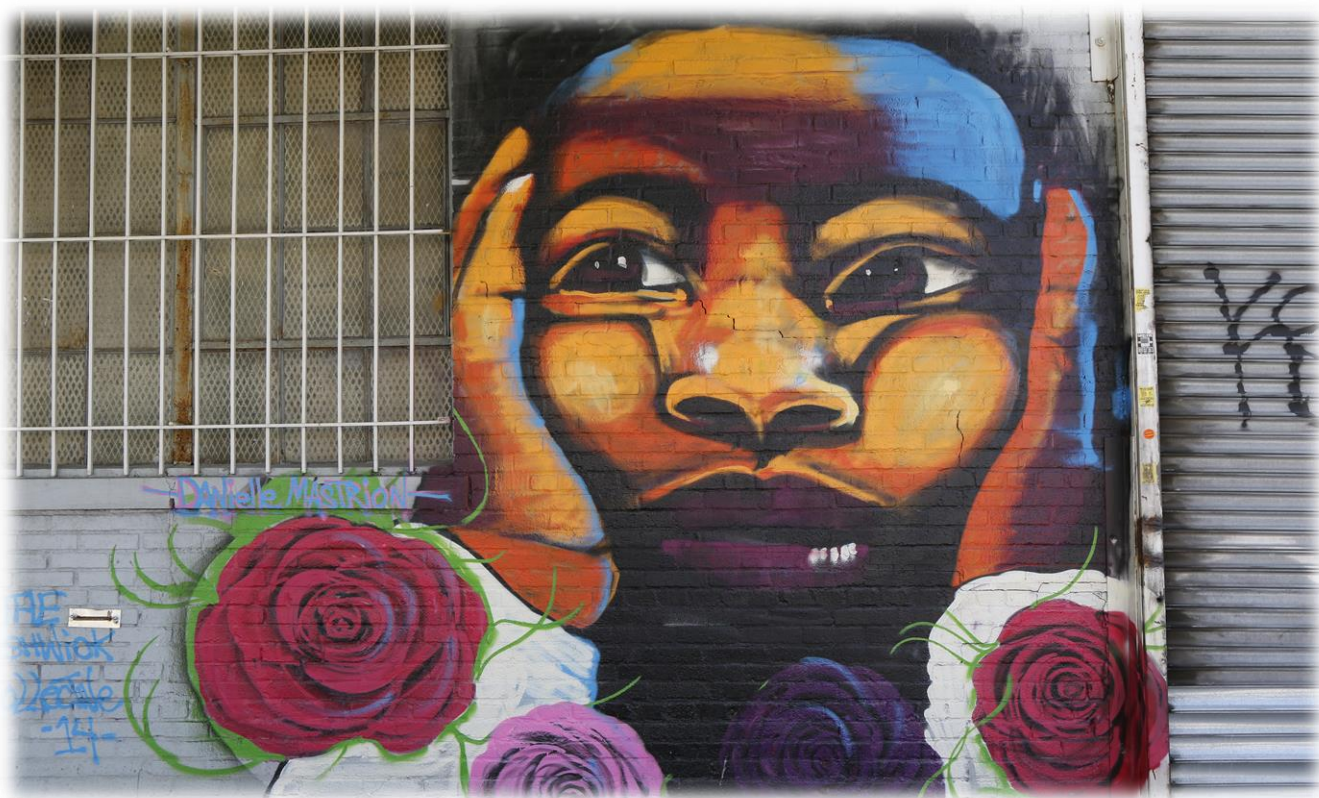
In this first Issue of Soul Space, we address the recent emergence of *trauma informed care* as a focus of mental health policy and practice and its connection to the mental health of African Americans.



***“You cannot heal what you conceal.”***  
*African Proverb*

*Here we wed science with the heart to create truth, feed the spirit and light the way to move forward. Soul Space provides a supportive resource and receptacle for culturally significant story telling, leadership support, and inspiration to continue the work in a healthy and inclusive environment.*

*Storytelling remains the optimum carrier of cultural information, in a way that research and evaluation alone do not do.*



## Prisoners of the Past

### *Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)*

Though based on the **1998 ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES STUDY** from the Centers of Disease Control and Kaiser Permanente, *trauma informed care* has only recently gained a wide-spread acceptance as a significant approach to understanding the mental health concerns of individuals. The original study asked more than 17,000 adults to complete a survey, which inquired into their early adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and current physical and mental health status. The study concluded that ACEs not only contribute to negative physical and mental health outcomes among adults, but are a very strong predictor of such challenges to occur later in life.

The researchers concluded that more than 60% of Americans had at least one adverse

experience; 12% had four or more ACEs. The more adverse experiences adults experienced as children, the more their physical and mental well-being is negatively impacted, affecting adult chronic disease, mental illness, and experiences with violence over a lifetime. These conclusions, however, were drawn from a sample that included 75% of respondents who were White, while a mere 4% were African American.

Since 1998, a broader understanding of what constitutes ACEs and what contributes to mental health have been acknowledged. But, more research is needed regarding ACEs amongst African Americans. But, we are pleased to be able to share some culturally relevant trauma informed resources in this newsletter.

# Resources Related to the Expansion of the ACE Framework to Reflect Experiences of African Americans

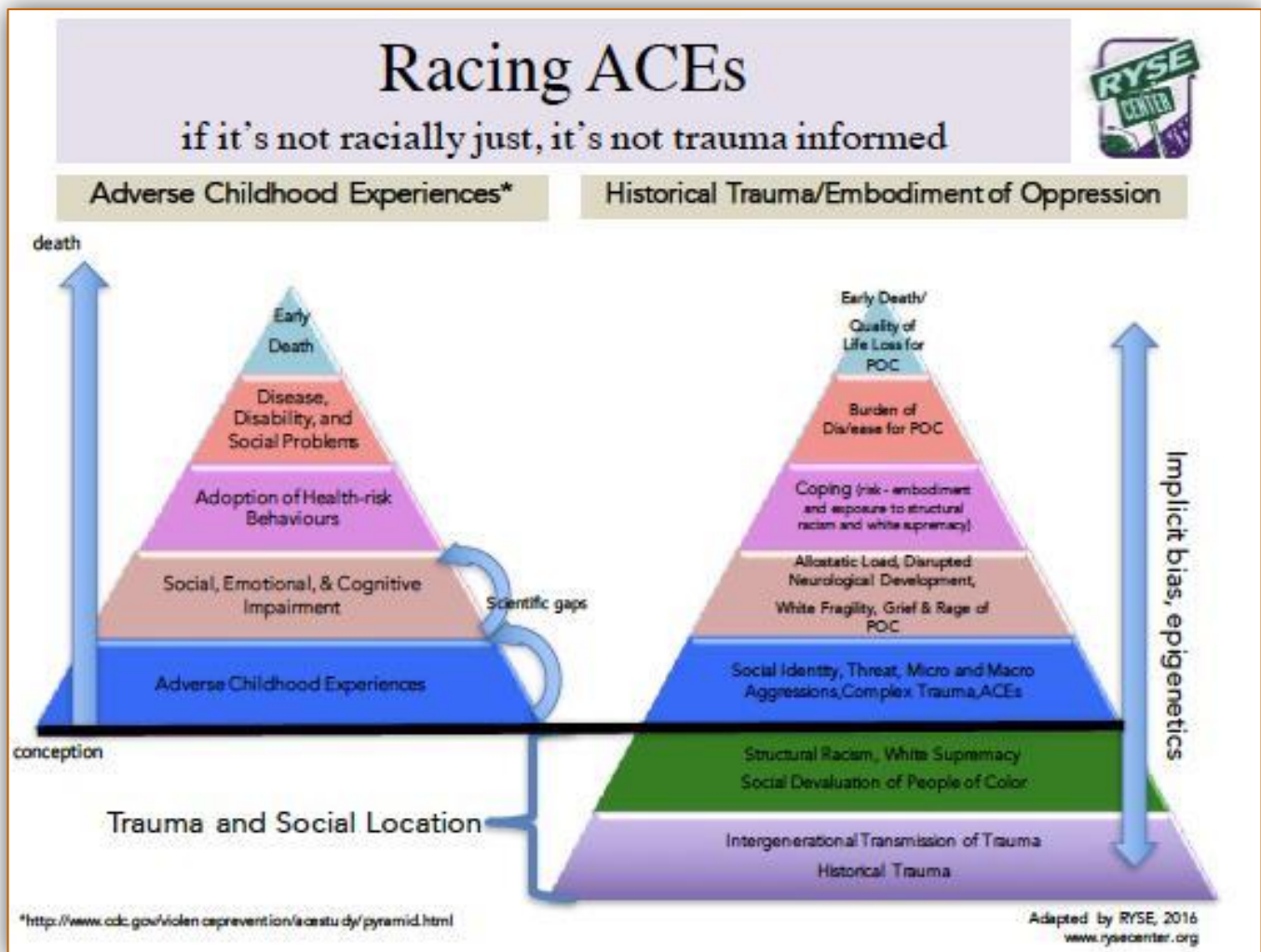
Driven largely by state-level resolutions and statutes across the country, including California's ACR no. 155, on February 26, 2018, the United States House of Representatives agreed to **H. RES. 433, RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF TRAUMA INFORMED CARE:**

[www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-resolution/443/text](http://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-resolution/443/text)

Significantly, the resolution broadens the scope the original ACEs study in noting specific communities addressing the impact of historical trauma and community violence.

Additionally, in a recent position paper, **"RACIAL INJUSTICE AND TRAUMA: AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE U.S.,"** the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN), an organization created by Congress to combat the impact of ACEs in the U.S., recently issued a position statement that recognizes the "unresolved historical trauma of slavery," and how "racism and oppression are embedded in American Society":

[www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdf/s/racialinjusticeandtrauma\\_101816\\_final.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdf/s/racialinjusticeandtrauma_101816_final.pdf)

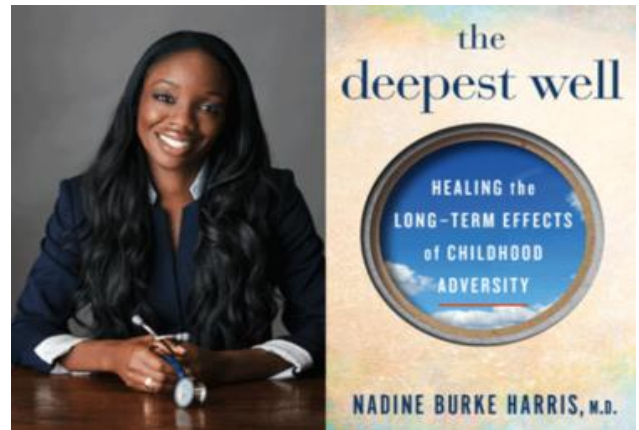


## Resource Related to the ACE Study & African Americans

**NEW:** Nadine Burke Harris, *The Deepest Well: Healing the Long-Term Effects of Childhood Adversity* (2018)

In this recently published book, **NADINE BURKE HARRIS, M.D.** recounts the powerfully told story of how she came to believe that ACEs are the source of the many health and behavioral challenges among the youth she serves in her San Francisco-based Center for Youth Wellness. In discussing her discovery of the ACEs study and how it was the missing element in her work with children in the low-income Hunters Point neighborhood of San Francisco, she also spends much of the book showing that ACE's is a universal experience that affects everyone.

For a quick overview of Dr. Burke Harris' discussion of why ACES should be a concern of all people, not just low-income people of color, view her Ted Talk, "**HOW CHILDHOOD TRAUMA EFFECTS HEALTH ACROSS A LIFETIME.**"



[www.ted.com/talks/nadine\\_burke\\_harris\\_how\\_childhood\\_trauma\\_affects\\_health\\_across\\_a\\_lifetime](http://www.ted.com/talks/nadine_burke_harris_how_childhood_trauma_affects_health_across_a_lifetime)

And, you can listen to a NPR review of her book:

[www.npr.org/books/titles/578679908/the-deepest-well-healing-the-long-term-effects-of-childhood-adversity](http://www.npr.org/books/titles/578679908/the-deepest-well-healing-the-long-term-effects-of-childhood-adversity)

## Resources Related to Healing ACEs and Trauma Affecting African American People and Communities



**DR. HOWARD PENDERHUGHES** is a Professor of Social Sciences in the University of California, San Francisco School of Nursing. He is the author of *RACE IN THE HOOD: CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE AMONG URBAN YOUTH*, and multiple essays exploring the connection between community violence and individual behaviors.

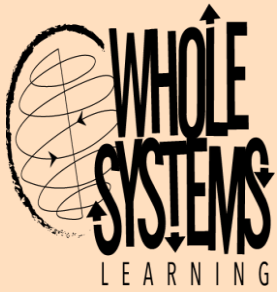
In this presentation, Dr. Penderhughes develops a framework for understanding the relationship between ACEs violence and symptoms of community trauma in which many African American people find themselves. Finally, he outlines a framework for individual and community healing, and provides examples of effective culture-based programs for healing trauma. The presentation was given at the annual *Echo Parenting* Social and Historical Trauma conference in March, 2017.

*Conference Presentation: IT'S LIKE A JUNGLE, SOMETIMES IT MAKES ME WONDER: HEALING COMMUNITIES & RESTORING COMMUNITY RESILIENCY:*

[www.echoparenting.org/dev/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Pinderhughes.pdf](http://www.echoparenting.org/dev/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Pinderhughes.pdf)

# CRDP African American IPP Spotlight

## Whole Systems Learning: Turning Resilience Into Brilliance for Eternity (TRIBE)



*In California Reducing Disparities Project (CRDP) Phase 2, the 35 grantees who are receiving funding to conduct demonstration projects under intensive evaluation are called **Implementation Pilot Projects (IPPs)**. In each of our newsletters, we will include a spotlight on one of the seven IPPs that focus on serving African Americans.*

**WHOLE SYSTEMS LEARNING (WSL)** is a strength-based youth program that has served foster and adjudicate youth in Watts, Compton, and Inglewood, since 2010. The mission of the program is to prevent homelessness for foster and adjudicated youth through college preparation and matriculation.

According to EBA LAYE, Founder and Executive Director of WSL, “unresolved and unaddressed trauma lies at the heart of poor outcomes for foster, adjudicated, and academically failing Black youth.” The approach of WSL’s CRDP Phase 2 funded program, **TURNING RESILIENCE INTO BRILLIANCE FOR ETERNITY (TRIBE)**, is to prevent or intervene in the early onset of effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and complex post-traumatic stress disorder (C-PTSD) for foster and adjudicated African American male youth. Additionally, the program seeks to reduce risks for skid row and homelessness, prison, drug addiction, and educational failure, which it views as the results of ACES, and historical and community-related trauma, such as generational poverty.

The TRIBE program accomplishes these goals by providing services that are culturally congruent with African and African American cultural practices, increasing the resiliency of youth through skill-building, identity-development, peer-support and mentoring.

There are four integrated building blocks of the program: 1) college preparation; 2) brain-based resiliency re-modeling through African-based self-knowledge, story-telling, and rites of passage; 3) life skills workshops; and 4) somatic therapy and rites of passage.



[www.WholeSystemsLearning.org](http://www.WholeSystemsLearning.org)

**1) COLLEGE PREPARATION:** The explicit commitment to college preparation is the first phase of the program. In contrast to gang culture in which youth are “jumped in,” it is in this initial phase of the program that youth are given the opportunity to “jump in” and build community with other youth and develop the communal norms of the TRIBE. In a partnership with Mt. San Antonio Community College and Cal State Dominguez Hills, youth take tours of the campuses and attend classes. Additionally, the Male Success Network at Dominguez Hills provides student mentors who serve as role models for the students and provides them with academic support.

**2) RESILIENCY AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE:** This component of the program introduces youth to the Ancient Egyptian Commandment to “Know Thyself,” which serves as the basis of all learning. Through brain-based techniques of mindfulness, individual counseling, and communal circles, youth are introduced to the tools of self-worth and value that reframe their self-perception and protect against the challenges of racism, trauma, and prevention of opportunity resulting from institutional bias.

**3) LIFE SKILLS:** This aspect of the program expands on the identification of gifts and talents in Resiliency and Self Knowledge and reframes masculinity from the hyper-masculinity of street culture to embody self-sufficiency and financial independence. Students obtain employment, develop entrepreneurial projects, and obtain internships. Financial Aid, including scholarships and grants, are explored as a means of financing college attendance.

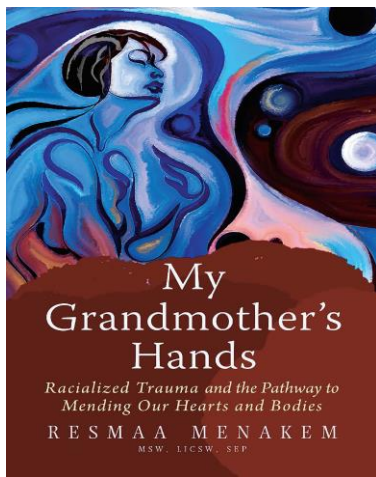
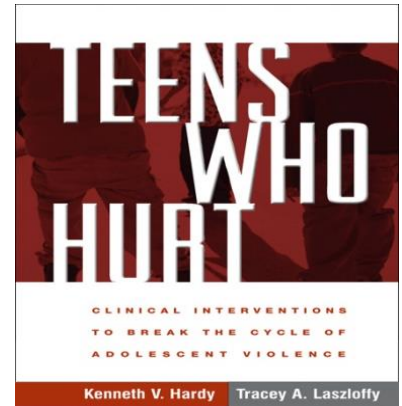
**4) SOMATIC THERAPY & RITES OF PASSAGE:** These elements recognize how trauma is inscribed in the body, while acknowledging the passionate physicality of African and African American culture. These components are woven through the other components of the program to develop a coherent narrative for each young person through which he can reimagine his life as a journey with clear markers on the passage from childhood to manhood. Video, music, and poetry production are used to allow youth through to tell their stories in culturally meaningful ways.

## RESOURCES RELATED TO HEALING ACES & TRAUMA AFRICAN AMERICANS, *continued from page 4*

**KENNETH HARDY** is a Professor of Counseling and Family Therapy at Drexel University College of Nursing and Health Professions. His work focuses on overcoming internalized inferiority and trauma through bonds of family and community. He is the author of *TEENS WHO HURT: CLINICAL INTERVENTIONS TO BREAK THE CYCLE OF ADOLESCENT VIOLENCE*.

In his article, *“HEALING THE HIDDEN WOUNDS OF RACIAL TRAUMA,”* he explores racial wounds among youth, how it manifests, and how it can be healed:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/545cdfcce4b0a64725b9f65a/t/54da3451e4b0ac9bd1d1cd30/1423586385564/Healing.pdf>



*MY GRANDMOTHER'S HANDS: RACIALIZED TRAUMA AND THE PATHWAY TO MENDING OUR HEARTS AND BODIES* explores how trauma is inscribed in Black and White bodies, passed on generationally, and how trauma and resilience interact. The book details specifically how racialized bodies experience and processes trauma. Most importantly, the author offers a step-by-step solution to protecting and healing our own bodies, while harmonizing with others. **RESMAA MENAKEM, MSW, LICSW**, is a therapist with decades of experience currently in private practice in Minneapolis, MN, specializing in trauma, body-centered psychotherapy, and violence prevention. Here is an interview with Menakem, about the book:

[www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-author-speaks/201709/my-grandmother-s-hands](http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-author-speaks/201709/my-grandmother-s-hands)

**OPRAH WINFREY** hosted a segment, *TREATING CHILDHOOD TRAUMA*, on CBS's 60 Minutes on March 11, 2018, in which she addresses ACEs and trauma informed care.

[www.cbsnews.com/news/oprah-winfrey-treating-childhood-trauma/](http://www.cbsnews.com/news/oprah-winfrey-treating-childhood-trauma/)

Be sure to watch the “Overtime” clip in which Oprah discusses her own experience with ACEs. She states that she feels this broadcast is the most important story she has ever reported and intends for it to be “revolutionary.”

Also, the **PREVENTION INSTITUTE** created a resource page to tie in with the broadcast that features their many publications that address *ADVERSE COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES AND RESILIENCE*.

<https://tinyurl.com/PreventionInstitute-ACEs>



ONTRACK Program Resources ([www.getontrack.org](http://www.getontrack.org)) is the African American Technical Assistance Provider to the CA Reducing Disparities Project, through the Office of Health Equity, CA Dept. of Public Health, with funding from the CA Mental Health Services Act, Prop. 63.

The information presented in this newsletter is not meant to diagnose or treat. It does not take the place of medical advice. It is for informational purposes only.