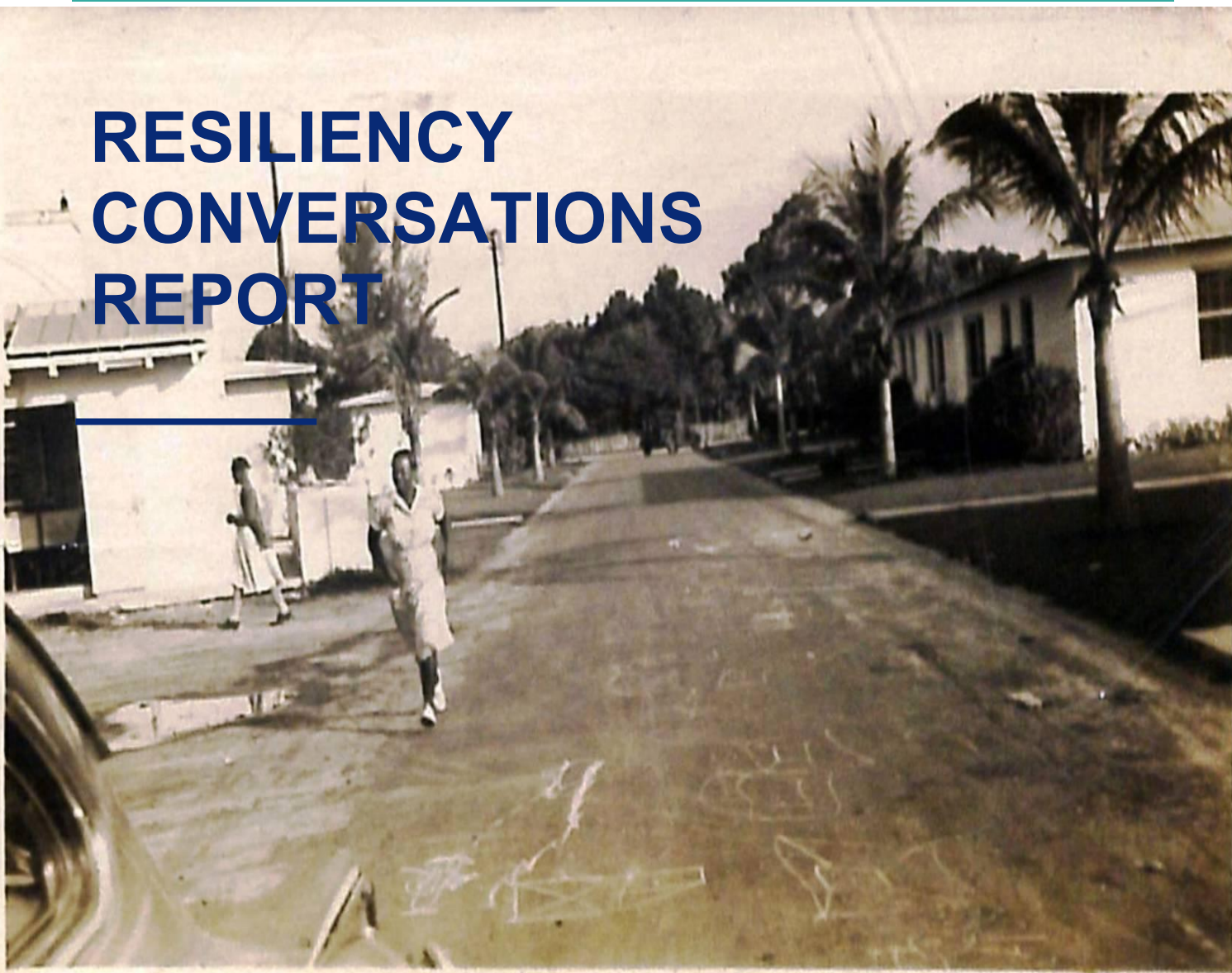


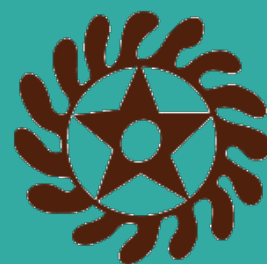
RESILIENCY CONVERSATIONS REPORT



“The streets are talking”

MARCH 2020

XULA Center for Traumatic Stress Research
Authored by: Cirecie A. West-Olatunji, Ph. D.



Resiliency Conversations Report

Executive Summary

In response to the Marjory Stoneman Douglas tragedy on 2/14/2018, the CSC has been working in the community to “connect the dots” – bringing disparate groups together. In conjunction with the trauma identification and amelioration services that CSC had already begun, this work needed to be replicated in other parts of Broward County, particularly those communities that are underserved. Prior to soliciting an outside consultant, the CSC staff convened community conversations with leaders in Pompano, West Park and Central Broward. The Children’s Services Council contracted Dr. Cirecie A. West-Olatunji, director of the XULA Center for Traumatic Stress Research (CTSR), to provide the following services: facilitate six resiliency conversations at three different venues in West Park, Pompano, and Central Broward communities. Three of these conversations were with adult community members and three were held with youth from the same communities. To prepare for facilitation of these conversations, Dr. West-Olatunji agreed to conduct a search of the relevant issues related to traumatic stress for school-aged children and the adults in their system. Additionally, Dr. West-Olatunji agreed to develop an abbreviated literature review summarizing the key constructs pertinent to the Resiliency Conversations. Prior to initiating the Resiliency Conversations, Dr. West-Olatunji provided a training on participant-observation procedures for a CSC staff person who would sit in the Resiliency Conversations as a participant-observer. Once the data was transcribed from the six conversations, the CTSR staff conducted a qualitative analysis and generated themes as well as subsequent recommendations for CSC disseminated in a final report.

***“You know, we’re nobody... they shown us everyday.
They don’t care about us. They don’t care about us.
It’s not fair.”***

The Rationale

- ▶ The different types of trauma students face in school systems affects their cognitive development and emotional well-being (Pappano, 2014).
- ▶ Traumas from mass shootings, sexual abuse, neglect, witnessing domestic/community/school violence, natural disasters, war, and suicide leave students with experiences that can cause long-term psychological disturbances and negative emotions.
- ▶ In 2017, Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fl experienced a traumatic experience that left 17 students dead from a 19 year old active shooter. However, students in other parts of the school district consistently face other traumatic events, such as drugs, alcohol, community violence, bullying, and structural racism.

Review of Relevant Research

Traumatic Stress

Traumatic stress has been used to explore the complexity of students' experiences in schools (Goodman, Miller, & West-Olatunji, 2012; Goodman & West-Olatunji, 2008). Some of these traumatic experiences include educational hegemony (the dominance of one social group over another) (Carter, 2007), transgenerational traumas (Danieli, 2007), and the effects of systemic oppression (Goodman & West-Olatunji, 2010). Psychological and somatic health problems affect substantial groups of children, leading to underachievement often, when students fall behind early in their educational experiences, they never catch up (Lau, 2002).

Trauma, as a wound that never heals, succeeds in transforming the subsequent world into its own image, secure in its capacity to re-create the experience for time immemorial. It succeeds in passing the experience from one generation to the next. (Prager, 2003, p. 176)

Transgenerational Trauma

Transgenerational trauma, also called multigenerational, intergenerational, or cross-generational trauma, is trauma that involves that transmission of trauma experienced by one generation to a subsequent generation (Davidson & Mellor, 2000; Nagata, 1990). Thus, members of the subsequent generation may be traumatized by a traumatic stimulus to which they were never directly exposed but that has impacted them through their connection to the generation that was directly impacted. The understanding of transmission between generations is essentially the belief that an experience of one person will affect future generations.

Systemic Oppression

Systemic oppression refers to the structural practices that serve as barriers to equality and are endemic in society (Carter, 2007). Those in the dominant group (e.g., White, male, higher socioeconomic status) possess the power to determine systemic practices that consistently deny privileges to those who are marginalized (Harley, Jolivette, McCormick & Tice, 2002). Oppression is the “unjust, harsh, or cruel exercise of power...that leads to psychological distress or emotional pain” (Hanna, Talley & Guindon, 2002, p. 431).

The point is oppressed people are routinely worn down by the insidious trauma involved in living day after day in a sexist, racist, classist, homophobic, and ableist society: being ogled by men on the street, slaving long hours and for minimum wages in a fish processing plant, hearing racist innuendoes even from one's White allies. (Burstow (2003, p. 1296).

Our Conceptual Framework: Emancipatory Program Evaluation (EPE)

- ▶ Emancipatory Program Evaluation (EPE) places culture at the center of inquiry to honor and validate the stakeholders' culturally diverse ways of knowing and being.
- ▶ The method privileges the voices of those under investigation and resists implicit cultural, theoretical, or pedagogical dominance to address the macrosystemic and interpersonal issues evident within the communities.
- ▶ Use of this methodological approach allowed the consultant to deepen her understanding of the participants' worldview as community stakeholders in the Broward County neighborhoods and schools (Creswell, 1994).
- ▶ EPE involves: diverse evaluation teams, engagement of stakeholders, use of culture-centered evaluation tools, management of power dynamics, participatory evaluation designs, and strategic use of qualitative methods (Hood, 2001).

Data & Methods

- ▶ Solicit the opinions of Broward Co. residents in communities most affected by gun violence:
 - ▶ What are the key issues?
 - ▶ What community agencies or programs have been most useful?
 - ▶ What are their perceived needs?
 - ▶ Who is most affected by the gun violence?
 - ▶ What coping mechanisms have been used by individuals, families, and community organizations?
- ▶ Exploratory Question: *“How do the stakeholders served by the Children’s Services Council articulate their traumatic stress experiences and subsequent needs?”*

- Conducted searches in relevant databases to identify salient research articles and then reviewing the articles to determine key constructs related to the issue presented in the Resiliency Conversation by CSC.
- Developed an abbreviated literature review to ascertain the relevant issues and challenges as well as evidence-based practices to address issues of traumatic stress for school-aged children and the adults in their system.
- Developed 2 interview schedules for the adult and youth FG interviews. These questions were then be shared with key stakeholders for feedback and then finalized for the actual focus group interviews.
- Conducted a 10–15 minute training with the identified process observer to ensure that observational data is appropriately collected.
- Facilitated the FG interviews (n=6)
- Conducted post FG debriefing sessions with the CSC executive director and cabinet (n=6)
- Analyzed the FG data using a constant comparative method, extracted themes, and developed a report with conclusions and recommendations for action.

Attendee Record for Resiliency Conversations		
Site	Youth	Adult
West Park (Koinonia Worship Center)	6	14
Pompano Beach (Blanche Ely High School)	20	10
Central (Old Dillard Museum)	1	1

-
- ▶ Data was collected over 3 evenings (2 FGs per evening)
 - ▶ Collected at 1 school location from:
 - ▶ students representing 2 high schools
 - ▶ Community members (adults)
 - ▶ Collected at 5 community sites from students and community members (adults)
 - ▶ Focus group interviews (individual interviews when only one adult and one student was present)

Data Collection Procedures

Participants were contacted in a variety of ways by the CSC staff. Students were recruited with the assistance of teachers/principals in the identified schools. Community members were contacted using a snowball method by the CSC staff (i.e., reaching out to the community leaders to solicit names of individuals who would be willing to participate). Once potential participants were identified, they were given an Informed Consent form that outlined the purpose of the project and what they are being asked to do, including an explanation of the focus on trauma-informed services.

Data Analysis Procedures

- ▶ Review the data (to assess for accuracy),
 - ▶ Review the data several more times while highlighting salient visual points, comments or phrases that were representative of the participants' experiences,
 - ▶ Cluster highlighted visuals or statements into summary visuals or statements, and
 - ▶ Create domains of meanings from the clustered summary visuals or statements.
- The domains of meaning that emerged from the data were written up along with quotes associated with each of the categories. Team members examined commonalities and highlights, and divergent themes to reach consensus. To ensure credibility of findings, we utilized triangulation of data (i.e., archival data and demographic information), and peer examination.

The Findings

- *Responsibility* - When individuals and communities initiate an effort to provide support to an individual that they perceive to have a need.
- *Coping/Resilience* - Strategies employed to limit negative effects of distressing factors, such as school absenteeism and listening to music)
- *Systemic Trauma/Stress* - An individual’s physical or emotional response to being in a challenging environments
- *Youth Programming* - Services or activities that provide youth with an outlet away from stressful environments that promote youth mental health and supports violence reduction.

Responsibility

Responsibility			
Communal Responsibility	Self Responsibility	Role Models	Parenting Skills
Lack of Community	Need Support and Programming		

A. Communal Responsibility and Lack of Community

Both the adults and the youth spoke at great length about the lack of community support, community resources, and conflicts within the community that has occurred over time and as a result of structural racism and community disenfranchisement. One person stated that, *“It hit home and it’s like we don’t have nobody to back us up to say...to bring us together and try to find out what happened...”* Another person stated that, *“If I might say, the substance use in the community which is leading to the violence as well. There are no advocates, no programs in place.”* Someone else said, *“...you don’t have the supportive community to assist with providing care for your child*

then you're limited to doing certain things." Even the youth are aware that the community is not the same as in the past. One student shared, *"Back in the day, my grandpa said there was one dude who used to help all the kids when they needed it. Now, they don't do it no more..."*

B. Self-responsibility and the Need for Support/Programming

Overwhelmingly, the community discussants shared their frustrations with the lack of programming in their communities (*"It's a shame. There's no resources, nobody to talk to"*). Although they acknowledged that some programs exist, they found that it was difficult to access the programs because of transportation issues and when they did reach out to program personnel, they were often greeted with hostility and bias. One person shared, *"So, we try to go outside to ask for help, it's like, 'Yeah, we'll help,' but then it's closed door. You don't hear nothing back from no one."* Another adult stated that, *"...They don't mean what they say. They just say it because it's to ease your pain. But it don't ease my pain."* A common concern was the lack of concern for the gun violence, *"They don't care about what's making us sad what's killing our kids. They don't care about that. They just care about money and what they can do to get more. It's sad."* The youth talked about being put in the "rejection box" when they asked for help in their schools, *"They're draining us out of life. They taking all the fun out and stuff."* Another stated, *"We're locked down so many hard rules that maybe don't even make sense."* Yet another shared, *"You can't sit on the grass..."* And, one student complained, *"...that just takes all the fun, all the motivation for school from us."*

In all conversations and across generations, the participants agreed that there a need for more programming in their communities. Educators and students talked about the overcrowded classrooms (*"I got 45 kids in my class and seats for 30"*). Some offered suggestions for the youth, *"And that we also need to develop programs for the boys so that they're doing something, they need to be engaged in something. And they have somewhere to go where they can talk..."* The youth also believed that more programming is needed, *"...most of the time when kids are acting up or having behavior issues is because there's nothing going on in that school..."*

C. Role Models

Issues of community violence, economic hardships, structural racism, and whole scale community disenfranchisement (“*They’re knocking the apartment down to build one house. It’s sad, it’s crazy. How is you making these [row of] houses into one house that got four bedrooms? You just basically made 20 people homeless just to build this one house...*”) has left the community bereft of community members who can guide young people toward a positive sense of self, self-worth, self-love, and community engagement. This **disconnected village** has little means of stemming the rampant gun violence perpetrated by young males, in particular. The police, who could be role models are perceived as perpetrators of violence themselves, “*But they always mess with the homeless people. They stop kids that riding at night, riding in the hood...They do other stuff instead of the right stuff...*” One adult stated, “*My niece died today from a gun violence. She just died...today from a gun. A security guard shot her in the stomach.*” When asked what youth needed, one youth participant stated, “*A male role model...*” to help young people make better choices. Participants stated that role models are needed to impart moral values.

D. Parenting Skills

Although the youth did not talk a lot about their parents except when stating that their parents were their best friends, the adults did talk extensively about parenting issues. Participants discussed how economic disenfranchisement compromises their ability to take care of themselves and how they are often blamed for lack of progress with their children and in their own lives. Several sub-themes around parenting skills were identified:

- children need attention; issues that prevent parenting
 - “*...parents at home are not as interactive with their kids as they should be. And, people go through a lot of stuff at home and some of the parents they be busy and what not, and they’re not showing as much attention and love to that child as that child may need or want...*”
- need for mental health services for youth
 - “*...sometimes parents aren’t available because they’re working two jobs because the housing market is very high and it’s not matching your working wage.*”

- Need for a parent-school relationship
 - *“Parents need to go to the school and tell the teacher. Me, I go to the school and tell the teacher: ‘Listen, when you call me, I’ll come to talk. I’m a pull him out, I’m a whip him.’ ...”*
 - *“...but we need help within the schools.”*
 - *“I have a wonderful principal”*
- parenting is complicated, given their struggles related to economic stress
 - [children] *“become statistics, and it’s not fair to them, they just babies and we’re losing them...”*
 - *“And the majority of the families here is single mothers; some single fathers...I’m a single mother of 4. I just been blessed...Okay, got a p erson sitting over there working hard...trying to pay the rent but she can’t pay the rent...What about the children that need shoes that they can’t afford to buy...”*

Coping/Resilience

Coping/Resilience		
Counseling & Conflict Resolution	Growth & Resilience	Maladaptive Coping
Privacy Concerns	1. Mutuality/Friendship; 2. Coping/Trust	Marijuana

A. Counseling & Conflict Resolution

Despite the challenges faced on a daily basis, participants spoke of resilience and coping. They talked about their coping strategies, some were beneficial and others were maladaptive. Coping mechanisms included mindfulness activities, such as prayer, listening to music, meditation, and sitting quietly (*“I had to really go somewhere where there is no noise, no music, or nothing...”*). Other forms of coping included social advocacy, social action, and community empowerment.

While some participants talked about the value of counseling and mental health services, most participants spoke despairingly about their encounters with social services, and behavioral health providers. The youth spoke quite negatively about their experiences with the school counselors, *“...half the guidance counselors, they don’t do their jobs...”* And, *“...the guidance counselors, they’re not really here. They tell you to come during lunch. You come during lunch...Yeah, they’re not here...”* Another

participant stated, *“I don’t have a connection with the guidance counselor. So, if I have an issue, I wouldn’t come to the guidance counselors. I would go to one of the teachers...”*

Positive experiences with counseling were reflected in comments, such as: *“...she’s in therapy now... she seems to be doing okay.”* And, *“That’s the reason why I stay in therapy because talking to somebody besides family help you kind of get through it because family it just feels like, ‘oh, you don’t need it.’”* One youth participant had a good experience with counseling, indicating that it has been helpful, *“You go there for an hour and they talk to you about good stuff and bad stuff.”*

Other ways to cope include self-advocacy. One participant comforted another by saying, *“Don’t carry this hurt personally. Do what your son has always done. Create something in his honor...Create something in his honor to help people.....”* Another participant shared, *“You’ve got to know how to fold the grief up, put it in a box. And, she [the counselor] said, ‘take it out when you need it, when you need to...’ But you just have to learn to deal with it. Because she said the love for him is never going to go away.”*

The issue of **conflict resolution** was brought up frequently. Adults asserted that [young people]...*“don’t understand that’s it’s okay to disagree. They don’t understand that it’s okay to be mad and not have to murder.”* In discussing the gun violence, one individual stated, *“It happens every day. They talk about a lot of drive by’s. We have a lot of shootings that’s happened in our old neighborhood where we grew up at.”* One offered: *“...children are desensitized to what’s going on because it’s in their face...”* A recommendation provided was, *“...some type of conflict resolution discussion for these kids...”* Changing the narrative for youth was a concern among the adults, *“That’s another narrative that’s got to change. If you see something, you say something. That’s what the police department is pushing but, unfortunately, in our communities, ‘it’s snitches get stitches’, so that narrative has to change in order for us to get these people off the streets from killer her children.”* One youth participant stated that when there were engaging programs, *“It was fun and we all came together and we wasn’t arguing...”*

B. Growth & Resilience

Despite feelings of lack of voice, stressful schools, gun violence, and the lack of sufficient resources, the youth participants overwhelmingly felt resilient. When asked if they cope better today than they did a year ago, most participants responded affirmatively. *“I cope better now.” “you get wiser when you’re older.”* They cope by listening to music, paint (*“I’m an artist. So, I paint a lot and I listen to music...”*), draw (*“with my little sketchbook”*). Another student shared, *“Me, I’m spiritual. So I go to the scriptures, Bible, motivational videos.”* One participant stated that, *“For me, music of course, but with music I like to dance. I love to dance. I love being active. Dancing just puts me in a happy place.”* Other students talked about their social support (*“...my Mom, she has a big impact on me. She’s like my best friend.”* Or, *“Me, I like to try to connect, I like to try to spread love.”*

Young people also suggested that they struggle with trust issues, *“...we really suffer with trust issues honestly. Because if it’s somebody from my school, I’m not going [to] want to open up about anything that I’m going through because I feel like you’re going to go tell the whole school...”* In recommending peer support groups at the school, one participant suggested, *“we can have groups like these set up randomly around the school with random kinds, random teachers, just to build the trust around those group of kids, have it constantly one or two times a day in different buildings. That would be a step...to what later done the line it could prevent violence or suicide.”*

Students also discussed their lack of trust with existing service providers, *“...we don’t tend to go to them for emotional problems. I feel like everybody’s so focused on graduating and so focused on all that stuff. We done even be worried about that until something does happen. They had all those like them therapists, all that.”* Another student stated, *“...we do not like talking to people. We did not want to express ourselves. We feel like we wouldn’t get heard anyway or it’s not going to help us or we wouldn’t want to show emotion.”*

C. Maladaptive Coping

Unfortunately, with the lack of sufficient or effective mental health resources, members of the community self-medicate to cope with life’s stressors. Participants, young and old, disclosed that they use alcohol and marijuana to deal with their anxieties and frustrations (*“My dog get zooted, gets gassed.”*). Others are alone in their distress, *“I cry. I don’t know. When I feel bad, I cry.”* Other distract themselves with video games

and some students engage in social distancing, (“...just distancing myself and getting over stuff by myself that now it’s hard to even speak up to people. ...I’ll just sit there and act like I’m all right...”)

Traumatic Stress

Stress				
Curriculum Issues	Insensitive Teachers	Fewer Resources	Lack of Student Violence	Social Services @ School
	Lack of Teacher Empathy	Less Resources/Less Learning		Ineffective School Counselors

Stressful Schools

Both adults and youth participants shared their perspectives on how stressful schooling experiences are and the negative interactions between parents and educators/leaders, educators and students, the home culture and the culture of schooling. Some of the subthemes found were:

In particular, community residents were most impacted by weaponized teachers who have access to guns in schools, particularly within the current socio-political climate of political intolerance that influences legislative policies affecting disempowered and disenfranchised community residents. Students spoke despairingly about teachers, stating that, “*Yeah, they don’t care about the students. They even say that if there’s a school shooting or something, they will take care of themselves. They’re not going to take care of the students.*” Another child stated, “*They were like, ‘I might save myself. I’m not going to save anybody else.’*” One youth participant agreed, “*One of my teachers told me if there’s a school shooting, she’d jump out the window.*” As a result, students feel, “*Nervous.*” “*Overwhelmed.*” “*...Nothing.*” When asked who protects them, they said, “*God.*” “*Your parents.*” “*Yourself.*” “*Your peers.*”

There is a need for:

- enhanced communication to prevent violence; awareness of structural racism;
- increased school-parent connection; parent involvement in schools
- positive educator interactions; advocacy; social action
- trauma-informed teaching
- caring educators - translating personal life story to teach female empowerment
- caring teachers; it takes a village; when teachers go above and behind; hopeful

Stress in the Community

The compounded stressors from housing, financial, familial, and educational issues causes multiple levels of distress for community residents. They talked about:

- community violence; trauma, suicide, hopelessness (“...my 27 year old son comes to me a few months ago and say, ‘Ma, I need help if you don’t get me help, you will bury me. You will see me in prison. I’m stuck. Stuck.’”)
- traumatic stress/transgenerational trauma (“But she ain’t like me outside, I had anger issues growing up. I don’t know why, I was just an angry kid with anger issues.”)
- emotional exhaustion; compassion fatigue; limited resources (“I lost my grandson and it just took everything out of me. I really wanted to stop living because when my grandson got killed...it was like my whole world was shattered from me...” And, “I don’t want to be [in] a relationship with no more kids. I don’t want to mentor girls. I don’t want to do it. I’m tired of it.” And, “It’s gotten to the point where for me, I’m like, okay, like you say what happens to us...No, we don’t have support. There’s only so much one person...”)
- complex grief, community grief, and loss “We need a resource that come out and talk to the kids that lost a parent.” “Like I said, I still go through the emotional struggles.”
- trauma; lack of resources; systemic racism within schools; need for mental health support “...he’s getting that exposure of seeing someone die or seeing someone get shot it becomes a norm, which means [he] becomes numb to it.”
- police brutality; trauma; policing culture; police-community relationships; police brutality causes lack of respect

Insights and Recommendations

- Youth Programming (culturally responsive); “the streets are talking”
 - Conflict resolution
 - Peer counseling
 - Increase student voice, particularly in schools; eliminate weaponized teachers
 - Rite of Passage program for girls
- Community Empowerment
 - Grant writing to submit proposals to CSC
 - Use of social media to “change the narrative”
- Parents Advocating for youth in schools
 - Improve the effectiveness of school counselors; family-school-community collaboratives
 - Addressing “rejection box”; student engagement
- Place programs in the community (mental health; culture-centered trauma informed care)

Increase Youth Programming

Youth Programming/After School Programs		
Violence Reduction	Outcomes of No Programs	Barriers to Access
Conflict Resolution	Youth Mental Health	1. Expansive Options; 2. Insufficient Resources

Nearly all of the participants talked about the need to develop programming for the young people in their communities. They described their neighborhoods as being **resource deserts** where practically no programming exists. In this programming void, youth create their own activities, many are quite destructive. Recommendations for

engaging activities focused on conflict resolution and peer counseling. The conflict resolution programming would need to be engaging and therefore culturally informed. The participants talked about the need for life skills training, cultural identity development, and moral/spiritual development to promote empathy and communal responsibility. The youth in particular talked about the desire to engage in peer counseling activities in which they could be afforded the opportunity to openly share their concerns, fears, and questions about life's challenges. They also wanted to better connect with their school counselors to do more than vocational guidance with them, to focus on their emotional and psychological needs. They also wanted more information about how to help each other as peers. They wanted to know how to comfort each other when they were experiencing any emotional problems or were grieving. They also wanted to know the signs of suicidal ideation so that they could be part of each other's support network. Both adults and youth expressed the desire to be heard and be at the table when policy decisions were being made that affected their lives. The adults suggested that professional development and grant writing training be offered to assist them in learning how to be more empowered to speak up for themselves and to advocate for themselves.

Rite of Passage Programs. One intervention that has proven successful in addressing the behavioral and academic problems of African American students, males in particular, is the Rite of Passage program. Rite of Passage programs target both the education and emotional wellbeing of African American youth (West-Olatunji, 2000). The two core elements of spirituality (or morality) and interconnectedness (Harvey & Rauch, 1997).

Rite of Passage programs typically address the following components: 1) appropriate role models/bonding, 2) identity/self-esteem, 3) academic values and skills, 4) parent and community strengthening, 5) transition to adulthood, and 6) safe haven (Ascher, 1991). The three latter components also represent the potential benefits from participating in Rite of Passage programs. Rite of Passage programs provide appropriate and positive images of African American adulthood through African American teachers, mentors, and other role models. The primary aim is to combat the substantial negative images of Black adulthood. Raising the self-esteem of young African American youth is also integral to facilitating positive change in their mindset, thus impacting the manner in which they view and approach problems

encountered both at school and within their communities. Rite of Passage programs facilitate academic improvement by mandating strict attendance, provide homework assistance, and help students develop conflict resolution skills. Rite of Passage programs also help to strengthen both the family and community of the African American youth participants. Lastly, these programs provide a safe haven wherein low-income African American youths can escape from many of the negative subcultures, such as gang membership, drug abuse, and premature sexual involvement, within their communities.

Community Empowerment

Increase communication. In schools as well as in neighborhoods, community residents wanted to know more about what services are available and how to avail themselves of those services. Students also wanted to know what services were available within the schools and how they could access those services. Many of the participants recommended that community agencies and schools find better ways of communicating. For instance, community agencies and schools could use social media to **change the narrative** within these low-resourced communities regarding conflict resolution and gun violence.

Allow Parents to Serve as Advocates

Both adults and youth talked about experiences with educational hegemony and implicit bias in their interactions with school personnel. It is recommended that family-school-collaboratives be implemented. The importance of family-school-community collaboratives in which parents are involved in schools and *have a say* in the curriculum and programs being offered in schools. Parents also suggested that they could be a bridge between the home culture and the school culture to facilitate student engagement and culturally responsive instruction. Parent involvement would also help to improve the effectiveness of school counselors, teachers, and principals, ensuring that educators were more caring and inclusive in their interactions with the students. This would also aid in transforming the role of the school counselors to serve as advocates for students and address their socio-emotional needs. Additionally,

participants recommended that schools may need to extend their school day to include out-of-school time (OST) programming.

Family-School-Community Collaborations. Addressing students' educational challenges separate from environmental factors restricts the schools' ability to sufficiently address the needs of students in a manner that builds on student, family, and community assets. It has been stated that students from low income and culturally diverse backgrounds are positioned along the margins of the public education system, typically privileging middle class White students. This cultural discontinuity or cultural disconnect can impact their psychological as well as academic wellbeing (Cholewa & West-Olatunji, 2008). Families have funds of knowledge that can contribute to the schooling experience; they are not socially or intellectually barren. Homes are often places where both teaching and learning occur and children are taught social skills. As such, schools have an untapped resource: the family.

21st Century School Counselors. Developmental guidance programs have transformed into a more comprehensive model that address the academic, career, and personal/social needs of students, student standards that should be met by the school counseling program. School counselors are encouraged to implement school programs that encompass vocational, remedial, and developmental interventions, all of which have been present throughout the profession's history. Each of these services implies collaboration with stakeholders to provide culturally relevant educational practices, addressing the academic achievement of all students, moving school systems toward systemic change that reaches all students, all activities that exemplify a role of leadership within schools. Professional development training for school counselors working in low-resourced schools is needed to augment their cultural competence and improve their effectiveness in serving culturally marginalized students. For instance, school counselors could serve as leaders to initiate **restorative justice** programs within schools.

Culturally Informed Parenting Skills. One of the effects of transgenerational trauma is the disruption of cultural mores that are typically passed down from generation to generation. Moreover, with the breakdown of community unity, the lack of community support compromises parent-child relationships, erodes community

trust, and ill prepares youth for adulthood. Current parenting programs typically assume that the key aspects of parents as well as the goals of parenting are shared across cultures. Some scholars challenge those beliefs and offer research that suggests that culturally informed parenting approaches may be more effective and correlative to student academic achievement (West-Olatunji, Sanders, Mehta, & Behar-Horenstein, 2010). African American parents, in particular, demonstrate coping skills and resilience despite systemic and personal stressors. Further, their coping mechanisms are rooted in cultural patterns, such as intergenerational support from grandparents, faith in themselves and family members, and understanding the power of the spoken word as a force for healing. Thus, parenting skills programs offered by schools and within culturally marginalized communities, need to be family-guided, family-centered, family focused, and family empowered.

Augment Community-based Programs

One solution to the dearth of community services is to bring those programs to the communities that need them most. This means that either satellite programs are developed in existing buildings in low-resourced neighborhoods or mobile units are brought to neighborhoods and rotated throughout the county. Utilization of community resources, both human and material, are needed. Given the multilayered trauma issues impacting community residents, adults and youth experience a myriad of concerns in which the intensity and duration of those traumatic experiences are notable. They're presentation of trauma symptomology is similar to disaster survivors. Additionally, the pervasiveness of ineffective services can be re-injuring.

To address their needs, a comprehensive, multi-layered approach is warranted in which the community residents themselves are key players and their voices are heard. There are several models globally, particularly evident in low-resourced countries, such as India and Jamaica, that emphasize a psycho-social approach wherein community residents serve as the primary service providers. In India, for example, their disaster mental health service delivery program utilizes the training-the-trainer model wherein local residents provide disaster mental health services and the few degreed mental health professionals only come in to provide periodic supervision and professional development training. Additionally, Zimbabwe has implemented a community-based

mental health program that trains grandmothers in problem-solving, role-playing, and behavior activation skills. Their therapy sessions occur out of doors, on wooden seats, called **Friendship Benches** to combat depression in a country with an insufficient number of trained mental health professionals. CSC should consider embracing such an approach to ameliorating the grief, loss, trauma, and emotional fatigue experienced by the Broward County residents in oppressed communities.

Law Enforcement Officers. Law enforcement officers were of particular concern in their interactions with community members. Sensitivity training as well as community policing programs need to be implemented. In response to periods when police brutality against African Americans has been in the spotlight, national reform efforts have spawned with mixed outcomes. Most important in reform efforts has been a focus on improving work conditions for law enforcement officers. With burnout as a major correlate to police aggression, improved work conditions, such as increased pay, more officers hired, and better benefits, has reduced incidents of police aggression. Additionally, cultural responsiveness training has also been shown to decrease police brutality toward citizens as has community partnerships. However, purchasing more equipment has not been shown to consistently impact incidents of police aggression. Some counseling communities have taken steps to serve as advocates for African American communities in the wake of police aggression by developing internships with community police units, actively marching in demonstrations, and writing open letters to their membership to encourage social action.

The civil unrest of the 1960's gave rise to an investigation U.S. policing and led to President Johnson's 1965 Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Criminal Justice. Unfortunately, the core of the commission's report erroneously stated that poverty, the economy, demographics, racism, and social injustice served as root causes to crime (Stuart & Herbert, 2016). What they did get right was their recommendation to adopt community relations programs. It wasn't until the 1990's that law enforcement reform experienced tangible results that focused on prevention and community partnerships rather than tactical resources and skills. Transformations included a focus on problem solving citizens rather than managing communities, what became known as "broken window" policing, and targeting policing. All of these steps

were taken in partnership with community stakeholders, from local transit officers to neighborhood residents, and spawned the **neighborhood watch** programs. Most importantly, law enforcement officers were operating with the approval of the community, especially among low-income African American community residents, who often experienced higher rates of crime.

In response to studies that showed significant hostility between African American community residents and police, law enforcement policy makers began to consider the need to improve community relations and developed **community-oriented policing** (COP). While studies have not shown a reduction in crime, it has been demonstrated that residents' attitudes toward law enforcement officers are greatly improved (Serbulo & Gibson, 2013). COP involved three essential elements: community partnerships, organizational transformation, and problem solving. Such problem-solving approaches have been shown to increase citizen satisfaction in relation to law enforcement (Gill et al., 2014) as well as job satisfaction among police (Greene, 2000). Counselors can serve to reduce the effects of conflict related stress on both sides. In general, culture-centered trauma informed care is needed on every level throughout the communities. This may mean that social service and behavioral healthcare providers receive substantive and comprehensive training in the area of culture-centered trauma informed care.

Culturally Responsive Evidence-based Strategies for Traumatic Stress (CRESTS).

Although there are several well-known trauma informed care strategies used by school districts, few adequately meet the needs of culturally diverse students. Even fewer have shown significant outcomes for students in low-resourced schools and impoverished communities. The CRESTS program is specifically designed to build upon the strengths of the community members and employs their cultural worldviews while integrating evidence-based interventions to reduce emotional distress, fatigue, and psychological issues resulting from pervasive stressors in marginalized communities.

The main aspects of the CRESTS program:

- a) Focuses attention on historical trauma and the macrosystemic influences as well as intrapersonal correlates on culturally marginalized individuals, families, and communities.
- b) Highlights the suppression of cultural mores and values *over* intrapsychic deficits when conceptualizing issues related to trauma in the community.

c) Introduce culture-centered healing to promote a robust state of wellness for the community (i.e., strong cultural identity, cultural restoration, spiritual wellbeing, and self-actualization).

Final Recommendation

Our final recommendation is that CSC engage in a full-scale community needs assessment that would encompass data collection over an extended period of time, consisting of:

- Behavioral Observations
- Focus Group & Individual Interviews
- Archival Data & Reports
- Existing School Data
- Videographic Data
- Surveys and Assessments, such as the Parent Proficiencies Questionnaire)

We recommend that CSC utilize the Emancipatory Program Evaluation (EPE) method to substantively involve community members of the community in the design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation. We also strongly urge the CSC to invest in training key CSC staff persons in the EPE method to engage in more participatory research under the direction of a skilled researcher. Taking these steps will ensure the trustworthiness of the investigations and improve their outcomes that, ultimately will impact the community members. Knowledge generated from and grounded in people's culture and experience can be liberating and have the potential to dismantle hegemonic knowledge paradigms that exacerbate pernicious trends in education (King & Mitchell, 1995). Therefore, this methodological framework, given its dependence on culturally diverse theories and forms of knowledge situate truth-telling, or testifyin' as tools of both disruption and liberation. By centering participant voices in accordance with their own thinking about education, schooling and achievement, EPE creates theory and practice to resolve persistent problems.

“I want to be involved because I don’t want to go to another funeral.”

Selected References

- Cavanaugh, B. (2016). Trauma-informed classrooms and schools. *Beyond Behavior*, 25(2), 41.
- Cholewa, B., Amatea, E., West-Olatunji, C., & Wright, A. (2012). Examining the relational processes of a highly successful teacher of African American children. *Urban Education*, 47(1), 250-279.
- Cholewa, B., Goodman, R. D., West-Olatunji, C., & Amatea, E. (2014). A Qualitative Examination of the Impact of Culturally Responsive Educational Practices on the Psychological Well-Being of Students of Color. *The Urban Review*, 1-23.
- Dods, J. J. (2015) Bringing trauma to school: The educational experience of three youths. *Exceptionality Education International*, 25(1), 112-135.
- Goodman, R., Miller, D., & West-Olatunji, C. (2012). Traumatic Stress and Academic Achievement. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 4(3), 252-259.
- Goodman, R., & West-Olatunji, C. (2008). Transgenerational trauma and resilience. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, 30, 121-136.
- Goodman, R. D., & West-Olatunji, C. A. (2010). Educational hegemony, traumatic stress, and African American and Latino American students. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 38, 176-186
- Jaycox, L. H., Kataoka, S. H., Langley, A. K., Nadeem, E., & Stein, B. D. (2011) Going to scale: Experiences implementing a school-based trauma intervention. *School Psychology Review*, 40(4), 549-568.
- Ojeda, K., West-Olatunji, C., Wolfgang, J., & Varney, M. (2014). Parenting practices articulated by a Latina parent that relate to her children's academic success. *Journal of Undergraduate Research*, 15(2), 1-5.
<http://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF00091523/00694>
- West-Olatunji, C., & Conwill, W. (2010). *Counseling African Americans*, a book in the Supplementary Monograph Series to accompany D. Choudhuri, A. L. Santiago-Rivera, & M. Garrett, *Multicultural Counseling Competency*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Publishers.

-
- West-Olatunji, C., Jean-Paul, N., Shure, L., Goodman, R. D., & Lewis, D. (2014). Culture-centered research and counselor efficacy. *Turkish Psychological Counseling and Guidance Journal*, 5 (42), 129-137.
- West-Olatunji, C., Sanders, T., Mehta, S., & Behar-Horenstein, L. (2010). Parenting practices among low-income parents/guardians of academically successful fifth grade African American children. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 12, 138-144.
- West-Olatunji, C., Yang, M. J., Wolfgang, J. D., Henesy, R., & Yoon, E. (2017). Highlighting the challenges when conducting cross-national studies: Use of transcultural theory. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 95(4), 457-464.
- Wingfield, R., Reese, R., & West-Olatunji, C. (2010). Counselors as leaders. *Florida Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 4(1), 114-130. Retrieved from http://education.ufl.edu/fjeap/files/2011/01/FJEAP_2010-Fall_Winter_Wingfield_Reese_WestOlatunji.pdf

Appendix A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE-YOUTH

The Children’s Services Council is seeking input from youth in Broward County to gain their insight, input, and support in order to enhance their program and service delivery. This conversation has been designed to facilitate authentic dialogue about your experiences and your opinions about those experiences.

1. What are the most pressing concerns that you have about the stressful events that have occurred or are currently occurring in your school, home, neighborhood, or larger community?
2. Please provide some examples of when you or other youth have shown how you were impacted by some events or experiences at school. In the community. At home.
3. What are some of the obstacles that you’ve faced that you believe have influenced your relationship with others, your academic performance, your emotional wellbeing?
4. How responsive do you think school personnel, community agencies, religious leaders, elected officials, or parents are to critical events (such as natural or human-made disasters) faced by the youth of your school, neighborhood, or larger community?
5. How responsive do you think school personnel, community agencies, religious leaders, elected officials, or parents are to environmental stressors (like poverty or racism) faced by the youth of your school, neighborhood, or larger community?
6. Are you aware of any community programs (either in your community or in other communities) designed to assist youth or their family members with the stress related to critical events or environmental stressors?
7. If so, can you describe how you have (or someone you know has) made use of such programs?
8. Overall, have you or your family members found these programs helpful?
9. In what supplemental or compensatory programs are you enrolled at or after school? Have you found them helpful?
10. Now, I’d like you talk about how you have shown *resilience/coping* (or the ability to “bounce back”). Can you provide some examples of how youth have shown resilience or coping in the face of critical events or environmental stressors at school, in your home or neighborhood, or in the larger community?
11. Do you feel more resilient now than you did a year ago to cope with life’s challenges? If so, what do you think accounts for the difference?
12. What recommendations do you have for school personnel, community agencies, religious leaders, elected officials, or parents that might help to reduce the amount of stress from critical incidents or environmental stressors?

Appendix B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE-ADULT COMMUNITY MEMBERS

The Children's Services Council is seeking input from youth in Broward County to gain their insight, input, and support in order to enhance their program and service delivery. This conversation has been designed to facilitate authentic dialogue about your experiences and your opinions about those experiences.

1. What are the most pressing concerns that you have about the stressful events that have occurred or are currently occurring in your community?
2. Please provide some examples of how you or others have been impacted by these events or experiences.
3. How responsive do you think community agencies, school personnel, religious leaders, or elected officials are to critical events (such as natural or human-made disasters) or environmental stressors (like poverty or oppression) faced by the members of the community?
4. Are you aware of any community programs (either in your community or in other communities) designed to assist individuals, families, or communities with the stress related to critical events or environmental stressors?
5. If so, can you describe how you (or someone you know) have made use of such a program?
6. Overall, do you find these programs helpful?
7. Can you give some examples of how some community members have shown resilience or coping in the face of critical events or environmental stressors?
8. Do you feel more resilient now than you did a year ago, two years ago to cope with life's challenges? If so, what do you think accounts for the difference?
9. What recommendations do you have for the community that might help to reduce the amount of stress from environmental stressors?