

EXAMINING COMMUNITY TRAUMA FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF BLACK AND LATINO YOUTH

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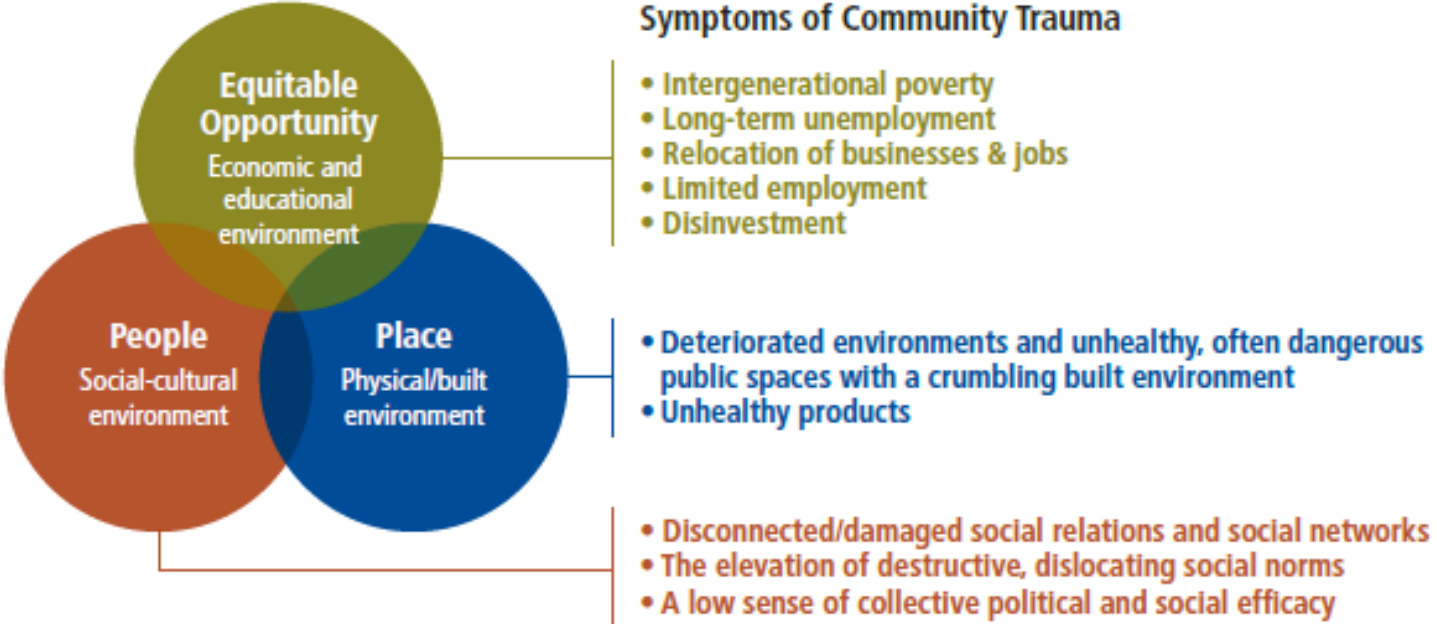


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TRAUMA AND COMMUNITY CONTEXT

- High levels of violence, poverty, substance abuse, & community disorganization result in:
 - increased levels of “individual trauma” and “community trauma”.
- Empirical & treatment efforts traditionally address trauma at the individual level (e.g. PTSD). Less work done on addressing community trauma.
- Community Trauma:
 - a concentration of trauma among individuals which affects the community as a whole.
 - affects three key aspects of the community environment:
 - Socio-cultural environment, Physical Environment, and the Economic environment.

FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING, PREVENTING & TREATING COMMUNITY TRAUMA (PINDERHUGHES, DAVIS, & WILLIAMS, 2015)



Pinderhughes, H., Davis, R. & Williams, M. (2015). Adverse community experiences and resilience: A framework for addressing and preventing community trauma. Prevention Institute, Oakland CA.



RELATIONSHIPS, RESILIENCE & COMMUNITY TRAUMA

- Importance of relationships and positive attachments between young people and the adults in their ecological milieu.
 - Internal Working Models of self & others (Bowlby, 1982).
 - Protective factor making young people less vulnerable to adversity & deviant behaviors (Mota, Costa, & Matos, 2016).
 - In the absence of stable positive attachments with primary caregivers, relationships with “positive” adults within institutions and communities can provide alternative pathways to resilience (Mota et. al, 2016).

PURPOSE

- To identify specific **indicators of community trauma** within the narratives of Black and Latino adolescents.
 - With attention to the **relationships with parental and non-parental adults** in their community.
- To highlight the **potential coping mechanisms** employed by youth in navigating the unique challenges presented by their environmental context.
- To empirically examine a newly developed **culturally grounded conceptual framework** (Pinderhughes et al., 2015) on community trauma.

METHODS

- Target community has one of the highest rates in the region for poverty, violence, substance abuse and HIV/AIDS among African American & Hispanic/Latino residents.
- The sample of youth (N= 85) Black & Hispanic/Latino adolescents ranging from 14-18 yrs. of age.
- Youth were engaged through 11 focus groups that lasted 60-90 minutes.
 - 5-semi structured interview questions were used, probing for:
 - supportive structures within their community, experiences of substance use and exposure to substance use prevention.

FINDINGS: SYMPTOMS OF COMMUNITY TRAUMA

- Adolescents reported all of the symptoms of community trauma outlined in the model.
 - **Physical Environment (Place):**
 - “The streets are one thing, there’s a whole bunch pot-there’s a lot pf potholes in the streets and the streets are hot. Then there’s garbage all over the place”.
 - “Not just how it looks, all the garbage, it kinda like messes with the environment.”
 - **Economic & Educational Environment (Opportunities):**
 - “parents should have jobs cuz usually if you don’t have a job and you’re really stressed out, the kids get worried, but they are going to help you in some way. That’s how you get drug dealers.”
 - **Socio-cultural Environment (People):**
 - “There’s a lot of things that need to be changed, but then my reasoning is there’s also this huge thing, Would we be able to do it.?”
 - “You can get a bag of Molly...where you get Chinese food.”

FINDINGS: PERCEPTIONS OF ADULTS

- **Parents:**

- “ I live in a neighborhood where kids be outside ‘til 6:00 in the morning, 5:00 in the morning, 4:00 in the morning. They’re young as 14. At 10:00, their parents will be standing outside drinking and stuff, having fun, throwing parties. They’ll be up playing music ‘til 6:00 in the morning, and they’ll still be outside.”
- “they don’t have nothing when they’re growing up. They don’t have love...”

- **Non-Parental Adults:**

- Youth, “get it from adults. Like my friend actually got a whole bag of weed from a grown man that actually sold it to him. Adults can give these things to children.”
- “people know what’s going on but you don’t see them doing anything, no one is really stopping this....the cops outside, they don’t talk to us...”
- “[My friend] had told her teacher that she was going to do drugs and her teacher said nothing about it... like even she wasn’t gonna actually do it, she was pretending to see if the teacher would say anything and the teacher didn’t say anything.”

FINDINGS: COPING MECHANISMS

- **Young people turning to substances to cope:**
 - “they’re actually doing it to feel better about themselves or to feel good because they have household problems. They feel people don’t understand ‘em, so they turn to the bottles.”
 - “Kids who have a hateful past usually have a little drinking and smokes.”
- **High levels of self-reliance and independence:**
 - “you have to be your own person”
 - “You have to do it yourself”
 - “I don’t have no one else to do it so I’mma do it myself.”



IMPLICATIONS & FUTURE DIRECTIVES

- Little hope, trust, & assurance in adults.
 - **Use of substances to cope**
 - **Self-reliance**

Implications for

- Internal working models.
- Accessing social capital & resources.



IMPLICATIONS & FUTURE DIRECTIVES

- **Future research:**
 - Tease out ways that independence & self-reliance influence outcomes under conditions of community trauma.
 - opportunities for risk and resilience-potential curvilinear relationship.
 - test moderator/mediator models.
- **Utility of using a community trauma lens:**
 - Contextualizing behaviors of adults.
 - Informing interventions at the community level.
 - Culturally grounded initiatives/Collectivism.
 - Restoring social cohesion.
- **Limitations.**

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