Trauma, Urban Violence and African American Men: Envisioning New Pathways to Healing

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Malcolm Peterson Lecture
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Young Men’s Health Clinic

- Founded in 1992 and based in Primary Care
- Focused on men ages 17-29
- Designed to serve as a “bridge” from adolescent to adult primary care and as a “door” to community services
- Initially sought referrals from within the hospital but quickly expanded to community referrals
- Enhanced with Health Educator and Psychologist
- Most men had few helping institutions in their lives
- Most had profound experiences of trauma
Patients in the Young Men’s Health Clinic

Uninsured – 80%
Never seen a doctor – 20%
Never seen a dentist – 25%
Violent injury in the past – 45%
Witnessed a shooting or stabbing – 51%
Do not feel safe – 25%
Harassed by the police – 44%
Violence
Violence in Philadelphia and Boston, 2006

- Homicide
- Shootings
- Aggravated Assaults

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boston</th>
<th>Philadelphia</th>
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<tr>
<td>Homicide</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shootings</td>
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<td>406</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aggravated Assaults</td>
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<td>8812</td>
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A City’s Deadly Toll

Homicides reported by city police through 11:59 p.m. Wednesday: 116

Total for the same period in 2006: 104

philly.com

For a map showing homicides in Philadelphia for 2006, along with articles about urban violence, visit http://go.philly.com/violence
Issues Facing Young African American Men
Death Rate from Homicide and HIV for Black Men (2005)

Incarceration

Unemployment

Source: Race, Ethnicity and Health Care: Young African American Men in the United States, Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, 2006
The Health Effects of Trauma
Consequences of Trauma

- Hypervigilance, Jumpiness
- Depression
- Avoidance
- Nightmares
- Flashbacks
- Insomnia
- Generalized anxiety
- Emotional Numbing
Anthony Christian
25 Years Old
Boston, MA
The ACE Study

Understanding Trauma
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Study

- Largest study of its kind ever done to examine the health and social effects of ACEs over lifespan (17,421 participants, 1995-97)
- Most were 50 or older (62%), white (77%) and college educated (72%)
- Outcomes assessed with National Death Index, hospital discharges, outpatient visits, pharmacy utilization, emergency room visits.
What are ACEs?

- Childhood abuse and neglect
- Growing up with domestic violence
- Substance abuse in home
- Mental illness in home
- Loss of a parent
- Crime/incarceration

Two-thirds had at least one ACE
More than one-third had 2 or more ACEs
ACEs and Chronic Disease

Strong, dose-response relationship between ACEs Score and . . .

- Smoking
- COPD
- Hepatitis
- Heart disease
- Fractures
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Alcoholism

- Substance abuse
- Depression
- Attempted suicide
- Teen pregnancy, including paternity
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Occupational health
- Job performance
What is our Role?
Care

• Listen to the stories of our patients about trauma and how it affects their complex lives
• Screen for trauma – direct and indirect - in the social history
• Educate our patients about what is normal in the aftermath of trauma
• Continue to remind ourselves of the connection between trauma and chronic disease
Research

• Understand more about the connection between trauma and chronic disease
• Consider racism as a form of trauma that could account for health disparities
• Study the effects of adverse childhood experiences on inner city, African American men and women
Advocacy

- Advocate for strong gun policy
- Advocate for access to effective, culturally-competent care
- Violence as public health problem mediated by trauma and chronic disease
- Engagement of those affected by violence and trauma as providers, co-researchers
HealthCREW

Training young men of color to be health educators
Nine month program, based in the Boston Public Health Commission

Goals:
Provide a career path in health for young men of color
Build a cadre of workers to address men’s health issues