

- intro Myself
- honored present with Prob
- Job - HIV/AIDS + Addictions - work in Atlanta
- why Provide Context for Presentation

Substance Use in Canada and the U.S

Historical Overview: People of African Descent in Canada

- ♦ Black communities in Canada are a collection of ethnically, culturally, linguistically, religiously diverse communities comprised of people of Black African descent who were born primarily in Africa, the Caribbean or Canada.
- ♦ Black communities include people who have been many generations in Canada, are established immigrants or are recent newcomers

Historical Overview

- ♦ African Nova Scotian community populated primarily by three waves of immigrants into Nova Scotia from 1783 – 1815 following the American War of Independence and the War of 1812.
- ♦ Historical account of African Nova Scotian settlers reveals a story of hardship, neglect and deprivation, mitigated by systemic discrimination and racism

Historical Overview

- ♦ African Nova Scotian settlers have struggled for social, political, and economic survival. Discriminatory and racist institutions of the day sealed the social, political and economic fate of current day African Nova Scotians

Black Women's Health: How Being Black and Female affects your Health

- ◇ State of Black women's health is in decline. Black women disproportionately suffer the risk of ill health and are faced with many health conditions that are preventable or controllable.
- ◇ Literature that does examine Black women's health has been criticized for being examined outside the contexts important to Black women

Black Women's Health

- ◆ Issues of Gender and culture add to the complexity of Black women's health resulting in both real and perceived poor health and low self-esteem.
- ◆ Black women are still being stereotyped in medical and health settings.
- ◆ Black women do not have access to culturally competent health care – health care that meets their social, cultural and linguistic needs

Black Women and Addictions

- ◇ The cycle of oppression is largely responsible for the fact that far more Black women resort to drugs and alcohol as a means to soften the blows of oppression.
- Large gaps exist in the literature even though substance misuse + abuse is threatening the future of POAD.

Black Women and Addictions

- ◇ Drugs and particularly alcohol has been a part of the Black community family system for many generations since the period of slavery to ease the effects and pressures of racism and oppression
- ◇ Black women turn to the use of cocaine to give them a false feeling of empowerment

Black Women and Addiction in the U.S.

- ♦ Black women, especially African American women who are addicted to illicit substances are disproportionately over-represented in jails, prisons, and treatment programs in the U.S.
- ♦ Drugs are readily available in neighborhoods, excitement of street life and drug abuse provides an alternative to a depressing home life

Black Women and Addictions in U.S.

- ◇ Drug use and abuse has reached epidemic proportions in the African American community
- ◇ The 2005 National Survey on Drug Use and Health showed that the highest rate of current illicit drug use was among American Indian/Alaska Native (12.8%), followed by persons reporting two or more races (12.2%), Blacks/African Americans (9.7%).

Black Women and Addictions in the U.S.

- ◇ Stressful conditions that come with life in low income neighborhoods leave people with a sense of hopelessness, depression and painful feelings associated with loss

Black Women and Addictions in Canada

- ♦ Nova Scotia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia have a significantly higher rate of substance abuse than the Canadian national average
- ♦ Centre of Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto estimate the prevalence of substance use problems at 11 percent of the population of Canada

Black Women and Addictions in Canada

- ◇ Lack of research on Black Nova Scotian women and their experiences with addictions
- ◇ Few gender specific programs and no residential programs for women in Nova Scotia.
- ◇ Women with Addictions face stigma and shame in society and within their families
- ◇ For Black women who are marginalized by gender, race and often class, the struggles are likely more challenging

Psychosocial Determinants

- ◇ Racism
- ◇ Stigma, Shame/Guilt from the Black Community
- ◇ Lack of Support from Family and Black Community
- ◇ Lack of Gender specific and Culturally Competent Appropriate Services
- ◇ Lack of Knowledge – available treatment and effects of addiction
- ◇ Poverty
- ◇ Spirituality – Black Church

Determinants

◇ Racism

- Differential treatment based on race, class and gender
- Stereotyped as single mothers, unemployed, drug addicts on social assistance
- Internalized oppression resulting in decrease confidence in one's self, passive acceptance of the stereotypes
- Under-representation of health professionals and lack of knowledge by professional of the specific needs of Black women's addiction
- Services not effective because they do not recognize the racial, educational and socioeconomic backgrounds which shape Black women's experiences

Determinants

◇ Stigma and Shame

- shame and stigma associated with substance misuse
- women are expected to be caregivers and nurturers
- society stigmatizes women addicts and because of social stigma, forcing women substance abusers to hide
- Black women have to deal with shame and stigma attached to substance misuse and are also faced with a triple jeopardy – race, gender and class simultaneously
- use of illicit drugs or abuse of alcohol is seen as more disturbing than men in similar situations

Determinants

◇ Lack of Support

- Stigma within their own families and Black community
- disconnection and isolation from family and community exacerbated their sense of hopelessness
- drug culture and community become more important and significant for Black women
- intergenerational legacy of substance abuse within families
- few family supports for women who are dealing with crack addiction

Determinants

♦ Lack of Gender specific and Culturally Competent Services

- gender issues compounded by the effects of marginalization, racism or by cultural bias and systemic barriers
- gender specific programs needs to be rooted in an understanding of the barriers to addictions women face
- Black women need and want services without the expectation and added burden of explaining their cultural experiences
- Lack of cultural competent services and Black counselors and therapist that are available
- Black women will not utilize a service if they anticipate problems around gender, in particular equity issues, like race and racism

Determinants

◆ Lack of Gender Specific and Culturally Competent Services

- only one gender-specific addiction treatment service in Halifax
- lack of residential programs for women that allow them to keep their children with them
- Current services and programs are under-utilized by Black women
- Racism within programs and services and are not addressed in a timely and effective manner
- Services do not address systemic issues that impact on substance misuse or abuse, including women's access to intervention

Determinants

- ◇ Lack of Knowledge – available treatment and Effects of Addiction
 - Black women are not made aware of the programs and services available for treatment
 - Lack of awareness on the effects of addiction on individuals, families and communities
- ◇ Poverty
 - drugs and alcohol readily available in low income neighbourhoods
 - Women may trade sex for money, drugs, food, baby supplies, etc as well as manifest other inappropriate and aggressive behavior

Determinants

◇ Spirituality - The Black Church

- Black women have had negative experiences with the Black Church but speak of the role of spirituality in their lives
- importance of spirituality centered and feeling connected
- finding spirituality core helped Black women in recovery
- role of believing in yourself and believing that they can change and things will get better
- source of hope is found through spirituality, community, family supports and effective role models