# Historical Trauma

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## Medical science and the Black body

#### THE MIDDLE PASSAGE

Surgeons preserved "human cargo" for maximum profit

#### **SLAVE TRADE**

- Physicians inspected bodies of enslaved
- Key professional competency = determining market value of Black bodies
- Bodies as teaching materials
- Black women as bearers of capital of enslavers

### ROOTS OF GYNECOLOGY

- Pioneering surgical techniques developed on bodies of enslaved women who were experimented on
- Physicians blamed enslaved mothers and midwives for infant mortality
- Forced sterilization

#### TODAY

- Pregnancy-related mortality 2-4x higher among Black women
- Black mothers' selfreports of pain overlooked and minimized
- Black women "make themselves" prone to illness

Today Middle Passage

Roots of Gynecology Slave Trade

#### Bodies marked as different because of race

#### The Paradox Begins: Justifying a system of inhumane forced labor

White weakness as strength/purported "stamina and invulnerability" of workers of African Descent as evidence of inferiority

**1826** "by the very nature

of his constitution."

1850s

Justifying denial of rest, shade, fluids, health care – "Less sensitivity to pain."

1911

Race "differences" fuel the "yellow peril"

1900s

Immigration restrictions = focus on "Mexicans"

POST-WWI

End of WWI in 1918 moves focus to labor

**2016**Racial bias persists

2008

People of color still in "hottest" jobs

1932-1972

Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Negro Male 1933

Beginning of the end of superficial racial science 1930s

Great Depression:
High rate of
unemployment tips
the script

1925

"Mexicans endure heat well."



2016 1826 1850s 1911 1900s Post-WWI

2008 \( 1932-1972 \) \( 1933 \) \( 1930s \) \( 1925 \)

#### Historical trauma

- A set of events perpetrated on a group of people who share a specific group identity with genocidal or ethnocidal intent
- Often result in annihilation or disruption of traditional ways of life, culture, and/or identity
- Contributes to sustained cultural disruption and community destruction



# Women in the US: A history of subjugation and abuse

Compelled to obedience to spouses or "master-the law"

Deplorable working conditions

Denied education

Limited employment options

Laws of divorce strip
power

"Civilly dead" if married

Viewed as property

HaRT<sup>3</sup>S

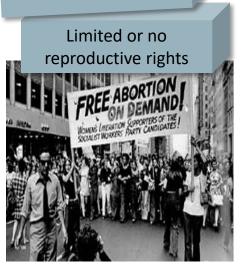
No voting rights

#### **Role of Women**

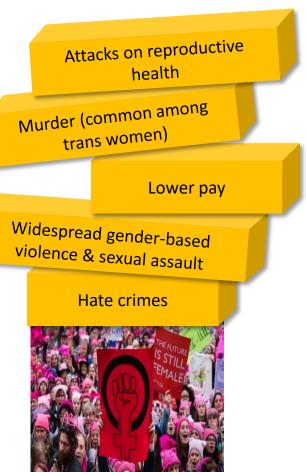
- Women's rights regarding legal property were limited
- A woman might have had fiefs in her dowry.
   However, when she married, her husband gained control over her dowry. In most cases a woman regained control of the property in her dowry if her husband died.
- Women mainly performed household tasks such as cooking, baking bread, sewing, weaving, and spinning
- Occasionally they also hunted for food and fought in battles, learning to use weapons to defend their homes and castles

PROPERTY ERA





WOMEN'S RIGHTS ERA



CURRENT DAY Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender & queer:

Cultural genocide

Ban on sexual minority immigrants

Classification as mentally ill

Punitive castration

Military discrimination

Harassment

Anti-sodomy laws

The "Lavender Scare"

Isolation

Imprisonment

"Deserving of AIDS" at beginning of epidemic

Broad discrimination

Anti-LGBTQ protests at LGBTQ funerals

Considered erosive to family & American values

Police violence

Accused of inherent pedophilia



STONEWALL ERA

Erasure from census & research

Workplace/employment discrimination

Hate crimes

High rates of suicide

Loneliness

Community-level HIV trauma

Conversion therapy

Addiction



CURRENT



African Americans: Eth

Widespread sexual assault & rape of Black people

Prohibition of native language, customs & traditions

Systematic abuse

Denial of education

Sold as property

Forced breeding

Shackled, stored & shipped in inhumane conditions

Stolen from lands

HaRT<sup>3</sup>S

Enslaved (1619-1865)



**SLAVERY ERA** 

Police violence

Denial of VA & other benefits

Redlining

Convict leasing system

Sharecropping

Abolition of slavery replaced w/ restrictive Black codes

Mass public lynching (late 1880s-1920s)

Jim Crow (~1890-1965)



JIM CROW ERA: SEPARATE BUT EQUAL Negative stereotypes & microaggressions

tral genocide

Health disparities

Mass incarceration

Police violence

Highest homicide rates



**CURRENT DAY** 

American Indian & Alaska Native: Ethnic &

cultural genocide

Tradition of extermination

Pandemics from introduction of new disease

Community massacres

Genocidal policies

Stolen land

HaRT<sup>3</sup>S

Prohibition of spiritual & cultural practices

Forced relocation & marches

Colonization

**Broken treaties** 



THE WHITE MAN
ARRIVES

Poor health Negative stereotypes & microaggressions

Forced removal of children (1879-1935+)

Mandatory imprisonment of parents who refused

Rampant sexual & physical abuse of children

"Kill the Indian, Save the Man" policy



NOT ALLOWED TO BE "INDIAN" Lack of concern about women

Destruction of natural resources on native lands

Suicide epidemic

Child abuse & neglect

Underfunding of Indian health services

Highest rates of violence & victimization

Interpersonal violence

Police violence



**CURRENT DAY** 

## Latina/Latino/Latinx &

1962: Travel to & from Cuba prohibited

Ethnic & cultura

Immigration Act of 1917: "Literacy" requirement

Lynchings

Texas Rangers "Los Rinches"

1848: Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo forces Mexicans out of "Texas"

Fighting for independence

Revolutions, revolts & rebellions

Colonization

Slavery



COLONIZATION

1950s: Operation Wetback – locate & deport

ltaly

1940s: Mexican American vets struggle to receive benefits

Pluse 1932: US begins to deport Mexicans (300k-500k in 1930s)

1925: Border control created by Congress

1921: Limits to US immigration imposed for 1st time

1917: Mexican immigrants obligated to register for draft



NO SPANISH HERE

Widespread anti-immigrant sentiment – rise of minutemen

Detaining children – separation from parents

Deportation of documented & undocumented

Health disparities

Ongoing English only campaigns

Violence

Hate crimes



SH HERE CURRENT DAY

Asian/Pacific Islander: Fthnic & cultural genocide

Deplorable working conditions

Denied citizenship – "US nationals"

HaRT<sup>3</sup>S

Denied right to own property

Predatory taxes

Women fetishized, men emasculated

Imported as laborers

Family not allowed

Yellow Peril

Banned from schools



LABORERS NO CITIZENS

Normative anti-immigration laws

Redlining & restricted to impoverished areas "China towns"

Territories denied representation & citizenship

Labor movement met w/ violence

Denial of VA benefits

Japanese internment camps



NATIONAL THREAT

Lack of disaggregated data = silencing

Filipinos in underpaid/long hour service industry jobs

Underrepresentation

Gentrification

Denial of ethnic studies programs at universities

Invisibility

Stereotypes



CURRENT DAY

### The impact of historical trauma

Trauma of these events is "embodied" or held personally and passed down over generations (Walters et al, 2011)

#### May Impair Ability to cope effectively with stressors

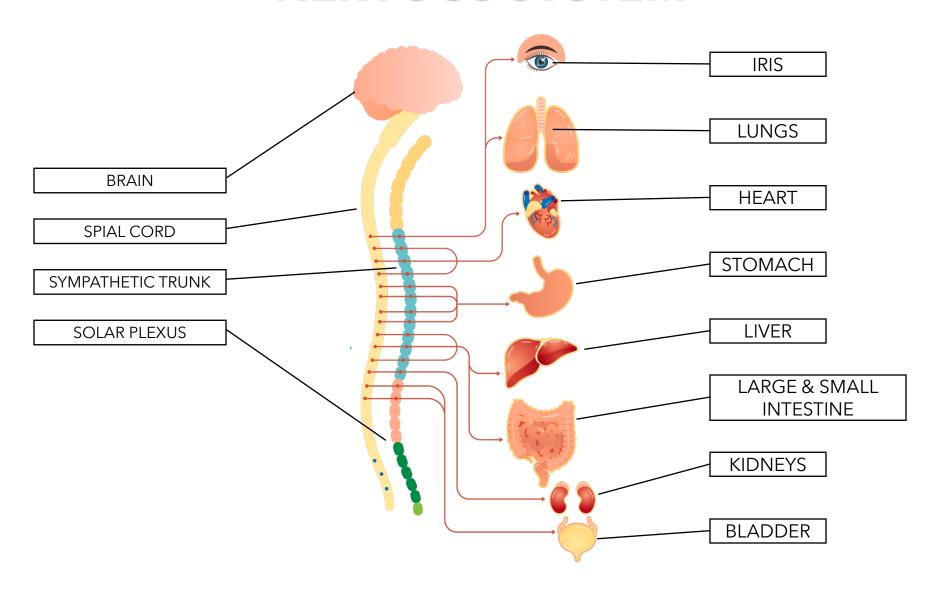
When high levels of stress are experienced in day-today life, a **heightened stress vulnerability** may result in PTSD or other related symptoms of trauma (Kellerman, 2001) Stressful environmental conditions can leave an **imprint or "mark" on epigenome** (cellular material) (Serpeloni et al, 2017; Ryan et al, 2017)

Psychological and nutritional stress during pregnancy can lead to biological changes predisposing children to negative health outcomes

Biological and psychological expressions of historical trauma are likely contributors to current health disparities

Impacts the individual, the family, and the community

## THE SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM





**Questions?** 

**Discussion** 

## Thank you

