I Am Because We Are:
Reclaiming African Culture As A Source Of Strength In Black Communities

Dr. Charmain Jackman

INNOPSYCH
CHANGING THE FACE OF THERAPY
Dr. Charmain Jackman

- African woman by way of Barbados
- Daughter, Mom, wife...
- Bring people together for the purpose experiences to learn, grow, and heal
- 23 years in mental health field
- Founder of InnoPsych, Inc.
Objectives

What we will cover today:

Identity & Mental Health

African Cultural Values

Community Interventions
Impact of Enslavement

1619: Arrival of 1st Africans to the U.S.

- Inhumane treatment
- Erasure of Culture & History
- Historical & Racial Trauma
- Generational Trauma
- Structural Inequities
Racial Trauma

- Shortened lifespan
- Imposter Syndrome
- Hopelessness
- Self-hate
- Physical/medical issues
- Chronic stress
- Fear
- Anxiety
Impact of Enslavement on Identity

- Internalized Oppression
- Loss of Identity
- Disconnection from Culture
- Self-Hate
- Identity Confusion

Dehumanization + Subordination
Identity

A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.

- Marcus Garvey

Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery, none but ourselves can free our minds.

- Bob Marley
Resistence + Reclaiming Identity + Building Community

"Until the lion learns how to write, every story will glorify the hunter."

- Challenging the narratives that have been told about who we are
- Unlearning the history
- Teaching the truth about our history + culture
- Rebuilding identity + community
Sankofa

Go back and fetch it!

Learning from the past to build the future.
Dear Students,

They didn't steal slaves. They stole scientists, doctors, architects, teachers, entrepreneurs, astronomers, fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, etc. and they made them slaves.

Sincerely,

Your ancestors.

Jovan Bradshaw
Africa's Great Civilizations by Henry Gates

- Takes a new look at the history of Africa, from the birth of humankind to the dawn of the 20th century.
- 6-hour documentary
- Watch on PBS
High On The Hog

- Based on book by Jessica B. Harris
- Traces the roots of African American cuisine back to Africa
- "A story of Black America’s resilience, enduring creativity, and vital contribution to America’s kitchen" (WP)
- 4-hour/4 episode docu-series
- Watch on Netflix
African Cultural Values

"It takes a village to raise a child."

- Community
- Honoring Ancestors/Respect for Elders
- Connection to land
- Greetings
- Sharing resources
- Oral storytelling
Ubuntu

- I Am Because We Are
- We exist because of each other
- Cooperation

"My humanity is tied to yours."
- Bishop Desmond Tutu
Voudou

- Spiritual practice that blends West African & European religions
- Present in many cultures
- Central to the Haitian Revolution, which led to 1st Black Republic

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uwpqsm4iH1
Community Interventions

"If you want to go fast go alone, if you want to go far, go together."

- Religious & Faith practices
- Healing Circles
- Global Movements
- Celebrations
- Protests
Year of Return

A celebration of resilience

- Marked 400 Years since 1619
- Goal: to help the African diaspora "rethink their identity and reclaim their roots."
Crop Over Festival

- Barbados: 1st island to have Africans (British)
- Celebration of the end of hard labor
- Going to carnival is becoming a global movement
Black Panther

- Grossed >$1.3B at the Box Office (2018)
  - #10 all movies; #5 Marvel
- Director: Ryan Coogler
- Cast: Mostly Black cast
- Social Movement
- Oscar: Best Costume Designer
  - Impacted Fashion Industry
RECLAIMING OUR WISDOM

- More resources supporting African identity
- More books written by Black authors
- More representation in film and the Arts
- More businesses started by Black entrepreneurs
- More, more, more....

www.sawatrivia.com

www.kidogoproductions.com

14 African Women Who Made History

www.thatomwosa.com

www.innopsych.com
Community Healing Network

**Mission:**
- "To mobilize Black people across the African Diaspora to heal from the trauma caused by centuries of anti-Black racism, to free ourselves of toxic stereotypes, and to reclaim our dignity and humanity as people of African ancestry.

- Ubuntu Healing Circles- led by non-clinicians
- Emotional Emancipation Circles
- Breathe, Baby, Breathe Podcast

www.communityhealingnet.org
Mission:

- Sawubona Healing Circles
- Certificate in African/Black Psychology

www.abpsi.org
Mission:
- A world where EVERY child, teen, and young adult (inclusive of all points of diversity) feels the freedom to live unapologetically and authentically within an environment that allows them to rise and thrive.
- Research on adolescents and mental health
- Free therapy resources

AAKOMA Project

www.aakomaproject.org
Impact of Community on Identity

Sawubona: "I see You"

- Self-Love
- Unity
- Belonging
- Empowerment
- Unstoppableness
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What initiatives are happening in your community?

How are you supporting Black organizations and Black businesses?