



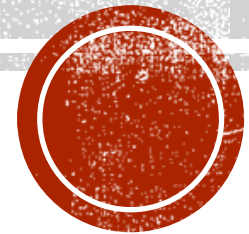
Racial Trauma and Communities of Color: Assessment and Treatment

Dr. Steven D. Kniffley Jr.
PsyD, MPA, ABPP, HSP

MHIA
Mental Health America
B4Stage4

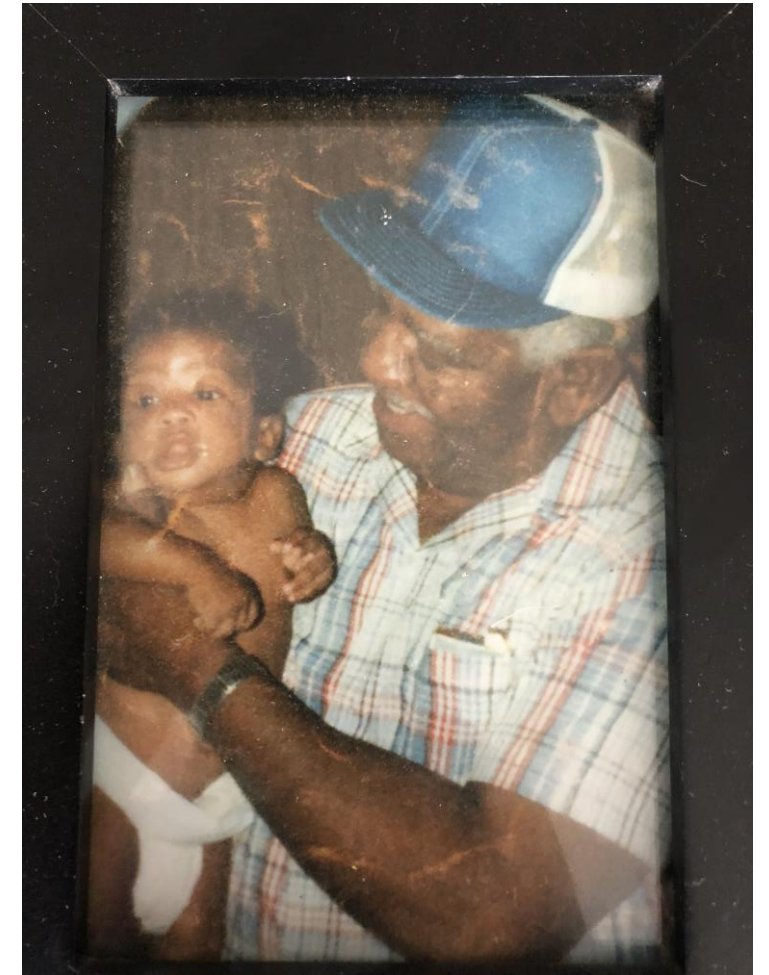
RACIAL TRAUMA AND COMMUNITIES OF COLOR: ASSESSMENT AND TREATMENT

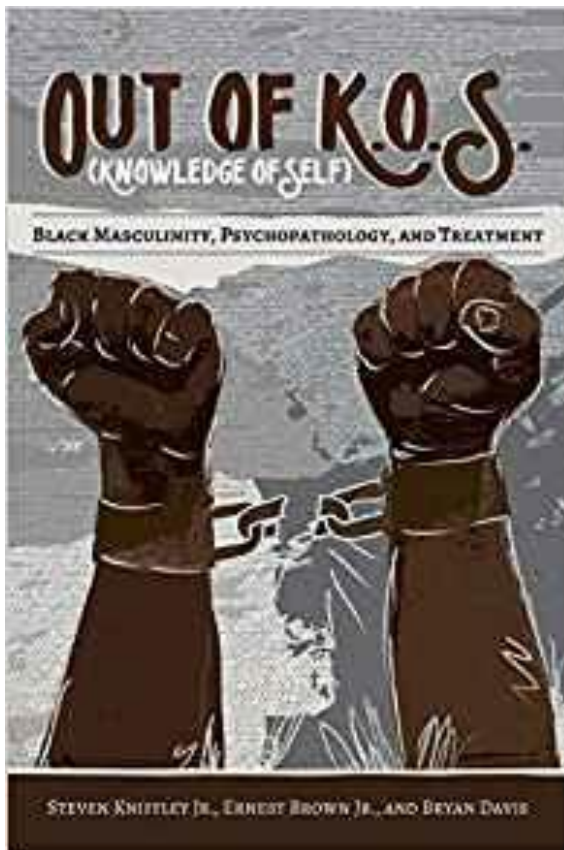
Steven D Kniffley Jr., PsyD, MPA, ABPP HSP



INTRODUCTION

- Chief Diversity Officer, Spalding University
- Assistant Professor, School of Professional Psychology
- Coordinator, Collective Care Center
- Education
 - PsyD, MA, Clinical Psychology, Spalding University
 - MPA, Wright State University
 - BS, University of Louisville
 - ABPP, Clinical Psychology
 - Certificate, Strategic Health care Leadership, Cornell University
- Research and clinical interests
 - Black male psychology
 - Multicultural Psychology
 - Racial Trauma treatment



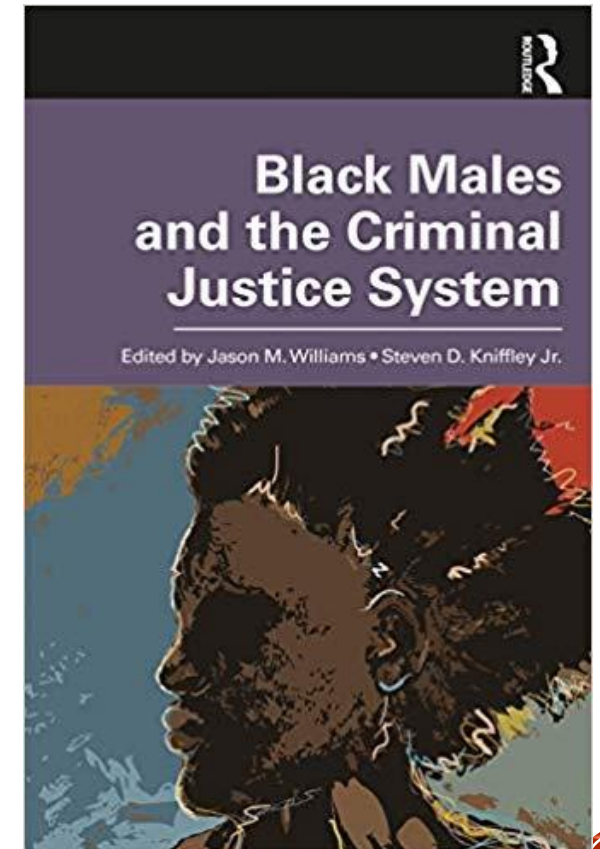


LOUISVILLE BUSINESS FIRST

FORTY
40

Dr. Steven Kniffley Jr.

Assistant professor, school of professional
psychology, Spalding University; associate
director, Center for Behavioral Health,
Spalding University





The Afrocentric Psychologist

EMPOWER OTHERS



THE HEALTHCARE ADVOCACY AWARD

The Healthcare Advocacy Award is presented to an individual who has worked to raise awareness of health challenges in our region and worked to affect change.

HONOREE: STEVEN KNIFFLEY JR. SPALDING UNIVERSITY

“Through Kniffley’s advocacy efforts in the areas of education, training and service provision, there has been an increased use of the racial trauma therapy services at the Collective Care Center as well as an increase in the number of individuals seeking services for racial trauma in general.”



to a heightened awareness of racial trauma as well as a greater understanding of warning signs and steps to get support.”

In 2020, Kniffley provided racial trauma therapy training to 200 clinicians across the world. These trainings increased access to racial trauma therapy services during the current times of racial tension and social unrest.

Lastly, the racial trauma clinic he coordinates, the Collective Care Center (CCC), provides accessible racial trauma therapy services to BIPOC individuals. In the last year, the CCC has provided services to 100 BIPOC clients.

Example of Results

Through Kniffley’s advocacy efforts in the areas of education, training and service provision, there has been an increased use of racial trauma therapy services at the CCC as well as an increase in the number of individuals seeking services for racial trauma in general.

Kniffley said, “When the CCC first started only a handful of BIPOCs were seeking services and support for race-based stress and trauma. However, the CCC has experienced a significant increase in the number of BIPOCs seeking racial trauma therapy to over 100 clients a year. This increase can be attributed to the improved community awareness of racial trauma, its impact, and ways to get help through education.”

Additionally, Kniffley said that the increase in service seeking can also be attributed to an improvement in the number of culturally competent clinicians equipped with the skills needed to support racially traumatized BIPOCs through the racial trauma therapy training program.

“According to the literature, BIPOC individuals report almost daily experiences of racism and discrimination which have contributed to increased rates of poor mental health and suicide.”

Why This is Important

Kniffley said, “According to the literature, BIPOC individuals report almost daily experiences of racism and discrimination which have contributed to increased rates of poor mental health and suicide.”

Additionally, the buffers that one would expect to protect individuals from identity related stress in the form of educational attainment and socioeconomic status do not shield BIPOCs from the negative effects of race-related stress and trauma.

Furthermore, the experience of race-related stress and trauma has been connected to health challenges such as poorer immune functioning, heart disease, insomnia, cancer and low birth weight babies. The literature is also clear that with appropriate treatment and education, BIPOCs can learn to cope and heal from the experience of racial trauma. Kniffley said, “However, without significant advocacy in the areas of education, training and service, many BIPOCs will continue to suffer the negative health effects of race-based stress and trauma.”

Steven Kniffley Jr., PsyD, MPA, ABPP, HSP, is an Assistant Professor at the School of Professional Psychology and Associate Director at the Center for Behavioral Health. Kniffley’s area of expertise is research and clinical work with Black males and the treatment of race-based stress and trauma. Kniffley also serves as an organizational diversity consultant and works with law enforcement departments on addressing conflicts between communities of color and police officers.

Citizen’s Commission on Police Accountability. He serves as the pro bono lead research consultant for Louisville Synergy Project which focuses on building positive community/police relationships. He also has a scholarship at the University of Louisville that is awarded to high achieving Black psychology students. Kniffley’s philanthropic involvement contributed to him being recognized as one of Louisville’s top 40 under 40 for 2020.



The literature is also clear that with appropriate treatment and education, BIPOCs can learn to cope and heal from the experience of racial trauma.”

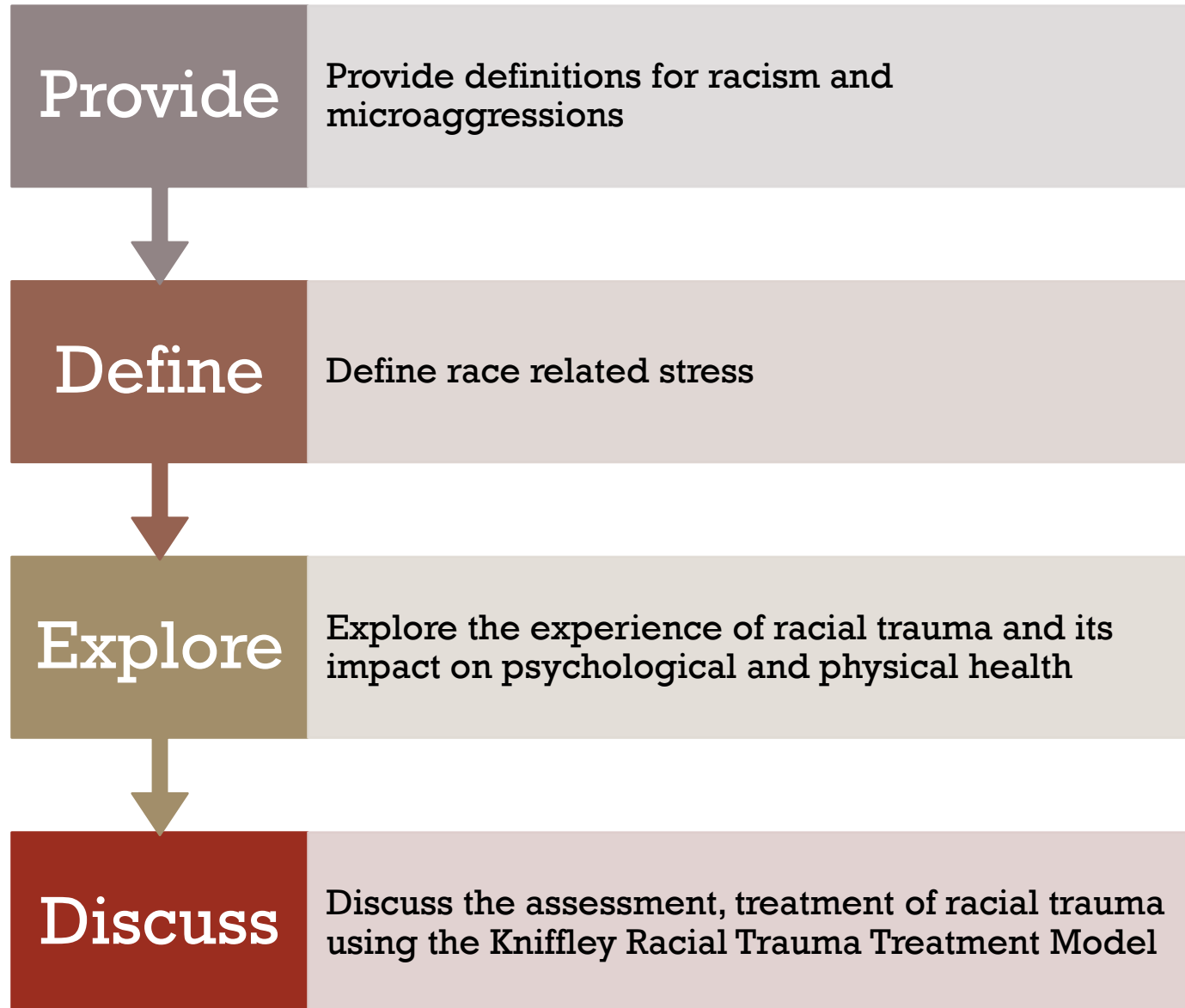
Kniffley is the president-elect for the Kentucky Psychological Association and serves on Louisville’s

Advocacy Efforts

Within the healthcare setting, Kniffley has advocated for increased culturally competent care for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) individuals. He has advocated for more education, training and service provision for the experience of racial trauma. Regarding education, he has conducted over 100 presentations related to the experience of racial trauma in the areas of healthcare, education, criminal justice and nonprofits. Kniffley said, “Conducting these presentations has contributed

CELEBRATING THE 2020
MEDISTAR HONOREES





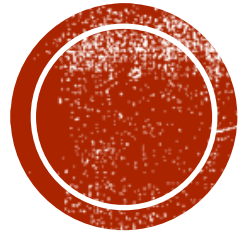
OBJECTIVES



INSPIRATION

- Ubuntu
- Sawubona
- Sankofa
- “If you conquer the enemy within, the enemy without can do you no harm”





WHY TALK ABOUT RACIAL TRAUMA?



01

96% of Black Americans report experiencing racism and discrimination daily.

02

The rate of depression for Black males has quadrupled in the last two decades

03

Suicide is the third leading cause of death for Black males ages 15-24

04

High earning Black women have the same risk for low birth weight babies as low earning White women

05

The Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism found that hate crimes are at their highest level in a decade with African Americans being the most targeted group.



DEFINING RACISM

Use of power and privilege at the individual, institutional, and cultural levels to oppress culturally diverse individuals, based on perceived biological inferiority characteristics



Used to justify the generalizability of dominant racial group values



Used to assess how well non-dominant group members adhere to dominant cultural standards



MICROAGGRESSIONS

- Commonplace verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicates hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults people of color.



Microinsult- communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person's racial heritage.

Microassault- Explicit racial derogations characterized primarily by a violent verbal, nonverbal, or environmental attack meant to harm the victim.

Microinvalidation- communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or lived experience of a person of color.

TYPES OF MICROAGGRESSIONS



EXAMPLES OF MICROAGGRESSIONS

- Microinsult- “You are a credit to your race” “Why are your people so loud”
- Microinvalidation- “I don’t see color,” “If you don’t like it here go back to your country,” “We are a melting pot,” “We are all Americans,” “Everyone can succeed if they work hard enough”





```
graph LR; A[Microaggressions] --> B[Adaptive coping]; B --> C[Exhaustion of adaptive coping]; C --> D[Experience of race-related stress];
```

Microaggressions

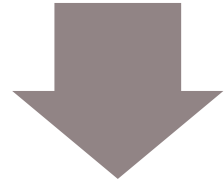
Adaptive coping

Exhaustion of
adaptive coping

Experience of
race-related
stress



Black individuals experience significant stress related to individual, institutional, and cultural encounters with racism and discrimination



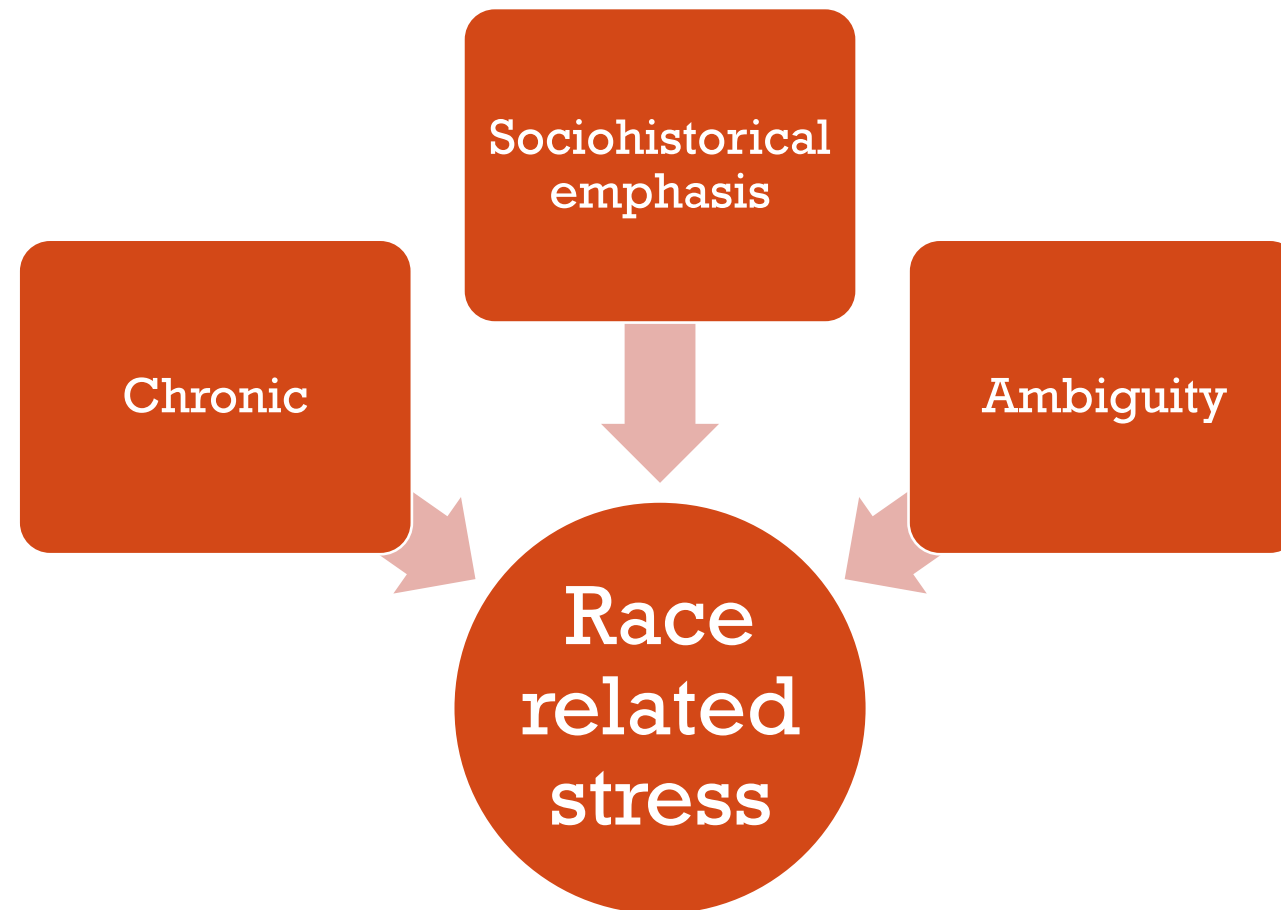
Types of race related stress

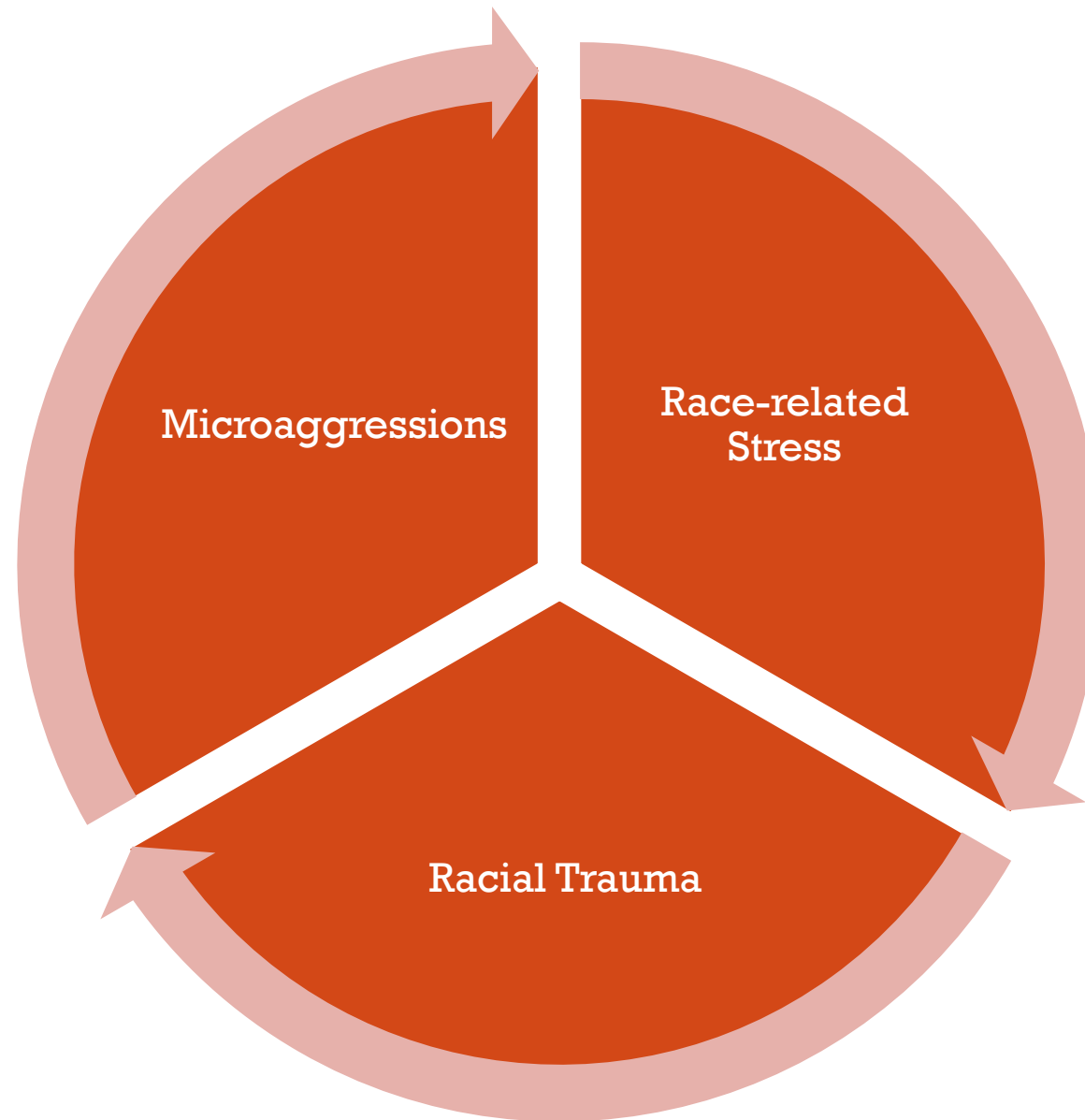
- Racism-related events
- Vicarious racism
- Daily racism
- Chronic contextual stress

RACE RELATED STRESS



RACE RELATED STRESS VS OTHER TYPES OF STRESS





RACIAL TRAUMA

Black individuals experience elevated levels of PTSD which cannot be explained by exposure to physical trauma

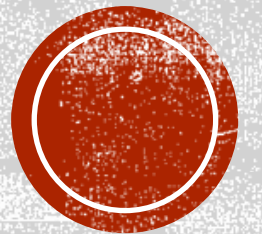
Race-based trauma is the result of chronic experiences racism and discrimination

Contributes to a constant state of hypervigilance for racially-based slights and micro-assaults at the individual, institutional, and cultural levels

Over time, individual coping techniques are exhausted, leading to negative health outcomes, caused by race-related stresses



IMPACT OF RACIAL TRAUMA



PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT

Flashbacks/nightmares

Intrusive thoughts

Inability to concentrate

Hyperactivity

Restrictive emotional expression

Depression

Anxiety



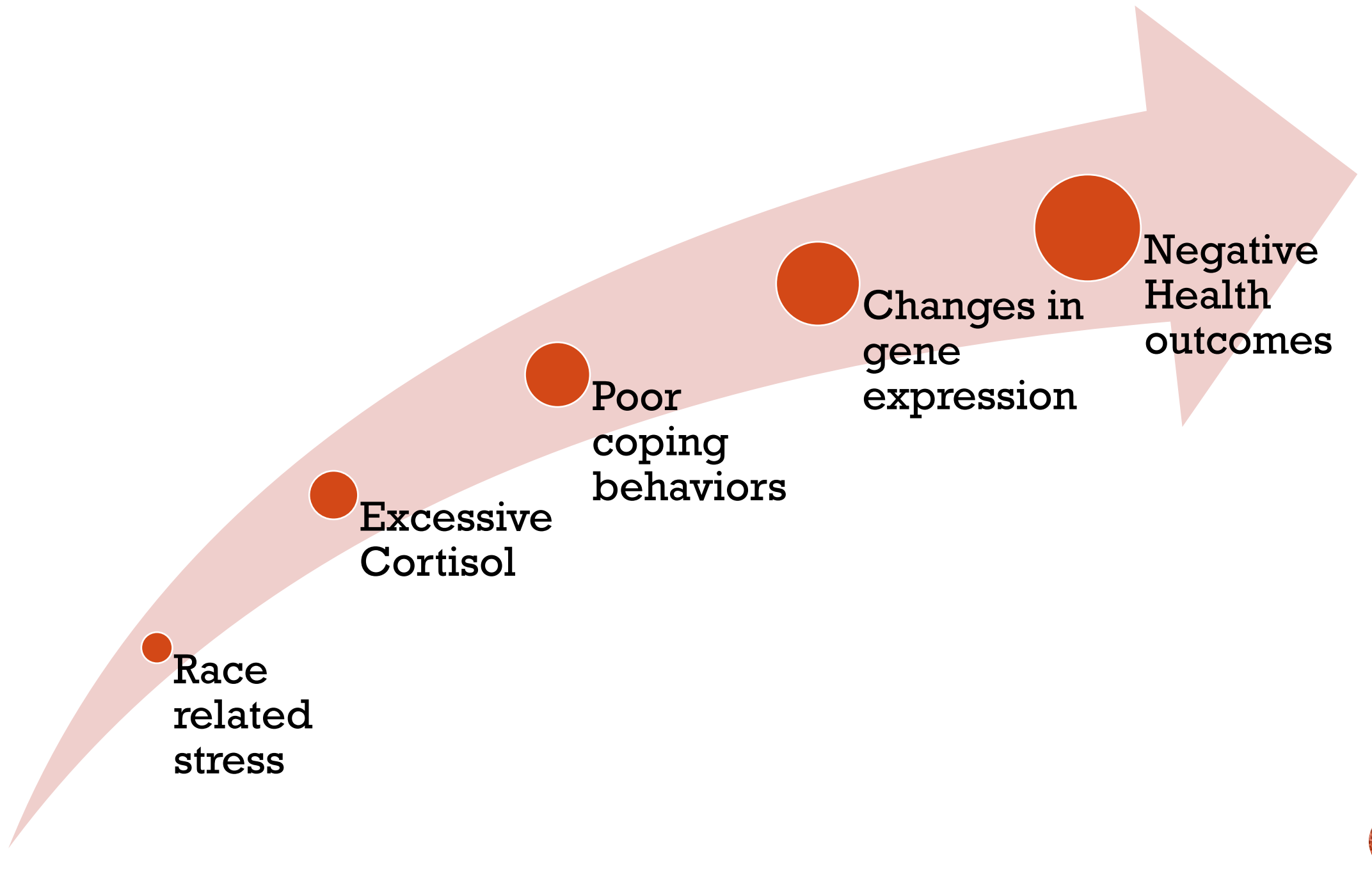
BIOLOGICAL IMPACT

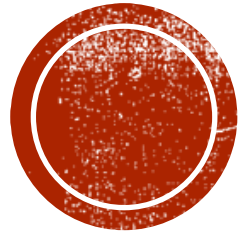
- Exhaustion of biological coping strategies for racial trauma
- Transmission of maladaptive biological coping responses for racial trauma



Cortisol - The Stress Hormone







RACIAL TRAUMA AND EDUCATION



Trauma influenced Behaviors and Emotions

Hypervigilance, aggression, irritability, poor decision making, anxiety, sadness

Biased informed perceptions

Lower expectations for achievement, capacity for emotion regulation, social skills, decision making abilities

Higher expectations for deviant behavior, aggressiveness, and learning disabilities

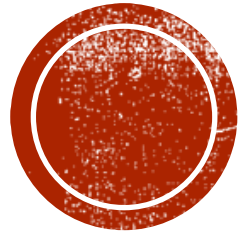
Use of punitive disciplinary practices

Containment vs skill building disciplinary practices

Disproportionate use of suspensions and detentions

Can exacerbate race-related stress and symptoms of racial trauma





RACIAL TRAUMA AND HOUSING



Adverse Housing
Policies

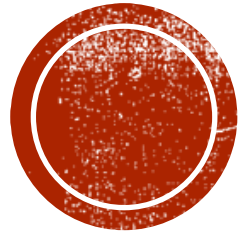


Decreased access to
quality health,
education, economic
resources



Increased risk for
race related stress





RACIAL TRAUMA AND PUBLIC SAFETY



Policing

- Function vs process of policing (e.g., procedural justice, police legitimacy)
- A recent study found that those individuals who report more intrusive police contact experienced increased trauma and anxiety symptoms. Those who reported fair treatment during encounters with law enforcement had fewer symptoms of PTSD and anxiety (Jackson, Fahmy, Vaughn, & Testa, 2019)



THE COLLECTIVE CARE CENTER

**SPALDING'S
COLLECTIVE CARE
CENTER OFFERS A
'SAFE PLACE' FOR
THOSE FACING
RACE-BASED
STRESS AND
TRAUMA**

Center for Behavioral
Health's specialty clinic is
one of kind in Louisville



WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR RACIAL TRAUMA TREATMENT?

- Experience of a traumatic situation that the client has attributed to their racial background
- High scores on RBTSSS and DLS indicating chronic experience of race related stress and microaggressions
- Low score on MIBI-S indicating low racial identity development
- Experience of trauma related symptoms (e.g., Flashbacks/nightmares, Intrusive thoughts Inability to concentrate, Hyperactivity, Restrictive emotional expression, Depression, Anxiety)





Develop racial identity



Process experiences of racial trauma



Build and practice skills for future racially traumatic events.

OBJECTIVES





**Develop Racial Identity
(Sessions 1-4)**

**Process Racial Trauma
(Sessions 5-8)**

**Develop skills for
future racial trauma
(Sessions 9-12)**



CONTACT INFORMATION

- skniffley01@spalding.edu
- drstevenkniffleyjr.com
- [@drstevenkniffleyjr](https://www.instagram.com/drstevenkniffleyjr)

