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IDENTIFYING INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSON OF HISTORICAL TRAUMA USING THE GENOGRAM PSYCHOSOCIAL ASSESSEMENT TOOL

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

BY

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my children the Butler-King/Johnson Clan (Tony/Kima, Ondre', Kenya, Keisha, Marcus, Jr., and Chaunce). I love you! This village was continually selfless, giving, and adaptive as my career made several changes for the sake of completing my doctoral studies. I cannot thank you all enough for all you do. So, I leave you all with following quote:

> I find it both an honor and a gift to listen to people share their hurts, dramas, traumas, upsets, disappointments, and fears. *Hurts, dramas, traumas, upsets, disappointments and fears* is my phrase for the lies that crash into our lives and make us feel small or fearful. From this perspective any experience or event that leaves us feeling worthless, not good enough, afraid of discovering or being ourselves, or disconnected from our innate value is a lie – a false impression. False impressions are not the truth.
>
> Tina Lifford

Dedication to God, Hope and Optimism!

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PROLOGUE

This dissertation adheres to a journal-ready format. Three journal articles prepared for submission to refereed journals comprise the first part of the dissertation. Manuscript I, Black Boys Suspension and Expulsion: Applying Theory to Practice is prepared for the *Journal of Children and Schools (National Association of Social Workers Press)*. Manuscript II, Assessing for Transmitted Intergenerational Trauma with African American Mothers is prepared for the *Journal of Social Work Research*. Manuscript III, What Happened to You? Working Your Way Out of Intergenerational Transmission of Historical Trauma is prepared for the *Zero to Three Journal*.

Dissertation Abstract

Intergenerational Transmission of Historical Trauma (ITHxT) is a real-world challenge that is multifaceted for Black children. As children with a legacy of slavery, the passing of trauma into their environment (home life) can impact that child's individual temperament and development. Culture is a huge factor in all families and shapes how behavior is expressed. The genogram is a tool that can assess ITHxT. The ability to assess a family's coping skills when exposed to daily toxic stress with a holistic measurement tool can yield information to impact life outcomes for children enrolled in early childhood programs. This research explored and evaluated the use of the genogram psychosocial assessment tool for identifying ITHxT. The identification deepened and extended knowledge of how many African American family systems adapt to daily and/or major stressors. Early identification of ITHxT in the young child's ecological and/or school system informs, transforms, supports, and empower parents, pediatricians, and/or educators of possible interventions.

MANUSCRIPT I

Black Boys Suspension and Expulsion: Applying Theory to Practice

This manuscript is prepared for submission to the peer-reviewed Journal of Children and Schools and is the first of three manuscripts prepared for a journal-ready doctoral dissertation.

Abstract

The development of theory is important to inform practice within an inclusive early childhood learning community. Black boys are suspended and expelled at an alarming rate within this community. The combination of critical theory and systems theory presents a supportive way to address the suspension and expulsion of young Black boys. By combining these two theories and recognizing the possibility of the transmission of generational trauma, early childhood social workers (ECSW) can reframe problems and issues to provide a new perspective. To transform the lived experience of oppression the educational environment needs to think *third space,* especially when engaging in the practice of assessments.

Keywords: *Black boys, suspension, expulsion, assessment, systematic racism, intergenerational transmission of historical trauma*

Black Boys Suspension and Expulsion: Applying Theory to Practice

At the heart of addressing early childhood education in a culturally sensitive manner is the "challenge of preserving one's sense of personal community over time, of establishing a sense of sameness of oneself, despite the necessary changes that one must undergo in terms of redefining the self" (Casey Family Programs, 2000, p. 7). A large body of research suggests meaningful assessment of young learners within their contextual environment supports school readiness, academic success, and a lower rate of behavior challenges upon entering elementary school (Gonzalez-DeHass & Willems, 2003; Hyson, 2008; Lidz & Gindi, 2003; Pena, 2001). The quality of education is an influential component to the health and well-being of any community. Yet, in the U.S. the literature documents that many Black children, specifically young Black boys, start out behind when they enter elementary school. All communities want the best possible educational experience for their children, more specifically, parents want to see their children succeed as they enter school systems. However, young Black boys are statistically experiencing a high rate of suspension or expulsions from early childhood educational settings (Gilliam, 2005).

The journey to become an inclusive early childhood learning community involves an intentional engagement of children within their contextual environment. This learning community should adhere to the literature that supports ones understanding of critical theory and systems theory, which is resoundingly relevant to the success of young Black boys' development, school readiness, and school success (Carlisle, Stanley, & Kemple, 2005). By concentrating on these two theories and recognizing the possibility of the transmission of generational trauma, early childhood social workers (ECSW) can work

with parents and teachers to address problems and behaviors that may arise. This article focuses on the intersectionality of critical theory and systems theory to provide an understanding of the conceptual framework of Intergenerational Transmission of Historical Trauma (ITHxT). The ITHxT genogram is a framework that can be used to assess historical trauma found in the early learners' environment that may lead to the behaviors that get young Black boys suspended or expelled from early childhood programs.

Critical Theory

Deliberately or not, people are assigned social identities. Within each social identity there is a hierarchy - a social status among majority and minority groups. As with race, members of the majority group often receive benefits because they are "normal," but members who fall into an "other" category do not receive those same benefits (Lorde, 2020). Often, people of the minority category experience oppression in the form of difficulties, disadvantages, or disapproval and certain individuals, institutions, or cultural practices perpetuate this oppression. Oppression signifies a combination of institutional power and prejudice that produces a system that consistently discriminates against some groups, while benefitting others.

People who have been oppressed have been conditioned to not question the status quo. However, in order for transformation to occur within a group of people, there must be freedom to question existing conditions. In the book, *Four Agreements*, Don Miguel Ruiz (1997) referred to this acclimation of silence as the domestication of humans or the lack of inquiry among the impoverished. Furthermore, Freire (1970) believed that inquiry was critical and foundational for early learners and their families, especially if they lived

in an oppressed, impoverished community. Freire stated that education suffers when there is a lack of critical inquiry. This type of inquiry provides a meticulous analysis from which knowledge emerges.

Freire's (1970) major contributions were his challenges to the model of education, which seems to separate community from the ability to participate in emerging knowledge, and his reassurance of existentialism that encourages community to participate in dialogue. Communication in the education system is one sided; in most cases, the teacher supplies knowledge while the student listens. This knowledge forms a worldview for the disadvantaged student that says unless my inquiry into knew knowledge looks and sounds like my teacher it isn't knowledge. Oppression inhibits the ability for impoverished students to comfortably inquire about the world or question other's perspectives. Moreover, oppressed communities often feel as though they have been reduced into vessels that are expected to receive knowledge from the identified majority and disregard their ability to dispense, transfer, and transform their own knowledge (Dimitriades & Kamberelis, 2006; Freire, 1970). Early learners in impoverished communities must use Freire's model of knowledge as a tool to break the cycle of oppression. Knowledge becomes power in oppressed communities when communication is facilitated in a bi-directional manner.

Existentialism

Literature repeatedly clarifies and describes the importance of existentialism for oppressed people (Dimitriades & Kamberelis, 2006; Freire, 1970; 1973). Existentialism can be defined as a philosophy that emphasizes the uniqueness of an individual's lived experience. The four key concepts within the Freirean pedagogy of the oppressed exist

as: limit situations, generative words, conscientization, and dialogue. Freire's explanations of these terms allow a closer look at these four concepts.

First, limit situations refer to situations in which oppressed people seem to have difficulty finding a solution to some social or political challenge (Freire, 1970). In fact, all interactions within their world reinforce the notion of no-way out with statements like: *that is just the way it is* or *they don't know how to use it*. Impoverished communities display evidence of limit situations because they rarely ask questions inquiring why they remain impoverished. Oppression has limited the ability for many in an impoverished community to question their own situation.

Secondly, generative words represent the verbal interchange the oppressed communities use to have dialogue with one another (Freire, 1970). Communication of the dominant culture rarely use nonconformitive English words. The generative words, and the ways in which they are expressed, appear as if an impoverished community has less intellect or lacks education. Defining and connecting generative words to limit situations is how oppressed communities participate in emerging knowledge. These words are unique and important to that community. To mainstream early learners and their families, providing an opportunity to transform their limit situation by scaffolding their generative words is necessary for clear communication and increase the possibility for success (Dimitriades & Kamberelis, 2006; Fiske, 2011). Knowledge encompasses one's class of origin while the community-based dialogue communicates that knowledge; Emdin (2016) calls this ratchetdemics; this can be a state of being for young learners coming from urban communities. As an example, to put it another way ratchetdemics is defined as a combination of being ratchet and academic. Acknowledgement that generative words

work in tandem to favor the interest of a specific class but they are not always transferrable to the members of the majority group.

Conscientization is Freire's (1970) third concept; it is transforming a word to allow the oppressed group to have a different sense of consciousness about the word. This different sense of consciousness facilitates action in the oppressed community. Perception is determined by an individual's culture, not by their nature or individual consciousness (Fiske, 2011). Cultural context frames and assists in development of the oppressed communities' view of themselves. Hartigan (2015, p. 223) states:

> Culture involves the process by which we formulate perceptions of the world, particularly in terms of our sense of belonging to or being different from particular groups of people. As well culture involves meanings, and meaning is a function of systems of signification that are variously bound to or embedded in or reference the material world around us. We learn to see these meanings in everyday gestures, images, and actions.

Critical reflection of one's culture, perspectives, and communication is the key to transformative learning and provides a more collective assessment of the dialogue that needs to occur.

Last, but not least, is the key concept of dialogue (Freire, 1970). The concept of dialogue is central to the process of actual communication and reflection with oppressed people. This approach to educating impoverished communities provides a sincere attempt for accountability. The continued development of emancipation has to be the collective work of the oppressed people. Whatever the limit situation is, the collective has to have dialogue and reflect on the generative words to present the situation as a problem.

Dialogue remains an essential piece to the pedagogy of the oppressed; it provides the praxis for the struggle and transparency for trust of the process.

Systems Theory

Systems theory is an interdisciplinary study of systems according to how the structures relate to one another within a larger, more complex system (Cox, Tice, & Long, 2019). The fundamental construct of systems theory is that the whole is greater than the sums of its parts. Simply stated, when examining how smaller systems come together to affect the greater complex system, certain characteristics of the whole or the complex system cannot be easily explained when only looking at one of its systems or its parts. When applied to early childhood social work, systems theory refers to a practice that enables specialists to look holistically at a child's circumstances and environmental dynamics to gain a clear comprehension of why they experience certain anxieties or hardships.

Assessing a child's behavior as it relates to their specific circumstances and environmental trauma experienced can be a complicated process; however, ECSW can apply systems theory to put the puzzle pieces together to illuminate the whole picture of the child's behavior. By applying systems theory, the ECSW looks to identify, explain, and develop a hypothesis involving the characteristics that surface within the complex systems effecting the child. The child's behavior refers to the unique interaction of their collective circumstances and environmental trauma. The ECSW's task is to apply the systems theory, look at all the contributing factors (the complex system), and ultimately determine how best to serve the parent, caregiver, or teacher in dealing with the emergent behavior.

Systems of Oppression

One element that is often not discussed when discussing young Black boy's emergent behavior is the systems of oppression. Systems of oppression refers to systemic racism that has been woven into the American culture since the beginning of slavery (Kendi, 2017). The dominant culture, society, and laws have marginalized certain social groups, while elevating the social groups in the majority. Systems of oppression have negatively influenced economical, educational, political, and judicial procedures for African Americans. Although American slavery was abolished in 1865, these systems have continued to oppress the minority group which has led to mistrust of authorities in power and the governing systems. This warranted mistrust has trickled down from generation to generation festering into intergenerational transmission of historical trauma.

Education System

The education system creates challenges and insecurities for many African American children who are striving to continue their social-emotional development (Wright et al., 2015). Although most public schools consider themselves advocates for children, research finds that the U.S. is

> ranked 18th in the percentage of children living in poverty; and 13th in the gap between rich and poor children. Additionally, children under 15 in the United States are 12 times as likely to die from gunfire as children in the other 25 industrialized countries combined. (Connolly, Hayden, & Levin, 2007, p. 93)

Knowing these statistics, along with the facts that Black and Hispanic children comprise almost two-thirds of the children in poverty, supports the notion of cultural disadvantages and speaks to the trauma experienced by African American families in the U.S.

educational system (Croner et al., 2018; Kendi, 2017; Wright et al., 2015). Young Black boys continually experience challenges and insecurities that have been communally felt, as well as transmitted to them from generational stories. The results of these experiences and stories cause them to mistrust the system resulting in behavior considered unacceptable to the status quo educational system.

Intergenerational Transmission of Historical Trauma

Most African American family's roots are traced back to the traumatic experience brought on by the Transatlantic Slave Trade which began in the early 1600s. The Transatlantic Slave trade is labeled as the largest and most inhumane forced migration in history (The United Nations, 2017). For this reason, the history of African Americans is an important component in helping to understand how this culture's parenting is adaptive and adjusted for the traumas related to a race-based society or a society that focuses on race (Hartigan, 2015; Hemming & Evans, 2018; Kendi, 2017; National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004). These families have experienced clear challenges in defining the appearance and expression of family attachment, especially the mother-infant attachment, due to the historical trauma passed down from generation to generation.

Literature often uses the terms *historical trauma* and *intergenerational transmission of trauma* interchangeably to describe this horrific trauma; however, Cromer et al. (2018) have suggested that these terms may be theoretically distinct. At this time, there is no specific model for African American people when it comes to the transmission of historical trauma. These terms have been traditionally reserved for the trauma experienced by American Indian and Jewish cultures (Berger & Luckmann, 1966;

Chisom & Washington, 1997; DeGruy-Leary, 2005; Fisk, 2011; Karenga, 2010; Kinde, 2017; Marabal & Mullings, 2009). In order to address the historical trauma of many

Figure 1 The Intergenerational Transmission of Historical Trauma (ITHxT)

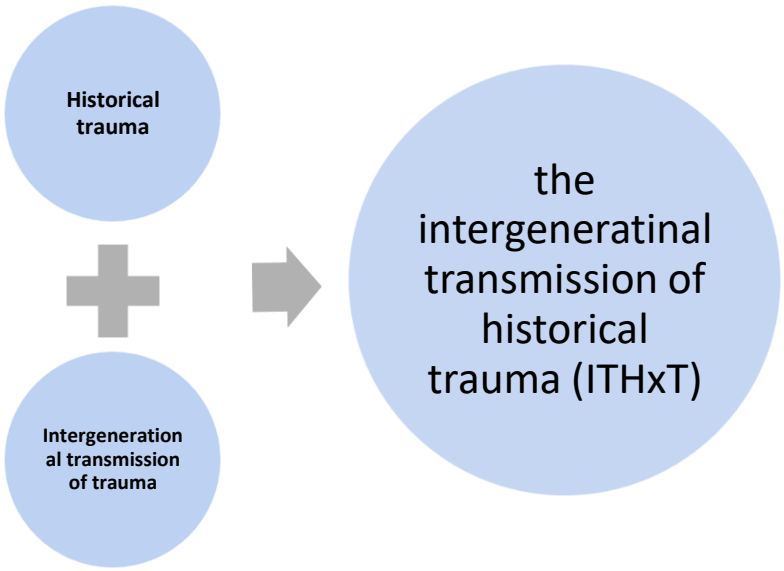


Figure 1-1 Represents and describes the acronym ITHxT for African American trauma in a cumulative, collective and institutionalized manner (Butler-King, 2020).

African American people, this researcher has integrated the terms *historical trauma* and *intergenerational transmission of trauma* into one concept: *historical trauma intergenerational transmission of trauma = the intergenerational transmission of historical trauma* or ITHxT (Figure 1-1).

Historical Trauma

Starting with the African American mother's history of trauma, or even the perception of her ancestor's experienced trauma, determines the trajectory of her child's social-emotional development and influences his behavior (Cromer et al, 2018; DeGruy-Leary, 2005; Karenga, 2010; Kendi, 2017). Intergenerational cultural relationships

among young Black boys and their mothers inform ECSWs and early childhood educators of the child's mental health and school readiness. Thus, a child's disruptive social-emotional behavior informs the potential need to assess the mother-child attachment and the mother's historical trauma. By using an assessment tool, such as a family genogram, an ECSW can provide a strength-based way to investigate attachment and trauma that may have led to suspensions or expulsions of three and four-year old boys from early childhood education programs.

An early childhood educator that is culturally sensitive to African American families experiencing trauma may provide stronger support for those children to successfully participate in an educational environment (Barton et al., 2004). Barton et al. (2004) believe that without intersecting early childhood education learning communities with families, children will fail. Realizing the public-school system could become an additional trauma experience for the African American mother, early childhood programs must be trauma informed.

Clear challenges exist in defining the appearance and expression of family and child attachment, as well as mother-infant attachment within the African American family and/or community due to the historical trauma that many faced coming to the Americas. Additionally, the fatigue that develops from the pain and anguish of living with the system of racism is constant and enduring. The results of intergenerational racism make one worry if a loved one [black son] will come home alive (Winters, 2020). The foundation of many African American children was and continues to be entrenched in a toxic environment that is too often mired in violence; suggesting that there is a

continual repetition of historical trauma these children face that often go unaddressed (DeGruy-Leary, 2005; Kendi, 2017).

Child-Adult Relationships

Literature speaks to parent-child relationships and how it helps children to co-construct family culture and communication with their parents and others (Anderson, 1997). This communication entails the parents' perspective of critical theory and systems theory in which the young Black boy often transfers to school settings. Bronfenbrenner (1999) indicated that lack of family engagement could add to the children's environmental confusion producing an unsafe place to learn. Maximum learning occurs when the relationship between the early childhood educator and family correspond to what is best for the child while in an early childhood program.

Duhn (2011) asserted that culturally, childhood is often understood as a time of innocence which can mean that issues such as social systems sustainability are considered too problematic for early childhood practitioners; however, ECSWs and early childhood educators who facilitate the genogram recognize the benefits to young Black boys and their families. When an early childhood educator is involved with a young Black boys' emerging behavior, it is important to promote parent engagement and assistance (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). By applying the ECSW's genogram tool, parents and educators can explore the young Black boy's behavior in the classroom in a cultural context. Awareness of ITHxT and the child's cultural context can provide a framework for early childhood educators to be more successful addressing emerging behavior and avoiding suspensions and expulsions.

Conclusion

Emdin (2016) states our educational systems are suffering from cultural agnosia, so much so that they do not recognize that they have a disease. A way forward would be to look to the literature that gives voice to the many ways in which early childhood social workers and educators should and could reimage school spaces by involving families and the community to collectively engage in conversations around ITHxT. These conversations would allow educators to understand how the ITHxT family assessment reveals aspects of historical trauma and systemic racism that impacts young Black boys' behavior within early childhood programs. These professionals must understand that critical thinking is of the utmost importance when beginning the transformation of an oppressed community, and that transformation can only be carried out by keeping the cultural context of the community in which one is working in view and in mind.

Early childhood learning communities must begin to create spaces within schools for young learners and their families to be as they are, even if it makes the teacher uncomfortable. Bhabha (1984) calls this Third Space. Third Space is the place where First Space -- young Black boys and their families bring their culture, language, and experiences, and Second Space – teachers and schools, begin to coexist and learn from each other. It is a place for conversation, collaboration, and negotiation around issues such as race, gender, cultural values, customs, and languages. The creation of Third Space within early childhood programs would allow the promotion of child development and learning that encourages children and families to come as they are, using the language and experiences they have had to create and demonstrate a narrative of new knowledge. ITHxT can help create Third Space by providing a framework that allows

families, social workers, and educators to process and reflect in a safe environment. Third Space and ITHxT can provide the tools so early childhood learning environments can begin to address young Black boy's behavioral challenges, that are often rooted in historical trauma and a system of oppression, in a responsive way that does not lead to suspension or expulsion but begins to provide the best possible educational experience for them.

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MANUSCRIPT II

Assessing for Transmitted Intergenerational Trauma with African American Mothers

This manuscript is prepared for submission to the peer-reviewed Social Work Research Journal and is the second of three manuscripts prepared for a journal-ready doctoral dissertation.

Abstract

The history of African Americans is an important component in helping to understand how parenting is adaptive and adjusted for the traumas related in a race-based society. The purpose of this article is to identify Intergenerational Transmission of Historical Trauma (ITHxT) through a case study using the Genogram Psychosocial Assessment (GPA) as an evaluative tool. By using the genogram assessment tool, an early childhood social worker helped identify the transmission of historical trauma in African American mothers and how that trauma has been passed down to their children. Through this GPA assessment, social workers, teachers, and mothers of young Black boys gain a better understanding of attitudes they hold towards early childhood programs and the educational system.

Keywords: Genogram Assessment, African American Mothers, Trauma

Assessing for Transmitted Intergenerational Trauma with African American Mothers

Most African American family's roots are traced back to the traumatic experience brought on by the Transatlantic Slave Trade, which began in the early 1600s and is considered the largest and most inhumane forced migration in history (The United Nations, 2017). For this reason, the history of African Americans is an important component in helping to understand how this culture's parenting is adaptive and adjusted for the traumas related to a race-based society or a society that focuses on race (Hartigan, 2015; Hemming & Evans, 2018; Kendi, 2017; National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004). These families have experienced clear challenges in defining the appearance and expression of family attachment, especially the mother-infant attachment, due to the historical trauma passed down from generation to generation.

At this time, there is no specific model for African American people when it comes to the transmission of historical trauma. These terms *historical trauma* and *intergenerational transmission of trauma* have traditionally been reserved for the trauma experienced by American Indian and Jewish cultures (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Chisom & Washington, 1997; DeGruy-Leary, 2005; Fisk, 2011; Karenga, 2010; Kinde, 2017; Marabal & Mullings, 2009). Literature often uses the terms interchangeably to describe these horrific injuries experienced by these groups; however, Cromer et al. (2018) have suggested that these terms may be theoretically distinct. These researchers studied the distinction and described it in this way:

> Historical trauma relates to a collective experience of trauma that is perpetrated against members of a group due to their group membership, and the trauma is about the secondary impact of trauma, from one generation to the next, at the

> individual level, whether or not the precipitating trauma occurred within a collective (Gone, 2013). Intergenerational trauma typically occurs within family systems. . . Vasquez, Ocean, Cromer, and Borntrager (2014) determined that intergenerational transmission of trauma occurs through parenting, possibly inadequate parenting, and through relationship dysfunction within the family unit. (Cromer et al., p. 100).

In order to address the historical trauma of many African American people, this researcher has integrated the terms *historical trauma* and *intergenerational transmission of trauma* into one concept to provide ease of adding voice to a dialogue that has been silenced, but that matters to the experiences of enslaved people: *historical trauma + intergenerational transmission of trauma = the intergenerational transmission of historical trauma* or ITHxT (Figure 1-1). The purpose of this study is to help acknowledge potential early indicators that allow social workers, parents/caregivers, and educators to recognize trauma, toxic stress, or historical trauma in a child's family system. Although the genogram is a tool often used in social work, this valuable instrument has not been thoroughly utilized in education. Acknowledgment and

acceptance of the valuable information this tool provides may lead to more support and

Figure 2-1 The Intergenerational Transmission of Historical Trauma (ITHxT)

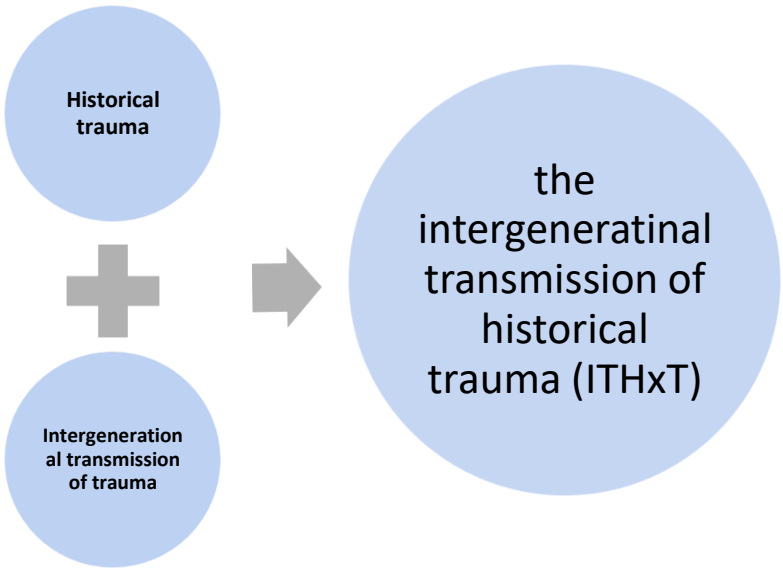


Figure 1 represents and describes the acronym ITHxT for African American trauma in a cumulative, collective and institutionalized manner (Butler-King, 2020).

understanding of a young Black boy's historical burden.

Clear challenges exist in defining the appearance and expression of family and child attachment, as well as mother-infant attachment within the African American family and/or community due to the historical trauma that many faced coming to the Americas. Additionally, the fatigue that develops from the pain and anguish of living with racism every single day is constant and enduring. The results of intergenerational racism make one worry if a loved one [black son] will come home alive (Winters, 2020). The foundation of many African American children was and continues to be entrenched in a toxic environment that is too often mired in violence; suggesting that there is a

continual repetition of historical trauma these children face that often goes unaddressed (DeGruy-Leary, 2005; Kendi, 2017).

Literature Review

The literature review of trauma assessment within the Black family can be addressed by using *Systems theory* to unpack the intergenerational transmission of historical trauma. Systems theory (Cox, Tice, & Long, 2019) provides an explanation of the child's interactions from various perspectives and in several different settings. The child's family system can be described as all things working within and affecting it. Systems theory focuses on the individual in their environment. For clarity in this study, the environment includes educational systems, family structure, and social support systems. Winters (2020) defines lack of adaptation in the African America family system as black fatigue and says that the "repeated variations of stress that result in extreme exhaustion and cause mental, physical, and spiritual maladies that are passed down from generation to generation" (p. 1). This relationship frames the social and emotional patterns for many African American young boys and their preparation for public school attendance.

Mother's Historical Trauma

African American mother's history of trauma, or even the perception of her ancestor's experienced trauma, may determine the trajectory of her child's social-emotional development and influence his behavior (Cromer et al, 2018; DeGruy-Leary, 2005; Karenga, 2010; Kendi, 2017). The relationships between young African American boys and their mothers help to inform early childhood educators, as well as pediatricians, of the child's mental health and school readiness. Thus, a child's disruptive social-

emotional behavior that might lead to preschool suspensions or expulsions might indicate a poor relationship between the mother and the child and the need to assess the mother-child attachment and the mother's historical trauma. The family genogram, an assessment tool utilized by early childhood social workers (ECSW), can provide a strength-based way to investigate this attachment and trauma.

An early childhood educator that is sensitive to African American families experiencing trauma may provide stronger support for those children to successfully participate in an educational environment (Barton et al., 2004), thus reducing suspensions and expulsions. Barton et al. believe that without intersecting early childhood education learning communities with families, children will fail. Some families are plagued with a lack of understanding about how their trauma can impact a three-year old's misconceptions about school. Realizing that public-school systems could become an additional trauma event for the African American mother, early childhood programs must become trauma informed. Coupled with a willingness to assist the Black mother to become fully conscious of her family's patterns and actively involved in trying to adjust those patterns to facilitate a healthy relationship with the educational environment.

It is important to understand that the Black mother is engaged in a process of attempting to heal her needs through healing of behaviors exhibited by her son in school (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Cromer, et al., 2018; DeGruy, 2005; & Winter, 2020). One issue becomes the mother's inability to understand that she is carrying her own adverse childhood trauma (ACE) that has not been addressed yet (Hays-Grudo & Morris, 2020). The atrocity of the slave trade developed intergenerational adversities that disabled the African American community around making sense of the body's response to trauma

triggers in a healthy way (Kendi, 2017). In the instance of suspension and expulsion of Black boys in early childhood programs, the signal may be the system itself. She has yet to give meaning to the way she has developed her attachment because there seems to be confusion around her child (who has yet to begin healing) and the child being addressed today in the early childhood program becomes a signifier and symbol of her unaddressed traumatic injury. In a trauma informed program, the ECSW can assist the African American mother by providing interventions that inform and educate, thus moving her towards emotional wellness.

Child-Adult Relationships

The National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009) position statement on early learning standards provides guidelines for children's rights and assist one's understanding of the importance of safe parent-child relationships. The literature speaks to parent-child relationships and how this key relationship helps children to co-construct family culture by playing and learning the standards of play (Anderson, 1997), a skill that is transferable to school settings. In like manner the mother creates a safe space for her child to explore the world. Bronfenbrenner (1999) indicated that the lack of family engagement could add to children's environmental confusion, thus, producing an unsafe place to learn. Maximum learning occurs when the relationship between the early childhood educator and family correspond to what is best for the child (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Lott, 2001). Howell and Costley (2006) call this maximum learning a part of supportive leadership by the early childhood educator, which includes a friendly informative approach to helping families understand and accept the power of cultural play.

Duhn (2011, p. 19) asserted that "culturally, childhood is often understood as a time of innocence which can mean that issues such as [social] ecological sustainability are considered too problematic for early childhood practice." When an early childhood educator has a preschooler who is presenting challenges, it makes sense to involve the families (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). When exploring young Black boys' behavior in classrooms is important to know and understand the family's cultural context as this informs the child-adult relationship impact. The family's cultural context can provide a frame for resource engagement such as practical ideas educators can apply immediately if there is questionable behavior (Wright, 2011; Wright et al., 2015).

Education System and Poverty

Today's education system creates challenges and insecurity for many African American children to continue their social-emotional development (Wright et al., 2015). Jones and Nichols (2013, p. 17) discuss it this way:

> Nationwide, public schooling as a system is under attack. Many view the system as rigid, unbending, bloated, outdated and unresponsive when it comes to preparing children with the social and technical skill sets that they need to be productive global citizens. The biggest victims are children of color, followed by children who live in poverty. Children who are both African American (particularly African American males) and poor suffer the most because of the ongoing legacy and continued pervasiveness of racism, economic exploitation and culture ignorance among educators and U.S. society overall.

Although most public schools consider themselves advocates for children, research finds that the U.S. is "ranked 18th in the percentage of children living in poverty; and 13th in the

gap between rich and poor children. Additionally, children under 15 in the United States are 12 times as likely to die from gunfire as children in the other 25 industrialized countries combined" (Connolly, Hayden, & Levin, 2007, p. 93). Knowing these statistics, along with the fact that Black and Hispanic children represent almost two-thirds of children in poverty, supports cultural disadvantages and emphasizes the trauma experienced by African American families in the U.S. educational system.

Assessment

Assessment is a cornerstone of early childhood practice. In the Executive Summary of Appropriate assessment techniques in pre-k through third grade settings (Horm-Wingerd et al., 2000), it is apparent that there are no appropriate comprehensive assessments that identify intergenerational transmission of historical trauma. Thomas (1998) modified a cultural genogram to study religious impact while assessing the culture of the family. This study focused on using the GPA for cultural assessment but the findings gave the researcher information on the behavior and rule setting of the family. However, the importance of utilizing the GPS allows early childhood educators and social workers to explore the third space created by ITHxT. This critical assessment gives a teacher an avenue to think about her pivotal decisions, especially in the consideration of suspension and expulsion of Black boys (Courtois, 2004; Guss et al., 2013; Horm-Wingerd et al., 2000; Larrivee, 2008; Strand et al., 2005).

Purpose of the study

This study explores and evaluates the use of the Genogram Psychosocial Assessment (GPA) along with asking specific questions that addresses transmitted trauma in order to identify ITHxT. This identification deepens and extends the knowledge and

understanding of how many African American family systems adapt to daily and/or major stressors that may be influenced by intergenerational trauma. The ability to assess a traumatized family's coping skills with a holistic measurement tool impacts life outcome for children entering school programs. Early identification of ITHxT could inform, transform, support, and empower parents, social workers, caregivers, and educators that behavioral issues children are having in school need interventions other than suspension and expulsion.

Methodology

This study utilized a holistic qualitative case study to understand the use of a modified assessment approach to inform a more culturally relevant assessment. Case study is defined as an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system. . . Yen (2008), for example, defines case study in terms of the research process. "A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident' (p. 18). Stake (2005), however, focuses on trying to pinpoint the unit of study – the case. Wolcott (1992, p. 36) sees it as "an end-product of field-oriented research."

The nature of this qualitative research was intentionally subjective, exploratory, relationship-based, and contextual. Within this research method, the strategy for design was an emergent one with data sources being the GPA, and researcher's field notebook; both were analyzed and interpreted with thick description (Creswell, 2009). The design and research questions justify the use of a case study design.

1. How does the new GPA identify ITHxT?
2. How do the families receive the GPA information and educational process?

3. How does the GPA aid families in identifying and discussing intergenerational trauma?

Participants and Location

During August 2019, a flyer describing the study and asking for participants who met the following criteria: 1) families were members of the Mid-West metropolitan area African American community, 2) had young Black boys who were students in pre-kindergarten to third grade classrooms, and 3) their young sons had been suspended or had been threatened with suspension, with distributed within several African American communities and the description of the study was shared by several local therapists. Mothers who met the criteria, called the researcher and received additional information. This purposeful sampling led to four mothers of Black boys consenting to be interviewed and to take part in a genogram assessment for ITHxT.

Four African American women, Sophia, Maria, Patricia, and Claudia participated in this study. Sophia consented because her mother met the researcher in an exercise class and thought it would be a good idea for her daughter to try and understand her son's challenges with school. Sophia is a single mom of three who lives in a home with three generations. To provide a safe place and supportive school environment, this family decided to dwell together for the sake of three-year-old Lawrence. They live in a gated medium SES community so that Lawrence could go to a good school. When he started to have social emotional challenges grandma, aunt, and mom partnered to help him do better, even moving to a better school district. Sophia's home was welcoming with all the family sitting at a large dining room table to hear what the study was about. After hearing about the study, the rest of the family left us to conduct the genogram assessment.

However, they were in proximity in case information needed to be added or subtracted. This gathering of information was a family event. Sophia stated,

> My mom and sister said they would help me take care of him while we get through this tough time. So, we put all our monies together and got this house and Lawrence was able to go to this school. I didn't know it, but the principal and his pre-school teachers were both changing to our neighborhood school. That was a blessing… I was changing jobs and I was pregnant with this last baby and little emotional support from the father of the baby. This is when Lawrence started to act out. He would just start crying at school and I'd have to go pick him up. So, we all had days assigned to pickup to keep him from getting kicked out.

This family (maternal grandmother, mother, and maternal aunt) all had bachelor's degrees in education and were able to problem solve and provide positive supports in the hope of improving Lawrence's behavior. Maternal grandma Esther stated "Our family believes in education and we can help him do better."

The researcher's interaction with Maria was very businesslike and did not include other family members. Maria asked to meet at work because she said her schedule was too busy in the evenings with family activities. She had taken a new position as an office assistant at a local school and was very proud of her position. To meet with me, she had arranged to have a two-hour lunch break. The atmosphere in her office felt intense and chaotic as I walked in because she was in full motion, moving items from one place to another. The genogram assessment felt hurried as Maria talked really fast about all of her family activities. She is a married woman with four children and has a nephew and a foster child who lives with them. The nephew and the oldest sons have experienced

continued threats of suspension and expulsion but are currently too old for the study. Her youngest son, who is three years old is who qualified her for the study. She talked about her family having trouble with school districts and shared that she has learned to ask for help by asking for an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for her child. Maria also shared that her mother was in prison for murder when she was growing up and that she "hated school and she didn't care if we went to school." While her mother was in prison, Maria and her sisters lived with different relatives.

> We (me and my sisters) had lots of trouble growing up and with school. I am not surprise my kids have trouble with school. It has taken me a long time to figure out how to help my sons have a positive school experience.

Patricia was very matter of fact and just wanted to get the interviews over with. She had received the information from her therapist who encouraged her to explore her trauma with the school district. When I arrived at her home, she and her mother were present while the children were at school. She invited me into a dimly light home as she continued to rush around the house cleaning and moving items from one place to another; she was busy the entire time I was there. Patricia is a single mom of two in a same-sex partnership with a woman whose daughter also lives in the home. She stated that she was angry with the school and felt as if the school was out to get her son.

> Do you know they suspended my child, sent him home without letting me know he was suspended? This school district does not like Black boys and they do not want our kid in their school.

Patricia stated that schools had always treated her son badly. "Since he entered school, it has been bad. They keep notes and they talk to the kids bad. The principal is horrible."

She did not answer when asked how she did in school and what kind of student she was. Patricia's mom said to me, "Ma'am you know the schools don't like our children!" Of the four interviews, Patricia was least engaged in the genogram process.

Claudia was very animated attempted to engage with the genogram questions but struggling to do so. At the beginning of the interview, she was unable to calm herself and settle down to engage. Maria referred her for the study and said that Claudia had a son who had trouble with school too. When she gave me her name and number she did not say that Claudia was her sister. It was not until I had two meetings working with the genogram with Claudia that I realized they were sisters. The youngest of the four participants, she is a single mom of three—two sons who have experienced threats of suspension, her older son lives with her sister Maria and her husband and they are threatening to send him back home, and her daughter suffers with sickle cell. Additionally, she had just lost her job and she had recently been released from jail for stabbing a friend "by accident." "I am so stressed that I keep smoking a lot." It took us four visits to get the genogram done and a referral to a therapist written.

The number of participants for this study is supported by two previous studies that also used genograms with a small number of participants. Initially, Thomas (1998) used four families in her study that utilized the cultural genogram that found ethnicity, race, acculturation, social class, gender, and "spirituality/religion has an impact on behaviors and family rules" (p. 30). Comparatively, Lev-Wiesel (2007), in his qualitative study of intergenerational transmission of trauma, started with five families but ended with three. The three families struggled with PTSD from traumatic experiences with immigrant transition camps, being a child Holocaust survivor, and living in relocation camps. Both

studies yielded rich descriptions and valuable findings. Additionally, by allowing the mothers to choose the location to complete the genogram, Thomas, (1998) states that the participants would be more open and comfortable in their interviews.

Data Sources and Procedures

Qualitative data used to examine the African American mothers' experiences, attitudes, and trauma included the Genogram Psychosocial Assessment (GPA) (See Appendix). Miles and Huberman (1994) state, "Field research is a process of progressive focusing and funneling. As data are collected, we see, more and more clearly, factors that bring the apparent flotsam and jetsam of local events into a meaningful pattern" (p. 151). As a result, it is important to note that the nature of a GPA is accompanied with interviews and observations embedded in the process.

Genogram Psychosocial Assessment. This assessment tool was used to gather and discover information from the mothers in the African American families to provide interactional data that gave the researcher a multigenerational family view of attitudes and patterns regarding their relationships with their respective public school and their Black sons. Intergenerational Transmission of Historical Trauma and its impact was assessed in the genogram with questions developed around intergenerational trauma and current relations with their schools. McCullough-Chavis (2004) specified the importance of developing a genogram is to include the family structure, history, and relationships over at least three generations. The genogram allowed the researcher to graphically represent the complex expressions of the varied patterns and themes. Interviews and observations are an intricate part of constructing a genogram.

Examples of the additional questions the researcher asked during the genogram relating to trauma included: 1) Who lives in the household? 2) How is each person related? 3) What has happened recently in your family? 4) When did the problem begin? 5) Who noticed this problem first? 6) Let's begin with your mother's family. 7)Your mother was one of how many children? 8) When and where was she born? These questions allowed the researcher to explore the family structure and begin constructing the GPA with the mothers' guidance. This line of questioning continued throughout the interview regarding other members of the family as well.

The researcher documented observations of family dynamics, body language, cultural language, and comfort while discussing intergenerational trauma. The mothers' ability to understand the concept of trauma determined the depth and complexity of communication. These observations were recorded throughout and immediately after each interview in a field notebook.

Genogram data was collected using face-to-face interviews and constructing a family tree of three generations of the Black boys' family. When questions led to the topic of trauma, the researcher took the opportunity to probe deeper to determine if the trauma was intergenerationally transmitted. Originally, audio recordings were going to be employed; however, a few participants in this study shared concerns regarding the audio recordings. Therefore, the researcher collected data by taking notes in order for the mothers to be the most comfortable.

Field note-book. Reflecting in a field notebook permitted the researcher to keep notes about the study's focus and record the context of events (Bazeley, 2013). The field note-book assisted the researcher in the recollection of events, reactions, and

observations. Often the reflections guided follow-up questions and a closer look at how each mother internalized trauma.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the 6-phases of thematic analysis described by Braun and Clark (2006). This framework was purposefully selected because it outlined clear and systematic procedures to follow. These distinct guidelines enabled the researcher to organize and describe in rich detail the data set and interpret distinct trauma.

- In the first phase, genogram interpretations and transcriptions of observations were read several times to get a wide-range of understanding of the information. This repetitive action allowed the researcher to become familiar with the notes gathered throughout the interviews.
- The second phase consisted of generating initial codes; a start list of codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994), was utilized for each area of the genogram and for each research question.
- In the third phase, data were recategorized in order to reduce the number of codes initially developed. Bazeley (2013) supports qualitative researchers to participate in constant comparative process to generate noteworthy information, enrich description, and to provide data to report. This constant comparative method was completed several times until themes emerged.
- The emergent themes then entered the refinement phase, where the researcher reviewed and cultivated the emerging themes and adjusted as needed.
- The fifth phase required the researcher to define and name themes.

- The sixth and final phase consisted of the researcher using the themes to develop the final narrative. Specifically, for this study, the researcher anticipated the findings would provide important information as it relates to the intersectionality of early childhood education and social work literature.

Trustworthiness and Limitations

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is establishing mechanisms that provide authenticity for the researcher to achieve research that includes *credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability* (Rodwell, 1998). This study demonstrates the above elements which are necessary for the confidence in the findings as well as plural perspectives for rigor. Green et al., (1988, p. 97) state the following:

> These standards are credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Credibility parallels internal validity in traditional positivist research. Dependability is analogous to reliability. Confirmability creates to objectivity. Transferability is related to external validity to the degree that it allows decisions regarding the applicability of results and interpretations to other audiences in other contexts. Together, these elements are intended to aid in the assessment of quality and the defensibility of the methods, results, and conclusions of a constructivist inquiry.

The standards are embedded in the process of conducting a Genogram Psychological Assessment and to demonstrate the researcher presents another iterations of the following: 1) *credibility* is prolonged engagement, observation of participants (the depth it takes to engage this type of assessment), and triangulation (checking theory to

data collection) that occurs as the researcher works through the questions of trauma with the family; 2) *dependability* correspondingly speaks to the research of practice and procedures employed to collect the data. The Genogram Psychological Assessment has embedded the ability to triangulate, establishes a documented record of the family tree, decision rules with analytic categories as labels and audits; 3) *conformability* equally important allows an outside auditor to repeat and check the initial raw data to a final product. Equally important to connect participants to the context; additionally, 4) *transferability* permits ability to transfer meaning and usefulness of this study to another.

Limitations

The assumptions for this study assumed participants were forthright and honest in their answers during the data collection and they accurately reported their experiences, attitudes, and trauma. Although the researcher had no way to verify this, all participants were briefed prior to the study's commencement on it purpose, goals, and procedures. The researcher had some challenges with feelings of protecting the community as a participant of the community.

Findings

ITHxT Genogram

Previous research (e.g. Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Cromer et al., 2018; DeGruy-Leary, 2005; Edwards & Davidson, 2018; Kendi, 201l; McGoldrick, 2016; Sorrels, 2019) provided guidance on how to modify the GPA into the ITHxT Genogram. This new tool helps families and teachers develop an improved treatment plan that raises awareness of historical loss and connects that awareness to possible suspensions and expulsions for Black boys in early childhood programs. Sorrels (2019, p. 19) states it this way.

> Children who experience trauma are often unable to communicate their distress through words. Some fear retribution from their abusers, and some develop defense mechanisms against even remembering the experience. But as van der Kolk asserts, the body is an historical organ and it keeps score.

The implication is, if the body remembers and keeps score, then many African Americans have 400 years of racism, Jim Crow, segregation, and Black lives not mattering memories stored in their bodies. This historical organ creates a transmissible bubble within and throughout African American communities. Critical theory gives the field many ways in which to address this bubble. Freire (1970) refers to it as an existential challenge, Emdin (2016) says it is a nonindigenous challenge, and DeGruy-Leary (2005) calls it post-traumatic slavery syndrome. While these theories have tried to describe the phenomenon, none have provided a tool or assessment that captures it. This study shows that the ITHxT Genogram can identify intergenerational historical trauma and loss, provide a transformative way to lessen the injury to the family, and deliver insights in a way that empowers both the family and fields of early childhood and social work.

Trust Verses Mistrust of Education

Unpacking the data revealed that all four mothers received the information gained from the ITHxT Genogram, but had opposite reactions. Sonia and Marie said that they trusted early childhood educators. Marie stated, “we have learned to use the IEP process within the school and it is working better now that we changed school districts.” She also said, “I have my children, one of sister’s sons and a foster child and the school has helped with many accommodations for my son and nephews’ anger problems.” Additionally, Sonia stated, “My son started to act out and the principal and his teacher were good about

helping figure this out. I was pregnant at the time so we all thought this might be part of the challenge for him." These mothers discussed the help they received from educators positively and truly felt that they wanted the best for their sons, demonstrating why they felt that educators were worthy of trust.

In contrast, Patricia and Claudia felt only mistrust for educators and administrators. Patricia stated, "Do you know they suspended my child and never called or sent me a note. Something is wrong with that. The principal is just not right!" Both mothers felt betrayal from educators and were disappointed with their lack of compassion and understanding.

Sorrels (2019) helps us understand that trauma creates a stress response that can lead to fear-based behavior that influences relationships among family members and with educators. By unpacking trauma through the ITHxT genogram, Maria and Sonia were able to identify their trust in people and provide examples of why they trusted them, and Patricia and Claudia were able to confront their traumas by provide information to construct the genogram. All stated that seeing the construction of the genogram and answering the questions about parents and grandparents made them think about conversations they had heard when they were younger but did not understand what they meant. Maria, "this helps me to understand a lot of people in my family had problems in school."

While all four mothers cared about their children, they also questioned their behaviors in the classroom. It was important for them to be in school and to behave well while in school. Through their experiences of being interviewed using the ITHxT genogram, they were able to work through the origins of their own challenges with the

education system and identify where their children were experiencing those same challenges (Emdin, 2016). To put it another way, paying attention to human behavior (acting out) and social environment (early childhood programs) helped the mothers look at their son's behavior as a signal of trauma transmission. Being able to recognize this behavior as a signal will allow the mothers to respond differently with their sons and with the education system.

Historical Trauma with Education

Mistrust of the school system was unanimous and the four mothers conveyed their fatigue fighting it. The ITHxT genogram was able to help them identify this fatigue as historical trauma. When interviewing Sonia, she asked,

> Can we turn the tape off? I am getting emotional, saying I am not sure I want my voice somewhere talking about this about the schools. I know you said this is confidential but I don't want my stuff out there on tape. I hope this is okay? They [school system] did this same shit to me when I was in school.

Christianson (1992) calls Sonia's statement an intrusive memory and believes it demonstrates evidence of the trauma she experienced when she was in school. Additionally, Jordan's (2006) work with mothers using Scripto-Trauma Genograms posits that memories like Sonia's are "part of the traumatic event that lets the victim know that something bad is going to happen" (p. 39). Patricia despairingly stated "The school don't care about my child. They [school system] did this same thing to me. They just don't do us right." The current distrust of the educational system was evident by all of the mothers and by processing the information through the ITHxT genogram respectively, they could relate their current understandings to their own memories of

being in school. Jordan says that "these intrusive memories have also been described as 'warning signal intrusions' because they are perceived as a way to see and then avoid future traumatic events (p. 39).

Additionally, the mistrust of early childhood programs experienced by African American families is often the manifestation of internalized racial oppression that also gets passed down from generation to generation (Chisom, & Washington, 1997). Understanding this trauma transmission allows African American mothers to identify reasons why their children or Black boys might respond to what teachers think of as simple questions with challenging behaviors. A simple question such as, *who lives in your home,* can cause Black boys to dysregulate and throw a fit on the floor or become aggressive; the behaviors are a manifestation of internalized racial oppression.

> The process of internalizing racial inferiority by non-whites is referred to as *internalizing racial inferiority*. When non-whites internalize inferior and subordinate images of themselves, they become fearful of challenging the institutions which have disempowered them. (Chisom, & Washington, 1997, p. 22)

Over many generations, this process of disempowerment and disenfranchisement expresses itself in defeating behaviors and can cause one to be confused about their understanding of the world. This confusion is also part of the transmission of trauma.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to help acknowledge potential early indicators that allow social workers, parents/caregivers, and educators to recognize trauma, toxic, or historical trauma in a child's family system. Acknowledgement and acceptance of the

valuable information this instrument uncovered lead to providing more support and understanding of a young Black boy's historical burden and support of the mother. The ITHxT genogram was able to help the participants recognize the structural inequality and oppression within early childhood programs and the education system in general. Participating in the ITHxT genogram empowered them to identify and verbalize the impact this oppression had on them as students, how they carry ITHxT with them, and pass it on to their children. The mothers worked through their feelings of frustration, bewilderment, and anger when it came to processing their son's suspensions and threats of expulsions through an intergenerational trauma lens. In other words, paying attention to human behavior and social environment helped them look at their common mistrust being acted out in early childhood programs with their sons and Black boys. The entire genogram process remains only one example that portrays a perspective commonly experienced within several generations of African Americans.

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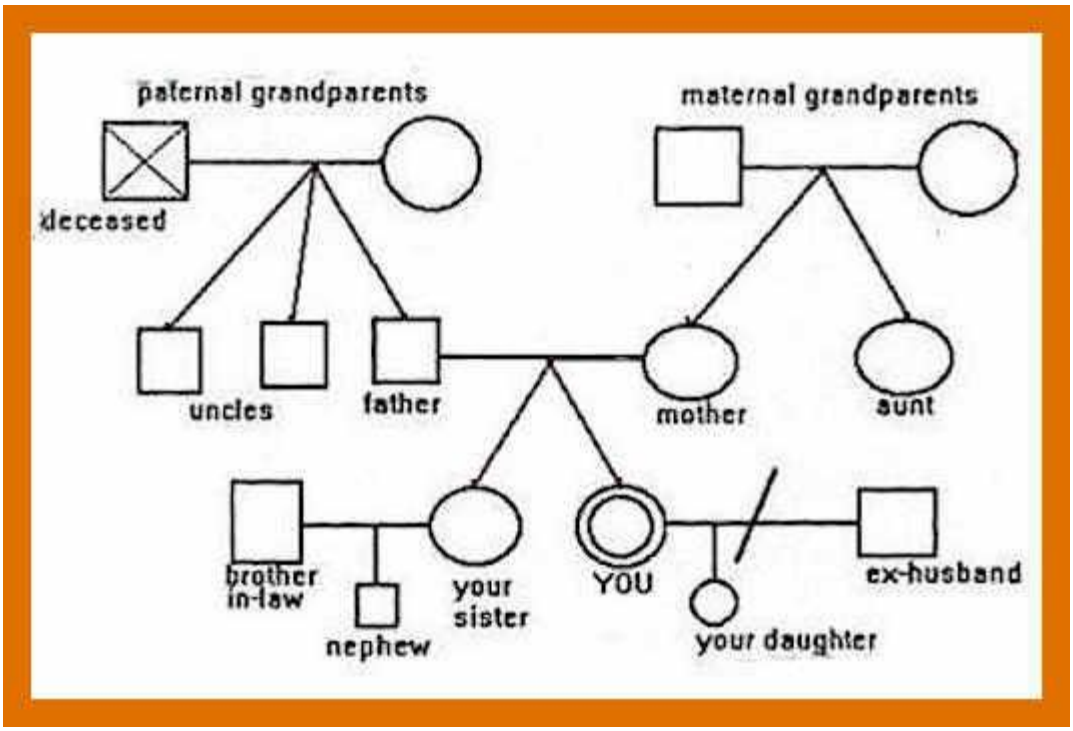
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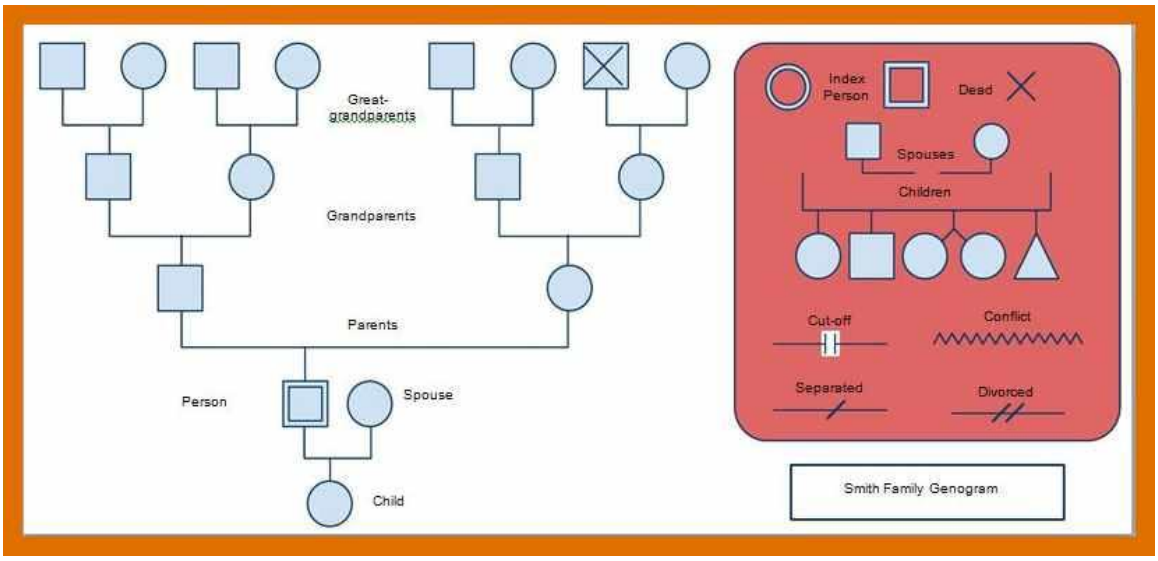
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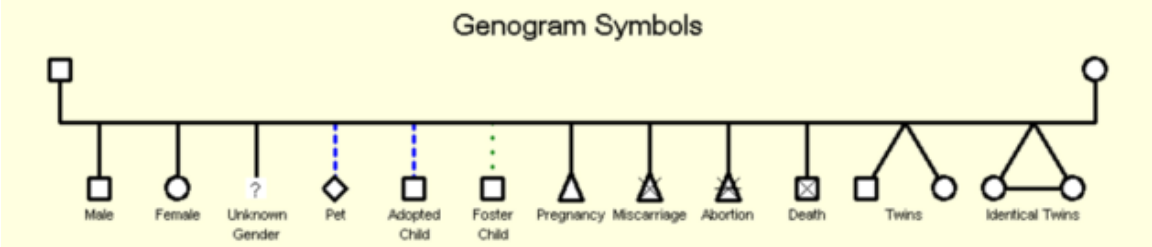
Appendix

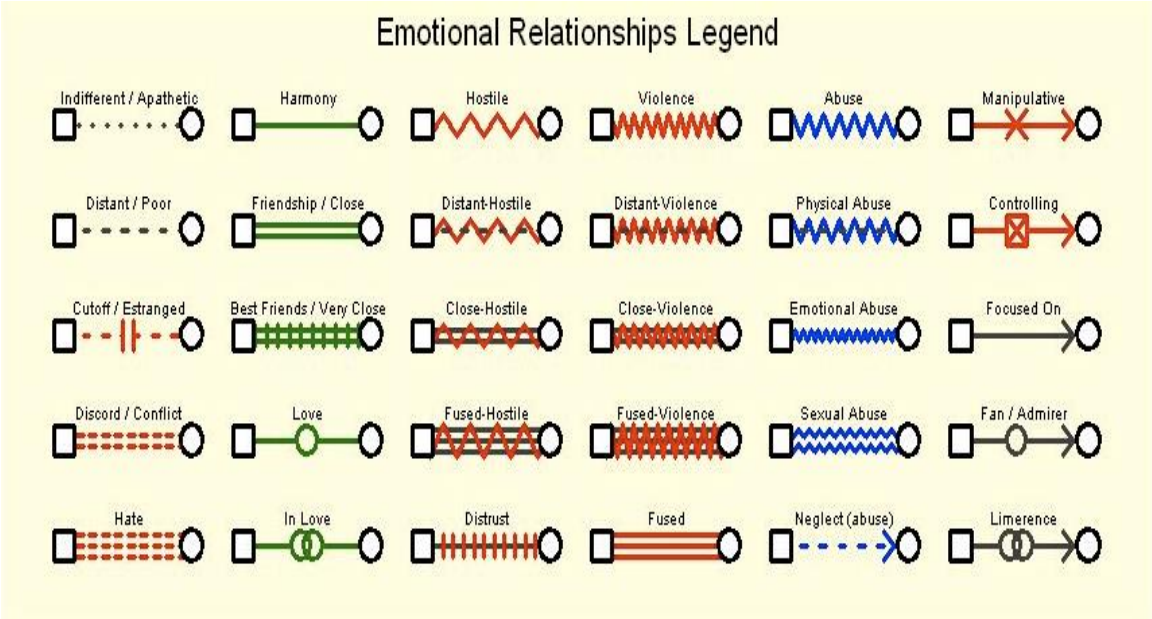
Genogram Psychosocial Assessment (GPA)

Genogram Examples and Relationship Symbols






Genogram Symbols
Male
Female
Unknown Gender
Pet
Adopted Child
Foster Child
Pregnancy
Miscarriage
Abortion
Death
Twins
Identical Twins


Emotional Relationships Legend
Indifferent / Apathetic
Harmony
Hostile
Violence
Abuse
Manipulative
Distant / Poor
Friendship / Close
Distant-Hostile
Distant-Violence
Physical Abuse
Controlling
Cutoff / Estranged
Best Friends / Very Close
Close-Hostile
Close-Violence
Emotional Abuse
Focused On
Discord / Conflict
Love
Fused-Hostile
Fused-Violence
Sexual Abuse
Fan / Admirer
Hate
In Love
Distrust
Fused
Neglect (abuse)
Limerence

MANUSCRIPT III

What Happened to You? Working Your Way Out of Intergenerational Transmission of Historical Trauma

This manuscript is prepared for submission to the peer-reviewed *Zero to Three Journal* and is the third of three manuscripts prepared for a journal-ready doctoral dissertation.

Abstract

Assessing students and their families in pre-school and pre-kindergarten programs is a critical component of what an early childhood social worker (ECSW) does. Many tools have been developed to assist the ECSW in assessing disruptive behavior of early learners and their family relationships to formulate an intervention plan that identifies and promotes healing of adverse childhood experiences (ACE) for both. This article explores the use of the genogram as a tool for successful assessment of Intergenerational Transmission of Historical Trauma (ITHxT) in young black boys experiencing threats of suspension or expulsion from school.

Keywords: Early Childhood Social Worker, ACE, Genogram, Intergenerational Transmission of Historical Trauma

What Happened to You? Working Your Way Out of Intergenerational Transmission of Historical Trauma

In 2018, Oklahoma ranked 50th for children's overall health and 42nd in child well-being. Additionally, 135,000 children had a parent who was or had been incarcerated, and 59% of children under age 18 were economically disadvantaged (Perry, 2020). Challenges such as these leave young children vulnerable to experiencing an increased number of traumatic events. These events of trauma are referred to as Adverse Childhood Experiences or ACEs (Felitti, & Network for Continuing Medical Education, 2006). Examples of ACEs include: experiencing violence, abuse or neglect; witnessing violence in the home or community, observing substance misuse, facing mental health problems, etc. Unfortunately, one-third of Oklahoma's children have two or more ACEs and as research confirms the more ACEs a child has, the more at risk he is for undergoing social-emotional disturbances (Hays-Grudo & Morris, 2020).

Children who demonstrate social-emotional disturbances often are suspended or expelled from school. When children face suspension or expulsion, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) strongly suggests asking the question "what happened to you" rather than, "what's wrong with you" (2014, p. 1). This question becomes even more significant for young black boys who experience the highest rates of suspensions and expulsions from pre-school (Gilliam, 2007). The cultural context of African American children, young black boys in particular, sets a turbulent terrain for lifelong consequences of trauma. Children and families with multiple ACEs often benefit from working with an Early Childhood Social Worker (ECSW) to help identify Intergenerational Transmission of Historical Trauma (ITHxT).

One of the most critical roles of an ECSW in an early childhood program is that of assessment. The ECSW is often the one called to a child's classroom when the child fails to demonstrate self-control, or in other words, self-regulate. Once in the classroom, she helps identify the possible challenges by quickly building rapport with the child. Through educational background, an ECSW has the professional training to conduct person-in-environment, trauma-informed psychological assessments. Collaborating with the teacher, family, and child, the ECSW analyzes the situation and formulates an early intervention to reduce the impact trauma has on the child (Azzi-Lessing, 2010). For preschool age black boys who face suspension or expulsion, the ECSW can help the child and family understand general trauma, as well as the ITHxT.

In this article, the author first defines general trauma as well as the philosophy of ITHxT and its current imprint on today's young black boys. Next, she explains the genogram, a tool to assist in the identification of ITHxT. The genogram functions as an assessment for gathering generational data that helps graphically depict the dynamics of a child's family system. It paints a picture to view the challenges within a family and begins the initial assessment towards possible interventions. This instrument assists the ECSW in understanding the family context in order to identify and trace possible contributions for the child's lack of self-regulation. Finally, the ECSW uses this conceptualization of the child's ecological environment to unite home and school by providing background information to help teachers, families, and young black boys who are threatened by suspension or expulsion from preschool or pre-kindergarten programs.

Trauma Overview

Defining Trauma

Trauma is complicated, invasive, and can have long-term effects. Three types of trauma include acute, chronic, and complex (Berry, 2000). Acute trauma refers to trauma that results from a solitary occurrence such as a kidnapping, tornado, or an unusual natural disaster experience. However, trauma can occur as a single event or an overwhelming event that is sustained overtime (Bailey, 2011; Shabad, 1993; Sorrels, 2020; Wright, Counsell, & Tate, 2015). Chronic trauma denotes recurrent and prolonged trauma. Examples of chronic trauma include domestic violence, abuse, neglect, or deprivation. Additionally, *complex trauma* is exposure to varied and multiple traumatic events, often of an invasive, interpersonal nature. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) defines complex trauma as a reaction to stress that develops overtime. Prolonged stress is a subjective experience but can result in creating trauma within a child and/or his family (AAP, 2014). Sorrels (2020) lists the following types of trauma: "physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, domestic violence and abandonment" (p. 14). Trauma and stress can be exhibited in many ways that portray emotionally painful, intense, and disturbing behavior.

Trauma Effects

Any of the identified traumas can have a significant impact on a child's brain development and can determine the health of or a disruption to the child's natural progress (Bailey, 2011; Shabab, 1993; Sorrels, 2020; Sousa, 2009; Wright et al., 2015). The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) states that the "pathologic stress response [has] significant and lifelong implications for learning, behavior, health and adult

functioning" (2014, p. 2). Traumatic events may affect anybody who has been directly involved. Consequently, studies report that children of color, specifically 61% of black children, have been exposed to trauma (Merrick, Ford, Ports, & Guinn, 2014). Common responses to traumatic events may be demonstrated cognitively, emotionally, physically and/or behaviorally. With this awareness, helping children with ACEs requires an ECSW to employ multi-level engagement strategies that include showing sensitivity and flexibility while establishing the appropriate amount of assertiveness.

Intergenerational Transmission of Historical Trauma

The term *historical trauma* refers to the concept of "massive trauma directed toward a group that shares an identity or affiliation and which has effects that transcend generational boundaries" (Cromer, Gray, Vasquez, & Freyd, 2018, p. 100). This term most often identifies the oppressive events, such as the *Trail of Tears* associated with displacement of American Indian tribes or the Jewish holocaust. *Intergenerational transmission of trauma* "acknowledges that exposure to extremely adverse events impacts individuals to such a great extent that their offspring find themselves grappling with their parents' post-traumatic state" (Yehuda & Lehmer, 2018). Traditionally, these terms have been reserved for American Indian and Jewish culture (DeGruy-Leary, 2005; Fisk, 2011; Kinde, 2017; Marabal & Manning, 2009) and have been used interchangeably in the literature. Given the meaning of these two types of trauma, it is incredulous that they have not been applied to the suffering experienced by African Americans whose ancestors lived enslaved in early America or to the social injustices they continue to experience today. To address the historical trauma of African American people, the terms historical trauma and intergenerational transmission of trauma should be integrated into

one concept: historical trauma + intergenerational transmission of trauma = intergenerational transmission of historical trauma or ITHxT (See Figure 1). Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, many ancestors of African Americans were enslaved in what is now the U.S. In fact, an estimated 6 -7 million Africans were imported and enslaved in the 18th century alone. The trauma experienced by these men, women, children, and families at the hands of White owners, left a deep mistrust of White people that is still evident in Black households today. Thus, the historical trauma (oppressive events) and the intergenerational transmission (continued generational adversity) are combined as ITHxT.

Figure 1-1 Intergenerational Transmission of Historical Trauma (ITHxT)

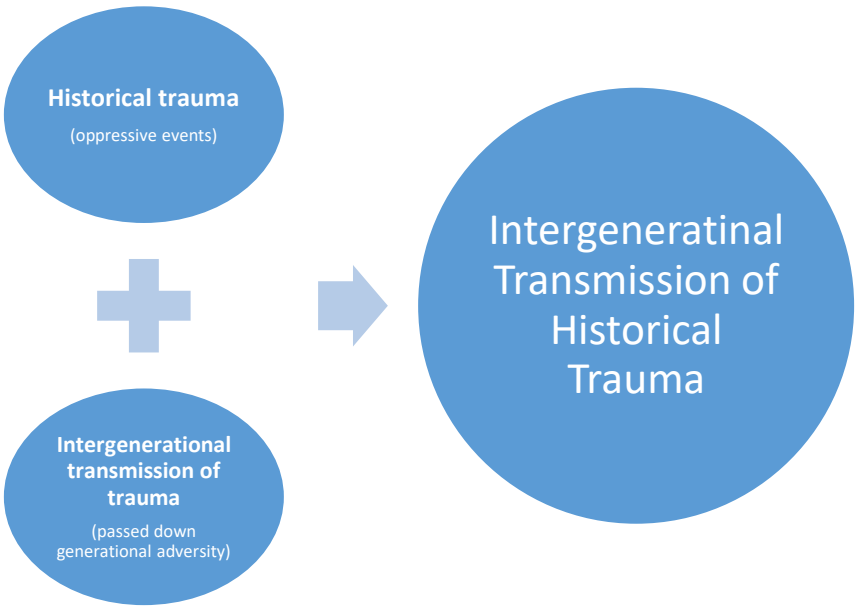


Figure 1.1 represents and describes the acronym ITHxT for African American trauma in a cumulative, collective and institutionalized manner (Butler-King, 2020).

Genogram

A genogram is a physical illustration outlining the history of a family's behavior patterns such as marriage, divorce, birth, abortion, death, or even suicide over several generations. McCullough-Chavis (2004) demonstrated in her single case study that in

depth descriptions emerging from the development of a families' genogram assist ECSW and early childhood teachers in having a better understanding of some African American's worldview. "It also provides an excellent tool for exploring dimensions of human experiences [across the lifespan] and the spiritual dimensions of those experiences intergenerationally" (p. 32). Additionally, family member's medical history is recorded to asses one's risk of developing disease.

> Typically, the genogram is constructed from information gathered during the first meeting with a client/participant and revised as new information becomes available. The initial assessment forms the basis for treatment. It is important to emphasize, however, that clinicians [ECSW] typically do not compartmentalize assessment and treatment. Each interaction of the clinician [ECSW] with a family member informs the assessment and thus influences the next intervention. (McCullough-Chavis, 2004, p. 4)

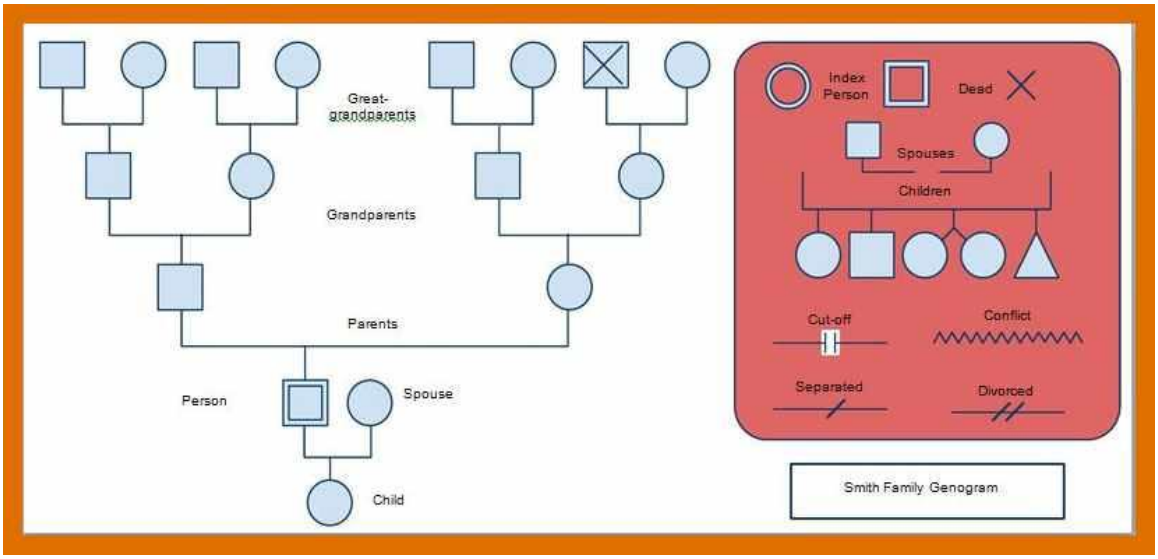
Completion of a genogram can take anywhere from 15 minutes to gather demographic information to approximately 20 hours for a comprehensive assessment and report. **"**Because family patterns can be transmitted from one generation to the next, the clinician [ECSW] should scan the genogram for patterns that have been repeated over several generations" (McGoldrick et al., 2008, p. 21).

Basic Steps for Genogram Construction

The interview process for the standard genogram requires an understanding of what the universal genogram symbols mean and how they can be used. (See Figure 2). The ECSW should approach this group collaboration with a spirit of exploration and

reassurance while advancing through the following steps in order to lead the family to supportive intervention (McGoldrick et al., 2008).

Figure 1-2 Family genogram example



Step 1. To begin constructing the genogram, use one large sheet of paper folded into thirds vertically. With the three defined sections, start at the bottom of the paper and identify the young learner and sibling(s) if any. Place the young learner with the appropriate symbol for gender, birth date, age, medical history, and presenting problem. If there are siblings, list them in the same bottom section with lesser emphasis in size of their gender symbols, with exact information (age, birth date, medical history, and any educational or personal challenges). Include their experiences with school difficulties, addiction, and trauma.

Step 2. In the middle section, include the parents of the child along with the parent's respective siblings. Place mom's symbol on the right side and Dad's symbol on the left side. Repeat appropriate symbols for gender, birth date, age, medical history, and any challenges. If there are siblings, list them in the same section with lesser emphasis in

size of their gender symbols, with exact information (age, birth date, medical history, and any challenges). Include their experiences with school difficulties, addiction, and trauma.

Step 3. In the top section, write both sets of grandparents of the young learner and the grandparent's respective siblings as well. Place grandmother's symbol on the right side and grandfather's symbol on the left side. Repeat appropriate symbols for gender, birth date, age, medical history, and any challenges. If there are siblings, list them in the same section with lesser emphasis in size of their gender symbols, with exact information (age, birth date, medical history, and any challenges). Include their experiences with school difficulties, addiction, and trauma.

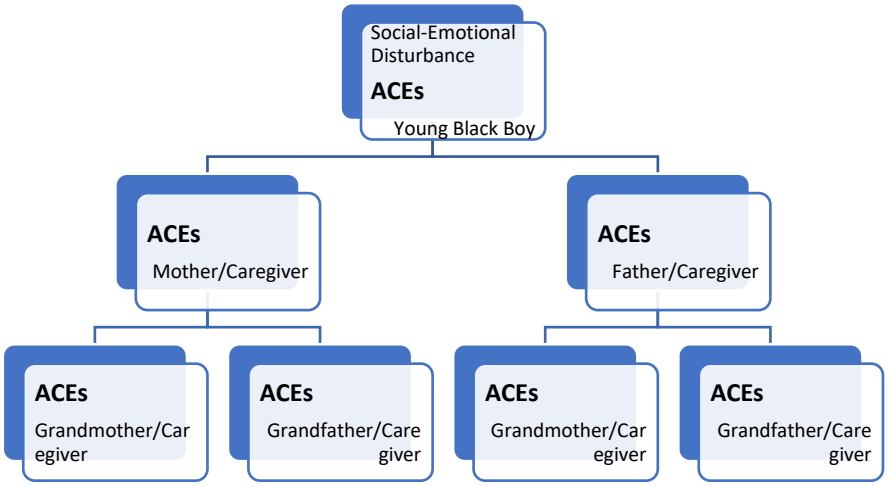
Step 4. Draw a line leading from the gender symbol of the identified young learner to the middle section connecting him to his parents. Next, connect the parents of the young learner to their respective grandparents in the top section of the paper. List the trauma history as well as difficult school experiences for them and their siblings as shown in the ACE genogram (See Figure 3).

Step 5. After completing Step 4, the ECSW begins to ask questions about the quality of the relationship within and across the generations listed. There needs to be an identification of the group within the three generations of who actually lives in the same household by including them in a circle reaching through all three sections of the diagram if necessary. The questions facilitate interpretations and integration of the information that is gathered throughout the process. Clarification of any information to the ECSW and/or family members involved in this assessment occurs at this point. This process often leads to "ah-ha" moments of the person(s) providing the information. The ECSW is

always exploring and clarifying the information gathered and fine-tuning to support the interventions.

Step 6. At this point, the ECSW begins to list in her notes, the patterns and themes related to the medical, addiction, and trauma history of the family and she may develop a *bio-psychosocial* report by writing a psychological history of the individual and family (See Appendix). The ECSW and family gain insights and understanding of the family history and patterns through this report that can be shared with the teacher. The information can be categorized by the family's demographics, chronicled history, or repetitive trauma throughout the report as diagramed in the genogram.

Figure 1-3. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Genogram



From "ADVERSE and PROTECTIVE Childhood Experiences: A Developmental Perspective," by J. Hays-Grudo and A. Morris, 2020, p. 84. Copyright 2020 by American Psychological Association. Reprinted with permission.

The ACE genogram provides important interactional data that can aid in assessing the participants' multigenerational family attitudes and patterns regarding public schools and young black boys (Chavis, 2004; McGoldrick, 2016; McGoldrick, Gerson, & Petry, 2008). This graphic representation shows how ACEs have influenced the relationships among family members and how this trauma has extended beyond the traditional family

tree. Thus, allowing the family and ECSW to visualize connections, hereditary patterns, and psychological factors in order to reflect on person events or trauma the caregiver has experienced.

Self-Reflection Practice

Child's Self-Regulation Begins with Adult Self-Reflection

One of the first steps in helping a child to self-regulate is for the caregiver to become aware of the possibility that they may be transmitting their own trauma, fear, and regret onto the child because they do not have the ability to provide protection for their children while outside of the home (Hays-Grudo & Morris, 2020). A one-sided trepidation felt by the adult ACE survivors often leads to feelings of inadequacy and sorrowfulness due to the loss of ability to have a heard voice in the systemic process. These feelings may be subconsciously transmitted to the child by communicating mistrust of system engagement. Wright et al. (2015) state that this mistrust may be characterized by a lack of disclosure of requested family information, suspicion of white teachers, or apprehensiveness about the language differences that all lead to the child's hesitation to transform to the school culture. Healing for the caregivers begins by identifying and addressing the ACEs that they have experienced for years. Caregivers who use self-reflection to identify their transmission of trauma recognize the stress they may be unduly placing on the child.

Caregivers Addressing Own ACEs

With an acknowledgement of the need to examine the child's outbursts in the classroom, the caregiver engages in an exploration process of the young learner's behavior. As caregivers begin to engage in this self-reflection process to construct the

ACE genogram, there becomes an awareness of what transmission of ones' trauma looks like. By examining the ACE genogram, the ECSW is able to address transmission of trauma and lead caregivers visibly through intervention using reflection. This process creates a safe space for the caregiver, child, and teacher to engage in the intervention. Until this point, the caregiver has been too busy holding their own adult ACEs together. Caregivers will need to gradually learn to trust the process of building a genogram in order to self-reflect. Self-reflection will increase the caregiver's ability to reconstruct the way in which they synchronize their attachment to their child. This is a delicate process and the steps from initial meetings to completion of the genogram are used by the ECSW in a way to improve the quality of classroom interaction for all involved.

Conclusion

In summary, *what happened to you* is the question we should be asking the grandparents, parents, and child to contextualize the Intergenerational Transmission of Historical Trauma and to view the residue of transferred systemic oppression. The root of high-risk suspension or expulsion of young black boys may be due to ITHxT and the sustained catastrophe from lifelong consequences of trauma carried by their caregivers (Hays-Grundo & Morris, 2020). What is important for intervention, is assessing and identifying the young learners' family environment and the family's understanding and ability to engage in a contextual worldview to facilitate change. The family environment refers to the culture which includes values and ethics that form the family's identity. Their traumatic history and transmission of trauma, invisible until there is a classroom disturbance, initiates an opportunity for sociocultural exploration, especially for pre-school age black boys who experience high rates of suspension and expulsions in public

schools. Collaborating with the teacher, family, and child, the ECSW assesses the child's disturbance(s) with the use of the ACE genogram for early intervention to reduce the impact that trauma has on the child (Azzi-Lessing, 2010).

The ECSW can help all involved understand the social emotional trauma that has been transferred onto the child. This approach to classroom disturbances allows all parties to participate in a comprehensive approach that allows for exploration of the situation rather than *black boy* blaming. Understanding ACEs and the ITHxT of a family will result in a journey of restoration, allowing sustainable engagement and intervention for the child in order to gain the family's confidence and trust.

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Appendix

Psychosocial History Outline

- Demographics and Description:
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Date of Birth
  - Religion
  - Nationality
  - Income
  - Veteran Status
  - Appearance—grooming, affect, Eye contact, body language
- Presenting Problem—what brought them to the agency? What help are they seeking?
- Development History—what was their childhood like. How many in their family, who raised them, was there any abuse.
- Family and Family History
  - Where did they grow up?
  - Did they move a lot—did this impact them
  - Siblings and what type of relationship do they have with their siblings
  - Parents relationship with each other and with the individual
  - Extended family relationships—positive or negative
  - Substance abuse history within the family
- Other Involvements
  - School experience
  - Friends
  - Church
  - Sports
  - Hobbies
- Physical Health
  - Any significant health issues
  - Family members with chronic or hereditary illnesses
  - Any injuries or surgeries
- Sexual History
  - Sexual Identity
  - Sexual Experiences
  - Pregnancies, miscarriages
  - General feeling about sexual issues
- Marital History
  - Current Marital Status
  - How many marriages—length—issues with each
  - Any abuse?
  - Any children Ages, locations, what is current relationship and interactions with them?
- Employment History

    - First Job—Since then?
    - Special Training—Achievements
    - Limitations in this area?
    - What is their goal in this area?
- Legal History
    - Any encounters with law enforcement? If so, what age and what kind?
    - Any history of incarceration?
    - Any current charges?
- Current Situation:
    - How do they see themselves in terms of the community?
    - Family contact and quality now?
    - School?
    - Work?
    - Church?
    - Friends?
    - Income?
    - Health?
    - What do they enjoy doing? Leisure or otherwise?
    - Functional issues—where do they live? Do they live with someone? Current transportation? What gives their lives meaning?
- Strengths and Liabilities
    - What do they see as their strengths and liabilities?
- Assessment
    - Significant developmental issues that have impacted their lives and how.
    - What psychosocial issues are they struggling with now?
    - What concrete needs are they dealing with?
    - Interaction between all of these? What (if anything) keeps them stuck?
- Plan and Goals
    - What do they want to address and how?
- Summary
    - Based on your perception—what options are available to address the needs and services? Are there additional needs or services that you see that would benefit the individual/family that they do not agree with or may be difficult to encourage them to accept.

APPENDIX A: PROSPECTUS

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

IDENTIFYING INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION OF HISTORICAL TRAUMA USING THE GENOGRAM PSYCHOSOCIAL ASSESSMENT TOOL

A PROSPECTUS

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

RENEA L. BUTLER-KING
Norman, Oklahoma
2020

IDENTIFYING INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION OF HISTORICAL

TRAUMA USING THE GENOGRAM PSYCHOSOCIAL ASSESSMENT TOOL

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

BY

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Chair

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Abstract

The history of African Americans is an important component in helping to understand how parenting is adaptive and adjusted for the traumas related to a race-based society. The ability to assess a family's coping skills when exposed to daily toxic stress with a holistic measurement tool can impact life outcomes for children entering and engaged in early childhood programs. The purpose of this research is to explore and evaluate identifying Intergenerational Transmission of Historical Trauma (ITHxT) through a case study using the Genogram Psychosocial Assessment (GPA) as a tool.

Genogram Evaluation by the Examination of Intergenerational Transmission of Historical Trauma

The history of African Americans is an important component in helping to understand how parenting is adaptive and adjusted for the traumas related to a race-based society (Hartigan, 2015; Hemming & Evans, 2018; Kendi, 2017; National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004). Two of the greatest contributors in facilitating the operationalizing of intergenerational transmission of historical trauma are from American Indian and Jewish cultures (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Cromer et al., 2018; DeGruy-Leary, 2005; Felitti, 1998; Wright, 2015). First, American Indian culture helps define the concept of historical trauma which is "massive trauma directed toward a group that shares an identity or affiliation and which has effects that transcend generational boundaries" (Cromer et al., 2018, p.100). Second, Jewish culture defines the concept of the Jewish Holocaust and its properties of multigenerational transmission of traumas within a culture (Cromer et al., 2018). Both historical experiences are culturally complex, rich, and provide a set of social rules and spiritual beliefs to assist that particular group's ability to smoothly govern within their community and interactions with one another (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Cromer et al., 2018; DeGruy-Leary, 2005; Felitti, 1998; Wright, 2015).

The terms *historical trauma* and *intergenerational transmission of trauma* have been used interchangeably in the literature (Cromer et al., 2018). Cromer et al. have suggested they may be theoretically distinct. There is no model for many African American people living in the Americas when it comes to the transmission of historical trauma. These terms have been traditionally reserved for American Indian and Jewish

cultures (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Chisom & Washington, 1997; DeGruy-Leary, 2005; Fisk, 2011; Karenga, 2010; Kinde, 2017; Marabal & Mullings, 2009). In order to address the historical trauma of many African American people, the terms *historical trauma* and *intergenerational transmission of trauma* should be integrated into one concept: *historical trauma + intergenerational transmission of trauma = the intergenerational transmission of historical trauma* or ITHxT (Figure 1).

Research Problem

ITHxT is a real-world issue that is multifaceted for many Black children,

Figure 3 The Intergenerational Transmission of Historical Trauma (ITHxT)

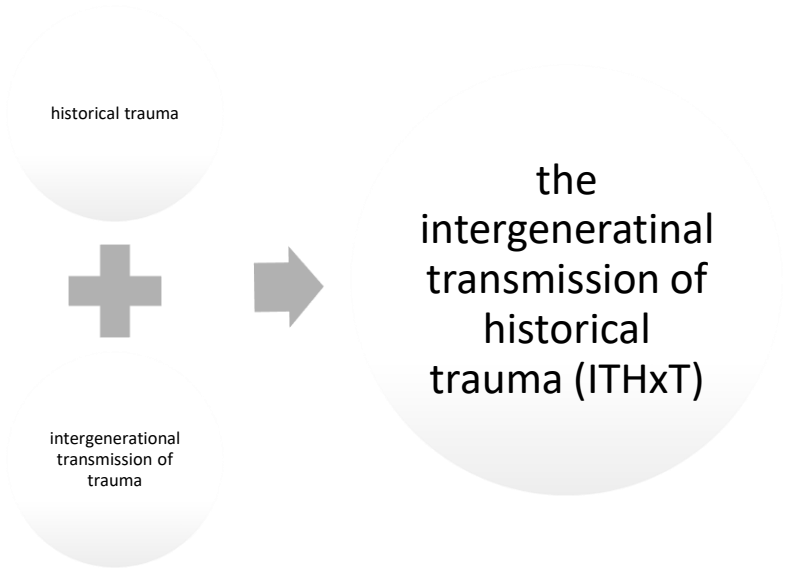


Figure I. Models the definition of the term Intergenerational Transmission of Historical Trauma (ITHxT) developed from the term's *historical trauma* and *intergenerational transmission of trauma* for integration into one concept (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Chisom & Washington, 1997; DeGruy-Leary, 2005; Fisk, 2011; Karenga, 2010; Kinde, 2017; Marabal & Mullings, 2009).

however, there is no measuring tool to assess it. The ability to assess a family's coping skills when exposed to daily toxic stress with a holistic measurement tool can impact life

outcomes for children entering and engaging in early childhood programs. As children with family legacies of slavery, the passing of trauma into their mirco-environment (home life) can impact that child's individual temperament and skill development (Cromer et al., 2018). Culture is a huge factor in all families and can determine how behavior is expressed.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is to explore and evaluate the use of the Genogram Psychosocial Assessment (GPA) as a tool for identifying ITHxT by adding specific questions that will address ITHxT. A genogram is a tool that helps social workers conceptualize and display the multigenerational structure of families (McGoldrick, 2016; McGoldrick, Gerson, & Petry, 2008). This identification could deepen and extend the knowledge and understanding of how many African American family systems adapt to daily and/or major stressors that may be influenced by intergenerational trauma. The ability to assess a family's coping skills when exposed to daily toxic stress or lingering trauma with a holistic measurement tool could impact life outcomes for children entering and engaged in early childhood programs. Early identification of ITHxT in the young child's ecological and/or school system could inform, transform, support, and empower parents, pediatricians, and/or educators of possible interventions.

Research Questions

The following foundational questions that will guide this research:

Research Question 1: How does the new GPA identify ITHxT?

Research Question 2: How do the families receive the GPA information and educational process?

Research Question 3: How does the GPA aid families in identifying and discussing intergenerational trauma?

In accordance with the stated research problem and research purpose, the researcher's chosen methodological approach is a qualitative case study design.

Theoretical Framework

The lived experiences of many African American children and families present an opportunity to explore theory and theorists from a historical, cognitive, and emotional perspective. Paulo Freire (1970) takes a critical look at young children and their growth within their families and communities. The synthesis of Freire's contributions individually and collectively to the general education field, as well as early childhood education, will assist in exploring the daily lives of African American families. The theoretical underpinning allows exploration of trauma's effect on parenting ability, especially the maternal adaption to major stressors and transmission of traumatic themes.

Freire's (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* clarifies and describes the importance of existentialism for the oppressed. Existentialism can be defined as a philosophy that emphasizes the uniqueness of an individual's lived experience. History remains critical and key to the conceptual understanding of Freirean pedagogy, as in the evolution of slavery and living Black in America in the 21st century.

Examined through this lens, ITHxT from the mother to the young child creates a rich context for exploration and further development. Particularly describing the mother's historical and race-based childhood trauma experiences, as well as her style of communication, allows the researcher access into the world of her young child. The mother's behaviors and words can lead to intergeneration of discriminatory messages that

could result in injury to her child as the mother's trauma is passed on. The concept of conscientization allows for the explorations ITHxT and the identification of maternal adaption.

Conscientization is transforming a word/phrase that allows the oppressed to have a different sense of consciousness about that particular word/phrase (Freire, 1970). The term conscientization can be a nomenclature that facilitates praxis in oppressed communities by creating a different sense of consciousness. Consciousness speaks to the collectiveness of a community and is determined by the culture people have been born into, not by their nature or individual consciousness (Chisom & Washington, 1997; Fiske, 2011). Cultural context frames and assists in the development of the oppressed communities' view of themselves. Hartigan, (2015) states

> Culture involves the process by which we formulate perceptions of the world, particularly in terms of our sense of belonging to or being different from particular groups of people. As well, culture involves meanings, and meaning is a function of systems of signification that are variously bound to or embedded in or reference the material world around us. We learn to see these meanings in everyday gestures, images, and actions. (p. 223)

Friere (1970, 1973) states the reason for an oppressed community to move towards transformation is that, the collective has begun to critically think. The oppressed community must develop a deeper understanding of poverty, history, and causes. The individuals in the community seek to understand their internalized oppression through group work developing their skill sets for communicating and relating more effectively across poverty barriers. Conscientization is a conceptual tool that facilitates self-awareness of community attitudes, beliefs, and values about poverty. This is a tool for building strong partnerships for a collective approach in an oppressed community. Conscientization is demonstrated by Freire's development of study groups in the various

countries he worked. He revealed that developing study groups adhered to the difficult encounters of their limited situation and continued to develop consciousness through dialogue to shift and change the dynamics of who they are, what they believe, and how they see their world and others.

The duality of history and language causes some African Americans to be disadvantaged in acquiring receptive language (Kendi, 2017). Receptive language is the ability to understand information so that one can engage in dialogue for the purpose of meaning and reading (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Boutte & Johnson, 2013; Cannella, 1997; Christakis, 2016, DeGruy-Leary, 2005). African American child rearing and child development are analyzed through this receptive language to best educate the young child. Consequently, required receptive language impacts the home-community-school and has created clashes throughout history within the United States public school system for many children of color. Receptive language impacts identity formation and, thus can create challenges and barriers for families educating their children.

Connecting Freire's (1970, 1973)child learning and development theory of the oppressed to the daily lives of African American parenting is important. Academic achievement is enhanced by a wide-ranging focus of development within the family system on infant learning and development, family functioning and priorities, and early screening of family challenges. The brain begins to develop shortly after conception and the infant is born with 100 billion neurons that double within their first year of life (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). These neurons create pathways leading to the organization and structure of the cortex, which controls how an infant-toddler relates to and behaves within his environment (Diamond, 2002; Oates, Karmiloff-Smith, & Johnson, 2012).

Furthermore, the development of African American children can be compounded by experiencing maternal historical trauma transmission. The history and evolution of slavery influence the early childhood setting for many Black children (DeGruy-Leary, 2005; Karenga, 2010; Kinde, 2017; Lascarides & Hinitz, 2011; Marabal & Mullings, 2009). This practice of historical duality presents an earnest challenge for theorizing child development and the education of young African American children.

Significance of the Study

Vital to the discussion of historical trauma is the context of many African American families, especially mothers, their adaptation levels and the ITHxT toward conscientization in African American boys. The importance of conscious development within oppressed communities has been explored through poverty and teacher biases, however; the impact of ITHxT between and among the parent-child relationship on development is missing (Cromer et al, 2018, Gilliam, 2005; Wright 2011; Wright et al, 2015). This gap in literature leaves the internalized inferiority perspective in many African American communities difficult to articulate in academic settings, particularly early childhood education. There is an increase in the intersectionality of social work and early childhood education, an academic study in this area has the potential to find the GPA a worthwhile and useful tool for interdisciplinary interventions.

Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to learn and identify the earliest stage at which parents, pediatricians, and/or educators can determine trauma, toxic stress, and/or historical trauma in a child's ecological system. To further develop a clearer picture of the family's ability to adapt to a crisis (trauma) that could impact the child-adult

relationships that mold social and emotional patterns for many African American males and their preparation for public school attendance.

Maternal Historical Trauma and Acculturation

Background information related to the mother's trauma history is important to determine the trajectory and influences of her child's development. It is equally as important to determine the extent of an African American mother's adverse childhood experiences and their influences on the social-emotional development of her child (Cromer et al, 2018; DeGruy-Leary, 2005; Karenga, 2010; Kendi, 2017). All generations benefit if educators acquire a greater understanding of the impact of toxic stress/trauma/historical trauma on children. Intergenerational cultural relationships among children and their families inform educators' understanding of the child's mental health and school readiness. Thus, a child's trauma history and his intersections with family attachment can potentially provide an understanding that is important for investigating suspensions or expulsions of 3- or 4- year old from preschool and pre-kindergarten programs.

The involvement of early childhood education programs with toddler families experiencing trauma possibly provides stronger connections for those children and their families to successfully participate in a pre-kindergarten environment(s) (Barton et al., 2004). Barton et al. further suggest that without intersecting early childhood education learning communities with families, children could fail. In fact, they claim that the public-school system could become an additional trauma event for the family.

Child care professionals have a responsibility to consider empathy because, in the U.S., children are in early childhood programs for long periods of time (Lally, 2013).

Often, children begin this engagement process as early as 6 weeks of age. Literature reflects the need to develop and enhance the way in which parents and educators communicate with each other and provide a way to assess if a child is challenged with trauma issues (Anderson, 1997; Chavkin, 2000; Lott, 2001). It also seems that there is an opportunity to do things in a more authentic way, with children spending the majority of their young lives in early childhood programs that move them to pre-kindergarten as soon as they are toilet trained. Increasingly, children spend their lives facing physical and emotional stress connecting and constructing engagement between their families and their early childhood setting, if they do not receive intentional scaffolding on how to engage their system regarding the awareness of trauma transmissions, the child's behavior can be interpreted as adversarial (Bronfenbrenner, 1999; Copple & Bredekamp, 2009).

Style of Communication and Cultural Interactions

There are clear challenges within the education system that create unsafe places for many African American children to continue their development (Wright et al., 2015). Public education in the U.S. is a very old institution, one that dates to 1642 when the first education law was enacted in Massachusetts. Early American education was primarily private or religious and it brought mass schooling and literacy to the nation well before the public-school system, as it is known today, was legislated into existence (Coulson, 1999). Most public schools consider themselves advocates for children (Canella, 1997). Educators often take pride in being child-centered and placing the whole child at the forefront of the nation's thoughts and actions to demonstrate children's rights and equitable access (Canella, 1997). Yet, we find the following in literature:

> Although the United States is the richest industrialized nation in the history of humankind, when compared to other industrialized countries the United States of

> America ranks 25th in infant mortality; 22nd in low birth rates; 18th in the percentage of children living in poverty; and 13th in the gap between rich and poor children. Additionally, children under 15 in the United States are 12 times as likely to die from gunfire as children in the other 25 industrialized countries combined. (Connolly, Hayden, & Levin, 2007, p. 93)

NAEYC's (2009) position statement on early learning standards provides guidelines for children's rights and aids ones understanding of the importance of safe parent-child relationships. The literature speaks to parent-child relationships and how it helps children to co-construct family culture and communication with their parents (Anderson, 1997), a skill that is transferable to school settings. Bronfenbrenner (1999) stated the lack of family engagement could add to the children's environmental confusion producing an unsafe place to learn how to process and adapt information from another systems environment. There is maximum learning when the relationship between the early childhood professional and families correspond to what is best for the child while in childcare (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Lott, 2001).

Duhn (2011) asserted that "culturally, childhood is often understood as a time of innocence which can mean that issues such as ecological sustainability are considered too problematic for early childhood practice" (p. 19). When an educator is involved with an infant or toddler exhibiting infant mental health challenges, it makes sense to promote infant/toddler parent involvement (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Family engagement is essential to the exploration of Black males' behavior in classrooms as it facilitates and maintains the inclusion of the families' cultural context. This cultural context can provide a frame for resource engagement such as practical ideas the educator can apply immediately if there is questionable behavior (Wright, 2011; Wright et al., 2015).

Cultural History

There are clear challenges in defining the appearance and expression of family and child attachment, as well as mother-infant attachment within the African American family and/or community due to the historical trauma that many faced coming to the Americas. The foundation of many African American children was and continues to be entrenched in a toxic environment that is too often mired in violence; suggesting that there is a continual repetition of historical trauma these children face that goes unaddressed (DeGruy-Leary, 2005; Kendi, 2017).

Most African American families and their children are in the U.S. because of the Transatlantic Slave Trade (DeGruy-Leary, 2005; Karenga, 2010; Tibbles, 1994). Lascarides and Hinitz (2011) state that the last half of the 15th century were years of preparation for the slave trade. Cannella (1997) explains the history of early childhood education documented by Euro-American males and she contradicts Lascarides and Hinitz (2011) who call slavery America's peculiar institution. These authors give descriptions of the slave quarters and Black families living in slave quarters, childrearing in the slave quarters, the mother's role, the father's role, the importance of children, plantation nursery, clothing, play and games, stages of development, religion and its clandestine congregation, and education. The Black family's ability to bond with their children was difficult during the foundation period of slavery due to the harsh conditions. Marable and Mullings (2009) explain African Americans created themselves

> through a series of vast historical events and social forces that greatly transformed the global political economy for over half a millennium. Chief among these were the development of the transatlantic slave trade, beginning at the dawn of the sixteenth century, which transported at least fifteen million Africans against their will into the Americas and the Caribbean; the subsequent institutionalization and expansion of monocrop agricultural production relying on forced labor; and, with

> these, the establishment of the new world settler societies based on the extermination of indigenous populations. These broad historical forces were the context for the development of the British colonies in North America, which in 1787 would become the United States. Within these states about 650,000 Africans were resettled as slaves between 1619 and the eve of the Civil War. (p. 3)

Lascarides and Hinitz (2011) state that slavery became an institution for landowners to gain wealth in the new world and produce goods such as cotton, tobacco, and sugar cane. There was also the sexual exploitation of Black women during the slave trade. This period in the U.S. history was a very violent one for African Americans, who were referred to during this time as Black or Negroes. Prior to the beginning of slavery in 1619, Negroes came to the U.S. as indentured servants. However, as the need for an increase in workers and a cheaper workforce rose, the slave trade began. "The slaves were treated with harshness and severity to the point of death, even though they were the foundation on which great wealth was accumulated" (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2011, p. 492).

Slave quarters, the places African American (Negroes) lived on the southern plantations, consisted of slave families and their children (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2011). They were one-room cabins, furnishings were scarce, families had straw-filled mattresses, boxes to store belongings, and it was enforced and mandatory that they stayed clean. Lascarides and Hinitz describe slave quarters as a "thriving little village" (p. 493). It is further stated that the larger plantations had various other houses for tannery, washing, smithy (a blacksmith's workshop), illness, bachelors, and nursery. The plantation was thought to be a self-contained community for slaves where all their needs were met, and their desires were taken care of with no need for interaction outside of the community. These negative experiences of whole family abuse patterns during slavery, Jim Crow, segregation, and discrimination lead to many compounding challenges for

generations of Black families. In summary of style of communication and cultural interaction, the substantive long-term historical trauma legacy being transmitted within the infant-mother relationship can impact the families' ability to have equity and equitable participation within their preschool and public-school settings. A study exploring the use of an alternative assessment of long-term historical trauma within Black families could provide an epistemological framework which promotes mindfulness in the delivery of mental services in early childhood programs for Black families.

Methodology

This research study will use a qualitative case study design that is holistic in its inquiry, emergent in its design, and purposeful in its sampling (Patton, 2002). The nature of qualitative research is intentionally subjective, encourages discovery, is exploratory, relationship-based, and contextual. Miles and Huberman (1994) describe qualitative research methods as techniques used that allow the researcher to provide elaborate interpretations of phenomena without depending on numerical measurement; its focus is on discovering true inner meanings and providing new insights into social interactions. Within this research method, the strategy for design is an emergent one with analysis strategies being interviews, observations, documents, and audio-visuals that are analyzed and interpreted with thick description (Creswell, 2009). Explorative qualitative research has an inductive process. This induction process allows the researcher to gain an understanding of the meanings of human attachment to events. Additionally, the structure allows flexibility and permits changes within the research design as the research progresses to generalize as needed (Saunders, Goldenberg, & Gallimore, 2009).

Participants and Recruitment Procedures

Participants will be members of the African American community who have children in early childhood programs in the Oklahoma City metropolitan area, pre-kindergarten to third-grade classrooms. The sampling intended is as follows:

- African American Family (single head of household or two parents)
- Have male children 36 months old to 8-year-olds
- Male children who have had challenges within their school setting around threats of or being suspended or expelled from that school
- Families who are willing to dialogue and participate in an assessment of their multigenerational family attitudes regarding public school and Black Males
- Once all the Cases (Families) have been interviewed, they are willing to participate in a focus group

There will be five families recruited for interviews regarding the transmission of family trauma using a genogram (Appendix A) that will explore at least three successive generations. This number of participants is based on the following two studies that also used genograms. Thomas (1998) used four families in her study that utilized the cultural genogram that found that ethnicity, race, immigration/acculturation, social class, gender, and "spirituality/religion has an impact on behaviors and family rules" (p. 30). Lev-Wiesel (2007), in his qualitative study of intergenerational transmission of trauma, started with five families but ended with three. The three families struggled with PSTD from traumatic experiences with immigrant transition camps, being a child Holocaust survivor, and living in relocation camps.

The families will be recruited from three places: 1) the African American Community radio station KVSP 92.1 FM that has a radio format segment call *Question of the Night* that asks the community to ponder challenges within the community, 2) the local African American churches, and/or 3) an advertisement in the Black community newspaper.

Interested families will be invited to an information/overview meeting that will take place at Central Oklahoma Health Start Initiative with Community Health Centers of Oklahoma located at 3017 N. Martin Luther King Ave., Oklahoma City, OK. The content will be a brief presentation about the study and an introduction to the GPA as a tool for ITHxT. This meeting will allow the researcher to contextualize the study for the participants. During the presentation, information on safety and confidentiality as it relates to the study will be explained, the researcher will provide psychoeducation related to intergenerational transmission of trauma and historical trauma, as well as facilitate a group discussion on experiences of bias. Of the participants attending, the researcher will ask them to self-select into the ITHxT study and complete a demographic survey (Appendix B). A $20.00 gift card will be given as an incentive for participating in the genogram information/overview meeting.

The information/overview meeting will provide a 1 ½ - 2- hour safe space of time to establish a reflective process with purpose and procedure of the impending study for the community participants, as well as the researcher, by providing the following:

- An invitation to the group

- Information in a contextual way to educate the group regarding self-safety, confidentiality, intergenerational transmission of trauma, historical trauma, and information on the genogram as an assessment tool (visual aid)
- A safe space for the generation of discussion questions
- A $20.00 incentive gift card
- Seeking participants for the ITHxT study

Data Sources and Procedures

Genogram. The tool for gathering data information in this study is the genogram, a clinical social work tool that permits the clinician the opportunity to graphically depict some aspect their client's ecological environment, providing important interactional data that can aid the researcher in assessing the participants' multigenerational family attitudes and patterns regarding public school and Black males (Chavis, 2004; McGoldrick, 2016; McGoldrick, Gerson, & Petry, 2008). McGoldrick et al. states the following about gathering genogram data:

> typically, the genogram is constructed from information gathered during the first meeting with a client/participant and revised as new information becomes available. The initial assessment forms the basis for treatment. It is important to emphasize, however, that clinicians typically do not compartmentalize assessment and treatment. Each interaction of the clinician with a family member informs the assessment and thus influences the next intervention. (p. 4)

It can take anywhere from 15 minutes to gather demographic information to approximately 20 hours for a comprehensive assessment and report. **"**Because family patterns can be transmitted from one generation to the next, the clinician should scan the genogram for patterns that have been repeated over several generations" (McGoldrick et al., 2008, p. 21). The genogram is a graphic representation of family members and their relationships with each other assisting in understanding the family context as shown in

Figure 2 below. The impact of ITHxT can also be assessed in a genogram with questions developed around intergenerational trauma.

McCullough-Chavis (2004) further states the importance of genograms to include a family structure, history, and relationships of a family for at least three generations. A

Figure 2 Family genogram example

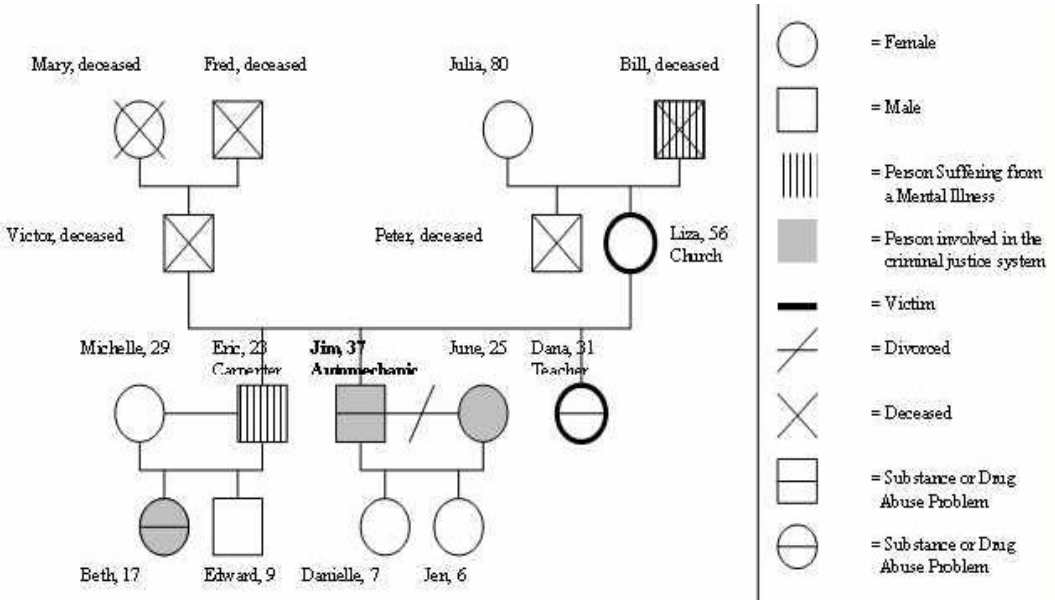


Figure II. Processing of standard genogram model that shows the construction of three generations of a family and the psychosocial dynamics of the relationships within the family adapted from "Genograms and African American Families: Employing Family of Spirituality, Religion, and Extended Network" by McCullough-Chavis, 2008, Michigan Family Review, 9, p. 31

standard genogram shows visual genogram symbols that indicate the family structure (Figure 2). McCullough-Chavis demonstrated in her single case study that thick descriptions help practitioners have a better understanding of some African American's worldview. The genogram with its structure to assess patterns and themes over three generations provides the ability to graphically represent complex expressions of these

varied patterns and themes. "It also provides an excellent tool for exploring dimensions of human experiences and the spiritual dimensions of those experiences intergenerationally" (p.32).

Genogram procedures. McCullough-Chavis (2004) gives the clearest example about approaching the initial genogram.

> The first steps in constructing a genogram as a device for visually exploring family history and family patterns in a manner that is culturally sensitive (McCullough-Chavis & Waites, 2004). During a standard genogram interview, the practitioner collaborates with the family to explore family history, family events, and significant family experiences. By participating in the drawing of the genogram, the individual and family can gain insight and understanding of their family history and patterns. Some of the information concerning demographics, chronologies, vertical, and horizontal repetitive information may be recorded within the genogram. Drawing the FIG with the family during the interview facilitates better interpretations and processing of the information. The interview process for the standard genogram is about 45 minutes, but adding additional questions to the interview could take longer. (p. 30).

For this study, the completion of a genogram with each family will take approximately two hours to complete. The researcher will meet each family in their home or at a designated location of the family's choice. Family members that need to be present for the genogram are the child's caretakers and other immediate family members if they choose. When the researcher arrives, she will review the study again with the participants before beginning the genogram and obtaining permission to audiotape the session. An easel with poster board will be set up to begin the visual transcribing of the family. Beginning with the child, the genogram skeletal structure of three generations will be created. The following questions will help guide the dialogue for gathering information for the intergenerational family story and traditions (history, values, beliefs, patterns, and communication).

1. What is the structure of your family?

- Who lives in your household?
- Whom do you include in your extended family network?
- What are the roles of adult members?

2. How do the elders and children in the family view education?
    - What role do elders play in education in your family?
    - How are children cared for by your family?
    - How is school selection made in your family?
    - Who is the caregiver before and after school?
3. What were significant transitions and/or critical life events in the history of your family, extended family?
    - What events or situations have been stressful for you and your family?
    - When these events take place how do you or family members respond?

Questions in section 1 are standard genogram questions. Questions in section 2 and 3 are the additional questions added to assess ITHxT.

As the dialogue ensues, the family and researcher begin to look for patterns that connect generations and these patterns are discussed. What does the pattern mean (or meant) for each generation? When the connections are exhausted, the researcher closes the process while also making sure that the family members are being affirmed. As family members reflect on the process, the researcher will be available for further dialogue.

Member checking. Once the transcription of the genogram has been completed, the researcher will return to each family and discuss the findings. At this time, the family and researcher discuss the accuracy of the information being shared, changes are made if

necessary. As a service to the families, the researcher will create a list of professional therapeutic services such as community agencies/ therapist that she can recommend if needed and each family will receive a $50.00 gift card as an incentive for their participation.

Focus group. The focus group begins when all five families have completed the genogram interviews. The researcher will utilize a more structured moderator level and lead the discussion regarding the actual interviews and questions conducted while completing the genogram (Morgan, 2013). The purpose of the focus group is to compare and contrast the use of the genogram as an assessment tool for identifying ITHxT across cases to reveal any differences and similarities as in synchronic reliability (Thyer, 2010). The intent of this study is to inform the research by generating new knowledge regarding the use of genograms and ITHxT and, as a result, there will be a high level of moderator involvement so as to impose the questions in Appendix D and allow for managing group dynamics (Morgan, 2013). This high level of moderator involvement makes the focus group process more structured and has an implied evaluation for systemic research. Each family will receive a $20.00 gift card as an incentive for participating.

***Focus group procedures*.** The focus group will provide a 1 ½ - 2-hour safe space to establish a reflective feedback process for the community study participants as well as checking for synchronic reliability by providing the following:

- Information post study in a contextual way to receive feedback regarding self-safety, confidentiality, intergenerational transmission of trauma, historical trauma, and information on the genogram as an assessment tool (visual aid)

- A safe space for critical thinking and post-interview questions regarding the genogram interviews
- Give a $20.00 incentive gift card to participants

Credibility. Focus group participants will be given the opportunity to inform possible improvements for the processes of the evaluation (a key test of the worthiness of the GPA tool). Their feedback will help establish the credibility (or validity) of the added questions as measures of ITHxT.

Field notebook. A field notebook will be used to record the researcher's processing of the data – and it will be a running record of the following considerations:

- Physical setting for each family
- Description of participants
- Activities and interactions of each family during genogram process
- Subtle factors, such as informal and unplanned activities, the symbolic meaning of words, as well as nonverbal communication with each family
- My own behavior – thoughts and reflections
- Tally various themes presented within the genogram assessment
- After each observation, transcription the observation for readability and preparation for future coding (Merriam, 2009)

Data Analysis

The data analysis employed is a thematic analysis as described by Bruan and Clark (2006). Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich)

detail. However, it also often goes further than this and interprets various aspects of the research topic.

Thematic analysis fits well within the inductive processes as research themes for meanings within this inquiry. Thematic analysis is flexible, it is independent, and it allows for a range that can intersect theoretical and epistemological approaches. The researcher will employ the 6-phases of thematic analysis to analyze the data in this research method as outlined by Bruan and Clark, (2006):

- Phase 1-Familiarizing yourself with your data. I will collect the data through face-to-face interviews conducting the genogram, observations, and focus group. The audio recordings of the genogram, observations, and focus group interviews will be transcribed using Microsoft Word. Afterward, the data will be imported into Dedoose 7.0.21 (2015), a qualitative research software program.
- Phase 2 – Generating initial codes. It is the process of coding that identifies the features of data that allows them to be sorted into meaningful groups. A start list of codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994), will be utilized for each area of the genogram and for each focus group question. This process will allow for collating the data in this phase.
- Phase 3 – Searching for themes. Once all data have been coded and sorted, the analysis of data moves from codes to making meaning of the themes. A refocusing of the data happens at a broader level to the potential themes, and collating the data makes it relevant within the identified themes.
- Phase 4 – Reviewing themes. This is a refinement phase. This level involves reviewing and refining the emerged themes and making adjustments as needed.

This phase includes two sub-phases: 1) Level One means reviewing the coded extracts for each theme to decide if they form a coherent pattern. If they do, move to Level two; if they do not, then the theme itself needs to be reconsidered. 2) Level Two is where you examine each theme in relation to the entire data set and see if the thematic map accurately reflects the meanings apparent in the entire data. If it works, move to the next phase, if it does not work, then you must return to Phase 2 and continue coding until you have a thematic map that you are satisfied with.

- Phase 5 – Defining and naming themes. Development of a theme of the researched data is vital in this phase. It is important to begin to interrupt the data and not just paraphrase the content of the data. The challenge here is to identify whether the themes are complete or if the data produces sub-themes (a theme within a theme). Bazeley (2013) encourages researchers to participate in a continual comparative process to ensure that the research is generating stimulating information, rich contextual descriptions, and to provide a comprehensive report.
- Phase 6 – The researcher will develop a report of the qualitative findings. Producing the report that incorporates three journal articles be submitted for peer review. The researcher will interrupt and report in an analytical narrative that informs the field of early childhood education. One anticipates the findings will strengthen early childhood literature, provide important findings as it relates to the intersectionality of early childhood literature and social work assessment tool, in addition to possible consideration for future study development, and move towards dissertation.

Ethical Considerations

Patton (2015) states "trustworthiness of data is tied directly to the trustworthiness of those that collect and analyze the data – and their demonstrated competence" (p. 706). Ethical issues and dilemmas are present in all research and depend on the researcher's own sensitivity and values. To ensure the dependability and credibility of the proposed study, the researcher will follow the guidelines of the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The goal of this researcher is to strive for intellectual rigor and uphold a strict code of ethics while keeping an audit trail, so others can see the process of how data is collected and analyzed. In addition, multiple sources of data (audio recordings, in-person interviews, focus group discussions, and field notes) will be used to ensure triangulation.

Trustworthiness. Qualitative researchers employ the constructs of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to substantiate their research. The strategies for ensuring trustworthiness will depend on the nature and purpose of individual projects (Maxwell, 2013).

Credibility. Considered one of the most important factors in qualitative research, credibility included in this study are *member checking* with each family, the *qualifications and experience of the researcher* in conducting genograms for over 20 years as a social worker, use of the field notebook to provide *reflective commentary* as a way of monitoring my developing constructions of the research, *triangulation* or the use of many different data courses, and *peer scrutiny* of the coding and analyzation process by other doctoral students and my advisor.

Transferability. The findings of this qualitative research will be specific to the five participating families. However, if the additional questions yield examples and

experiences of ITHxT, then further research should be conducted with additional participants. Additionally, the study participants who have experienced ITHxT, could further become participants in a follow-up study to begin examining factors of expulsion in young Black boys from early childhood settings.

Dependability. The interviews, focus group, observations, and findings are all specific to this particular study. Along with the criterial listed in credibility, other elements to ensure dependability are the full *description of the research design and how it was implemented*, the very specific information of *data gathering and analysis*, and the final *evaluation of the effectiveness of the study*.

Confirmability. Confirmability means that the findings represent the experiences and ideas of the participants and not the researcher's preferences. Miles and Huberman (1994) discuss four criteria to establish confirmability: whether the researcher *acknowledges and confronts her own biases and preferences* and how the research documents preliminary theories that result in the study's findings. These two areas will be established in the reflective commentary in the field notebook. The researcher already acknowledges her potential bias as she has a deep personal and professional opinions that inform the understanding of the social context of the study. The final two areas will be presented as part of the *audit trail* by providing two diagrams. The first diagram will detail the *data-oriented* decisions made and procedures used. The second diagram will show the *theoretical* audit trail, which examines the entire study and shows how the theoretical framework and literature we used to inform the findings and discussion.

Limitations

The assumptions of this study include that participants will be forthright and honest in their answers during the data collection. The researcher has no way to verify this. However, all participants will be briefed on the study's commencement its purpose, goals, and procedures in the overview, focus group two and the in-person interviews. Prolonged engagement in the field setting hopes to provide a sense of trust in that the participants will have no reason to misrepresent themselves and information.

Other limitations could include the homogenous nature of the sample or potential difficulties in recruiting participants. However, this study could introduce an interdisciplinary usefulness of the GPA if this tool, which is often used in social work, also proves its applicability to understanding issues in Intergenerational Trauma and Early Childhood Education. Exploring the use of an alternative assessment tool for long-term historical trauma within Black families could provide an epistemological framework which promotes mindfulness in the delivery of mental services in early childhood programs for Black families. Since child behavior is so closely linked with family culture, the GPA could offer insight into child behavior, which could help improve family and educational outcomes in Black children.

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Appendix A

Background Information

Directions: Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability and willingness.

1. What is your relation to the child/children having challenges in school?
   [ ] mom [ ] dad [ ]grandmother [ ]grandfather [ ] aunt [ ] uncle
   [ ] foster parent [ ] sibling (brother or sister) [ ] caregiver (nanny/babysitter)
   [ ] other: (please describe) _____

2. How many children did you bring with you today?
   [ ] none [ ] 1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 or more
   Child 1's age: [ ] under 12 months [ ] 12-23 months [ ] 24-35 months [ ] 3 years [ ] 4 years or older
   Child 2's age: [ ] under 12 months [ ] 12-23 months [ ] 24-35 months [ ] 3 years [ ] 4 years or older
   Child 3's age: [ ] under 12 months [ ] 12-23 months [ ] 24-35 months [ ] 3 years [ ] 4 years or older
   Child 4's age: [ ] under 12 months [ ] 12-23 months [ ] 24-35 months [ ] 3 years [ ] 4 years or older

3. How many children under the age of 18 do you have living your home?
   [ ] 1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 or more

4. What is your family's combined annual income?
   [ ] less than $15,000 [ ] $15,000-$34,999 [ ] $35,000-$49,999
   [ ] $50,000-$74,999 [ ] $75,000-$149,999 [ ] 150,000 or more

5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
   [ ] Some high school [ ] GED [ ] High School [ ] Some college
   [ ] Associates degree (AA) [ ] Bachelor's degree (BA/BS)
   [ ] Graduate degree (Masters) [ ] Professional degree (JD, PhD, EdD, MD)

6. Do you participate in any parenting programs (school/community/religious)?
   [ ] yes [ ] no

7. If yes-approximately how long is your relationship with program?
   [ ] less than 6 months [ ] 6-11 months [ ] 1 year [ ] 2 years [ ] 3 years [ ] 4 years or more

8. What is your age:
   [ ] 18 years-24 years [ ] 25 years-29 years [ ] 30 years -40 years [ ] 41years +

9. What best describes you?
   [ ] African-American, Black [ ] American Indian/Alaskan Indian
   [ ] Bi-racial (please describe) _____[ ] Hispanic/Latino
   [ ] Other(please describe_____[ ] White

10. What best describes you?
    [ ] Single [ ] Divorce [ ] Married [ ] Separated [ ] Other _____

11. How many adults (over the age of 18) live in your home?
    [ ] 1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ] 5 or more

12. What is the primary language spoken in your home?
    [ ] English [ ] Spanish [ ] Other (please describe) _____

Appendix B

Consent Form
Genogram Evaluation by the Examination of Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma (ITHxT)
Informed Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a research study on the Genogram Evaluation. We hope to learn if your participation in the study impacts the development of Intergenerational of historical trauma questions. You were selected as a participant in this research study because you are a parent to an African American male child enrolled in a public School, private school, and charter school and you are willing to participate in the Genogram Evaluation for Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma Evaluation (ITHxT).

If you decide to participate, you will complete a genogram that asks you questions about your family multi-generational attitudes and experiences with school systems and historical trauma. This process could take as much as 20 hours total (focus group(s), 2-75 minute meetings to prepare and discuss the genogram, closure, and intervention tips for parents and teachers). There are no risks or benefits predicted for this research study.

Any information obtained in connection with this research study that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. In any written reports or publication, no one will be identified or identifiable. The data from this study will be used for informing the support of a larger study and to determine the development of additional questions for the standard genogram.

Your decision whether or not to participant will not affect your future relations with Renea L. Butler-King, of Oklahoma City, OK. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without affecting such relationship.

If you have any questions, please ask me. If you have any additional questions later about your rights as a participate in this research study, please contact:
Renea L. Butler-King, Ph.D. candidate, MSW, Lead Researcher at 405.412.8912

You will be offered a copy of this form to keep.

****

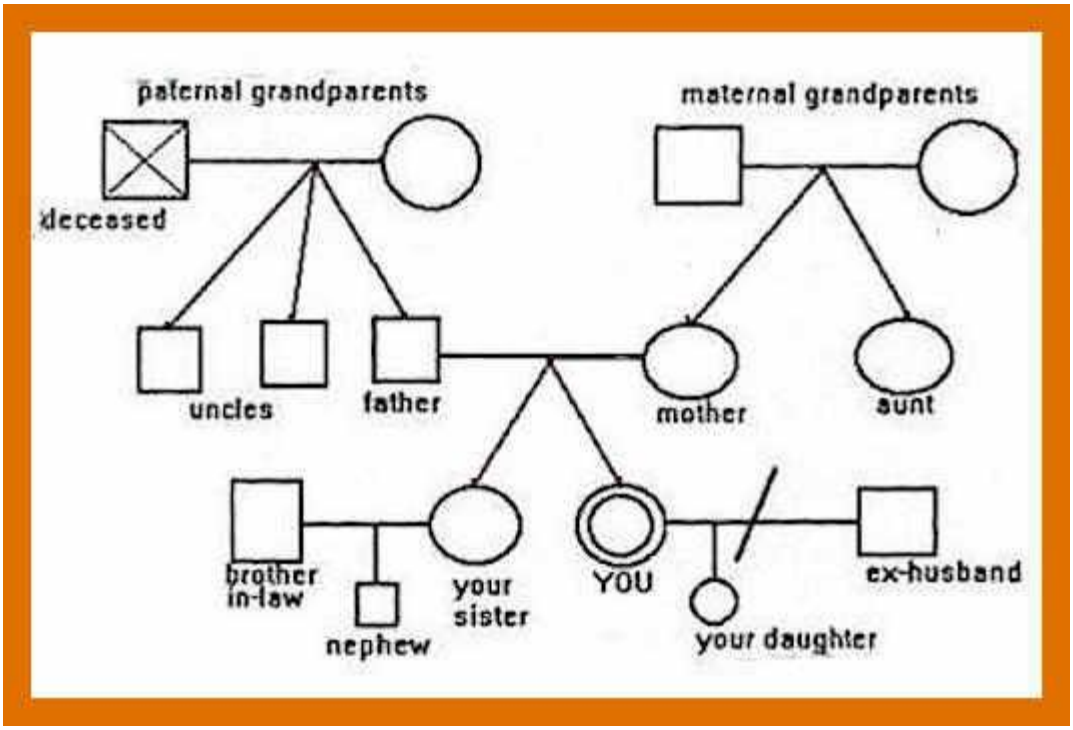
You are making a decision whether or not to participate in a research study. Your signature indicates that you have read the information provided above, have had your questions answered, and you have decided to participate. You may withdraw at any time after signing this form should you choose to discontinue participation in this research study.

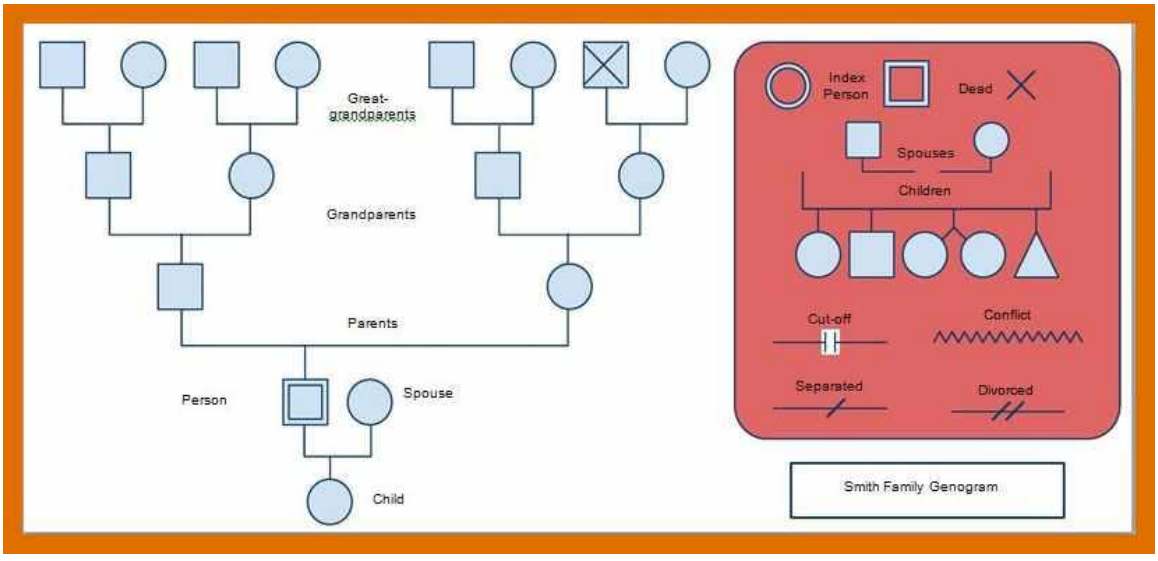
_____ _____
Signature Date

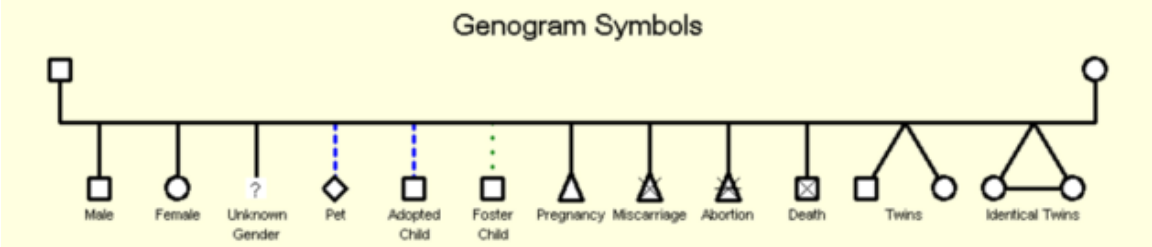
_____ _____
Signature of Principle Investigator Date

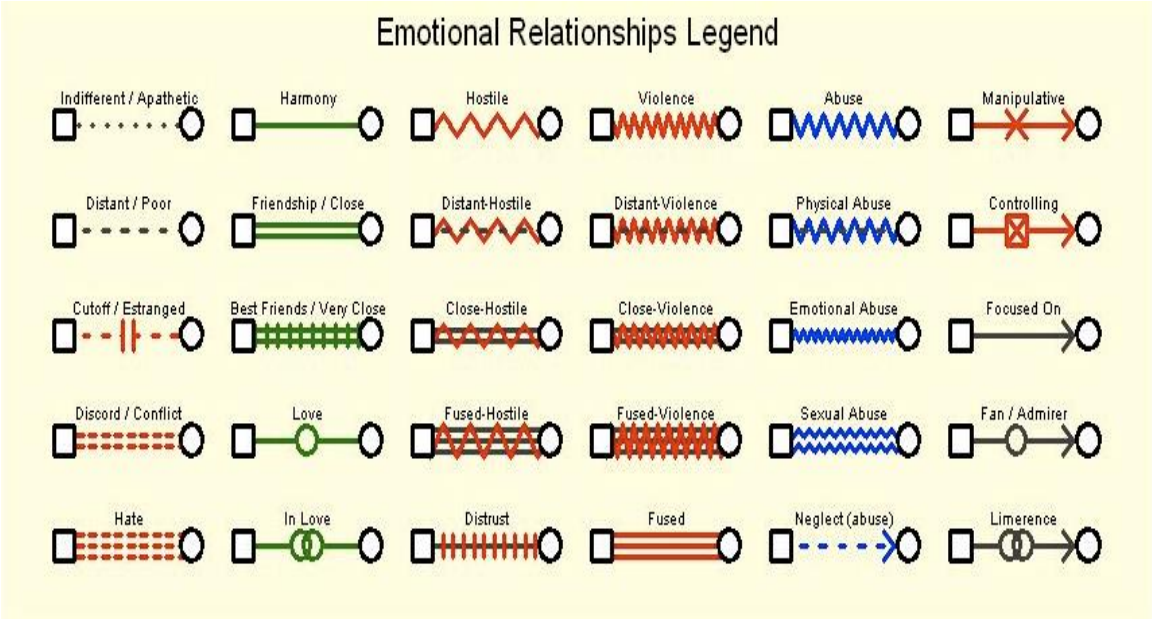
Appendix C

Genogram Examples and Relationship Symbols






Genogram Symbols
Male
Female
Unknown Gender
Pet
Adopted Child
Foster Child
Pregnancy
Miscarriage
Abortion
Death
Twins
Identical Twins


Emotional Relationships Legend
Indifferent / Apathetic
Harmony
Hostile
Violence
Abuse
Manipulative
Distant / Poor
Friendship / Close
Distant-Hostile
Distant-Violence
Physical Abuse
Controlling
Cutoff / Estranged
Best Friends / Very Close
Close-Hostile
Close-Violence
Emotional Abuse
Focused On
Discord / Conflict
Love
Fused-Hostile
Fused-Violence
Sexual Abuse
Fan / Admirer
Hate
In Love
Distrust
Fused
Neglect (abuse)
Limerence

Appendix D

Focus Group Discussion Questions
Experience with Bias

1. How has the knowledge of Genogram development for your family, influence your parenting children?
2. Did the experience change the way you value/discuss/promote education with your children?*
3. Are there experiences related to bias, prejudice, or oppression (e.g. racism, sexism, physical disabilities, homophobia, non-privilege) that you would like to discuss? *
4. What effect have these experiences had on you?
5. Are there experiences related to bias, prejudice, or oppression that your family has experienced?*
6. What effect have these experiences had on you and on your family members?
7. Do you believe that your current concern is related to these experiences?*
8. Is there anything else with regard to experiences that I left out and you would like to discuss that would be useful for me (the researcher) to know?

*2,3,5 & 7 Will prompt and develop follow up questions in the field as needed.

Appendix E

Projected Time-Line

Summer 2018 – Complete prospectus and obtain IRB approval from the University of Oklahoma.

September 2018 – Make radio and newspaper announcement to recruit participants.

October 2018 – Schedule and conduct Community Information Overview of study.

October 2018 – Begin scheduling the GPA family interviews.

October 2018 – Beginning qualitative analysis of interviews and reflections to determine common strands that might redirect researcher prompts.

November 2018 – Continue qualitative analysis of interviews and reflections.

December 2018 – Begin completing analysis of all collected data, hold the focus group and start writing the dissertation.

Spring 2019 – Defend dissertation.

Dissertation Proposal Outline

Chapter 1 – Problem Statement

Chapter 2 – Three publication-ready articles

- Empirical research article
- Theoretical research article
- Practice research article

Chapter 3 – Implications for the Early Childhood Education field and future research

Potential Journals

- Theory and Research in Education
- Journal of Black Studies
- Journal of Urban Studies
- Wiley Online Journals
    - Child Development
    - Infant & Child Development
    - Infant Mental Health Journal
    - Child & Family Social Work
    - Family Relations
    - Child Development Perspectives

APPENDIX B INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD STUDY APPROVAL LETTER

Internal Review Board Study Approval Letter



Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Approval of Initial Submission – Expedited Review – AP01

Date: April 08, 2019 **IRB#:** 10315

Principal Investigator: Renea L Butler-King, MA

Approval Date: 04/08/2019

Continuing Review Due Date: 03/31/2020

Study Title: Identifying Intergenerational Transmission of Historical Trauma Using the Genogram Psychosocial Assessment Tool

Expedited Category: 6 & 7

Collection/Use of PHI: No

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I have reviewed and granted expedited approval of the above-referenced research study. To view the documents approved for this submission, open this study from the *My Studies* option, go to *Submission History*, go to *Completed Submissions* tab and then click the *Details* icon.

As principal investigator of this research study, you are responsible to:

- Conduct the research study in a manner consistent with the requirements of the IRB and federal regulations 45 CFR 46.
- Obtain informed consent and research privacy authorization using the currently approved, stamped forms and retain all original, signed forms, if applicable.
- Request approval from the IRB prior to implementing any/all modifications.
- Promptly report to the IRB any harm experienced by a participant that is both unanticipated and related per IRB policy.
- Maintain accurate and complete study records for evaluation by the HRPP Quality Improvement Program and, if applicable, inspection by regulatory agencies and/or the study sponsor.
- **Submit a continuing review report to the IRB to provide the study/recruitment status and report all harms and deviations that may have occurred.**
- **Submit a final closure report at the completion of the project.**

If you have questions about this notification or using iRIS, contact the IRB @ 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

Cordially,



Lara Mayeux, Ph.D.

Chair, Institutional Review Board



Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Approval of Continuing Review – Expedited Review – AP0

Date: March 04, 2020 **IRB#:** 10315

Principal Investigator: Renea L Butler-King, MA **Approval Date:** 03/04/2020

Study Title: Identifying Intergenerational Transmission of Historical Trauma Using the Genogram Psychosocial Assessment Tool

Based on the information submitted, your study is currently: Active, closed to enrollment. On behalf of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I have reviewed and approved your continuing review application. To view the documents approved for this submission, open this study from the *My Studies* option, go to *Submission History*, go to *Completed Submissions* tab and then click the *Details* icon.

As part of IRB approval, this study has been transitioned to the new requirements under the revised Common Rule. It has been determined that this study now meets the criteria for Exempt Category 2. Please continue to submit Modification and Protocol Deviation forms as needed, and notify the IRB office when this project should be closed by submitting the Exempt Study Closure Report form within iRIS.

Even though future continuing reviews are no longer required for this study, you are reminded that, as principal investigator of this research, it is still your responsibility to:

- Conduct the research study in a manner consistent with the requirements of the IRB and federal regulations 45 CFR 46.
- Obtain informed consent and research privacy authorization using the currently approved, stamped forms and retain all original, signed forms, if applicable.
- Request approval from the IRB prior to implementing any/all modifications.
- Promptly report to the IRB any harm experienced by a participant that is both unanticipated and related, per HRPP SOP 407.
- Maintain accurate and complete study records for evaluation by the HRPP Quality Improvement Program and, if applicable, inspection by regulatory agencies and/or the study sponsor. **Submit a final closure report at the completion of the project.**

If you have questions about this notification or using iRIS, contact the IRB @ 405-325-

8110 or irb@ou.edu.

Cordially,



Lara Mayeux, Ph.D.

Chair, Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX C INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FINAL REPORT

The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects

Final Report – Inactivation

Date:	January 14, 2021	**IRB#:**	10315
		Inactivation Date:	
To:	Renea L Butler-King, MA		01/14/2021

Study Title: Identifying Intergenerational Transmission of Historical Trauma Using the Genogram Psychosocial Assessment Tool

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I have reviewed the Final Report for the above referenced research study. You have indicated that this study has been completed and should be inactivated. This letter is to confirm that the IRB has inactivated this research study as of the date indicated above.

Note that this action completely terminates all aspects and arms of this research study. Should you wish to reactivate this study, you will need to submit a new IRB application.

If you have questions about this notification or using iRIS, contact the IRB at (405) 325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

Cordially,

Lara Mayeux

Lara Mayeux, Ph.D.

Chair, Institutional Review Board