

Race As An Adverse Childhood Experience



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Introduction:

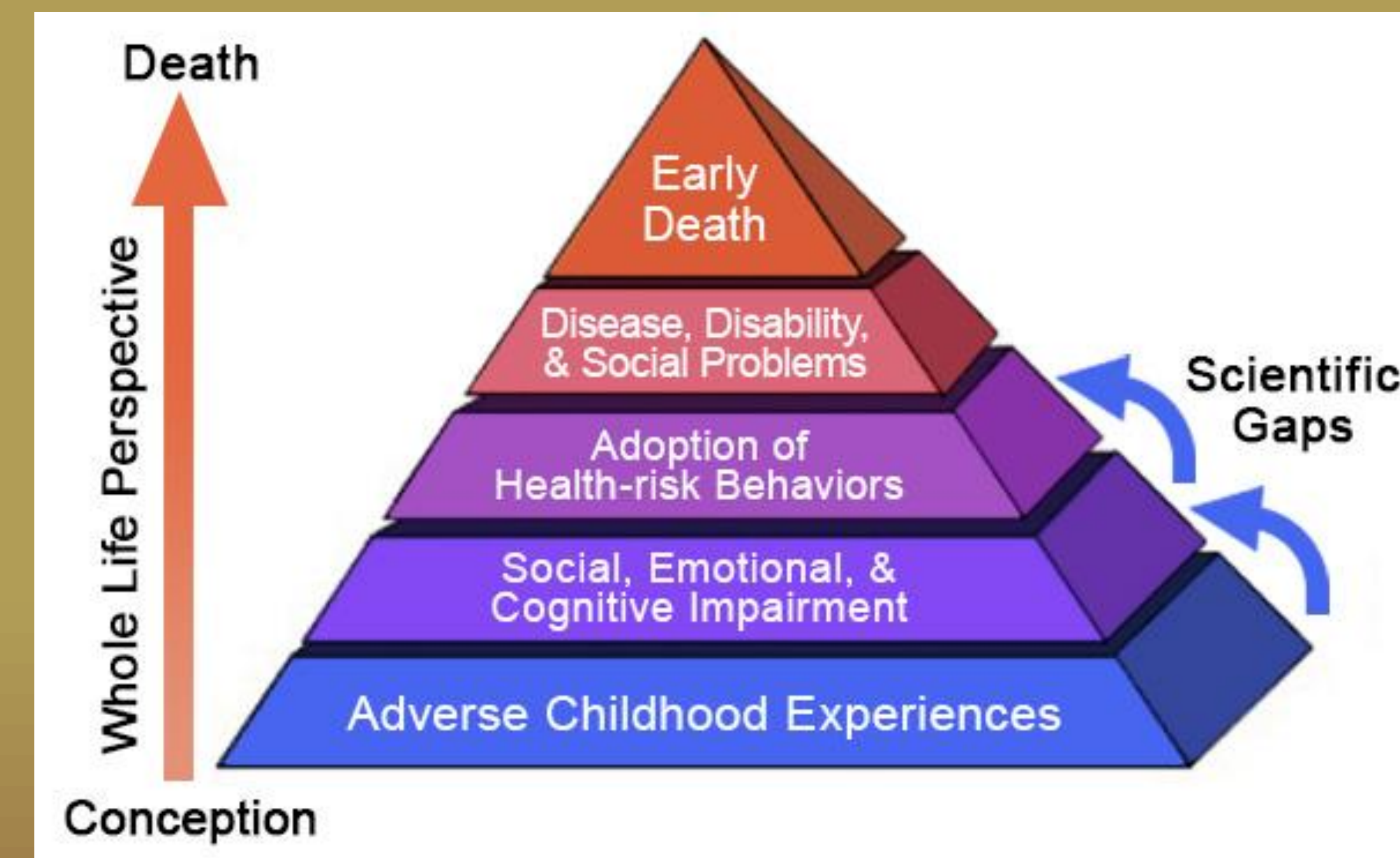
- ❖ According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) adverse childhood experiences have both positive and negative effects on future violence victimization and on one's mental health.
- ❖ According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health services Administration, these ACEs include physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical neglect, emotional neglect, intimate partner violence, mother treated violently, substance misuses in early years of household, household mental illness, parental separation or divorce, or incarcerated household members.
- ❖ ACEs influences health through a continued linear pipeline which includes: disrupted neurodevelopment; social, emotional, and cognitive behaviors; adoption of health risk behaviors; the disease, disability or social problem; and then death.
- ❖ We conducted research on the (ACEs) scale and about racial trauma and concluded that race is an adverse childhood experience and should be accounted for as a factor on ACEs scales.
- ❖ Racial trauma, especially in the black community can affect one's mental health and affect their psyche. Research has concluded also that one does not have to experience racial discrimination, but the simple act of being black is a traumatic experience in itself.
- ❖ We came to the provocative conclusion that though the black community was being specifically researched, all minority race groups experience racial trauma and that hinders them from healing or resiliency without the proper tools to treat this.
- ❖ Adding this sub factor of race as an (ACEs) could be used with resilience therapy that leads to healing efforts of marginalized communities in relation to trauma.

Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to explore the issue of race as a trauma related to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). The research was specifically focused on the black individual's experience of being black in America and how this affects the psyche in the role of healing. The goal of this research is to help researchers think about the profound effects of race and help strengthen the ACEs scale. The ACEs scale is a scale that identifies trauma which is linked to later life well-being and health. Identifying ACEs, carefully understanding them, and providing preventative measures allow for healing and resilience building. This research is not the first of its kind, but is the first to be applied to the ACE scale. Databases of research were searched to find materials that include, but were not limited to: ACES, black trauma, post-enslavement, the psyche of African Americans, and other dynamics in the black community which combine to make the assumption that race is a traumatic experience. There was also research on the similarities and parallels of trauma within other cultures and ethnic groups. This resulted in the provocative conclusion that race is in fact an adverse childhood experience related to trauma. With this notion in mind, racial traumas should be accounted for in the new ACEs scales in order to help ensure the well-being and mortality of certain populations. This is essential in ACEs for minority communities in which their healing efforts will be culturally sensitive and accurate; which will lead to better preventative measures, as well as healing efforts.

Methods:

- ❖ This study was conducted by going through Academic Search Complete, Jstor, and PsycINFO.
- ❖ Information was also collected through The Center for Disease Control and Prevention and from The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administrations.
- ❖ This research was conducted at Florida State University, beginning in October 2017 and ended in January of 2019.
- ❖ An upward number of around 120 articles were sorted through, read, and analyzed.



Discussion:

- ❖ Though every individual is different, the literature shows that these ACEs and trauma related issues are often caused by disparities that are linked to race and blackness which perpetrate a generational cycle of psychological warfare, inequality, and institutionalized and systematic racism.
- ❖ Racial trauma is a personal form of trauma, but also can be seen through a lens of institutional and systematic racism, that has generational affects.
- ❖ When the initial ACEs research was conducted by CDC-Kaiser the tested demographics were skewed. In terms of race and ethnicity participants, African-American (Blacks) were the second to last group accounted for at 4.5 %, compared to Whites at 74.8 %, Hispanic / Latino populations at 11.2 %, Asian /Pacific Islander at 7.2 % and the other category at 2.3 % (Felitti et al., 1998).
- ❖ All of the experiences seen in ACEs can be seen stacking upon each other and this creates issues that are no longer considered individual racism or prejudice but a systemic or institutionalized racism complex that is hard to debunk without proper treatment.
- ❖ This racial trauma is seen in many forms such as the large medical disparity in the black community, underfunded public school systems, racial profiling, epigenetics, generational post-enslavement trauma, and entrenched systematic racism.
- ❖ Limitations include looking at theories through Afrocentric viewpoint.

Future Implications:

- ❖ Race may be viewed as a traumatic childhood experience and more specifically being black is an additional trauma that should be accounted for when utilizing (ACEs) scale.
- ❖ It is important to analyze the communities in which these ACEs are typically the most prevalent in. In order to provide equality to all adverse backgrounds and experience in this culturally and politically charged climate, one must not ignore the affects that race has upon an individual growing up.
- ❖ Adding race as an ACEs would allow for the leverage between equality and equity.
- ❖ Adding race as a category in ACEs would also allow for proper understanding from people who also care to know more about populations affected by these issues and can aid in an effort to educate and inform privileged groups who want to understand.
- ❖ We came to the provocative conclusion that though the black community was being specifically researched, all minority race groups experience racial trauma and that hinders them from healing or resiliency without the proper tools to treat this.

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