

# How do we lift the burdens of history?

## Opportunities for the Behavioral Health Field

The behavioral health disparities that burden African Americans are among the many legacies of history, old and new. Here are some of the burdens of history.

### Trauma

Historical trauma from centuries' worth of abuse and oppression. **Our opportunities include:**

- Teaching people body-based practices for coping with racial trauma and lowering stress responses
- Learning how to make our services and settings safe, welcoming, and culturally responsive
- Learning about history; cultivating cultural humility

### Losses

Loss of safety, home, culture, belonging, opportunity, freedom, health, comfort, family, friends, esteem, promise, dignity—and more. **Opportunities include:**

- Approaching with humility, empathy, and respect
- Being respectful witnesses of trauma, loss, and grief
- Cultivating a culture-rich atmosphere of belonging

### Betrayal

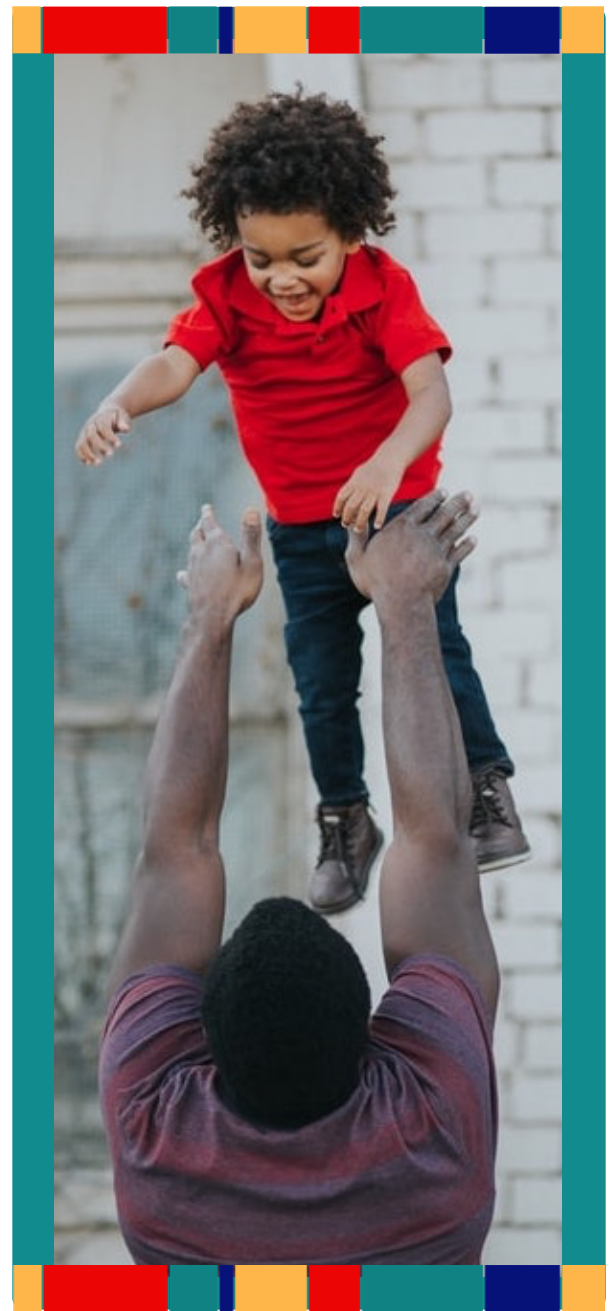
Frequent and severe betrayal of even the most basic human laws and covenants. **Opportunities include:**

- Learning about history, even if it's uncomfortable
- Telling the truth about history

### Inequitable Policies and Practices

Policies leading to poverty, ill health, deprivation, unequal opportunity, discrimination, mass incarceration, and more. **Opportunities include:**

- Starting at home, in our own agencies, communities and states, focusing on policies
- Studying the formal and informal policies that are leading to unfair and harmful practices
- Joining or forming a collaborative group where people with a variety of skills are working together to change inequitable policies and practices



**Let's face history together.**

***Healing History: Where History Meets Behavioral Health Equity for African Americans***

Self-Study and Discussion Guide



African American Behavioral Health  
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[africanamericanbehavioralhealth.org](http://africanamericanbehavioralhealth.org)

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