# An Introduction to health, wellness, and community partnership

Evelyn Hunter, PhD

**COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY**
**TEAM**
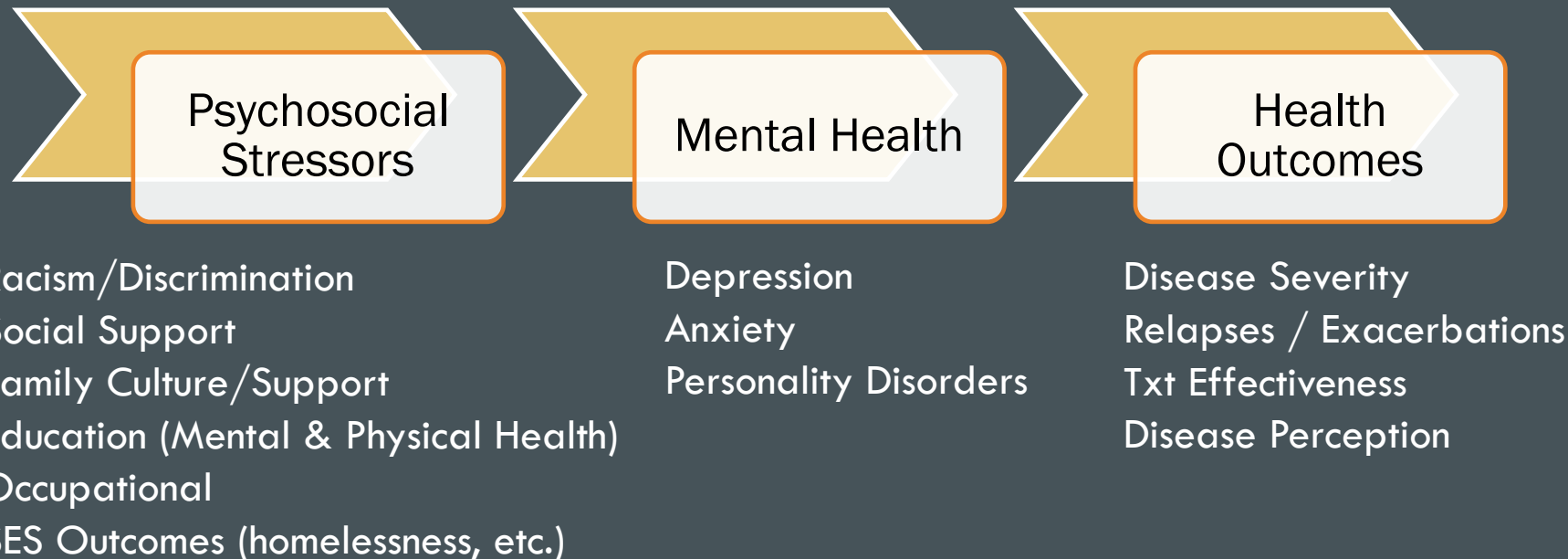**(TRAINING, EDUCATION, & MENTORSHIP)**
**LAB**

Evelyn Hunter, PhD
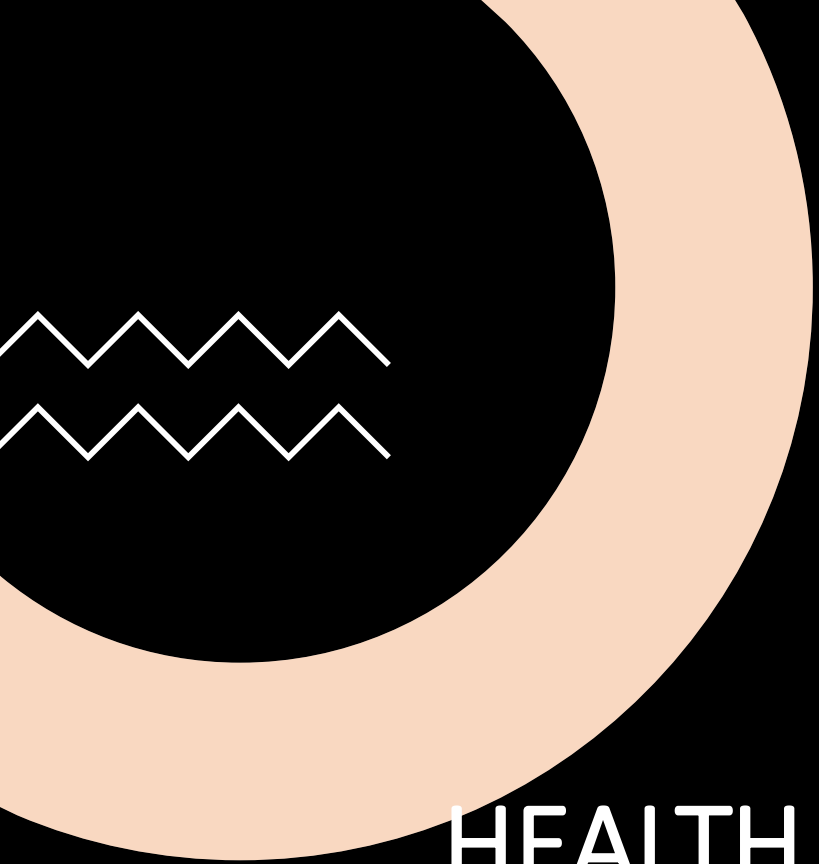Advisor
Asst. Professor, Counseling Psych

Madison Hanks, MA
Project Manager
4th year Doctoral Student

aub.ie/TEAMlab

# CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK...

## WE SEEK TO UNDERSTAND THESE PATHWAYS TO INFLUENCE MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TREATMENT IN RACIAL (AND OTHER OPPRESSIVE) TRAUMAS

**Psychosocial Stressors** → **Mental Health** → **Health Outcomes**

| Psychosocial Stressors | Mental Health | Health Outcomes |
|---|---|---|
| Racism/Discrimination | Depression | Disease Severity |
| Social Support | Anxiety | Relapses / Exacerbations |
| Family Culture/Support | Personality Disorders | Txt Effectiveness |
| Education (Mental & Physical Health) | | Disease Perception |
| Occupational | | |
| SES Outcomes (homelessness, etc.) | | |

# HEALTH DISPARITIES:
For Black/Brown folx, it is more than difference

- "a particular type of health difference that is closely linked with economic, social, or environmental disadvantage"

- Health disparities are preventable differences in the burden of disease, injury, violence, or opportunities to achieve optimal health that are experienced by socially disadvantaged populations.

- For Black folx, we are physically sicker across almost every condition

# How does this relate to the COVID-19 pandemic…

WE seek to understand these pathways to influence mental and behavioral health treatment in racial (and other oppressive) Traumas

Health Disparities lead to….

Pre-existing Conditions

Exacerbate COVID-19 severity
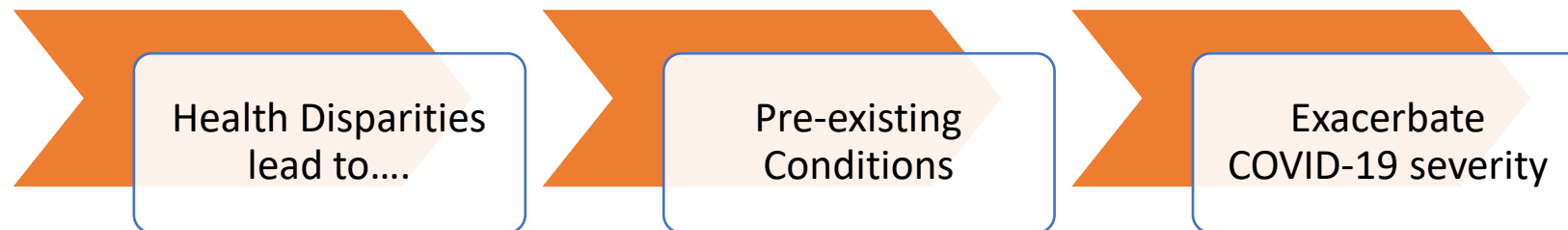
- SOCIAL ISOLATION
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
  - 40% increase in adults reporting

- SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS
  - Alcohol/Drug Use
  - Increased self-coping
  - 12% increase in adults reporting

- RACIAL TRAUMA
  - Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome
  - Race-based stress leads to race-based stress reactions
  - Intensity, Frequency, and Time determine if these reactions become trauma

# MENTAL HEALTH
# in the
# PANDEMIC CONTEXT

# Myths about Mental Illness: The stories we're told

- **SUPERWOMAN / SUPERMAN COMPLEX** (Weakness)
  - "Be strong for your family"
  - Mental illness is caused by my personal weakness

- **HANDLE WITH PRAYER** (Guilt)
  - "Don't take those pills, just pray"
  - Mental illness makes people violent or dangerous

- **CRAZY PERSON SYNDROME** (Shame)
  - "Stay away from them… they're crazy down there"
  - Mental illness makes people violent or dangerous

- **DEFUNCT & DEFECTIVE** (Secretive)
  - "Uncle Angelo and his ways"
  - Admitting to Mental illness means I will not be able to care for myself… don't admit it

# Why were these our stories?

- Ancestors (parents, grandparents, greats, and so on) were AMAZING
  - Had to survive:
    - Slavery
    - Racial Terror
    - Jim Crow
    - White Supremacy
  - Could Not:
    - Visit and/or trust doctors (physical or mental) safely
    - Disclose weakness (children were taken, families separated)
    - Afford care

**THEY TAUGHT US WHAT WAS REQUIRED FOR SURVIVAL**

- But some things have changed:
  - More AA therapists, physicians, etc. (not enough, but we outchea)
  - We have access and its more affordable to seek care

**WE OWE IT TO OUR ANCESTORS TO TAKE CARE OF OURSELVES AND LIVE WELL BECAUSE THEY ENDURED HELL SO WE COULD**

# Community Strengths

**We are an Equipped Community!**

# Community Strengths

"Family is life"
- Strong family bonds

"God is good…"
- Strong religious orientation

"Black Girl Magic / Black is King"
- Racial/Ethnic Identity Development

"Make a way out of no way"
- Resilience

"I'm on my grind"
- Strong work orientation

" You gotta work twice as hard to get ½ as far"
- Strong achievement orientation



WAKE UP. HUSTLE. GRIND. REPEAT.

But... we must be

# INTENTIONAL

Given what we know about disparities for Black Americans,

**OUR self-care AND wellness MUST be INTENTIONAL**

# So what does Intentional Self-Care and Wellness look like?

1. Be on the Lookout

2. Identify a Preventative Wellness Plan
   - Self Soothing (Urgent and emergency needs to **Get you Through**)
   - Self-Care (A consistent practice to **Build you Up**)
   - Community Care (Ways in which you foster community to **Add your Strength and Get Support**)
   - Structural Care (Ways you add your voice to **Impact Systems for Change**)

3. Get HELP (Emotional, Cognitve, & Systems)

# What is Self-Care?

We will rely on artist and author Deanna Zandt to help us here….

**Self Soothing**

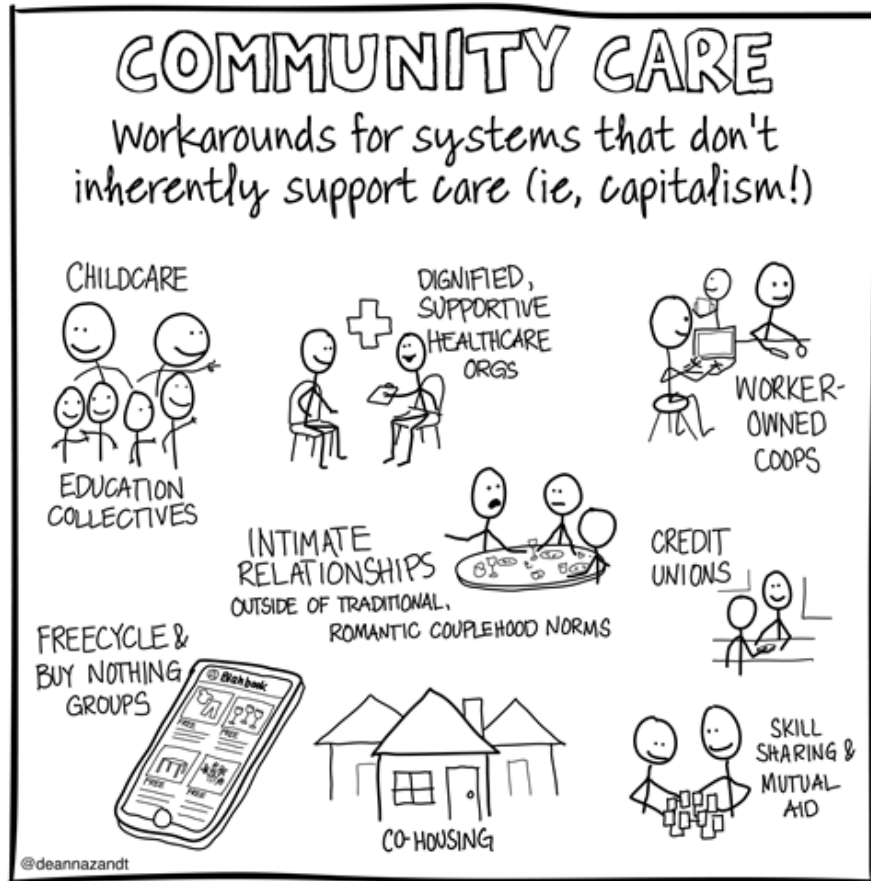(Urgent and emergency needs to **Get you Through**)



**Self-Care**

(A consistent practice to **Build you Up**)

**Community Care**
(Ways in which you foster community to
**Add your Strength and Get Support**)

**Structural Care**
(Ways you add your voice to
**Impact Systems for Change**)