

In a time of crisis, black psychologists develop new ways to help their communities heal

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The psychological impact of the recent killings of young black men by police is devastating to Americans of conscience, but particularly to many members of African-American communities around the country. How can they cope with the added fear, stress, and sense of persecution these verdicts create?



A new coalition between the Association of Black Psychologists (ABPsi) and the Community Healing Network (CHN) offer an answer. It's called "The Emotional Emancipation Circle Movement."

According to Dr. Theopia Jackson, a professor of clinical psychology at Saybrook University in Oakland, California, and co-chair of the ABPsi's national Education & Training Committee, the Emotional Emancipation Circle is a community focused therapeutic effort – one in which members of a community are taught how to heal one another. Ordinary men and women in black communities come to facilitated sessions in cities around America. After receiving counseling and training in how to address the psychological damage caused by what the curriculum calls "the lie of black inferiority," they leave able to lead sessions in their own communities to support its psychological health.

"The Emotional Emancipation Circles are one more tool that our communities can use to combat the many ways in which they receive the message that to be Black is to be bad," Dr. Jackson says. "It is an effort to help us remember what we have innately known for years, that it does take a village, we are all in this together regardless of our social status or geographical location. We are all touched by the lie, directly or indirectly. The village is hurting, healing is needed and this is a way to Do community."

The first trainings were held in late 2014 in cities including Oakland, New Haven, Tuskegee, and Los Angeles – and more are scheduled for February.

Emotional Emancipation Circles are safe spaces in which participants can share their stories and feelings; deepen their understanding of historical forces on their emotional lives, relationships, and community; free their minds and spirits from the legacies of racism; practice proven techniques for emotional resiliency; and plan community action to address injustice.

All of these techniques are validated by research on humanistic psychology, which emphasizes personal growth and development as opposed to anti-depressants or

neurological adjustments. Saybrook University is one of the world's leading centers for research in humanistic psychology, and supports the vital work The Association for Black Psychologists is performing.

(Boilerplate)