



NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER *for*  
HEALTHY MARRIAGE *and* FAMILIES



Working  
with  
***African  
American  
Individuals, Couples,  
and Families***

A Toolkit for Stakeholders





# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Section 1: Historical Backdrop</b>	<b>5</b>
Emancipation .....	5
Civil War to Civil Rights.....	7
Civil Rights Movement.....	9
Post-Civil Rights .....	13
<b>Section 2: Understanding Perspectives</b>	<b>17</b>
Family Structure .....	18
The Lockdown Effect .....	27
Education .....	30
Employment and Economic Mobility .....	35
Religion .....	38
<b>Section 3: Improving Communication</b>	<b>41</b>
Improving Communication Between Service Providers and Clients .....	41
Communication and Conflict Resolution Tips for Couples.....	43
Parenting/Co-Parenting.....	47
<b>Section 4: Strengthening Relationships</b>	<b>49</b>
Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education .....	49
Strategies for Integrating Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education into Existing Services.....	51
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Works Consulted</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>57</b>



# Foreword

As I reviewed *Working with African American Individuals, Couples, and Families: A Toolkit for Stakeholders*, I was reminded of a challenge I have faced over the past several years as chair of the diversity committee at the Columbia University School of Social Work. Many of our students complain that social service providers work with clients from a perspective of power and privilege. These students argue that social service providers often make inappropriate assumptions about what motivates their clients' behavior because the staff and clients have few shared experiences. As a result, clients do not get the help they need. To overcome this problem, students insist that diversity and difference be incorporated into social work education. Despite the merits of such complaints, this is a tall order because our students serve diverse populations in even more diverse contexts across the United States and around the world. By focusing on social service providers serving African American clients in self-sufficiency programs, this toolkit draws a more well-defined target. And, in my estimation, it nearly hits the bull's eye.

This toolkit is an excellent resource for service providers working with African American populations, beginning with its balanced account of African American history and the implications of this difficult history for many African American adults trying to achieve self-sufficiency in a rapidly changing economy and society. The information is cautious, noting in several places that service providers may encounter clients who, despite appearances, do not share this history. Staff can determine when this history—and the faith, family, education, criminal justice, employment, and social mobility patterns discussed—is relevant by taking the time to reflect on their assumptions and listen to their clients' individual stories.

This toolkit is well researched, and critical and thoughtful in interpreting research to ground the advice it offers service providers. For example, the toolkit notes that while high rates of divorce and nonmarital births among African Americans mean that two-thirds of African American children are raised in single parent families, many single mothers are not really single. Instead, they maintain cohabiting or romantic relationships, which pose risks and opportunities for supporting children. The risks can be minimized and opportunities maximized if service providers apply the tips offered in this toolkit for promoting effective communication between parents (both married and unmarried) who are raising children together. This tolerant and health-promoting approach repeats throughout the toolkit. At the same time, the toolkit is realistic, noting that African American single mothers often rely on extended families members, especially grandparents, to assist in child rearing. This decades old strategy can be stressful for grandparents until they develop routines and their grandchildren get older. Service providers can help by connecting grandparents to community-based supports for themselves, their children, and grandchildren.

This toolkit offers service providers a wealth of other innovative, pragmatic, and forward-looking options for serving African American families. Many of these options are available online. It also provides examples of successful collaborations between self-sufficiency programs and programs operated by governmental and nongovernmental agencies to help African American families acquire skills in parenting, financial literacy, and conflict resolution. Additionally, the toolkit gives service providers a progressive strategy for integrating healthy marriage and relationship education into existing services.

I cannot improve upon the toolkit’s own summary of what users can gain if they carefully study and apply what it contains: “To effectively assess and meet the needs of any family requires setting aside personal prejudices or preconceived ideas and taking the time to get to know the individuals. Building an effective client-provider partnership based on mutual respect will improve service provision and increase the likelihood of the family’s success in reaching its goal of self-sufficiency.” This awaits you in the following pages.

**Ronald B. Mincy**

Maurice V. Russell Professor of Social Policy and Social Work Practice  
Columbia University School of Social Work

# Introduction

Safety-net service providers strive to help individuals and families move beyond poverty to achieve self-sufficiency. This process requires targeted agency services and open, respectful exchanges of information between service providers and clients. Open communication, as well as engaging and retaining low-income families in services, can be difficult because of barriers that include distrust of social service agencies, lack of staff diversity, and families' perceptions that staff members have negative attitudes toward them (U.S. Department of Justice, 2005). While participating in services is challenging for all families, it is often more challenging for those who have both socioeconomic disadvantage and ethnic minority status (Prinz & Miller, 1991; Staudt, 2003).



In the wake of Barack Obama's election as president, perceptions of black progress have changed. According to a 2009 survey by Pew Social Demographic Trends, nearly four in 10 (39%) African Americans said that the "situation of black people in this country" was better than it had been five years earlier, compared to 20% in the previous five years. However, in the same study, 43% of African Americans surveyed said that there is a lot of discrimination against blacks (compared with 13% of whites) and 81% of African Americans said "our country needs to continue making changes to give blacks equal rights with whites," while just 36% of white respondents agreed (Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, 2012). Safety-net service providers must take their clients' differing perspectives and experiences into consideration to build a trusting and supportive environment and prevent situations where the wariness common among low-income families is compounded by racial and cultural misunderstandings.

*Working with African American Individuals, Couples, and Families: A Toolkit for Stakeholders* is a resource for improving service delivery to African American clients. This toolkit includes historical examples of oppression and traumatic events—which have strained families and helped foster feelings of distrust and disenfranchisement in today's African American community—in order to highlight ways that communication can break down between families who need services and the stakeholders who can provide them.

This toolkit uses a backdrop of significant historical events as a foundation for understanding perspectives, improving communication, and strengthening relationships with those in the African American community. This toolkit is grounded in current research and draws on the experience of practitioners who have successfully worked with families in the African American community to provide practical suggestions for



engaging and serving this population, particularly for incorporating healthy marriage and relationship education skills into service delivery systems as part of a comprehensive family-centered approach to promoting self-sufficiency.

This toolkit is designed to help stakeholders—including administrators, supervisors, and safety-net service providers—around the country better serve African American families, couples, and individuals. The term safety-net service provider refers to governmental agencies and programs, such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), child support services, child welfare, labor and workforce services, and Head Start, along with other stakeholders who provide community and family services, education, youth independent living, and Tribal services.

The 2010 U.S. Census defined black or African American as “a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa” (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011). This also includes individuals of sub-Saharan African descent (e.g., Kenyan, Nigerian) and Afro-Caribbean descent (e.g., Haitian, Jamaican). The terms African American, black, and black American will be used interchangeably in this toolkit. However, the definition of black

**While the category of black/African American is rigid, an individual’s sense of identity is not. Stakeholders should be sensitive to this issue when serving clients who appear to be black or African American. Take time to learn about individuals’ culture, background, and history before grouping or classifying them at first glance.**

varies in different countries and cultures and research indicates that race and ethnicity are subjective concepts; self-perceptions of race and ethnicity change over time and across circumstances for many people (Office of Management and Budget, 1995).

The term black or African American does not necessarily apply to all individuals who fall within this definition, nor does everyone classified within this group identify with this category. For example, while an individual of Jamaican ancestry or birth may look categorically black based on skin color, it would be incorrect to assume that this individual identifies with the black American struggle or as African American. This toolkit recognizes that the experiences of the African American community in the United States are not homogeneous and static; instead they are diverse, complex, and rich and should be appreciated as such.

## Toolkit Structure

This toolkit is organized in four sections:

- Section 1: Historical Backdrop
- Section 2: Understanding Perspectives
- Section 3: Improving Communication
- Section 4: Strengthening Relationships

Each section includes chapters that address the core and most relevant issues discussed in the research literature and by practitioners in the field. Case studies and resource recommendations are also integrated throughout the sections.

**Stakeholders should use this toolkit as a starting point and quick reference guide:**

- **To gain a broad overview of significant historical events in African American history (Section 1).**
- **To better understand modern perspectives and demographic trends affecting families in the African American community (Section 2).**
- **To learn more about the role that core marriage and relationship skills play in work, school, and family environments (Section 3).**
- **To learn about strategies for integrating healthy marriage and relationship skills into existing service delivery systems (Section 4).**

**Although this toolkit is designed to be used in parts, reading through the toolkit completely will better assist service providers in connecting the dots between these broad issues and their client interactions. Agencies and staff can determine the most relevant and useful portions of the toolkit for their needs and employ them as appropriate.**



## Section 1:

### Historical Backdrop

This section presents a historical overview of African American life in the United States over the past two centuries. Beginning with slavery in the 1700s, this section explores history through the post-civil rights period. Stakeholders are encouraged to use this section and the highlighted resources to gain a stronger understanding of this history. Though some of these events happened nearly 200 years ago, struggles against oppression and the lingering effects of trauma are still present today. Awareness of these issues can help service providers better understand their own and their clients' perspectives.



### Emancipation

For more than two centuries, Africans were bought and sold as a source of slave labor, denied the most basic human rights, and subjected to abusive treatment (Library of Congress, n.d.). When delegates to the Constitutional Convention met in Philadelphia in 1787, they were strongly divided over the issue of slavery, particularly concerning its status in border territories (Claremont Institute, 2002). As a result, the word “slavery” was never

#### RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Understanding slavery’s role in U.S. history is important. New research and publications continue to expand our understanding of the impact slavery had on the men and women who lived through it and on our nation.

##### ***Slavery and the Making of America***

This 2005 PBS documentary examines the history of American slavery from its beginnings in the British colonies to its end in the Southern States and the years of post-Civil War Reconstruction. Drawing on a wealth of recent scholarship, it looks at slavery’s role in our developing nation and focuses on the remarkable stories of individual slaves and new perspectives on the slave experience. Visit the website to learn more about the series and for suggestions of additional online and print resources: <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/slavery/index.html>

mentioned in the Constitution and the document fell far short of abolishing slavery. For example, Article IV provided for the return of escaping persons “held to service or labor,” such as fugitive slaves (National Park Service, 2011).

Several compromises were made at the Constitutional Convention concerning slavery: one provided for counting each slave as three-fifths of a person in the census for the purposes of representation in Congress and the Electoral College, while another allowed for the continuance of the slave trade for another 20 years (National Park Service, 2011). The three-fifths compromise had the effect of giving the South a larger role in the national government—more than what would have been possible based on its free population—and effectively established the value of slaves at three-fifths the value of a free man. Delegates agreed the Constitution would state that population would be determined by counting the number of “free Persons . . . plus three-fifths of all other Persons . . .” (National Archives, n.d.).

The Civil War, fought between 1861 and 1865, began as a bitter dispute over Union and States’ rights, but ended as a struggle over freedom in America (PBS.org, 2002). During the third year of the U.S. Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. In it, he declared, “all persons held as slaves within any State, or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free” (Lincoln, 1863).

The ideas in the Emancipation Proclamation fundamentally changed the nature of the Civil War. After January 1, 1863, every advance of Federal troops expanded the domain of freedom and the Proclamation announced the acceptance of black men into the Union Army and Navy. However, the Proclamation had limited influence and did not formally end slavery (National Archives & Records Administration, n.d.).

### RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Visit the Our Documents initiative at [www.ourdocuments.gov](http://www.ourdocuments.gov) to learn more and see photos of the Emancipation Proclamation and the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

*Our Documents* ([www.ourdocuments.gov](http://www.ourdocuments.gov)) is a cooperative effort of National History Day, the National Archives and Records Administration, and USA Freedom Corps.

On December 6, 1865, the U.S. Congress ratified the 13th Constitutional Amendment, which formally abolished slavery in the United States. The 13th Amendment states that, “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction” (United States Congress, 1865). Though the amendment ended slavery in the United States, the effort to extend equality to African Americans had just begun.

## Civil War to Civil Rights

In Reconstruction, the period following the Civil War, the Federal government set conditions for Southern States to re-enter the Union. During this contentious time, Southerners attempted to restore slavery in substance, if not in name, to circumvent the Federal government's intentions regarding freed slaves (Wormser, 2002a). Laws referred to as the "black codes" were implemented in Southern States, severely restricting rights of freed slaves and imposing harsh penalties for minor infractions. For example, blacks who were found guilty during criminal cases could be sentenced to death, whipped, or hired out—penalties that were rarely imposed on white citizens (Constitutional Rights Foundation, 2013; Richardson, 1969).

**“The 14th Amendment was one of the three amendments to the Constitution adopted after the Civil War to guarantee black rights. The 13th Amendment abolished slavery, the 14th granted citizenship to people once enslaved, and the 15th guaranteed black men the right to vote (Wormser, 2002b).**

The 14th Amendment to the Constitution was ratified in 1868 and sought to close this loophole by prohibiting States from denying or abridging the privileges, immunities, or protections of any citizen of the United States (U.S. Congress, 1868). The amendment stated that all persons born in the United States were now citizens, without regard to race, color, or previous condition. Persons who denied these rights to former slaves could be charged with a misdemeanor.

**“Since Reconstruction, the Fourteenth Amendment—especially the equal protection clause—has been applied to a number of cases. It emerged in the famous *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* when the United States Supreme Court used the Fourteenth Amendment as one of its rationales for declaring school segregation unconstitutional (Wormser, 2002b).**

The 15th Amendment to the Constitution granted African American men the right to vote by declaring that the “right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude (Library of Congress, 2012).”

**Although ratified on February 3, 1870, the promise of the 15th Amendment would not be fully realized for almost a century. Through the use of poll taxes, literacy tests and other means, Southern states were able to effectively disenfranchise African Americans. It would take the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 before the majority of African Americans in the South were registered to vote (Library of Congress, 2012).**

The promises of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments proved easier to accomplish in theory rather than in practice. According to Smith (2004), “The Civil War and Reconstruction resulted in the concept of equal citizenship regardless of race being introduced into the American legal system, but this legal principle was only sporadically and inconsistently enforced. Most people in the country agreed that slavery could no

longer exist, but beyond that there was wide disagreement over what African American 'freedom' was going to mean." From the 1880s into the 1960s, a majority of American States enforced segregation through "Jim Crow" laws, named after a black character in minstrel shows (National Park Service, n.d.). From Delaware to California and from North Dakota to Texas, many States and cities penalized people for consorting with members of another race; the most common types of laws forbade intermarriage and ordered business owners and public institutions to keep their black and white clients separated (National Park Service, n.d.).

Racial violence, especially lynching, became so common in Southern States that it could be seen as an institutionalized method that was feared by many blacks (Gibson, 2013). Between 1882 and 1968, some 3,446 African Americans were lynched (Linder, 2000). During Reconstruction, such tactics were used to force blacks to work on large plantations, and mob violence by groups such as the Ku Klux Klan instilled fear and intimidated many blacks (Stagg, 1974).

By 1900, new laws and old customs in the North and the South had created a segregated society that condemned Americans of color to second-class citizenship. To see examples of Jim Crow laws in place at the time visit:

National Park Service, Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site  
[http://www.nps.gov/malu/forteachers/jim\\_crow\\_laws.htm](http://www.nps.gov/malu/forteachers/jim_crow_laws.htm)

Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Separate Is Not Equal: Brown v. Board of Education Exhibition  
<http://americanhistory.si.edu/brown/history/1-segregated/jim-crow.html>

During Reconstruction, many Southern white Americans expected blacks to conduct themselves according to the racial etiquette that governed many of the daily interactions of the South. For example, blacks were rarely, if ever, referred to as Mr. or Mrs. On the contrary, black men were commonly referred to as "Boy," "Uncle," or "Old Man," while black women were addressed as "Auntie" or "Girl"—regardless of their age (Davis, 2006).

If white people did not know an African American, they generally called him "nigger" or "nigger-fellow," while legal cases and the press referred to blacks as "Negro," often attached to their first name, such as "Negro Jim" (Davis 2006). Blacks were also referred to by generic names, such as on trains' Pullman sleeping cars, where whites would call the black workers "George" (Davis, 2006).

**The whole intent of Jim Crow etiquette boiled down to one simple rule: blacks must demonstrate their inferiority to whites by actions, words, and manners. The practice of addressing blacks by such terms denoted inferiority and disrespect and reduced the individual to a non-person. Daily life for blacks involved being demeaned, dehumanized, and dejected by the law, resulting in an oppressive and high-stress environment.**

Black men were normally expected to call their white male counterparts “Sir” or other names signifying authority, such as “Boss” or “Cap’n” (Davis, 2006). Black women servants and acquaintances addressed white women with “Miss” and their first or last name—“Miss Julie” or “Miss Charlotte” (Davis, 2006).

The majority culture’s use of these names was a form of control; these words were meant to objectify and dehumanize black individuals and this type of treatment has had a lasting effect on blacks to this day.

## Civil Rights Movement

Beginning in the 1950s, the civil rights era marked the nation’s struggle to break with a history of racism and unequal treatment under the law, advancing a movement that insisted on equality regardless of race.

### Brown v. Board of Education

Beginning in the 1930s, African American attorneys developed a plan to use the legal system to weaken and destroy segregation. Their decades-long campaign demanded support from black communities across the country and extraordinary legal expertise. Two institutions led the way: the Howard University School of Law and the



National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) (National Museum of American History, 2004). The NAACP was originally known as the Niagara Movement. Established in 1905 and led by W.E.B. Du Bois, John Hope, Fredrick L. McGhee, and William Monroe Trotter, the organization’s goal was to discuss civil liberties and the end of racial discrimination, while continuing to recognize the overall ideal of human brotherhood (Niagara Movement, 2013). As the civil rights era emerged, the appeal of the NAACP and its chapters led to many mass action litigations aimed at ensuring racial equality.

Education was the main battleground in the movement for the legal campaign. For millions of children, excluded from American public schools because of their race or ethnicity, segregated education was designed to enforce their subservient status and second-class citizenship (National Museum of American History, 2004). In the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, in 1896, the high court explicitly established the separate-but-equal principle, which claimed that segregated facilities did not violate the 14th Amendment as long as they were equal (Smith, 2004). This would change, with the historic Supreme Court decision of *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954—a suit initiated by the NAACP (Groves, 1951). Argued by Thurgood Marshall, *Brown v. Board of Education* overturned the “separate but equal” doctrine, stating that the “separate educational facilities are inherently unequal” (Supreme Court of the United States, 1954).



## Non-Violent Protest

In addition to attempts to end segregation via litigation, many black church and community leaders began advocating for the use of nonviolent direct-action protest. Three of the most influential groups—the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)—were pivotal in the U.S. civil rights movement (Independent Television Service, 2013).

CORE was founded in Chicago in 1942 to promote better race relations. CORE's protest against segregation at a Chicago coffee shop in 1943 is one of the earliest known sit-ins (Independent Television Service, 2013). Sit-ins were events where black protestors refused to leave restaurants in which they were denied service based on their race. During the height of the civil rights movement, CORE was instrumental in voter registration drives and was one of the sponsors of the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. In 1961, CORE sent more than 1,000 Freedom Riders on buses throughout the South to test segregation laws, which ultimately ended segregation on interstate bus routes (Independent Television Service, 2013).

SCLC was organized in 1957 by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., based on principles of nonviolence and civil disobedience. Working primarily in the South, some of SCLC's most influential work was the coordination of voter registration drives in Albany, Georgia, and Birmingham and Selma, Alabama, in the early 1960s. The organization also played a major part in the March on Washington in 1963 (Independent Television Service, 2013).

SNCC was organized in 1960 at Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina, following its success with a surge of sit-ins in Southern college towns (Independent Television Service,

2013). Marion Barry served as the organization's first chairman, followed by John Lewis. SNCC supported Freedom Rides in 1961, along with the March on Washington in 1963, and agitated for the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Independent Television Service, 2013).

## Montgomery Bus Boycott

On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, a secretary for the Montgomery, Alabama, NAACP, refused to give up her seat on a public bus to make room for a white passenger (Chafe, 2003). Parks was arrested, tried, and convicted of disobeying a public ordinance and disorderly conduct (Chafe, 2003; Wright, 1991). This small act of defiance catalyzed the Montgomery bus boycotts, thanks to the swift action of community organizers.

Almost 90% of the African American population of Montgomery participated in the bus boycott, which lasted 381 days and caused an 80% reduction in revenue for the city's bus services. The boycott ended in November 1956 when the Federal court ordered the desegregation of the buses, another victory in the fight for equality (Chafe, 2003; Gilliam, 1989).

This event brought Dr. King onto a national stage due to his role in a movement that promoted non-violent civil disobedience and his ability to engage, inspire, and articulate the message of the civil rights movement.

**Spirituality has always played a strong role in African American culture. Individuals often leaned on their faith when overwhelmed with the challenges of slavery and subsequent racism. During the Montgomery bus boycotts, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. gave voice to the important role of spirituality in the movement, saying, "We are not wrong in what we are doing. If we are wrong, then the Supreme Court of this nation is wrong. If we are wrong, the Constitution of the United States is wrong. If we are wrong, God Almighty is wrong ..." (Carson & Shepard, 2001) This connection to spirituality would continue and be further solidified when Dr. King and other black ministers formed the SCLC. Dr. King even described the movement as one "to save the soul of the nation" (Mellows, 2012).**

## March on Washington

The 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom brought more than 250,000 marchers to Washington, DC to the grounds of the Lincoln Memorial and National Mall (Nammour, 2003). The purpose of the event was to end violence and racism and promote equal access to employment, education, and public accommodations (Lampinen, 1968). It was during this event that Dr. Martin Luther King delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech (Nammour, 2003).

### *I Have A Dream*

**In his famous speech at the Lincoln Memorial during the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, Dr. King urged America to "make real the promises of democracy.**

**Listen to the speech: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/multimedia/audio/128077288.html>.**

## Civil Rights Act of 1964

In a nationally televised address on June 6, 1963, President John F. Kennedy urged the nation to take action toward guaranteeing equal treatment of every American regardless of race. Soon after, Kennedy proposed that Congress consider civil rights legislation that would address voting rights, public accommodations, school desegregation, nondiscrimination in federally assisted programs, and more. Despite Kennedy's assassination in November 1963, his proposal culminated in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson just a few hours after House approval on July 2, 1964. The act outlawed segregation in businesses such as theaters, restaurants, and hotels. It banned discriminatory practices in employment and ended segregation in public places such as swimming pools, libraries, and public schools. The Act prohibited discrimination in public places, provided for the integration of schools and other public facilities, and made employment discrimination illegal. (Our Documents, n.d.).

By 1965, concerted efforts to break the grip of State disfranchisement had been underway for some time. Congress determined that the existing Federal anti-discrimination laws were not sufficient to overcome resistance by State officials to enforcement of the 15th Amendment. On August 6, 1965, President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law, applying a nationwide prohibition against the denial or abridgment of the right to vote (U.S. Department of Justice, n.d.).

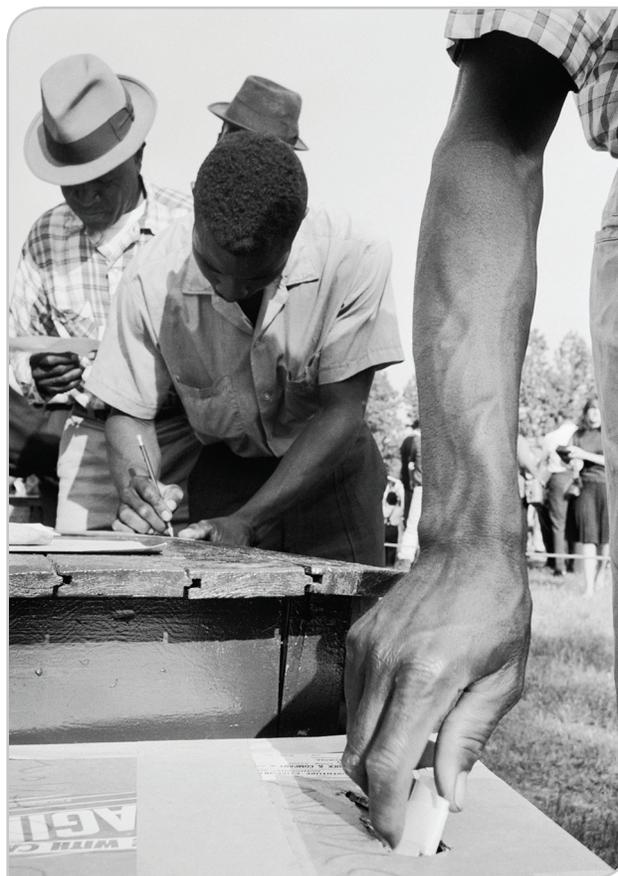
**In 1968, sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee, united in protest of their city's treatment of them. The protest was sparked by an accident involving the death of two African Americans due to an equipment malfunction. The sanitation workers believed that the overall treatment of the situation and the minimal compensation given to the victims' families was unfair and indicative of how they were undervalued as individuals (Stanford University, n.d.). Elmore Nickleberry—a participant in the protest—summed up the feelings of the workers: “They felt a garbage man wasn't nothing...And they figured they could treat us any way they wanted to treat us. . . . Make you feel bad, 'cause you know you wasn't no garbage. You supposed to been a man” (Pitts, 2008). Nickleberry's comments align with signs carried by the sanitation workers during the strike that said, “I AM A MAN (Pitts, 2008). The sign seemingly alludes to the Constitution's reference to black men being valued at three-fifths of white men.**

**“Soon after passage of the Voting Rights Act, Federal examiners were conducting voter registration, and black voter registration began a sharp increase. The cumulative effect of the Supreme Court's decisions, Congress' enactment of voting rights legislation, and the ongoing efforts of concerned private citizens and the Department of Justice, has been to restore the right to vote guaranteed by the 14th and 15th Amendments. The Voting Rights Act itself has been called the single most effective piece of civil rights legislation ever passed by Congress (U.S. Department of Justice, 2009).**

## Post-Civil Rights

The death of Dr. King did, in many ways, bring the civil rights movement to a halt. The signing of Federal legislation, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, showed positive signs of significant change, but the struggles for blacks did not stop. Much work needed to be done to secure equality and lasting well-being for African Americans. One of the most pervasive components lurking underneath the thin veneer of hope for black Americans was the “man-in-the-house” rule, a practice that had a profound effect on African American families in the 20th century.

Under this Federal regulation, a child or family who qualified to receive welfare benefits would be denied such benefits if the child’s mother was living with, or having relations with, any single or married able-bodied male, because the male was considered to be a suitable substitute father, even if he was not supporting the child (Neubeck & Cazenave, 2012).



Many believe the regulation discouraged the formation of two-parent households, especially for those families in dire need of public assistance. In some cases, fathers willingly left homes and spouses to allow their families to receive government financial assistance. The act of leaving was intended as a sacrifice to allow loved ones to gain needed assistance; instead it led to stereotypes of absent fathers and myths regarding black couples not wanting to marry (Neubeck & Cazenave, 2012).

From the 1940s through the 1970s, the second wave of the Great Migration took place. During this period, blacks moved from the South to northern and midwestern cities such as Chicago, New York, and Detroit, as well as the West Coast—settling in cities such as Los Angeles and Oakland (Schomburg Center, 2005). Blacks moved to these areas for better employment opportunities in industrial and factory jobs and better race relationships (Gregory, 2009).

This wave of migration emptied the South of a large portion of its black population, added to the growing urbanization of the North and African Americans, and saw the growth of such religions as the Nation of Islam and the Pentecostal movement among blacks searching for spiritual guidance and grounding (Schomburg Center, 2005).

In spite of their search for a better life and racial equality, many black families found difficult lives in their new homes. According to Frazier and Tetley-fio (2006), “What started as the formation of black enclaves within these cities, evolved into hyper-urbanization and hyper-segregation in large central cities...While Jim Crow laws legally separated blacks and whites in the southern states, institutional mechanisms—restrictive deeds, redlining, loan denials, and steering, became the tools of northern whites to restrict the living spaces of black Americans.” In addition, Frazier and Tetley-fio noted that during this period, whites increasingly moved to the suburbs—aided by new highway systems—while blacks remained, resulting in cities that experienced a decline in population and erosion of their tax base.

Since the mid-20th century, the U.S. economy has moved from manufacturing to a focus on finance, services, and technology. With this decline in manufacturing, employment opportunities for low-skilled workers shifted to the retail and service sectors—a setback since these jobs do not offer the same wages and benefits as unionized manufacturing jobs (Wilson, 2011). Further, many jobs moved to the suburbs, leaving former manufacturing districts in city centers empty. This pattern persisted throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Today, in Baltimore, Detroit, and Philadelphia, less than 20% of jobs are located within three miles of the city center (Wilson, 2011).

Racial discrimination in large cities, coupled with lack of access to jobs and adequate housing, caused frustration and tension within the black community. On August 11, 1965, Los Angeles’s South Central neighborhood of Watts gave voice to these frustrations when an encounter between the police and the Frye family escalated and sparked a riot that lasted for six days (Luna Ray Films, 2002). The Watts community was a predominantly African American and Hispanic neighborhood, the same population that felt disenfranchised by the city and targeted by the militarized police force. The Watts riots caused \$40 million in property damage (Cannon, 1997). The Watts riots were one of the country’s worst examples of racial tension until the Los Angeles riots of 1992, which began after witnesses saw and videotaped Rodney King being pulled over in a police traffic stop and beaten and kicked by five officers. This excessive force, and acquittal of the officers, set off six days of rioting in South Central Los Angeles, costing more than \$200 million in damages (France, 2012; Shaw, 1999).

### *Hyper-Segregation*

**Some researchers measure segregation according to five dimensions: (1) evenness refers to the differential distribution of groups across neighborhoods, (2) exposure measures the probability of interaction between groups, (3) concentration refers to the amount of physical space occupied by the minority group, (4) centralization indicates the distance to the center of the urban area, and (5) clustering indicates the degree to which minorities live in areas that adjoin one another. According to research by Massey and Denton (1989), when a group is highly segregated on several dimensions of segregation in a given metropolitan area, it can be considered to be hyper-segregated. In their research, Massey and Denton found that the only racial group that can be characterized as hyper-segregated in U.S. metropolitan areas is blacks.**

After the Watts riots, then-Governor Pat Brown named John McCone to head a commission to study the riots. The report issued by the commission concluded that the riots were not the act of thugs, but rather symptomatic of much deeper problems: the high jobless rate in the inner city, poor housing, and bad schools. Although the problems were clearly pointed out in the report, no great effort was made to address them or to rebuild what had been destroyed in the riots (Luna Ray Films, 2002).

The African American experience does not simply begin with slavery and end with riots and anger, but rather is an ever evolving process that has seen the growth of the black middle class, increasing social and economic influence for blacks, and the election of the country's first African American President, Barack Obama, in 2008. But even with these great strides, one would be hard-pressed to announce that the dream of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had become fully realized. As with any evolving entity, the black community continues to grow and deal with many issues today.

### The State of Black America Today

The National Urban League works to provide economic empowerment, educational opportunities, and the guarantee of civil rights for the underserved in America. In 2013, the National Urban League released the 37th edition of *The State of Black America* commemorating the milestones that have occurred in black history in the 50 years since the height of the civil rights movement. *The State of Black America, Redeem the Dream: Jobs Rebuild America* also includes a commemorative Special Collection of essays that pay homage to the early freedom fighters in the civil rights movement.

Read the book and learn more at <http://www.iamempowered.com/soba/2013>

**If there is anyone out there who still doubts that America is a place where all things are possible, who still wonders if the dream of our founders is alive in our time, who still questions the power of our democracy, tonight is your answer.**

**Barack Obama, November 4, 2008, following his election as the first black President of the United States (Nagourney, 2008).**

This snapshot of the African American historical experience offers insight into some of the challenges and perspectives currently prevalent in African American communities. The section that follows discusses these perspectives in more detail and offers tips for better serving families.



## Section 2:

### Understanding Perspectives

This section explores recent trends related to families, economic opportunity, and religion in the African American community. This toolkit is based on the premise that understanding an individual's history and culture is the first step to better understanding the individual—in turn, a necessary component of targeted, accurate, and effective service provision. Service providers should be prepared to identify and re-examine previously held assumptions on these topics.

Regardless of the individual's race, religion, or personal background, social service providers may not entirely comprehend many nuances of their clients' backgrounds and experiences.

When seeking to provide effective services to a population—in this case, the African American community—it is crucial to bridge this gap in culture and experience. This section promotes understanding and insight by exploring important social and communal topics.



Christine Bennett (Bogenschneider, Kaplan, & Morgan, 1993) explored how differing world views and cultural expectations affect individual perspectives:

World views refer to the way a cultural group perceives people and events. While individual idiosyncrasies do exist, it is also true that the people who share common dialects and primary experiences learn to see “reality” in the same ways. They develop similar styles of cognition; similar processes of perceiving, recognizing, conceiving, judging, and reason; as well as similar values, assumption, ideas, beliefs, and modes of thought.

Service providers should reflect on their own world views and how those views may inadvertently affect service provision. Recognizing how one's own world views may affect client interactions allows service providers to assess if interactions are based on the current reality of the situation or their personal world view.

Service providers should also accept that each of their clients may come to the interaction with a different world view as well. Accepting the world view of others does not mean that you agree or even understand their view, just that you respect their right to have a different view.

This section examines how issues related to family fragmentation, education, and religion have affected the African American community. Understanding these issues should increase stakeholder awareness of familial experiences and stressors in the African American community and enhance service provision to individuals, couples, and families.

**Of course there are problems in black families. For four hundred years a black man could have a child, but not be a father. A black woman could have a child, but not be a mother.**

21st Century Plantation Mentality Interview with Dr. Love Henry Whelchel,  
Professor of Religion and Department Chair, Clark Atlanta University.  
See the full interview at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HlyIWazxMKM>.

## Family Structure

Family fragmentation occurs when an event breaks up the nuclear family structure or a traditional family structure was never formed. Family fragmentation most commonly refers to divorce and unwed childbearing (Scafidi, 2008).

Family fragmentation is occurring across all racial and ethnic groups in the United States. According to the Pew Research Center analysis of 2010 U.S. Census data, barely half of all adults (ages 18 and older) in the United States are married (51%)—a drastic change from 1960 when 72% of all adults were married. If current trends continue, the share of adults who are currently married will drop to below half within a few years. Other adult living arrangements—including cohabitation, single-person households, and single parenthood—have all grown more prevalent in recent decades (Cohn, Passel, Wang, & Livingston, 2011).



While breaking up the family may be necessary in certain circumstances (such as cases of domestic violence), there is growing evidence that it has a negative social and economic impact on children and adults:

- Children of adults who have healthy, stable marriages are more likely to have better physical and emotional health, better school performance, fewer behavioral problems in school, better relationships with their mothers and fathers, lower likelihood of drug and alcohol abuse, lower rates of teen pregnancy, and decreased risk of divorcing when they marry (Adler-Baeder, Shirer, & Bradford, 2007; Wilcox, Marquardt, Popenoe, & Whitehead, 2011).

- Adults who are in healthy marriages can experience many benefits, such as better physical and emotional health, greater financial well-being, better relationships with their children, and decreased risk of drug and alcohol abuse (Adler-Baeder et al., 2007). Although married women experience fewer health benefits than married men, married adults have lower rates of injury, illness, and disability and have a reduced risk of being either perpetrators or victims of crime (Bachman, 1995; Goodwin, Hunt, Key, & Samet, 1987; Horney, Osgood, & Marshall, 1995; Laub, Nagin, & Sampson, 1998; Pienta, Hayward, & Jenkins, 2000; Sampson & Laub, 1993).
- Research shows that both divorce and unmarried childbearing increase the economic vulnerability of both children and mothers, with the effects of family structure on poverty remaining, even after controlling for race and family background (Wilcox et al., 2005). According to Rank and Hirschl (1999) 81% of children living in nonmarried households will experience poverty during the course of their childhood, compared to 22% of children living with married parents.

### *Economic Implications*

Research shows that marriages can be important to the economic well-being of children, adults, and families in the African American community:

- **Page and Stevens (2005) found that black single mothers who marry see their income rise by 81% (compared to an income increase of 45% for white single mothers who marry). This same study found that the income of black children fell by 53% two years after a divorce.**
- **Willson and Hardy (2002) reported that married African American women enjoy significantly more income than their widowed, divorced, and unmarried peers.**
- **Black men who marry also see a significant increase in their annual income, about \$4,000 according to one estimate (Nock, 2003).**
- **Krivo and Kaufman (2004) found that African Americans and Latinos who are married also enjoy significantly higher levels of home equity, compared to their peers who are not married.**

Although there may be extraordinary benefits to marriage, marriage should not be viewed as a solution to all social problems—particularly for families experiencing emotional or physical abuse, intimate partner violence, or chronic neglect. Stakeholders should understand that clients experiencing family fragmentation will likely be under additional stress, which can affect their emotional and financial well-being. The following section discusses how family fragmentation trends have affected the African American community, particularly single mothers, grandparents, and other extended family members.

### **Recent Marriage Trends Among African American Families**

According to Cohn, Passel, Wang, and Livingston's (2011) analysis of U.S. Census and American Community Survey data, only 31% of black adults were married in 2010, compared to 61% in 1960. The number of adults who had ever been married was similar for whites, blacks, and Hispanics in 1960, but recent decades have shown a particularly severe decline in marriage for African American adults. In 2010, only 55% of black adults had ever married, compared to 64% of Hispanics and 76% of whites (Cohn, Passel, Wang, & Livingston, 2011).

According to data from the American Community Survey, the divorce rate within the African American community was 11.5% from 2005 to 2009 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Results from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth found that from 1992 to 2008, 29% of African American respondents divorced, compared to 28% for Hispanics and 25% of non-Hispanic others. Compared to other racial and ethnic groups, married black adults experience more challenges in their efforts to maintain long-lasting unions and are more likely to report being unhappy and rate the quality of their marriages as poor (Bulanda & Brown, 2008). Black couples are also at an increased risk of separation due to discord; not only are wedded blacks more likely to break up, but they are prone to remain separated considerably longer than other couples without filing for a divorce (Cherlin, 1981).



### Understanding Distinct Marital Separation Patterns Among Black Couples

Married black couples are more likely to separate and remain separated considerably longer than other couples without filing for a divorce. Safety-net service providers should be aware that couples often experience great stress during separation. Long periods of separation have the potential to undermine individual well-being, child welfare, and family stability.

*Understanding Distinct Marital Separation Patterns Among Black Couples* is a fact sheet from the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families that describes unique patterns in marital separation among black couples, highlights factors linked to marital separation, outlines consequences of marital separation, and offers strategies that safety-net service providers can use to empower clients experiencing marital separation.

Download the fact sheet at <http://tinyurl.com/separation-black-couples-p> and learn more at [www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org](http://www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org)

Despite declining marriage rates, Americans generally, and African Americans specifically, still value and desire marriage. For example, in 2006, Gallup's Minority Rights and Relations survey found that 50% of black respondents said it is very important for couples to marry when they have a child and two-thirds (69%) said getting married is very important for couples when they plan to spend their lives together. Both rates were

higher than among white respondents (Saad, 2006). More generally, Cohn, Passel, Wang, & Livingston (2011) found that a substantial portion (47%) of respondents to a Pew Center survey who claim marriage is obsolete still report that they themselves wish to marry.

There has been much speculation about the cause of declining black marriage rates: researchers (such as William Julius Wilson) posited the “marriageable man theory” in the 1980s, asserting that as labor market conditions worsen and employment drops for young black men, the number of attractive potential partners for black women also decreases (Mare & Winship, 1991); others (including Charles Murray) have argued that the marriage decline is due to government welfare programs that lessen a woman’s incentive to marry by reducing public benefits (Banks, 2011). More recent research has suggested that lower marriage rates among black couples may have more to do with educational and income disparities than race (Toldson & Marks, 2011). While these are a few theories, there is no definitive answer about the cause of black marital trends and discussion on the subject continues.

### **Dispelling the Myth: Black Couples Are Not Interested in Marriage**

*Dispelling the Myth: Black Couples Are Not Interested in Marriage* is a fact sheet from the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families. This fact sheet and associated video examine seven common myths about black marriage, provide accurate information about demographic trends in black relationships, and share strategies for safety-net service providers working with African American families and couples.

The seven myths debunked in this fact sheet are:

- Myth #1—Marriage is for white people
- Myth #2—Black women do not marry and do not desire to marry
- Myth #3—Black men marry women of other races
- Myth #4—Black men do not earn as much as black women
- Myth #5—Black family formation has not been affected by structural conditions
- Myth #6—A single parent can raise a child as well as a married couple
- Myth #7—Black relationships do not need any help

Visit [www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org/media-gallery](http://www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org/media-gallery) to watch the video.

Download the fact sheet at <http://tinyurl.com/dispelling-the-myth-p>.

Learn more at [www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org](http://www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org).

Service providers should keep in mind that while there are overarching patterns of family formation and fragmentation in the African American community, every client’s family experiences and desires will be different. Though nearly one-fifth of low-income black couples are married, these marriages are commonly overlooked by social services and infrequently represented in media (Simms, Fortuny, & Henderson, 2009). Service providers should try to identify any personal assumptions that could influence service delivery—from previous client interactions or personal marriage and relationship experiences—and then move beyond them to focus on understanding the needs of each client as an individual.

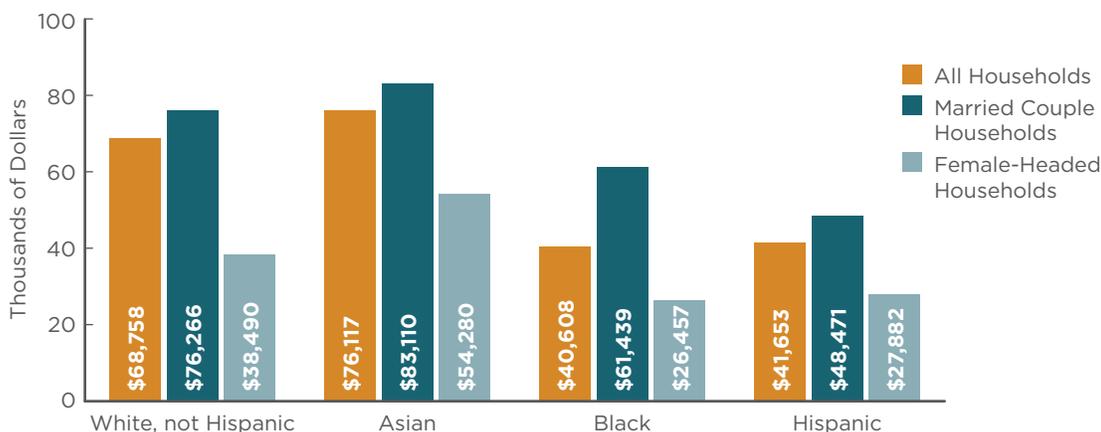
## Single Mothers

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, single mothers head black households in large numbers (Lofquist, Lugaila, O'Connell, & Feliz, 2012):

- Single-female households accounted for roughly 30% of all black households (compared to nearly 10% for whites and 9% for non-Hispanic whites).
- Of the single-female households, 17% were households with children (the highest of all reported racial groups).
- Husband-wife households accounted for nearly 29% of black households.
- Male households accounted for 6% (of these 3% were households with children).

According to the Annie E Casey Foundation (2013), 67% of African American children are raised in single-parent families. Aside from the economic burden that a single-parent household may pose, there also arises the threat of cognitive, emotional, and social problems. Research has shown that children raised in single-parent households are more likely to fall below the poverty line, drop out of school, and become teen parents (Mather, 2010). According to the Women of Color Policy Network, for example, in 2009, the median family income for a black female-headed household was \$26,457. This economic stress affects parenting as well as financial stability. For example, “Mothers who are dissatisfied with their employment status enjoy their children less, are less confident as parents, and have more difficulty controlling their children (Sroufe, Cooper, & DeHart, 1996).”

**Median Income Levels by Household Status and Race, 2009**



Source: <http://wagner.nyu.edu/wocpn/publications/files/IncomeAndPovertyInCommunitiesofColor.pdf>

Research indicates that several factors may contribute to stress among single mothers and affect family function: disposition and optimism (outlook or resiliency); past childhood hardships; and economic pressures (Livingston & Parker, 2010). These attributes shape interpersonal skills, parenting styles, and financial management skills for all adults. However, in a couple relationship, individuals have a partner to provide feedback, reinforcing positive effects of these attributes and questioning negative ones. In isolation, single parents struggle to know if they are doing a “good job,” especially if they did not grow up in an environment with positive role models. As a result, single parents



are vulnerable to internalizing problems (economic and personal), which affects their reactions to children’s behavioral issues (Livingston & Parker, 2010). Single mothers also have less time to devote to their own personal care, which can contribute to increased stress (Sanik & Mauldin, 1986).

With the stresses of single motherhood, the status of being a single mother alone is a good predictor of child difficulties and hostile or stern parenting. Further, the experience of maternal depression can put children at increased risk for psychological difficulties. Despite this, children from single-mother families develop difficulties for the same reason as children from two-parent families (Lipman, Boyle, Dooley, & Offord, 2002). Proper recognition of this information can be invaluable to a stakeholder trying to assist parents and children who are looking to develop stable family lives, but may not understand how certain parenting styles may affect their family outcomes.

The paradox of single motherhood is that while they may not be married, many single mothers are not *really* single. The dynamics of their romantic relationships may range from casual to committed and vary by whether the partner lives in the home, provides financial support, serves in a caregiver role to the child, or other factors. In addition to the partner, there may be other individuals in the child’s life who the mother may rely on for support. It is a challenge for single mothers to simultaneously develop and strengthen new romantic relationships, while balancing their role as a mother. Further, the traditional definition of single, meaning not married, is increasingly challenged. Today, practitioners may encounter clients who define their relationship status by a more liberal definition based on being in a relationship—even if it has not yet been determined to be a committed one. Rebuffing the label of single, a mother may feel pressured to speed up a new relationship, causing her to incorporate a new partner into her children’s lives before she has really gotten to know him. She may see this as a way to not have to choose between spending time with her new partner and her children.

Unfortunately, a pattern of short-term relationships—where men come in and out of their lives—can be difficult for children. Additionally, there are serious risk factors for single mothers to consider. According to the Children’s Bureau 2011 Child Maltreatment Report, 16,734 incidents of child abuse and neglect were substantiated as having been perpetrated by the male partner of the child’s parent (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2012).

In response to the prevalence of marital instability in the black community, black women have been socialized to excel in nontraditional gender roles and rely on extended family members for support, rather than a spouse. Black women are taught different coping strategies to promote survival in case they should experience a broken marriage (Hurt, 2013).

### Role of the Extended Family

Raising a child is no easy task. As the African proverb says, it takes a whole village to raise a child. Children raised by single mothers are more likely to succeed if they are part of a supportive community (Steinberg, 1989). Within the African American community, these supportive networks often comprise extended family members, including uncles, aunts, and grandparents. This complex support network and safety net provides child care, growth opportunities, and social connections that benefit the well-being of both the mother and child. Extended family involvement has been shown to help prevent social isolation for both the parent and child, an important connection because social isolation can be a good predictor of poor parenting (Crockenberg, 1981).



Involvement from extended family members can positively affect children’s long-term achievement and social adjustment. Family can provide additional academic encouragement and assist with transportation so children can participate in sports or other enrichment opportunities that a parent’s schedule may not allow. Research has found that children from single-mother households who were raised with involvement from extended family members functioned and achieved adequately, compared to children from single-mother households without such support (Wilson, 1989). Single mothers also benefit from living with their extended family because they are able to focus on self-improvement and maintain connections to their peer social networks, compared to their counterparts who live apart from this family structure (Furstenberg & Crawford, 1978; Wilson, 1989).

Additionally, in times of poverty or economic strife, individuals can stabilize themselves by moving into the safe haven of extended family. This strategy grew as a financial lifeline during the recent recession. From 2007 to 2009, individuals living with their extended family increased from 46.5 million to 51.4 million (Kochhar & Cohn, 2011). African

Americans are among the most likely (23.7%) groups to live with extended family. From a purely economic standpoint, this can be beneficial to both the individual and the extended family by pooling limited resources. This arrangement has been shown to raise the median household income for African Americans from \$39,484 to \$43,677 and decrease the poverty rate for African Americans living on their own from 27.3% to 19.2% for those in multigenerational households (Kochhar & Cohn, 2011). While these multigenerational households tend to be larger (4.3 residents versus 2.4) (Kochhar & Cohn, 2011), the ability to pool resources and share responsibility makes the extended family crucial not only in the African American community, but also for all groups.

### Tips for Service Providers Working with Single Mothers

Take time to talk with single mothers to better understand their specific circumstances and make appropriate referrals:

- Ask about current child care arrangements and offer information about subsidized child care or other assistance to ensure she has safe and stable care for her children.
- Do not judge. Single mothers are very resourceful, especially when in “survival mode.” Offering alternatives to questionable behavior is helpful; telling her what she is doing is wrong is not.
- Be honest with clients about what services you can or cannot provide and follow through with any commitments you make to them.
- Be aware of community resources that address common challenges such as parenting, stress management, and financial education. If possible, keep handouts or contact information handy so you can share them with your clients.
- Provide healthy relationship information to single mothers to assist them in recognizing unhealthy relationship patterns and developing romantic relationships that will be positive for them and their children. The National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families offers free downloadable resources at [www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org](http://www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org).

### Grandparents as Caretakers

In recent decades, grandparents have taken on a crucial role in African American communities, as many have assumed the role of primary caretaker for their grandchildren. This trend is not a uniquely African American experience, but spans all racial backgrounds. Census data shows that one in 10 children in the United States lives with a grandparent, and 41% of those who live with a grandparent are also being raised primarily by that grandparent (Livingston & Parker, 2010). From 2007 to 2008, this number rose for whites by 9% and for African Americans by 2%, while Hispanics showed no change (Livingston & Parker, 2010). Though this trend is not exclusive to the black community, service providers should understand how it can affect family outcomes, particularly since multigenerational family ties have long been, and continue to be, an important source of support for both older and younger generations of African Americans (Baker & Silverstein, 2009; Ross & Aday, 2009).

## GrandCare Support Locator

The GrandCare Support Locator, a service of the AARP Foundation, connects grandparents with Federal, State, and local groups, programs, resources, and services that support grandparents or other relative caregivers, as well as grandparents facing visitation issues.

Use the GrandCare Support Locator to connect with:

- Support Groups
- State or Local Navigator/Information
- Referral Programs and Warm-lines
- Grandparent Resource Centers
- Respite Programs
- Health and Wellness Services
- Resource Guides and Newsletters
- Training/Education Opportunities
- Child Care Resources and Referral
- Children and Youth Clubs and Programs
- Caregiver Camps
- Legal Services
- Advocacy Programs
- Aging Agencies
- Children and Family Services
- Foster Care Programs

Visit [http://www.giclocalsupport.org/pages/gic\\_db\\_home.cfm](http://www.giclocalsupport.org/pages/gic_db_home.cfm).

The overwhelming majority of African American grandparents are female (62%) and younger than 60 years old (67%) (Livingston & Parker, 2010). Finances are a major part of child rearing, but for the most part, grandparent caretakers have very limited financial resources. A 2009 Census report found that nearly 18%, or one in five, grandparents were living below the Federal Poverty Level, with another 47% of households headed by grandparents living between one and three times the poverty line (Livingston & Parker, 2010). Regardless of income, grandparents who are caretakers face increased financial demands when raising grandchildren, especially if their income may have been dramatically reduced because of decreased employment as they age (Ross & Aday, 2009).

Financial issues are not the only stressors affecting grandparents in their caretaker role. A 2009 health study found that 94% of African American grandparents reported clinically significant levels of stress (Ross & Aday, 2009). Ross and Aday (2009) reported that the stress is caused by multiple factors:

- Relationship between married grandparents and perceived need to share time and attention with spouses and grandchildren.
- Role reversals of the biological parent, who now plays a limited role in child upbringing, similar to a traditional grandparent.
- Challenges that may arise when raising a child with special needs or behavioral issues.

In some cases, grandparents have assumed the caregiver role as a result of their adult child's behavior, such as substance abuse or incarceration, which adds to the stress. Aside from the emotional issues, grandparents also have to consider safety issues related to visitation between the parent and grandchild. Another concern for grandparents is when and how to engage social services. They are often caught between doing what is best for the grandchild and protecting their child.

### *Case Study*

Sandra took in her two young grandchildren because her daughter, Kelly, was using drugs and hanging out with a new boyfriend that Sandra thought was sketchy. Sandra is on a fixed income and is struggling to make ends meet. Kelly gets TANF, but is not helping her mom.

Sandra has heard that she can get Child Only financial assistance through TANF if she applies. She may also be eligible for child care and other assistance. Sandra loves her daughter, but needs help caring for the kids even though she is afraid that if she applies for assistance, Kelly will get into trouble.

### *Tips for Social Service Providers*

A supportive social service provider will appreciate the difficult place Sandra sees herself in. The provider can help Sandra recognize that without intervention, Kelly's substance abuse issues will likely worsen. If Sandra engages the child welfare system and intervenes, she can likely get the support she needs to care for the children while Kelly gets the help she needs to get clean and get her life back on track.

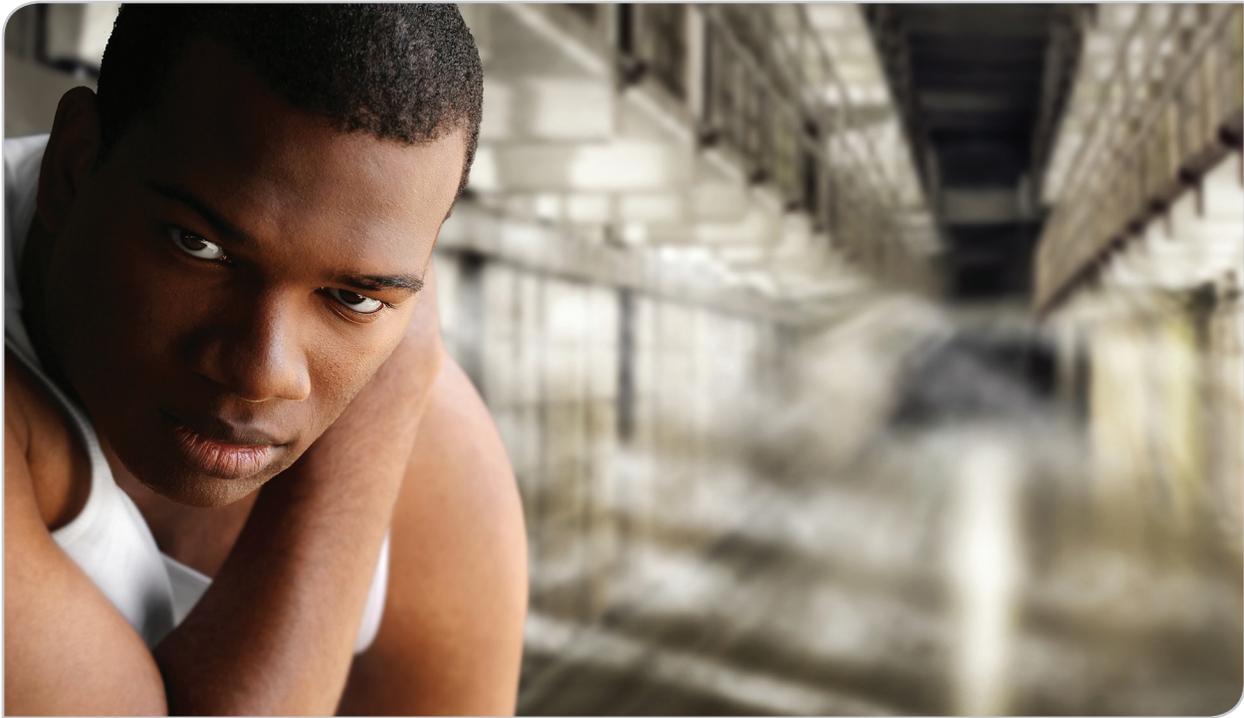
However, grandparents' experiences seem to change as their grandchildren grow. The stress lessens, routines are developed, better relationships are formed, and they gain continued enjoyment out of having an active role in the lives of the children (Ross & Aday, 2009; Baker & Silverstein, 2009).

Building on the observations in this section about family fragmentation and how it affects mothers, children, and the extended family, the next section examines the effect of incarceration on the men and women who would otherwise cement these fragmented families.

## The Lockdown Effect

One in every three black men can expect to go to jail in his lifetime (Center for American Progress, 2012). African Americans currently represent nearly half of the incarcerated population in the United States (almost 1 million of 2.3 million)—a disturbing number considering that African Americans make up only 13% of the U.S. population (NAACP, 2013). People of color are disproportionately policed, incarcerated, and sentenced to death compared to their white counterparts (Center for American Progress, 2012).

According to Human Rights Watch (2009), people of color are no more likely to use or sell illegal drugs when compared to whites, yet African Americans comprised almost one in three of the 25.4 million adults arrested for drugs from 1980 through 2007. African Americans are about 14% of regular drug users, yet account for 37% of those arrested for drug offenses.



Research suggests that racial disparities in incarceration rates can limit education, voting, and equal access to employment:

- One in 40 Americans is disenfranchised because of a felony conviction. They will not have the ability to cast a ballot or participate in national and State elections (Uggen, Shannon, & Manza, 2012).
- Only 11% of State and 24% of Federal inmates have attended some college or postsecondary education, compared to 48% of the general public (Harlow, 2003).
- 2008 data from research done through the Center for Economic and Policy Research suggest that ex-prisoners with felony convictions are less likely to be employed (Schmitt & Warner, 2010)

Black women are being incarcerated at a similarly alarming rate. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the number of women in the total State prison population increased by 75% between 1986 and 1991 (Meares, 2011). While black women are approximately 13% of the U.S. female population, they are disproportionately 50% of the female prison population (Meares, 2011).

Disparities in incarceration rates affect black women and children:

- Black women are seven times more likely to be imprisoned than white women, and the incarceration of these mothers, wives, and caretakers has a lasting effect on their lives, families, and children (Meares, 2011).
- Two out of three women in State prison have had at least one family member incarcerated and nearly 12% have a child who is also incarcerated (Prison Fellowship, 2013).

One predictor of incarceration is low educational attainment. The average prisoner is less educated than the general population. The Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that 41% of the nation's inmates have not completed high school or its GED equivalent, compared to 18% of the general population (Harlow, 2003). It is a common belief that States use third grade reading scores to project capacity needs for State prisons.

Another predictor of incarceration is highlighted in the results of a Chicago-based longitudinal study that confirmed rates of overall delinquency, along with violent, drug, and property offenses, were elevated among childhood and adolescent maltreatment victims compared to their non-maltreated peers. Childhood maltreatment was associated with delinquency independent of adolescent maltreatment, and strong connections between adolescent maltreatment and delinquency were present independent of prior victimization (Mersky, Topitzes, & Reynolds, In Press).

Specific to women, another study found 70% of the incarcerated women had experienced rape and 50% had been victims of child sexual abuse. (Meares, 2011)

Researchers agree that past abuse and victimization are common experiences of many incarcerated individuals. The over-representation of African American children involved as victims in the child welfare system explains one possible path to involvement in the judicial system. These and other factors can compound to move African Americans more quickly along this trajectory. Factors such as low educational attainment, lack of resources to hire adequate counsel, laws requiring stiffer penalties for those with a previous record, and weapons charges affect African Americans disproportionately (Meares, 2011).

### *Tips for Service Providers*

- **Encourage appropriate intervention and treatment of abuse victims to reduce the likelihood of delinquency. Even adult survivors of abuse can benefit from treatment.**
- **Encourage tutoring and afterschool programs for youth who may struggle academically to improve test scores and educational achievement. Ensure equal access to information on educational resources and educate parents of youth on the importance of education.**
- **Disenfranchisement laws are made at the State level. Know what the laws are for your State in relation to ex-offenders and their rights to vote. Educate your clients on their rights and options for having their rights restored or having their criminal records expunged (removed) or sealed (highly restricted access).**
- **Encourage caregivers to help children of incarcerated parents maintain relationships with their parents. If maintaining the relationship is safe for the child, it can be beneficial to both the child and the incarcerated parent.**
- **Promote healthy relationship education skills. Assist individuals in breaking unhealthy relationship patterns that may have contributed to incarceration. Support couples separated by incarceration as they attempt to maintain or renew a relationship upon re-entry.**

### *Where Are the Good Black Men?*

When looking at the number of black men in prison, unemployed, and absent from their families, it is easy to wonder where the good black men are. One answer is that there are actually fewer black men than black women in general, with 91 black males per 100 black females (Hurt, 2012). Additionally, what defines a black man as “good” varies in large part based on the socioeconomic status and expectations of the woman who is asking.

“Structural inequalities have challenged a black man’s (and woman’s) ability to be a stable provider and reduced the probability of marriage,” according to Hurt (2012). The incarceration rate of black males likely augments trends of non-marriage and “when black men and women do partner, relational challenges attributed to gender role confusion” can be observed (Hurt, 2012).

Economic stability and family dynamics play a role in the success of any couple. However, couples who take the time to get to really know each other are in a better position to determine compatibility on these issues. Understanding the world view that each brings to the relationship can help couples better assess how their expectations for a relationship align with the potential of their partner to meet those expectations and vice versa.

## Education

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2013), educational attainment affects employment status. For example, in 2012 the median unemployment rate was 6.8% and the median weekly earning rate was \$815 across all degree levels. Those with less than a high school diploma had average weekly earnings of \$471 and had the highest unemployment rate (12.4%) compared to individuals with a bachelor’s degree who earned \$1,066 weekly and had 4.5% unemployment rate. This association between educational attainment and increased wages holds for blacks specifically as well. U.S. Department of Education data show that black students who earn a four-year college degree have incomes that are substantially higher than blacks who have only some college experience, but have not earned a degree (Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 2006). The association between educational attainment and economic security makes ensuring the success of black students an important topic for educators, parents, safety-net service providers, and other stakeholders.

### **Current Trends in Educational Attainment Among Blacks**

In 2009-10, estimates of black high school students graduating within four years of first starting the ninth grade were 66.1% for black students (compared to 83% for white students) (Stillwell & Sable, 2013). The calculated dropout rate for black students was 5.5% (Stillwell & Sable, 2013).

From 1999-00 to 2009-10, the number of degrees earned by black students increased for each level of degree, but at varying rates (U.S. Department of Education, 2012):

- Black students earned 13.7% of all associate's degrees awarded in 2009-10, an increase of 89% over the previous decade.
- From 2009 to 2010, black students earned 10.3% of all bachelor's degrees conferred, up from 9% in 1999-00.
- The number of master's degrees earned by black students more than doubled from 1999-00 to 2009-10 (increasing by 109%), with black students earning 12% (up from 9%) of all master's degrees conferred.
- The number of doctorates awarded from 1999-00 to 2009-10 increased by 47% for black students, with black students earning 7.4% of all doctorates, compared to 6.6% the previous decade.

Across all racial and ethnic groups, evidence suggests that female students are graduating at higher rates than males, a pattern that holds true for black students. In 2003, 59% of African American females graduated high school, while only 48% of African American males earned a diploma (Greene & Winters, 2006). From 2009 to 2010, 68.3% of all associate's degrees, 65.9% of all bachelor's degrees, 71.1% of all master's degrees, and 65.2% of all doctoral degrees awarded to black students were received by women (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

Many researchers have also noted evidence of a persisting gap between black and white male students at all levels. During 2009-10, the national high school graduation rate for black male students was 52% compared to 78% for white/non-Latino males (Schott Foundation for Public Education, 2012). In 2012, college attainment among blacks reached unprecedented levels, as 23% of blacks (ages 25-29) had completed at least a bachelor's degree, an increase from 20% in 2011 (Fry & Parker, 2012). Despite these gains in the black population, 40% of whites (ages 25-29) completed at least a bachelor's degree in 2012, up from 39% in 2011 and 20% in 1971 (Fry & Parker, 2012).

This racial gap extends to achievement as well. According to a 2009 report from the Council of the Great City Schools, only 12% of black fourth grade boys are proficient in reading, compared to 38% of white boys, and only 12% of black eighth grade boys are proficient in math, compared to 44% of their white counterparts (Lewis, Simon, Uzzell, Horwitz, & Casserly, 2010).



## Attitudes Toward Educational Attainment

African American parents place great importance on education and have high educational aspirations for their children, even though historically, African American families in the United States have struggled in the face of educational discrimination and exclusion. Billingsley and Caldwell (1991) noted that over the past half-century, “African American parents, their children, leaders, and organizations have been in the forefront of efforts to desegregate schools so that African American children could receive a quality education. In the process they have endured enormous hardships and sacrifices for limited gains.”

Educational attainment is often supported by the larger community and extended networks among African Americans as well. Activities such as “passing the hat” in African American churches to help pay for the education of college students are examples of this type of support in practice. According to Freeman (2004), “Education has always been a matter of interest for the family and entire community. The church, the extended family (including grandparents and other relatives),” and the immediate family have always been involved in the education of African American children.

African Americans’ views on education must be understood in the context of attitudes about access. A 2003 survey by Public Agenda and the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education found that while 53% of African American respondents believed that college is essential for success at work, 76% believed that many qualified people in their State do not have an opportunity to attend college (Immerwahr, 2004). In addition, 63% of black respondents felt that students from low-income families have less opportunity to attend college than others, and 56% also say that students from racial and ethnic minorities have less opportunity to attend college (Immerwahr, 2004). According to the author of the study, “Many African Americans believe, in other words, that this essential path to workplace success is closed for a large number of Americans, especially those from low income and minority families (Immerwahr, 2004).”

## Early Education

Early education, for children five years old and younger, can greatly affect future outcomes. Many researchers argue that early childhood programs may be the most cost-effective way to ensure the healthy development of children in poverty. According to the Ounce of Prevention Fund (n.d.), research shows that the achievement gap appears long before children reach kindergarten—in fact, it can become evident as early as age nine months.

### *Head Start*

The Head Start program was created in 1965 to serve low-income three- and four-year-old children and their families with comprehensive early education and support services. Programs provide services focused on the “whole child,” including early education that addresses cognitive, developmental, and socio-emotional needs; medical and dental screenings and referrals; nutritional services; parental involvement activities and referrals to social service providers for the entire family; and mental health services. In 2011, 30% of the children enrolled in Head Start preschool programs were African American (Schmit, 2012).

**Learn more about studies of early childhood outcomes including:**

- The Abecedarian Project: Demonstrated that young children who receive high-quality early education from infancy to age five do better in reading and math and are more likely to stay in school longer, graduate from high school, and attend a four-year college.
- High/Scope Perry Preschool: By age 40, adults who participated as three- and four-year-olds in quality preschool were more likely to have graduated from high school, held a job, made higher earnings, and committed fewer crimes than those who did not attend, according to this seminal study.
- Chicago Parent-Child Centers: This study demonstrated that young children who receive high-quality early education do better in school academically, are less likely to drop out of high school, be arrested, repeat grades, or be placed in special education services.
- Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project: Children enrolled in Early Head Start performed better on measures of cognition, social-emotional skills, and language functioning than their peers who were not enrolled, according to this landmark study of the Federal Early Head Start program.

To learn more about these studies and the research supporting early childhood education, visit <http://www.ounceofprevention.org/about/why-early-childhood-investments-work.php>.

**Parental Involvement with Schools**

After reviewing 51 studies published from 1995 to 2002, the National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools concluded that a positive and convincing relationship exists between family involvement with schools and benefits for students, including improved academic achievement (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). The authors explained, “This relationship holds across families of all economic, racial/ethnic, and educational backgrounds and for students at all ages. Although there is less research on the effects of community involvement, it also suggests benefits for schools, families, and students, including improved achievement and behavior” (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

Since parent involvement has been shown to be positively related to children’s educational performance, increasing parent involvement has been identified as a possible strategy for reducing the achievement gap (Lee & Bowen, 2006) and has become the target of educational efforts by researchers, policy makers, and practitioners (Jackson & Remillard, 2005). However, parent involvement is generally understood as an activity that is visible to school officials and teachers, such as volunteering in the child’s classroom or attending school-sponsored meetings (Lawson, 2003).

As part of their 2005 study, Jackson and Remillard interviewed African American mothers in an urban, low-income, predominantly African American neighborhood about their parent-child interactions related to math. Their findings showed that these mothers were very involved with their children’s math education, though not in ways typically recognized as parent involvement by those working in schools (Jackson & Remillard, 2005). For example, mothers in the study worked to structure, foster, and support their children’s

### *Tips for Family Involvement*

Not all parents or caregivers can attend school functions due to work, child care, or any number of other reasons. Teachers and administrators need to think differently about how families can be involved in promoting their child's positive education experience.

Encourage families to promote learning at home by providing them with a list of ideas like:

- Reading to young children.
- Having older children read to them.
- Encouraging eight or more hours of sleep.
- Having a designated study space.
- Taking the child to the library or a museum.
- Having a family board game night.

Many parents may not be confident reviewing their child's homework. Let them know that just verifying the work has been done is helpful for accountability. Provide families information on available homework assistance resources so children can access help.

Encourage teachers or child care providers to strengthen relationships with the child's family. Call or text parents when children do something good, not just when they are in trouble.

Think broadly when inviting parents and caregivers to school activities. A child may live with an aunt or other relative; they need to know that individual is welcome as well.

learning in a variety of contexts (such as including them in learning opportunities about math in the home, grocery store, and laundromat) and found ways to monitor their children's progress in school through alternative avenues (such as arranging for a relative who works in the school to check up on a child's progress), rather than through traditional modes of communication (such as volunteering in a child's classroom, notes between the teacher and parent, or report cards).

Too often, there is a disconnect between school staff (including teachers and administrators) and the communities where their schools are located which may cause school personnel to view the parents and surrounding community as needing to change and having little to offer (Cotton & Wikelund, n.d.). Service providers should understand that it is important to distinguish between parents' involvement in children's learning and involvement in their school, not discount clients' desire to help children learn, and assist clients in finding constructive ways to get involved in their children's education.

## Employment and Economic Mobility

Moving from one rung of the economic ladder to another can be challenging; it requires a reliable source of income and the accumulation and management of assets to support individual and family well-being. As black males today struggle to attain higher education and women to receive equal pay, it becomes clear that this feat may be much harder than anticipated for low-income African Americans. The struggle to make these advancements is evident as blacks have a harder time exceeding their parents' family income and wealth and have a higher chance of working in lower earning occupations compared to whites (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2012).



According to recent findings from a Pew Charitable Trusts (2012) study, African Americans are struggling to exceed the family income and wealth of their parents:

- 66% of blacks raised in the second quintile of family income (\$15,600–\$23,400) surpass their parents' family income, compared to 89% of whites.
- 23% of blacks raised in the middle quintile surpass their parents' family wealth, compared to 56% of whites.
- African Americans are more likely than whites to be in the bottom quintile of income level and fall from the middle to lower levels.
- 53% of blacks raised in the bottom quintile of family income level remain there as adults, compared to 33% of whites.
- 56% of blacks raised in the middle quintile of family income level fall to the lower two levels, compared to 32% of whites.

According to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), more than 37 million households in the United States were either unbanked or under-banked in 2011, with the highest percentage of these households (34%) belonging to African Americans (Burhouse & Osaki, 2012). Individuals may choose not to participate in the formal banking system for a variety of reasons, including lack of understanding about the banking system, past negative experiences and personal beliefs, and lack of appropriate identification to open such an account (Burhouse & Osaki, 2012).

According to the FDIC report, low-income individuals, less educated individuals (approximately 26% do not have a high school degree), and households experiencing unemployment or being headed by a younger individual are most likely to be unbanked. Unbanked households are also common among foreign-born individuals. While not

categorized by race, unmarried female households make up almost one-third (30%) of unbanked households and 19% of under-banked households (Burhouse & Osaki, 2012). This phenomenon of under- and unbanked status is not unique to blacks, but service providers should be prepared to explain the risks and offer referrals and services to clients for financial literacy and asset building when appropriate.

Unbanked individuals are more likely to rely on nontraditional financial services like:

- Check cashing businesses
- Payday loans
- Buy here, pay here car lots
- Appliance and furniture rent-to-own stores
- Pawnshops
- Tax refund loans

Nontraditional loan systems often charge exorbitant fees and, in some cases, interest can compound at a rate that requires individuals to pay as much as three times the amount they have borrowed. Buy here, pay here and rent-to-own stores can result in a person paying two or three times what an item is worth and one missed payment can result in default. Helping low-income clients understand these risks and learn how to engage in mainstream financial systems can reduce the risk of predatory lending and allow them to better manage and protect their limited resources.

Most families struggle to establish a balance between today's financial necessities and preparing for unknown future needs. This balancing act is even more difficult for low-resource families. Service providers can use the following six strategies to support families in their efforts to manage their finances:

**Financial Education:** One of the most important asset-building strategies is financial education to improve financial literacy. Financial education gives families information and skills to make sound decisions about budgeting, using mainstream financial institutions, saving, managing credit, setting aside funds for emergencies, accessing available tax credits, and more.

**Saving for the Future:** Many low-income families and individuals who are struggling to make ends meet often have difficulty finding money to set aside on a regular basis for savings. Even a few dollars each payday can provide a safety net and prevent households with unexpected expenses from depending on supportive friends and family or public assistance. One government program that encourages saving for the future is the Assets for Independence program operated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Assets for Independence encourages low-income households to save and invest in starting a small business, home ownership, higher education, or job training by offering a cash match on their savings. Encouraging families to consider this option when getting their tax refund is one way to start them on the path to savings.

**Getting Banked:** Encourage clients to use mainstream financial services, such as checking and savings accounts, for financial transactions and to avoid high-cost sources of credit like payday lenders and pawn shops. Introducing the idea of using a safety deposit box

### *Case Study*

Cassandra rides the bus to work. She works at a nice downtown hotel in the laundry department. She gets paid every two weeks and walks to the check cashing store near her job to cash her check before she gets on the bus. She pays her bills each month with money orders, but prefers to buy them at the store by her apartment since they are 20 cents cheaper than the check cashing place. She has a pretty good system; one payday she pays the rent and the next she pays the lights and gas bills. Money's always tight, but she manages.

This payday the rent is due. She cashed her check, put her envelope of cash in her purse, and got on the bus. As she stepped off the bus in her neighborhood, some guy on a bike whizzed by, grabbed her purse, and knocked her down. He got away with her rent money, cell phone, bus pass, and identification. She has no money saved and even if she can borrow the money to pay the rent, she cannot afford to pay it back.

### *Alternate Ending*

Cassandra gets paid every two weeks and has direct deposit. She opened her account a few weeks ago after finding out that she could save \$20 a month in check cashing fees. She can also save money by paying her bills through auto-draft so she doesn't have to buy money orders. The lady at the bank showed her how to set it up. They even text her if her balance gets low so she doesn't have to worry about over-drafting.

Today, as she stepped off the bus in her neighborhood, some guy on a bike whizzed by, grabbed her purse, and knocked her down. He got away with her cell phone, bus pass, and identification. She was upset, but thought about how glad she was that her rent money wasn't in her purse. It was safe in her bank account.

### *Tips for Social Service Providers*

Simple suggestions show concern and potentially transform an unwilling person into an advocate. A social service provider who takes a few minutes to explain the risks of using nontraditional financial services and the benefits of using a mainstream financial institution can make a difference. It can change the outcome of a simple purse snatching and prevent it from causing a family to spiral into a financial crisis.

for important papers such as birth certificates and social security cards is one way of encouraging families to use banks. For an average cost of \$20 per year, they will have a safe place for important documents.

**Managing Credit and Debt:** Successfully managing credit means maintaining a good credit score by making on-time payments to creditors and knowing how to access fairly priced financial products. Reducing existing debt and limiting the accumulation of new debt can also help protect credit ratings and improve access to credit when an actual emergency occurs, such as unexpected car repairs.

**Tax Credits and Filing Assistance:** Refundable tax credits and filing assistance can bolster working families' income. In 2010, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child

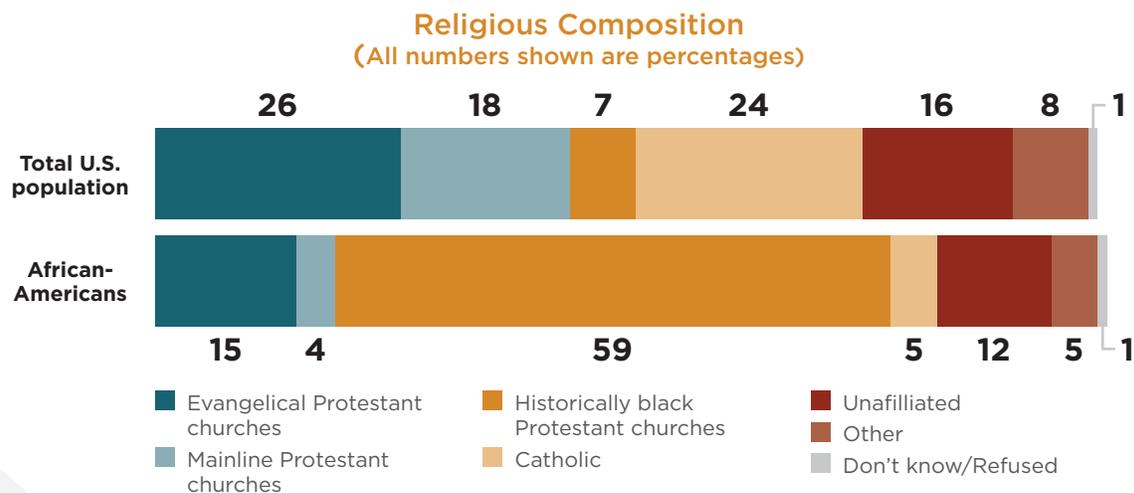
Tax Credit lifted 9.2 million people, including 4.9 million children, above the poverty line (Charite, Dutta-Gupta, & Marr, 2012). The EITC is primarily a Federal tax credit for low- to moderate-income working families with children, although there is a small EITC available for very low-income working individuals without children. The program is designed to reward work by increasing the amount of the credit as earned income rises, with the credit phasing out at higher income levels (Charite et al., 2012).

**Accessing Federal and State Benefits:** While one goal of asset-building is to reduce the need for benefits over time, many families require short-term support. Low-wage workers, particularly those earning close to the minimum wage, can receive thousands of dollars in additional income and services through Federal and State programs. Benefit screening, a sixth asset-building strategy, aims to connect low-income families to immediately available benefits by cross-checking client information against Federal and State eligibility standards. Accessing Federal and State benefit programs can not only help with daily living expenses, but also help families save and build assets (Assets for Independence Resource Center, 2011).

## Religion

Religion plays an important role in the African American community, as faith-based organizations help nurture, enhance, and strengthen black families.

According to the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life (2009a), blacks are one of the most religious groups in the United States. Eighty-seven percent of blacks describe themselves as belonging to a religious group and nearly nine in 10 (88%) indicate that they are absolutely certain that God exists.



Source: Pew Forum U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, conducted in 2007, released in 2008  
Note: Due to rounding, totals in this report may not sum to 100

The vast majority of blacks are Protestant (78%), more so than any other racial or ethnic group (Pew Forum, 2009b). Within this Protestant group, the black churches have three distinct traditions: evangelical, mainline, and historically black Protestant churches. According to Sahgal and Smith (2009), “More than three-in-four African American

Protestants (and 59% of African Americans overall) belong to historically black Protestant denominations, such as the National Baptist Convention or the American Methodist Episcopal Church.” Forty percent of all blacks identify with Baptist denominations within the historically black tradition of churches (Pew Forum, 2009b). Overall, 92% of blacks compose the membership of the historically black Protestant denomination, despite making up a small portion of the membership of mainline and evangelical churches, at 2% and 6% respectively. Outside of historically black churches, 15% of blacks are members of evangelical denominations, such as Southern Baptist Convention and Assemblies of God (Pew Forum, 2009b).

In addition to their spiritual mission, black clergy and churches have long stood ready to meet pressing human needs in their communities, including food, clothing, and shelter. Recently, many churches have seen themselves as a first line of defense when natural disasters, such as Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf Coast, strike and provide relevant training for other churches (Trader-Leigh, 2008). These churches also have members and leaderships that take active roles in local, State, and Federal issues through lobbying and public office (Smith, 2002). As described by the Pew Forum (2009b), they consider their faith in partnership with social issues, political candidates, and party affiliation.

Many of the challenges discussed in this section are not unique to African American families, but these families are over-represented in the social service and criminal justice systems and underrepresented in the employment and education systems. A key to addressing these challenges is effective communication. The next section offers specific strategies for improving communication as a foundation for improving relationships and service delivery.

### *Engage Faith Leaders*

**Consider engaging local faith leaders and organizations in supporting the families you serve. They can support your efforts by providing resources like volunteers, food/clothing drives, transportation, and child care. Additionally, some TANF agencies have had success using faith-based organizations to provide added supports to hard-to-employ clients.**

## RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS

*Enhancing TANF Faith-Based and Community Partnerships: Essential Readiness Factors and Capacities of TANF Agencies and FBCOs* offers a cross-site analysis of eight exemplary faith-based community organization (FBCO)-TANF partnerships described in the project’s case studies. The report draws out important findings related to volunteer management, organizational infrastructure, inter-agency communication, and place-based strategies. Moreover, the 14-page report articulates some of the leading reasons a TANF agency would want to partner with an FBCO, and describes how effective partnerships can emerge. The report is available at <https://peerta.acf.hhs.gov/index.cfm?event=viewTopic&sectionTopicID=63&topicId=21&tabtopic=21&sectionId=15&nav=21>.



## Section 3:

### Improving Communication

Many safety-net service providers are not even aware of how their personal biases, experiences and expectations of how a normal family is structured affect their dealings with African American families and couples. Culture has a significant impact on the ways people seek expressions of love and on family formations.

Children learn interpersonal skills like effective communication and conflict resolution, as well parenting and financial management skills, from their family of origin. However, family dysfunction, whether mild or extreme, can disrupt this natural process regardless of socio-economic status.

Clients with poor communication skills may struggle to articulate their needs. This struggle is compounded when the service provider also lacks effective communication skills. This section provides important information regarding communication skills and offers specific strategies for improving communication, building on the lessons learned about cultural perspectives.



### Improving Communication Between Service Providers and Clients

Effective communication is essential to every relationship—within the family, at work, and in the community—including the relationship between a social service agency worker and client or family member. The volume or frequency of communication does not matter as much as the quality of the exchange. The way something is communicated is important: whether communication is mutual or one-way and whether an individual's non-verbal cues and facial expressions match what he or she is saying. Likewise, the way a person receives information (e.g., makes eye contact, leans into the conversation, repeats key points, or asks clarifying questions) affects communication quality. Those qualities, in turn, affect feelings of trust and connectedness between the parties involved.

Code-switching is a well-known communication style in which a presenter alters his speaking dialect, style, or register to better connect with his audience.

### *Tips for Service Providers*

Establishing a relationship with clients starts with effective verbal and non-verbal communication. Follow these tips to improve your communication with clients:

- Greet your client with a smile and a handshake. Greet their children or partner as well.
- Make eye contact when speaking with your client.
- Ask open-ended questions.
- Don't interrupt; listen to what they have to say.
- Explain things in simple terms and ask questions to be sure they understand.
- If you need them to fill out forms, explain the forms. Don't assume they can read and understand them.
- Offer information or other resources that you think might be helpful or of interest.
- Always offer your card or contact information and let them know they can call (or text or email) you if they have questions.
- Getting to know more about your clients will allow you to better assist them in achieving their goals.
- Accept that there may be distrust. Don't take it personally. Demonstrating respect and concern for your client will build trust.

In the African American community, this might refer to an individual's ability to switch between African American vernacular and standard American English. For example, there might be a difference between the way an African American male speaks on a job interview and the way he would speak to his friends. Code-switching can be a protective maneuver to create distance when an individual feels threatened. Code-switching may occur when a social service provider rejects a client's request for assistance. Recognizing code-switching as a defense mechanism, not a personal attack on the provider, can help providers diffuse the situation.

### *Rap to Riches*

Curtis James Jackson III, better known as 50 Cent to his fans, offers a vivid example of code-switching. 50 Cent entered the entertainment scene as a hard-core rapper with a thug background. Using his fame as a springboard, he has since expanded his business ventures to include writing books, a clothing line, sports promotion, and a host of other entrepreneurial ventures. His communication style as a rapper is very different from his communication style when negotiating on behalf of his corporate or philanthropic interests. In his case, code-switching and his acute business savvy helped propel him from a tough street life to being listed in Forbes magazine as having a net worth of more than \$110 million in 2012.

### *Tips for Service Providers*

The following strategies can help successfully manage conflict:

- **Using Soft Startups.** How a conflict begins generally predicts the path it will take. A key strategy in managing conflict is the use of soft startups to a discussion. A soft startup involves talking about an issue in a way that is sensitive to the partner's perspective. To use a soft startup, describe the concern in a neutral, factual manner. (e.g., "I noticed that you missed an important appointment related to your case plan.") Next, describe how the concern makes you feel as specifically as possible (e.g., "I am concerned that we may not be able to keep getting appointments for you."). Finally, state a positive need (e.g., "I'd really like to come up with a system that allows us to get you through this case plan more quickly."). Soft startups are free from criticism, blame, and contempt, and usually do not elicit defensiveness. Thus, the likelihood of a productive discussion is far greater.
- **Using Calming Techniques.** Learning to regulate negative emotions during conflict is important. Maintain your cool and speak in a calm voice.
- **Accepting Influence.** Accepting influence is a sign of mutual respect. It generally represents power sharing and joint decision-making. Clients often know what they need.
- **Not Sweating the Small Stuff.** Some differences in opinion and belief will likely be present. Learning to manage, and not necessarily resolve, minor differences is important.
- **Forgiveness.** Letting go of resentment or grudges is a longer term strategy and an effective way to improve one's own mental and physical health. It is not the same as accepting someone's actions as permissible, such as if the client misses an appointment or forgets paperwork.

## Communication and Conflict Resolution Tips for Couples

One of the reasons interpersonal skills such as communication and conflict resolution are so important is that these skills affect every human interaction. How well individuals communicate makes a difference whether the relationship is between provider and client, parent and child, or even co-workers or romantic couples.

### Communication

In intimate relationships, research shows that both the quality of communication and increasing certain areas of knowledge are particularly important. During the dating stages of a relationship, mutual exchanges of knowledge between potential partners permit individuals to explore how well-matched they are and how honest they are with each other. It also helps individuals determine whether a potential partner is able or willing to reach a place of shared meaning.

The most critical areas for couples to discuss with each other are:

- **Family Background.** Experiences in upbringing carry a strong influence into adults' current attitudes and behaviors.
- **Core Values and Beliefs.** Individuals should share their cultural and religious background, community norms and values, and values and beliefs of significant people in their lives.
- **Relationship Expectations.** Discussions about what roles each partner should play in the relationship (ranging from how much time should be spent alone together to deeper matters such as commitment, having children, and parenting styles) are useful. While roles may change over the course of a relationship, expectations that are unstated, unreasonable, or unmet can cause conflict in relationships.
- **Previous Relationship Patterns.** Prior patterns often repeat in current relationships. Previous relationships also shape relationship expectations. For this reason, it is important to pay attention to how a partner describes past partners and to know about the relationship dynamics.
- **Lifestyle Choices.** Spending and debt habits, priorities, and hopes and plans for the future can bring couples together when they are similar or create problems for them when there are significant differences.
- **Compatibility.** The degree of physical connection and social and spiritual similarity between two individuals also matters.
- **Conflict Management.** How individuals approach and attempt to resolve issues that they encounter affects the quality of the relationship. Conflict occurs in all relationships, but couples who have similarly healthy conflict management skills—such as focusing on the positives, being willing to accept influence, accepting differences, and forgiving—can create long-lasting, healthy relationships. Escalating or persistent use of power, force, control, or violence to resolve issues is a sign of a potentially dangerous relationship.

How well does an individual *really* know his or her romantic partner? Though a seemingly simple question, it has important implications for maintaining a safe, satisfying, long-lasting relationship. Knowing one's partner well, like so many of the other qualities that enhance a relationship, begins by knowing oneself well. It then involves a mutual understanding of each other and complete comfort with exchanging personal information, without fear of how the information will be shared or used.

Use these topics as conversation starters with clients to help them think through what's going on in their own relationships.

## Case Study

Larry and Harriet have been dating 10 months. Harriet thinks that Larry is seeing another woman. Harriet begins to notice that Larry does not answer her text messages. When she calls him, he gets off the phone quickly and never calls her back. She's gotten into his computer and seen some strange emails. When they do go out, Larry never sits in the same spots they have always sat in. When she asks Larry about his behavior, he says everything is fine and she's being paranoid.

### Discussion questions:

- How well do Larry's words and actions align?
- What did Larry do well as far as communication with Harriet? What could he do better?
- What are three tips you could provide to Larry and Harriet to strengthen the quality of their communication?

## RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS

The following tip sheets were created for marriage and relationship education professionals, but also are useful for safety-net service providers for basic engagement. They include practical tips that anyone can apply to strengthen an intimate or co-parenting relationship.

- Why Trust Matters ([tinyurl.com/why-trust-matters](http://tinyurl.com/why-trust-matters))
- Why Forgiveness Matters ([tinyurl.com/why-forgiveness-matters](http://tinyurl.com/why-forgiveness-matters))
- Why Commitment Matters ([tinyurl.com/why-commitment-matters](http://tinyurl.com/why-commitment-matters))
- Strategies for Couples Dealing with Financial Strain ([tinyurl.com/strategies-financial-strain](http://tinyurl.com/strategies-financial-strain))

## Conflict Resolution

Conflict arising from individual differences, cultures, backgrounds, and stressors is a normal part of couple relationships. The inability to manage conflict in a healthy way leads to poor relationship quality and relationship break-up (Gottman, Coan, Carrere, & Swanson, 1998). Poor conflict management skills can also negatively affect people outside of their romantic relationships. For example, the inability to manage and resolve conflict can hinder an individual's ability to get and maintain a job.

Exposure to high levels of unmanaged conflict also creates an unhealthy environment for children. Couples who are violent toward each other are more likely to be violent and abusive toward their children. Witnessing domestic violence affects children differently, depending on a number of factors such as age, length and depth of exposure, and presence of other influential adults. However, children who have experienced high levels of

parental conflict tend to have more internalizing and externalizing behavior problems (e.g., aggression, depression, lower academic achievement).

On the other hand, exposure to conflict that parents successfully manage can help children learn conflict management skills. As children observe their parents' interaction, they develop internal working models of family relationships including the attitudes, availability, and responsiveness of others (Sroufe & Fleeson, 1988).

Children who have and observe positive family relationships during childhood are more likely to go on to create positive, supportive relationships in adulthood. Likewise, negative and unsupportive relationships tend to be repeated in future generations. For example, adults who recall their parents having high conflict tend to report lower marital satisfaction during the transition to parenthood (Hatton, Conger, Larsen-Rife, & Ontai, 2010).

Every individual is different. However, given the historical impact of trauma on African Americans, African Americans are statistically more likely to have been exposed to high conflict in their home or community than other major racial and ethnic groups. Sharing information on the commonness of exposure and negative effect of high conflict on children can open dialogue with clients. Social service providers can then offer resources to assist clients in reducing the likelihood of conflict for the next generation and breaking patterns or cycles of conflict in their own families or communities.

### RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS

For effective conflict management tips, visit the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families Virtual Library to view these and other free resources at [www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org](http://www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org):

- Conflict Management and Resolution: Can We Agree by Meredith Taylor
- Ten Rules for Constructive Conflict by Victor W. Harris
- Dealing With Anger in a Marriage by Nancy Recker

### Personal Safety

- Personal safety—the absence of fear of physical or emotional violence in a relationship—is a foundational component of a healthy, stable relationship (Stanley, 2004). An immediate danger sign for any relationship is one or both partners being unable to manage conflict without causing fear or using violence or threats.
- While healthy marriage and relationship skills can be integrated as a preventive strategy to increase protective factors and reduce risk factors in family dynamics, they do not offer a safety intervention. All stakeholders should have protocols and processes in place for referring individuals and families in danger to more immediate assistance.
- For more information and resources, view *Family Violence Prevention: A Toolkit for Stakeholders* from the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families at <http://tinyurl.com/fvp-toolkit-p>.

## Parenting/Co-Parenting

African Americans have the lowest marriage rate and the highest rate of nonmarital births out of all U.S. racial and ethnic groups (Chambers & Kravitz, 2011). However, a consistent finding of many studies over the last 20 years is that black non-resident fathers are more likely to have contact with their non-resident children than white non-resident fathers (Danziger & Radin, 1990; Huang, 2006; King, 1994; King, Harris, & Heard, 2004; Mott, 1990; Seltzer, 1991; Seltzer & Bianchi, 1988). In many ways, parenting while living separately is quite similar to parenting while living together. In both situations, children are best served when parents work together to create a healthy and supportive environment. The ability of parents to communicate effectively and manage multiple stressors and conflicts is vital for successful parenting and co-parenting. In both situations, parents share the responsibility of creating a stable, nurturing environment; they share the rights and privileges of rearing the child and contributing to healthy growth and development.



Tips to promote effective co-parenting communication apply universally. They include:

- Minimize unhealthy arguing in front of the child because it can lead to further confusion or potential internalization of fault within the child.
- Maximize healthy conflict management. When issues inevitably arise, parents who use healthy ways of working through them, such as using soft start-ups and maintaining an overall positive environment, teach their children effective conflict management skills.
- Set guidelines. Use these tips to establish parenting guidelines that recognize both parents have a common goal—providing the child with a healthy environment in which to thrive. Make sure that both parents have a say in creating the guidelines since accepting influence from one another is a sign of mutual respect.
- Use direct, open communication about goals and plans for the child, paying attention to the child's wishes as well as the parent's goals.
- Focus on the present and the future, not the past. Decisions made in the past cannot be altered, and “mistakes” are par for the course in parenting. Focus on the child's current needs to make sure those are met, and take into account past decisions to repeat what works well and to learn from what did not.

- Avoid categorization of right versus wrong, which can be polarizing as a parent and to the child. Listening, acknowledging, and attempting to understand the other parent's perspective is important and can help parents find common ground even when they disagree about an action or decision to be made.
- Focus on positives—and talk about them routinely. This includes the child's positive achievements, each parent's positive contributions, and shared positive moments. Positives tend to beget more positives (and negatives more negatives).

Effective communication is an underpinning for all interpersonal relationships. For families to move to self-sufficiency, individuals need to be able to effectively articulate their needs and service providers must have the skills to appropriately identify and address concerns with empathy and sincerity. Recognizing that these skills are equally as critical within the family, the community, and the workplace, the next section addresses strategies for integrating healthy relationship education into service delivery systems where families can access interpersonal skills as well as other critical skills such as parenting and financial education in familiar, non-punitive environments.



## Section 4:

### Strengthening Relationships

This section explores different strategies agencies can use to integrate healthy marriage and relationship education into existing service delivery systems for African American individuals, couples, and families.

**Although we do not believe that strengthening African American marriages and families is the panacea for all of the problems that face African Americans, we do believe that it is an essential part of the solution.**

**Anthony L. Chambers and Aliza Kravitz,  
The Family Institute at Northwestern University.**

### Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education

Healthy marriage and relationship education teaches core relationship skills to individuals, couples, and families on a voluntary basis to help them achieve, maintain, and strengthen relationships. Healthy relationship education often occurs in a group setting and is not meant to be therapy or clinical treatment for couples experiencing serious issues.

A couple's relationship health can change over time. Research shows that an unhealthy marriage can negatively affect the couple's physical and mental health, job functioning, and parenting, as well as their child's social and cognitive skills and educational achievement (Moore et al., 2004).

Based on an extensive literature review, Child Trends identified the following as core constructs of a healthy marriage (Moore et al., 2004):

- Commitment to each other and any children
- Satisfaction
- Communication
- Conflict resolution
- Lack of domestic violence
- Fidelity
- Quality interaction/time together
- Intimacy/emotional support
- Duration/legal marital status

**Healthy marriage and relationship education builds the core skills of healthy *communication* and *conflict resolution*, and enhances critical skills like *parenting* and *financial education*. Enhancing these skills can reduce stress and improve coping skills for families navigating the normal issues related to parenting, everyday life, and finances.**



The National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families promotes a focus on healthy marriage and relationship education because research shows that the core skills it teaches—communication, conflict resolution, financial management, and parenting—strengthen both intimate and work relationships, including the ability to build a social support network. Learning these skills can positively affect a person’s physical and emotional health, economic self-sufficiency, and stability.

### **Strong Relationships, Strong Families**

The *Strong Relationships, Strong Families* curriculum educates stakeholders on the importance of healthy marriage and relationship skills and equips them to educate the families they serve about these skills. The National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families developed the curriculum based on current research regarding the core components and benefits of healthy marriage and relationship education and skills. Both modules of the curriculum are available for free at <https://training.healthymarriageandfamilies.org>

## Strategies for Integrating Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education into Existing Services

### Levels of Integration

Healthy marriage and relationship education skills can be integrated into existing service delivery systems in different ways based on an agency's strengths, needs, and capacity. The National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families has created a Levels of Integration concept to visualize levels along a continuum of integration efforts.



#### *Level 1 - Basic Engagement*

Sharing facts about the importance of healthy marriage and relationship skills is a good starting point for basic engagement. Basic engagement strategies can include distributing tip sheets throughout the community, such as at Head Start centers or WIC offices.

The National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families has a Virtual Library with more than 500 free materials in a variety of formats, including factsheets, research-to-practice briefs, brochures, pamphlets, training resources, program reports or evaluations, and research reports. Visit [www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org](http://www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org) to learn more.

### ***Level 2 - Partnerships***

Engaging community members and other stakeholders also helps agencies reach the next level of integration—partnerships. Developing partnerships with other agencies within the community is a great way to pool resources and expertise for the benefit of clients. All agency partners should share a common vision of promoting healthy marriage and relationships, which may require educating other stakeholders about the positive impacts of a healthy marriage on family safety and stability, employment, and self-sufficiency.

Through partnerships, agencies can identify resources and experts on various components of healthy relationship skills—such as communication, conflict resolution, parenting, and financial capability—and collectively integrate the components into a group workshop or class for African American couples and families.

For more tips and tools on developing partnerships to promote healthy marriage and relationship education, including a collaboration assessment and partnership agreement template, visit the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families web page about partnerships at [www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org/partnerships](http://www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org/partnerships).

### ***Level 3 - Full Integration***

Stakeholders can help strengthen couples' and families' health and well-being by fully integrating healthy marriage and relationship education into existing social service delivery systems that serve African American individuals, couples, and families. To achieve full integration, all service providers should be trained or cross-trained so they are prepared to discuss and teach core skills (e.g., healthy communication, conflict resolution, parenting, and financial management) as an interwoven part of service delivery. Well-established partners can help effectively integrate healthy marriage and relationship education into service-delivery systems by providing training, tips, and other resources.

Many considerations are involved in program planning, development, and implementation. The National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families website features helpful tips and tools on full integration and program development for State, local, and Tribal stakeholders. Visit [www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org/program-development](http://www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org/program-development) to learn more.

## Conclusion

African American families have a history rich with stories of incredible resilience in the face of adversity. This culture of resilience is an asset that can be tapped to better serve these families. Additionally, while acknowledging the shared history of African American families, service providers must also accept that all black people do not share that history.

All families are unique in their individual experiences, complexity, and circumstances. To effectively assess and meet the needs of any family requires setting aside personal prejudices or preconceived ideas and taking the time to get to know the individuals. Building an effective client-provider partnership based on mutual respect will improve service provision and increase the likelihood of the family's success in reaching its goal of self-sufficiency.

Making healthy marriage and relationship education skills available through trusted resources in a familiar, non-punitive environment is one way of helping African American families strengthen their family relationships and improve outcomes for children. Strengthening individual families is the key to strengthening communities.





## Works Consulted

- Brown, S. L., & Bulanda, J. R. (2008). Relationship violence in young adulthood: A comparison of daters, cohabitators, and marrieds. *Social Science Research, 37*(1), 73-87.
- Burtless, G. (1990). Earnings inequality over the business and demographic cycles. In G. Burtless (Ed.), *A future of lousy jobs?: The changing structure of U.S. wages* (pp. 77-117). Washington, DC: Brookings Institute.
- Chafe, W. H., Gavin, R., & Korstad, R., Eds. (2001). *Remembering Jim Crow: African Americans tell about life in the segregated south*. New York: The New Press.
- Guzman, J. P., Jones, L. W., Hall, W., & Guzman, J. P., Eds. (1952). *1952 Negro yearbook - A review of events affecting Negro life (economic, social, political, and educational progress)*. New York: Wm. H. Wise & Co., Inc.
- House Joint Resolution proposing the 13th amendment to the Constitution, January 31, 1865; Enrolled Acts and Resolutions of Congress, 1789-1999; General Records of the United States Government; Record Group 11; National Archives. Retrieved from <http://www.ourdocuments.gov>
- Jencks, C. & Phillips, M. (1998). *The black-white test score gap*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Johnson, W. R. & Neal, D. A. (1998). *Basic skills and the black-white earnings gap*.
- Kirp, D. L. (2010). *The widest achievement gap*. Retrieved from <http://www.nationalaffairs.com/publications/detail/the-widest-achievement-gap>
- Moss, P., & Tilly, C. (1996). "Soft" skills and race: An investigation of black men's employment problems. *Work and Occupations, 23*, 252-276.
- Moss, P., & Tilly, C. (2001). *Stories employers tell: Race, skill, and hiring in America*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Moss, P., & Tilly, C. (2001). Why opportunity isn't knocking: Racial inequalities and the demand for labor. In O'Connor, A., Tilly, C., & Bobo, L. D. (Eds.), *Urban inequality: Evidence from four cities* (pp. 444-495). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- National Archives. (n.d.) Teaching with documents: Court documents related to Martin Luther King, Jr. and Memphis sanitation workers. Retrieved from <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/memphis-v-mlk/>
- Rampey, B. D., Dion, G. S., Donahue, P. L. (2009). *The nation's report card: Trends in academic progress in reading and mathematics 2008*. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pubs/main2008/2009479.asp>
- Smith, W. C. (1985). *The church in the life of the black family*. Valley Forge, PA; Judson Press.
- Stanford University. (n.d.). *Martin Luther King, Jr. and the global freedom struggle: Memphis sanitation workers strike (1968)*. Retrieved from [http://mlkpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc\\_memphis\\_sanitation\\_workers\\_strike\\_1968/](http://mlkpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_memphis_sanitation_workers_strike_1968/)
- Sum, A., Fogg, N., Harrington, P., Khatiwada, I., Palma, S., Pond, N., & Tobar, P. (2003). *The growing gender gaps in college enrollment and degree attainment in the U.S. and their potential economic and social consequences*. Retrieved from [http://ovcaa-iro.org/ovcafo\\_archive/vcafo%20bulletins/gender\\_gap.pdf](http://ovcaa-iro.org/ovcafo_archive/vcafo%20bulletins/gender_gap.pdf)
- U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). *Housing vacancies and homeownership (CPS/HVS)*. Retrieved <http://www.census.gov/housing/hvs/>
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2012). *The condition of education 2012 (NCES 2012-045), Indicator 33*. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=16>
- U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2011, June 6). *National Longitudinal Surveys: The NLSY79*. Retrieved from <http://www.bls.gov/nls/nlsy79.htm>
- U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary. (n.d.). *Recess reading: An occasional feature from the Judiciary Committee. The Civil Rights Act of 1964*. Retrieved from <http://www.judiciary.senate.gov/about/history/CivilRightsAct.cfm?renderforprint=1&>



# References

- Adler-Baeder, F., Shirer, K., & Bradford, A. (2007). What's love got to do with it? The role of healthy couple relationships. *The Forum for Family and Consumer Issues*, 12(1). Retrieved from <http://ncsu.edu/ffci/publications/2007/v12-n1-2007-spring/adlerbaeder-shirer-bradford/fa-3-adlerbaede-shirer-bradford.php>
- Annie E. Casey Foundation, Data Center Kids Count. (2013). *Children in single-parent families by race (Percent) - 2011*. Retrieved from <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/acrossstates/Rankings.aspx?ind=107>
- Assets for Independence Resource Center. (2011). *Asset initiative: Accessing federal and state benefits*. Retrieved from <http://idaresources.org/servlet/servlet.FileDownload?file=015700000000IRDV>
- Bachman, R. (1995). *Violence against women: A National Crime Victimization Survey report (No. NCJ145325)*. Rockville, MD: Justice Statistics Clearinghouse/NCJRS.
- Baker, L. A., Silverstein, M. (2009, November 3). *Depressive symptoms among grandparents raising grandchildren: The impact of participation in multiple roles*. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2772115/>
- Banks, R. R. (2011). *Is marriage for white people? How the African American marriage decline affects everyone*. New York: Dutton.
- Billingsley, A., & Caldwell, C. H. (1991). The church, the family, and the school in the African American community. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 60(3): 427-440.
- Bogenschneider, K., Kaplan, T., & Morgan, K. (1993, October). Single parenthood and children's well-being (2nd ed.) *Wisconsin family impact seminars briefing report*. Retrieved from [http://www.familyimpactseminars.org/s\\_wifis02report.pdf](http://www.familyimpactseminars.org/s_wifis02report.pdf)
- Bulanda, J. R., & Brown, S. L. (2008). *Race-ethnic differences in marital quality and divorce (Working Paper Series 06-08)*. Bowling Green University. Retrieved from: <http://www.bgsu.edu/downloads/cas/file35757.pdf>
- Burhouse, S., & Osaki, Y. (2012). *2011 FDIC national survey of unbanked and underbanked households*. Retrieved from <http://www.fdic.gov/householdsurvey/>
- Cannon, L. (1997). Scars remain five years after Los Angeles riots. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpsrv/national/longterm/lariots/lariots.htm>
- Carson, C., Shepard, K. (Eds.) (2001). Address to the first Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) mass meeting (December 5, 1955). *A call to conscience: The landmark speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* Retrieved from [http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/documentsentry/the\\_address\\_to\\_the\\_first\\_montgomery\\_improvement\\_association\\_mia\\_mass\\_meeting/](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/documentsentry/the_address_to_the_first_montgomery_improvement_association_mia_mass_meeting/)
- Center for American Progress. (2012, March 13). *The top 10 most startling facts about people of color and criminal justice in the United States: A look at the racial disparities inherent in our nation's criminal-justice-system*. Retrieved from: <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/race/news/2012/03/13/11351/the-top-10-most-startling-facts-about-people-of-color-and-criminal-justice-in-the-united-states/>
- Chafe, W. H. (2003). *The unfinished journey: America since World War II*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Chambers, A. L., & Kravitz, A. (2011). Understanding the disproportionately low marriage rate among African Americans: An amalgam of sociological and psychological constraints. *Family Relations*, 60(5): 648-60.
- Charite, J., Dutta-Gupta, I., & Marr, C. (2012). *Studies show earned income tax credit encourages work and success in school and reduces poverty*. Retrieved from <http://www.cbpp.org/cms/index.cfm?fa=view&id=3793>
- Cherlin, A. J. (1981). *Marriage, divorce, remarriage*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Claremont Institute. (2002). *Rediscovering George Washington - Lesson plan: The Constitution and the idea of compromise*. Retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/georgewashington/classroom/index3.html>
- Cohn, D., Passel, J., Wang, W., & Livingston, G. (2011). *Barely half of U.S. adults are married - a record low: New marriages down 5% from 2009 to 2010*. Retrieved from <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2011/12/14/barely-half-of-u-s-adults-are-married-a-record-low/>

- Constitutional Rights Foundation. (2013). *The southern "black codes" of 1865-66*. Retrieved from <http://www.crf-usa.org/brown-v-board-50th-anniversary/southern-black-codes.html>
- Cotton, K., & Wikelund, K. R. (n.d.). Close-up #6: Parent involvement in education. *School Improvement Research Series*. School Improvement Program of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. Retrieved from <http://educationnorthwest.org/resource/825>
- Crockenberg, S. (1981). Infant irritability, mother responsiveness, and social support influences on the security of infant-mother attachment. *Child Development*, 52, 857-865.
- Danziger, S. K., & Radin, N. (1990). Absent does not equal uninvolved: Predictors of fathering in teen mother families. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 52(3), 636-642.
- Davis, R. L. F. (2006, September). *Question of the month: Jim Crow etiquette*. Ferris State University. Retrieved from <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/news/jimcrow/question/sept06.htm>
- Encyclopædia Britannica. (2013). *Niagara movement*. Retrieved from <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/413740/Niagara-Movement>
- France, L. R. (2012, April 30). *CNN: 'Uprising' documents role of hip-hop in L.A. riots*. Retrieved from <http://www.cnn.com/2012/04/30/showbiz/tv/uprising-documentary-la-riots>
- Frazier, J. W. & Tettey-fio, E. L. (Eds.) (2006). *Race, ethnicity, and place in a changing America*. Binghamton, NY: Global Academic Publishing.
- Freeman, K. (2004). *The influence of family. African Americans and college choice: The influence of family and school*. New York: SUNY Press.
- Fry, R., & Parker, K. (2012). *Record shares of young adults have finished both high school and college*. Retrieved from <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/11/05/record-shares-of-young-adults-have-finished-both-high-school-and-college/1/>
- Furstenberg, F. F., & Crawford, D. B. (1978). Family support: Helping teenagers to cope. *Family Planning Perspectives*, 10, 322-333
- Gibson, R. A. (2013). *The Negro holocaust: Lynching and race riots in the United States, 1880-1950*. Retrieved from <http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1979/2/79.02.04.x.html#b>
- Gilliam, T. J. (1989). The Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955-56. In D. J. Garrow (Ed.), *The walking city: The Montgomery bus boycott* (pp. 191-301). Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing.
- Greene, A. D. & Billingsley, A. (1992, June 1). The black church as a family support system: Instrumental and expressive functions. *National Journal of Sociology*, 6, 21-40.
- Goodwin, J. S., Hunt, W. C., Key, C. R., & Samet, J. M. (1987). The effect of marital status on stage, treatment, and survival of cancer patients. *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 258(21), 3125-3130.
- Gottman, J. M., Coan, J., Carrere, S., & Swanson, C. (1998). Predicting marital happiness and stability from newlywed interactions. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 60, 5-22.
- Greene, J. P. & Winters, M. A. (2006). *Leaving boys behind: Public high school graduation rates*. Civic Report, No.48. Retrieved from [http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr\\_48.htm](http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr_48.htm)
- Gregory, J. N. (2009). *The second great migration: A historical overview. African American urban history: The dynamics of race, class and gender since World War II*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Groves, H. E. (1951). Separate but equal: The doctrine of Plessy v. Ferguson. *Phylon (1940-1956)*, 12(1), pp. 66-72.
- Harlow, C. W. (2003, January). *Education and correctional populations*. Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report. Retrieved from <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/ecp.pdf>
- Hatton, H., Conger, R. D., Larsen-Rife, D., & Ontai, L. (2010). An integrative and developmental perspective for understanding romantic relationship quality during the transition to parenthood. In M. S. Schulz, M. K. Prueett, P. Kerig, & R. Parke (Eds.), *Strengthening couple relationships for optimal child development: Lessons from research and intervention*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

- Henderson, A. T., & Mapp, K. L. (2002). *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement*. Austin, TX: National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools. Retrieved from <http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf>
- Horney, J., Osgood, D. W., & Marshall, I. H. (1995). Criminal careers in the short-term: Intra-individual variability in crime and its relations to local life circumstances. *American Sociological Review*, 60(5), 655-673.
- Huang, C. C. (2006). Child support enforcement and father involvement for children in never-married mother families. *Fathering: A Journal of Theory, Research, and Practice about Men as Fathers*, 4(1), 97-111.
- Human Rights Watch. (2009, March 2). *US: Drug arrest skewed by race: National data on 1980-2007 cases show huge disparities*. Retrieved from <http://www.hrw.org/news/2009/03/02/us-drug-arrests-skewed-race>
- Humes, K. R., Jones, N. A., & Ramirez, R. R. (2011). Overview of race and Hispanic origin: 2010. *Census Briefs*. Retrieved from: <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-02.pdf>
- Hurt, T. R. (2012). *Dispelling the myth: Black couples are not interested in marriage*. Fairfax, VA: National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families (Product No. 031). Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/dispelling-the-myth-p>
- Hurt, T. R. (2013). *Understanding distinct marital separation patterns among black couples*. Fairfax, VA: National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families (Product No. 056). Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/separation-black-couples-p>
- Immerwahr, J. (2004). *Public attitudes on higher education: A trend analysis, 1993 to 2003*. Retrieved from [http://www.highereducation.org/reports/pubatt/Pub\\_Agenda\\_040210.pdf](http://www.highereducation.org/reports/pubatt/Pub_Agenda_040210.pdf)
- Independent Television Service. (2013). *Civil rights and nonviolence. February one: The story of the Greensboro four*. Retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/februaryone/civilrights.html>
- Jackson, K., & Remillard, J. T. (2005). Rethinking parent involvement: African American mothers construct their roles in the mathematics education of their children. *School Community Journal*, 15(1), pp. 51-73.
- Journal of Blacks in Higher Education. (2006). *Black student college graduation rates inch higher but a large racial gap persists*. Retrieved from <http://www.jbhe.com/preview/winter07preview.html>
- King, V. (1994). Variation in the consequences of nonresident father involvement for children's well-being. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 56(4), 963-972.
- King, V., Harris, K. M., & Heard, H. E. (2004). Racial and ethnic diversity in nonresident father involvement. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 66(1), 1-21.
- Kochhar, R., & Cohn, D. (2011). *Fighting poverty in a bad economy, Americans move in with relatives*. Pew Research, Social & Demographic Trends. Retrieved from <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2011/10/03/fighting-poverty-in-a-bad-economy-americans-move-in-with-relatives>
- Krivo, L. J. & Kaufman, R. L. (2004). Housing and wealth inequality: Racial-ethnic differences in home equity in the United States. *Demography*, 41, pp. 585-605.
- Lampinen, L. G. (1968). *The poor people's campaign: International socialism*. Retrieved from <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/marxists/history/etol/newspape/isj/1968/no034/lampinen.htm>
- Laub, J. H., Nagin, D. S., & Sampson, R. J. (1998). Trajectories of change in criminal offending: Good marriages and the desistance process. *American Sociological Review*, 63(2), 225-238.
- Lawson, M. (2003). School-family relations in context: Parent and teacher perceptions of parent involvement. *Urban Education*, 38(1), 77-133.
- Lee, J. S., & Bowen, N. K. (2006). Parent involvement, cultural capital, and the achievement gap among elementary school children. *American Educational Research Journal*, 43(2), pp. 193-218.
- Lewis, S., Simon, C., Uzzell, R., Horwitz, A., & Casserly, M. (2010). *A call for change: The social and educational factors contributing to the outcomes of black males in urban schools*. Retrieved from <http://www.cgcs.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&ModuleInstanceID=124&ViewID=047E6BE3-6D87-4130-8424-D8E4E9ED6C2A&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=73&PageID=1>

- Library of Congress. (n.d.). *From slavery to civil rights: A timeline of African American history*. Retrieved from [http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/civil-rights/learn\\_more.html#teachers](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/civil-rights/learn_more.html#teachers)
- Library of Congress. (2012). *Primary documents in American history: 15th Amendment to the Constitution (Web Guide)*. Retrieved from <http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/15thamendment.html>
- Lincoln, A. (1863, January 1). *National Archives: The Emancipation Proclamation*. Retrieved from [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured\\_documents/emancipation\\_proclamation/transcript.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured_documents/emancipation_proclamation/transcript.html)
- Linder, D. (2000). Lynchings: By state and race, 1882-1968; Lynching in America: Statistics, information, images. *The Shipp Trial: An Account*. Retrieved from <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/shipp/lynchstats.html>
- Lipman, E. L., Boyle, M. H., Dooley, M. D., & Offord, D. R. (2002, January). Child well-being in single-mother families. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 41, 75-82.
- Livingston, G., & Parker, K. (2010, September 9). *Since the start of the great recession, more children raised by grandparents*. Retrieved from <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2010/09/09/since-the-start-of-the-great-recession-more-children-raised-by-grandparents/>
- Lofquist, D., Lugaila, T., O'Connell, M., & Feliz, S. (2012, April). Households and families: 2010. *2010 Census Briefs*. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-14.pdf>
- Luna Ray Films. (2002). *Watts riots*. Retrieved from [http://www.pbs.org/hueypnewton/times/times\\_watts.html](http://www.pbs.org/hueypnewton/times/times_watts.html)
- Mare, R. D., & Winship, C. (1991). Socioeconomic change and the decline of marriage for blacks and whites. In C. Jencks & P. E. Peterson (Eds.), *The urban underclass* (pp. 175-202). Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution.
- Massey, D. S. & Denton, N.A. (1989). Hypersegregation in U.S. metropolitan areas: Black and Hispanic segregation along five dimensions. *Demography*, 26, 373-393.
- Mather, M. (2010). *U.S. children in single mother families*. Retrieved from <http://www.prb.org/Publications/PolicyBriefs/singlemotherfamilies.aspx>
- Meares, C. F. (2011, December 14). *Disappearing acts: The mass incarceration of African American women*. Retrieved from [http://digitalarchive.gsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1009&context=aas\\_theses](http://digitalarchive.gsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1009&context=aas_theses)
- Mellows, M. (2012, November 1). The Black church." The Black Church. PBS, n.d. Retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/godinamerica/black-church>
- Mersky, J. P., Topitzes, J., & Reynolds, A. J. (In Press). Unsafe at any age: Linking childhood and adolescent maltreatment to delinquency and crime. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*.
- Moore, K. A., Jekielek, S. M., Bronte-Tinkew, J., Guzman, L., Ryan, S., & Redd, Z. (2004, September). *What is "healthy marriage"? Defining the concept*. (Research Brief No 2004-16). Retrieved from <http://www.childtrends.org/?publications=what-is-healthy-marriage-defining-the-concept>
- Mott, F. L. (1990). When is a father really gone? Paternal-child contact in father-absent homes. *Demography*, 27(4), 499-517.
- Nagourney, A. (2008). Obama elected president as racial barrier falls. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/05/us/politics/05elect.html?pagewanted=all>
- Nammour, C. (2003). *The march on Washington for jobs and freedom*. Retrieved from [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/july-dec03/march\\_8-27.pdf](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/july-dec03/march_8-27.pdf)
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). (2013). *Criminal justice fact sheet*. Retrieved from <http://www.naacp.org/pages/criminal-justice-fact-sheet>
- National Museum of American History, Department of Education and Public Programs, Smithsonian Institution. (2004). *A classroom guide for separate is not equal: Brown v. Board of Education*. Retrieved from <http://americanhistory.si.edu/brown/resources/teachers-guide.html>
- National Park Service. (n.d.). *Jim Crow laws. Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site, Georgia*. Retrieved from [http://www.nps.gov/malu/forteachers/jim\\_crow\\_laws.htm](http://www.nps.gov/malu/forteachers/jim_crow_laws.htm)

- National Park Service, Southeast Region, Division of Interpretation and Education. (2011). *Slavery: Cause and catalyst of the Civil War*. Retrieved from <http://www.nps.gov/fodo/forteachers/upload/SLAVERY-BROCHURENPS2011.pdf>
- Neubeck, K. J., & Cazenave, N. A. (2012, November 1). *Welfare racism*. Retrieved from <http://www.yorku.ca/crsp/issue51/issue51-14.pdf>
- Nock, S. L. (2003). Marriage and fatherhood in the lives of African American men. In O. Clayton, R. Mincy, & D. Blankenhorn (Eds.), *Black fathers in contemporary society* (pp. 30-42). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Office of Management and Budget. 1995, August 28). *Federal register: Standards for the classification of federal data on race and ethnicity*. Retrieved from [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg\\_race-ethnicity](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg_race-ethnicity)
- Ounce of Prevention Fund. (n.d.). *Why investments in early childhood work*. Retrieved from <http://www.ounceofprevention.org/about/why-early-childhood-investments-work.php>
- Our Documents. (n.d.). *Civil Rights Act 1964*. Retrieved from <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=97>
- Page, M. E. & Stevens, A. H. (2005). Understanding racial differences in the economic costs of growing up in a single-parent family. *Demography*, 42, 75-90.
- PBS.org (2002). *The Civil War: The crossroads of our being*. Retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/civilwar/war/>
- Pew Charitable Trusts. (2012). *Pursuing the American dream: Economic mobility across generations*. Retrieved from [http://www.pewstates.org/uploadedFiles/PCS\\_Assets/2012/Pursuing\\_American\\_Dream.pdf](http://www.pewstates.org/uploadedFiles/PCS_Assets/2012/Pursuing_American_Dream.pdf)
- Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. (2009a, January 30). *African Americans and religion*. Retrieved from <http://www.pewforum.org/African-Americans-and-Religion.aspx>
- Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. (2009b, January 30). *A religious portrait of African Americans*. Retrieved from <http://www.pewforum.org/A-Religious-Portrait-of-African-Americans.aspx>
- Pew Research Center for People & the Press. (2012). *Views of law enforcement, racial progress and news coverage of race: Pew Research Center data note: Attitudes about race*. Retrieved from <http://www.people-press.org/2012/03/30/blacks-view-of-law-enforcement-racial-progress-and-news-coverage-of-race/>
- Pienta, A. M., Hayward, M. D., & Jenkins, K. R. (2000). Health consequences of marriage for the retirement years. *Journal of Family Issues*, 21(5), 559-586.
- Pitts, L. (2008, March 30). *Four decades later, men recall King's last campaign*. Retrieved from <http://www.miamiherald.com/multimedia/news/iamaman/pitts.html>
- Prinz, R. J., & Miller, G. E. (1991). Issues in understanding and treating childhood conduct problems in disadvantaged populations. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*, 20(4), 379-85.
- Prison Fellowship. (2013). *Statistics about women prisoners*. Retrieved from [http://www.demosnewspond.com/pf/additional/statistics\\_about\\_women\\_prisoners](http://www.demosnewspond.com/pf/additional/statistics_about_women_prisoners)
- Rank, M. R. & Hirschl, T. A. (1999). The economic risk of childhood in America: Estimating the probability of poverty across the formative years. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 61(4), 1058ff.
- Richardson, J. M. (1969, April). Florida black codes. *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, 47(4), 365-379.
- Ross, M. E. T., & Aday, L. A. (2009, September 28). *Stress and coping in African American grandparents who are raising their grandchildren*. Retrieved from [http://www.uk.sagepub.com/pricfamchnge4e/study/articles/14/Ross\\_Aday.pdf](http://www.uk.sagepub.com/pricfamchnge4e/study/articles/14/Ross_Aday.pdf)
- Saad, L. (2006). *Blacks committed to the idea of marriage: More likely than whites to say it is very important for couples to marry*. Retrieved from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/23767/blacks-committed-idea-marriage.aspx>
- Sahgal, N., & Smith, G. (2009). *A religious portrait of African Americans*. Retrieved from <http://www.pewforum.org/A-Religious-Portrait-of-African-Americans.aspx>
- Sampson, R. J., & Laub, J. H. (1993). *Crime in the making: Pathways and turning points through life*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Sanik, M. M., & Mauldin, T. (1986). Single versus two-parent families: A comparison of mothers' time. *Family Relations*, 35, 53-56.
- Scafidi, B. (2008). *The taxpayer costs of divorce and unwed childbearing: First-ever estimates for the nation and all fifty states*. Retrieved from <http://www.americanvalues.org/pdfs/COFF.pdf>
- Schmit, S. (2012). *Head Start participants, programs, families and staff in 2011*. Retrieved from <http://www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications/files/HSpreschool-PIR-2011-Fact-Sheet.pdf>
- Schmitt, J., & Warner, K. (2010, November). *Ex-offenders and the labor market*. Center for Economic and Policy Research. Retrieved from <http://www.cepr.net/documents/publications/ex-offenders-2010-11.pdf>
- Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library. (2005). *In motion: The African American migration experience*. Retrieved from <http://www.inmotionaame.org/migrations/topic.cfm?migration=9&topic=1>
- Schott Foundation for Public Education. (2012). *The urgency of now: The Schott 50 state report on public education and black males*. Retrieved from <http://blackboysreport.org/urgency-of-now.pdf>
- Seltzer, J. A. (1991). Relationships between fathers and children who live apart: The father's role after separation. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 53(1), 79-101.
- Seltzer, J. A., & Bianchi, S.M. (1988). Children's contact with absent parents. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 50(3), 663-677.
- Shaw, D. (1999, November 24). *Watts riot: Six nights of anger and ashes*. Retrieved from <http://articles.latimes.com/1999/nov/24/local/me-36997>
- Simms, M. C., Fortuny, K., & Henderson, E. (2009). *Racial and ethnic disparities among low-income families*. Retrieved from [http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/411936\\_racialandethnic.pdf](http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/411936_racialandethnic.pdf)
- Smith, D. R. (2002). *The public influences of African-American churches: Contexts and capacities*. Retrieved from <https://www.morehouse.edu/centers/leadershipcenter/pubinfl/PewReport2002.pdf>
- Smith, A. N. (2004). *Separate is not equal: Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. Retrieved from <http://americanhistory.si.edu/brown/resources/index.html>
- Sroufe, L. A., Cooper, R. G., & DeHart, G. B. (1996). *Child development: Its nature and course* (3rd ed.). New Baskerville: Clarinda Company.
- Sroufe, L. A., & Fleeson, J. (1988). The coherence of family relationships. In R. A. Hinde & J. Stevenson-Hinde (Eds.), *Relationships within families: Mutual influences* (pp. 27-47). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stagg, J. C. A. (1974). The problem of Klan violence: The South Carolina upcountry, 1868-1871. *Journal of American Studies*, 8(3), 303-318.
- Stanford University. (n.d.). *Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Global Freedom Struggle. Memphis Sanitation Workers Strike (1968)*. Retrieved from [http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc\\_memphis\\_sanitation\\_workers\\_strike\\_1968/](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_memphis_sanitation_workers_strike_1968/)
- Stanley, S. M. (2004). *Testimony on healthy marriage before the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance, Subcommittee on Social Security and Family Policy*, May 5, 2004.
- Staudt, M. M. (2003). Helping children access and use services: A Review. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 12(1), 49-60.
- Steinberg, L. (1989). Communities of families and education. In W. Weston (Ed.), *Education and the American family: A research synthesis*. New York: New York University Press.
- Stillwell, R., & Sable, J. (2013). *Public school graduates and dropouts from the common core of data: School year 2009-10: First look (provisional data) (NCES 2013-309)*. U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>
- Supreme Court of the United States. (1954). *Transcript of Brown v. Board of Education*. Retrieved from <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=87&page=transcript>

- Toldson, I. A., & Marks, B. (2011, August 8). New research shatters myths and provides new hope for black love and marriage. *emPower Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://www.empowernewsmag.com/listings.php?article=2051>
- Trader-Leigh, K. (2008). *Understanding the role of African American churches and clergy in community crisis response*. Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies Health Institute. Retrieved from <http://www.jointcenter.org/taxonomy/topics/hurricane-katrina>
- Uggen, C., Shannon, S., & Manza, J. (2012). *State-level estimates of felon disenfranchisement in the United States, 2010*. Washington, DC: Sentencing Project.
- United States Census Bureau. (2010, December 14). *2005-2009 ACS 5-year estimates*. Retrieved from [http://www.census.gov/acs/www/data\\_documentation/2009\\_release/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/data_documentation/2009_release/)
- United States Congress. (1865, December 6). *Amendments to the Constitution of the United States of America: Amendment XIII*. Retrieved from <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=6>
- United States Congress. (1868, July 9). *Amendments to the Constitution of the United States of America: Amendment XIV*. Retrieved from <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=6>
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2012). *The condition of education 2012 (NCES 2012-045), Indicator 47*. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=72>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. (2012). *Child maltreatment 2011*. Retrieved from <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research/child-maltreatment>.
- U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division. (n.d.). *The Voting Rights Act of 1965*. Retrieved from [http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/intro/intro\\_b.php](http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/intro/intro_b.php)
- U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division. (2009). *The effect of the Voting Rights Act*. Retrieved from [http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/intro/intro\\_c.php](http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/intro/intro_c.php)
- U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Child Protection Division, Safe Start Demonstration Project. (2005). *Principles for engaging and retaining families in services*. Retrieved from <http://www.communityscience.com/pdfs/PERF022005.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2013, January 28). *Education pays*. Retrieved from [http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep\\_chart\\_001.htm](http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm)
- U.S. National Archives & Records Administration. (n.d.) *The charters of freedom: A new work is at hand*. Retrieved from [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution\\_transcript.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_transcript.html)
- U.S. National Archives & Records Administration. (n.d.). *Featured documents: The Emancipation Proclamation*. Retrieved from [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured\\_documents/emancipation\\_proclamation/](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured_documents/emancipation_proclamation/)
- Wilcox, W. B., Doherty, W. J., Fisher, H., Galston, W. A., Glenn, N. D., Gottman, J.,...Wallerstein, J. (2005). *A report from family scholars: Why marriage matters, second edition twenty-six conclusions from the social sciences*. Retrieved from [http://americanvalues.org/pdfs/why\\_marriage\\_matters2.pdf](http://americanvalues.org/pdfs/why_marriage_matters2.pdf)
- Wilcox, W. B., Marquardt, E., Popenoe, D., & Whitehead, B. D. (Eds.). (2011). *The state of our unions: When baby makes three—How parenthood makes life meaningful and how marriage makes parenthood bearable*. Retrieved from <http://www.stateofourunions.org/2011/SOOU2011.pdf>
- Wilson, M. N. (1989). Child development in the context of the Black extended family. *American Psychologist*, 44(2), 380-385.
- Wilson, W. J. (2011). Being poor, black, and American: The impact of political, economic, and cultural forces. *American Educator*, 35(1), 10-23.
- Willson, A. E. & Hardy, M. A. (2002). Racial disparities in income security for a cohort of aging American women. *Social Forces*, 80, 1283-1306.
- Women of Color Policy Network, NYU Wagner. (2010, September). *Policy brief, income and poverty in communities of color: A reflection on the 2009 U.S. Census Bureau data*. Retrieved from <http://wagner.nyu.edu/wocpn/publications/files/IncomeAndPovertyInCommunitiesofColor.pdf>

Wormser, R. (2002a). *The rise and fall of Jim Crow: Reconstruction (1865-77)*. Retrieved from [http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories\\_events\\_reconstruct.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories_events_reconstruct.html)

Wormser, R. (2002b). *The rise and fall of Jim Crow: The Fourteenth Amendment ratified (1868)*. Retrieved from [http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories\\_events\\_14th.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories_events_14th.html)

Wright, R. H. (1991). *The birth of the Montgomery bus boycott*. Southfield, MI: Charro Press.

This toolkit was prepared by the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families in consultation with Dr. Rozario Slack.

Dr. Slack leads the Legacy Campaign, an initiative to ensure future generations by helping today's families establish a solid and healthy foundation on which to build steadfast families.





NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER *for*  
HEALTHY MARRIAGE *and* FAMILIES

Used our product? Please tell us how.  
Email: [info@HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org](mailto:info@HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org)  
Reference product #054  
[www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org](http://www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org)

This product was produced by ICF International with funding provided by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Grant: 90FH0002. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.