

⊗ "... social workers, in order to do their job in a culture in which religion is growing in intensity and diversity, have to engage in some form of religious dialogue" (Knitter, 257)

The bottom line

Practitioner-Identified Barriers to Black Church Outreach

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⌘ Gary Owen on Black Churches

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kB1d2WZIfmU>

First ... a laugh

⌘ Regina Belle – God is Good

http://youtu.be/ddYVZCdwo_Q

Now some movement

⊗ Social workers with a limited understanding of the role of faith for African-Americans are disadvantaged in their practice

- ∅ Historical reliance on faith during difficult life circumstances
- ∅ Older African-Americans esp. vulnerable to depression/dementia seek support from church
- ∅ Prayer, reading scripture, & pastoral support are sources of coping

The problem

⊗ Unrecognized or pathologized religious coping practices lead to missed opportunities to include those these practices in the treatment process are missed & reflect a lack of basic cultural competence

The problem

- ⌘ Divine reliance began during enslavement
- ⌘ Spirituality is seen as a primary strength (Bell-Tolliver & Wilkerson, 2011)
- ⌘ Greater overall life satisfaction among older church members & decreased depressive symptoms
- ⌘ African-American men in treatment for substance-abuse & IPV with connection to faith = protective factor (Freeman, 2006)
- ⌘ Spirituality is a source of coping with work-related stress for professional Black women (Bacchus & Holley, 2004)
- ⌘ Supportive relationships within one's church helps protect against suicidal risk (Chatters, Taylor, Lincoln, Nguyen & Joe, 2011)

Some of what we know

- ⌘ Religion and Public Life's U.S. Religious Landscape Survey (2009)
 - ⌘ African-Americans = most religious racial group
 - ⌘ 79% say religion is "very important"
 - ⌘ 40% are Baptist "within the historically Black tradition"
 - ⌘ BCs = 7% of national religious population & 59% of African-American religious population

The Pew Forum

⊗ Are social workers actively engaged in outreach to the Black Church and the African-American religious population?

⊗ If not, why not?

The question is ...

- ⊗ Three interactive professional development workshops in New England
 - ⊗ Large, public R1 institution ($n=74$)
 - ⊗ Small public agency ($n=51$)
 - ⊗ Small, private faith-based institution ($n=40$)
- ⊗ Participants ($n=165$) were primarily social workers with some para-professionals, ranged from students to senior administrators, and very racially diverse
- ⊗ Three stickers per person – possible stickers across all three workshop sites = 495

An accidental “study”

- ⌘ I do not know the culture of the Black Church
- ⌘ I am not a Christian
- ⌘ If they wanted help, they would reach out
- ⌘ I am not religious
- ⌘ I would be very uncomfortable
- ⌘ I am not Black
- ⌘ They don't trust social workers

Identifying the Barriers

- ⌘ Based on your own practice, education and personal background ... what do you think people identified as significant barriers to outreach with the African-American faith community?

What do YOU predict?

Barriers	Workshop Site 1 <i>n=74</i>	Workshop Site 2 <i>n=51</i>	Workshop Site 3 <i>n=40</i>
I do not know the culture of the Black Church	26	N/A	9
I am not a Christian	14	11	N/A
If they wanted help, they would reach out	12	21	7
I am not religious	27	29	11
I would be very uncomfortable	14	N/A	14
I am not Black	42	22	13
They do not trust clinicians/social workers	24	33	5

What they said

- ⌘ Are you surprised by any of the numbers? Why/not?
- ⌘ What do you think the numbers “mean?”

Your thoughts?

& Let's compare your responses to those in the workshops!

What YOU said

- & Offers preliminary insight into barriers that are daunting to social workers
- & Race & spirituality both appear to be challenges to effective and culturally-competent practice
- & Identification of mistrust held by African-Americans toward social workers – how will trust be fostered if their face and their faith scare you?

Race & religion ... the 3rd rail

- ⊗ Get out of the way!!!
- ⊗ Use of informants
- ⊗ Forced immersion
- ⊗ Curriculum development in BSW/MSW pgms
- ⊗ Increased content in professional journals

Overcoming barriers

Number of Articles Addressing Religion and/or Spirituality, 2000-2010

Journal	Religion	Spirituality	Both	Aggregate	Percent of Total Number of Faith-based Articles Appearing in Journal	Total Articles per Journal 2000-2010
Affilia	4	7	0	11	4.08%	269
Child Welfare	0	2	0	2	.43%	458
Families in Society	12	21	1	34	5.38%	631
Rsch. on Social Work Prac.	3	10	0	13	2.57%	548
Social Service Review	0	2	0	2	.79%	252
Social Work	8	15	0	24	6.59%	364
Total	27	57	1	86	3.40%	2522

Number of Articles Specifically Focused on African-Americans and/or the Black Church, 2000-2010

Journal	The Black Church	General Religion/Spirituality	Aggregate	Percent of Total Number of Articles
Affilia	0	2	2	.74%
Child Welfare	0	1	1	.21%
Families in Society	0	5	5	.21%
Rsch. on Social Work Prac.	0	1	1	.18%
Social Service Review	0	0	0	0
Social Work	2	1	3	.82%
Total	2	10	12	.47%

Number of Articles by Hodge and/or Canda, 2000-2010

Journal	Hodge	Canda	Aggregate	Percent of Articles by One or Both Authors	Total Articles per Journal
Affilia	0	0	0	0	269
Child Welfare	0	0	0	0	458
Families in Society	8	5	13	2.06%	631
Rsch. on SWK Prac.	3	0	3	.54%	548
Social Service Review	0	0	0	0	252
Social Work	11	0	11	3.02%	364
Total	22	5	27	1.07%	2522

- ⊗ Broader range of interventions/treatment goals
- ⊗ Empowers client to “use what they have”
- ⊗ Interventions are culturally & socially relevant
- ⊗ Demonstrates cultural appreciation by social worker → enhanced therapeutic relationship

SW Benefits of Religious Coping

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Thank you!