

## **Making the Case for Fulsome Emancipation.**

**Two 7-Year-Old Boys, Two Dramatically Different News Stories, *Huffington Post*, 7/24/2013**

On the *Today Show*, a white dad describes the event of his seven-year-old son's taking the family car on an unsupervised joy ride as *funny*. He then tells the audience that if this could happen to a *cotton candy all-American kid like Preston, then it could happen to anybody*.

To the initial question of an off-camera interviewer who asks why a black seven-year-old male took the family car on an unsupervised joy ride, the child responded *I wanted to do it 'cause it's fun, it's fun to do bad things*. To a follow-up question, *did you know that you could perhaps kill somebody*, the black child replied *Yes, but I wanted to do hoodrat stuff with my friends*.

We note in earlier and recent doll studies that black (as well as white) children identify black dolls as 'bad'. And so do almost 50 percent of adult blacks and 80 percent of adult whites. For more than 400 years and counting, we have not escaped this grip of oppression which affects quality of life for black children and adults in any setting from neighborhood and community to prisons—the reason why we introduce here our theory and praxis for Fulsome Emancipation--*a trauma informed initiative consistent with evolving local, state, and national priorities*.

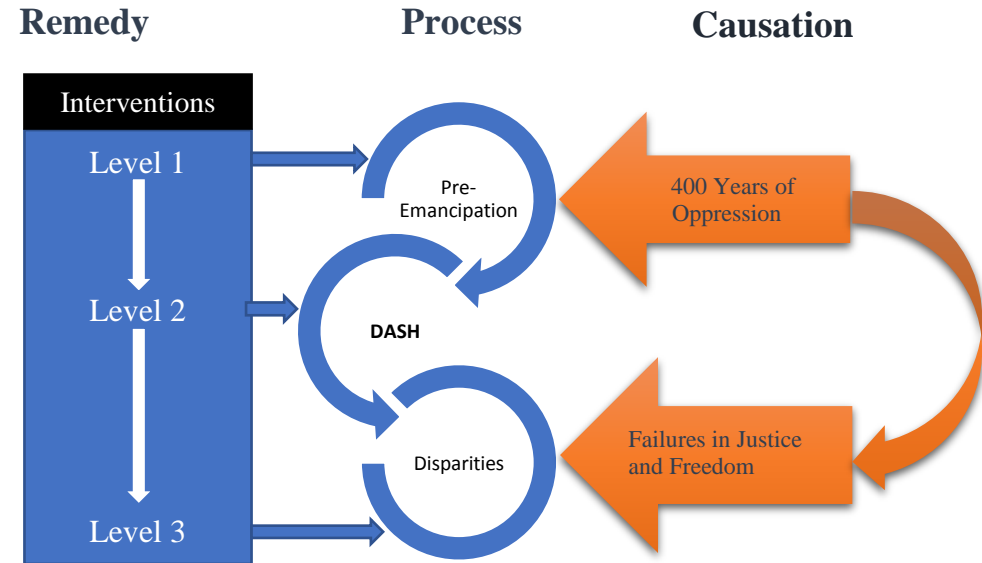
# Fulsome Emancipation

## Center for Family Excellence, Inc.

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### Background

1. Years ago I noticed, from studying weekly case notes of my staff's delivering in-home services to predominantly black families at risk of child abuse or neglect, that sharp shifts in parental mood were linked closely with immediate declines in quality of parenting. Four precipitous mood shifts were especially problematic: **D**epression, **A**nxiety, **S**tress, or **H**ostility (**DASH**).
2. In two studies, the first using surveys and the second in-depth interviews, pastors representing Protestant, Catholic, and Islamic traditions reported that symptoms of **D**epression, **A**nxiety, **S**tress, and **H**ostility were ranked among a larger list of symptoms as best characterizing members of their predominately black congregations and persons living in their surrounding black neighborhoods.
3. In our study involving 1,000 black college students attending state and private public and private colleges in racially homogeneous or heterogeneous settings, we found that there were five patterns of black identity. Pre-Emancipation, the first and most prevalent of the five identity patterns, was associated with higher levels of **D**epression, **A**nxiety, and **H**ostility (**S**tress was not evaluated in this study). These overall findings applied as well to black students enrolled in public and private Historically Black Colleges and Universities.
4. We found that Pre-Emancipation—black identification with the stereotype that blacks are *mentally defective* intellectually, emotionally, and morally and *physically gifted* athletically, sexually, and rhythmically—is problematic also in samples evaluated in seven nations in the Caribbean and in four countries on the Continent of Africa.
5. Using structural equation modelling, we found that Pre-Emancipation is an antecedent rather than a consequence of **DASH**.
6. Whether in America, the Caribbean, or Africa, we find that Pre-Emancipation is not only associated with **DASH** but also linked to higher risks of obesity, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and problematic styles of coping—denial, avoidance, fatalism, and escapism. Moreover, blacks in America who identify with these stereotypes commit more serious black-on-black crimes, consume more alcohol, experience more debilitating family conflicts, score lower on a standardized IQ test, and underachieve on conventional markers of socioeconomic success—educational, occupational, and income.



Published studies indicate that nearly 80 percent of whites and almost 50 percent of blacks consciously or unselfconsciously endorse racist stereotypes about blacks—our Level I shared and barely mitigated cultural heritage of more than 400 years that continue unabatedly to generate disparities of a wide range. Since we have successfully designed and evaluated methods for managing effects corresponding to Levels 2 and 3, here we will focus on Level 1 policies and practices designed to mitigate identification with racist stereotypes. Following our diagram, these Level 1 policies and practices are expected to:

1. Reduce Pre-Emancipation Identity;
2. Reduce levels of DASH components; and
3. Reduce wide-ranging disparities (*e.g.*, social [delinquency behaviors] and educational [course grades]) *vis-à-vis* Level 2.

### First Study

#### *Sample*

On November 4, 2004, staff of the Male Coalition of the Center for Family Excellence met with 18 African American males between 14 and

18 years of age. Almost all had prior histories of prior involvement with our juvenile justice system or a history of serious adjustment problems in schools.

### Measures

Before and after intervention, our sample of 18 black males completed inventories to evaluate self-reported levels of pre-emancipation, depression, anxiety, stress, hostility, spiritual orientation, seven values, and delinquency behaviors (social justice indicator) and course grades (educational justice indicator).

### Procedures

There were 14 two-hour evening sessions. The first two sessions were spent training and certifying each participant's competence in three interpretive frameworks used subsequently in examining and rating DVD media products. Starting with Session 3, after training and certification, they reviewed and critiqued the DVD version of *Choices* which is about a young black drug dealer who was arrested, convicted, sentenced, imprisoned, and years later paroled. Upon his release, old friends who continued to sell drugs began to flock around him. They then began to process this DVD using the three interpretive frameworks on which they had been trained and certified:

- *Spiritual*. Did choices of the black main characters reflect a *sense of hope* for themselves, their family, and their community (vs a *sense of despair* for themselves, their families, and their community)?
- *Cultural*. To what extent were black characters portrayed as acceptably balanced *mentally and physically* competent (vs racially stereotyped—*mentally defective* intellectually, morally, and emotionally and *physically gifted* athletically, sexually, and musically)?
- *Values*. To what extent did the main characters reflect *Love and Respect*—respects others (vs. disrespects others); *Interpersonal Skills*—sensitive to feelings of others (vs. insensitivity to feelings of others); *Learning Orientation*—interest in furthering one's education (vs. hates schooling); *Self-Confidence*—probes, investigates (vs. bored, inactive); *Self-Persistence*—hangs in (vs. gives up); *Self-Esteem*—satisfied with self (vs. dissatisfied with self); and *Self-Reliance*—thinking for oneself (vs. readily influenced by others).

*In general, training students to perceive, evaluate, and interpret events through the lens of spiritual, cultural, and value norms was expected to shape their day-to-day perceptions, intentions, and behaviors. Underlying these expectations is our foundational assumption that seeing affects being—cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally—which accords with basic hermeneutical principles and African cosmology.*

### Results— Pre-to-Post Intervention Changes

1. Reduced Pre-Emancipation Identity
2. Reduced levels of each component of **DASH**
3. Reduced social (delinquency) and educational (grades) disparities *vis-à-vis* Level 2.

## Subsequent Studies

Over more than 15 years with multiple samples of black and white males and females living in high-risk neighborhoods and communities, our findings from 2004 through 2019 are similar in pattern and magnitude. Moreover, with female samples, it is quite remarkable to note that none of the pre-teen and teen females exposed to our model has become a teenage mother. Indeed, most have gone on to college and many have already launched successful careers. For males also, we have touching and compelling stories, the latest being two weeks ago of a black male student on the verge previously of being expelled now making straight A's.

## Future Questions

Might procedures described here be instrumental in enabling Ful-some Emancipation that would promote Justice and Freedom even in unjust and unfair places; provide a generous down payment on America's long overdue promissory note of liberty and justice for *all*; and offer a generalizable methodology for attenuating effects of other types of oppression (*e.g.*, classism, sexism, genderism) globally as well as locally?

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