

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

Disclaimer: We are offering recommendations to support and guide your conversation with friends and family

HOW TO SUPPORT A SURVIVOR

CHECK-IN WITH THEM AS FREQUENTLY AS POSSIBLE

REMIND THEM THEY ARE LOVED

LET THEM RELEASE THEIR EMOTIONS

LISTEN TO THEM

BELIEVE THEM

LET THEM KNOW SHARING THEIR STORY IS NOT A BURDEN

UNDERSTAND THEIR TRIGGERS

THINGS YOU CAN SAY TO A SURVIVOR OF TRAUMA

"What can I do to support you?"

"I'm sorry this happened to you"

"Do whatever you need to heal"

"Your feelings are totally valid"

"You did not deserve this"

"Do you want to talk about it?"

"Healing is possible but it will take time"

THINGS TO AVOID

**PRESSING FOR
DETAILS**

**JUDGING THEIR
THOUGHTS AND
FEELINGS**

**QUESTIONING WHAT
THE SURVIVOR DID OR
DID NOT DO**

**OFFERING SUPPORT
BEYOND YOUR
LIMITATIONS**

**COMPARING THEIR
EXPERIENCES WITH
OTHERS**

**JUMPING INTO
RESCUE MODE**

**GETTING
OVERWHELMED BY
YOUR OWN EMOTIONS**

**REPEATING
DETAILS....."I'M SORRY
YOU GOT RAPED"**

**ASKING TOO MANY
QUESTIONS**

HOPE AND EMPOWERMENT

INSPIRE HOPE

**DO NOT PROVIDE FALSE
HOPE**

**LET THEM KNOW OF PLANS
TO INVEST AND REBUILD**

**MAKE SURE IT IS
VISIBLE**

**AFFIRM THAT WE SEE AND
HEAR THEIR RESILIENCE
AND STRENGTH**

**LET THEM KNOW WE
ARE UNITED**

What is survivor's guilt?

Survivor's guilt is a type of self-guilt that sometimes takes place after a traumatic event. People may feel guilty for surviving or avoiding some type of harm when others did not.



Symptoms of survivor's guilt

- ❑ Surviving when others did not
 - ❑ what they did during the traumatic event
 - ❑ what wasn't done
 - ❑ Helplessness
 - ❑ Lack of motivation
 - ❑ Difficulty sleeping



COPING SKILLS

Read a book



Practice self forgiveness

Allow yourself to grieve

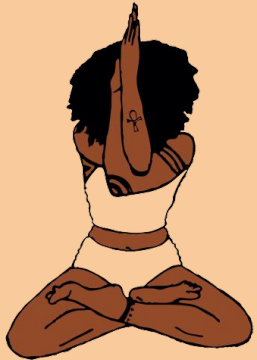
Help others

Know you are not alone

Practice self-care

Do something positive

Connect with others



WHAT IS INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA?

- Also known as transgenerational trauma, refers to the idea that trauma can be passed down from generation to generation.



- Examples originate from shared experiences such as **war, genocide, colonialism, and racial enslavement**. These experiences are plentiful in the **Tigray** community where many of us have inherited significant amounts of trauma.

CAUSES OF INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA

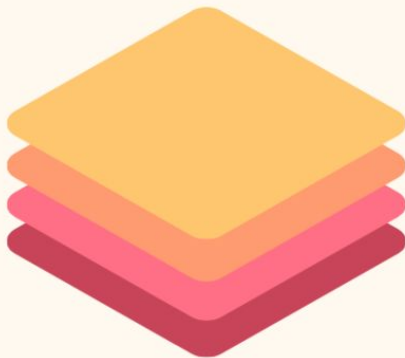
- According to science, trauma can **literally alter DNA**- intense stress in a parent causes epigenetic (changes in an organism) changes that affect the health of their future children.
- Intergenerational Trauma can also be acquired through **learned behavior**. Parents from these households often operate in "**survival mode**." This includes high levels of anxiety, depression, and toxic behaviors.



INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA

CAN NEGATIVELY IMPACT FAMILIES AS A RESULT OF...

- ◆ Unprocessed emotions and thoughts about a traumatic event
- ◆ Dysfunctional parent-child relationships & emotional attachment
- ◆ Untreated or poorly treated mental illness or substance abuse
- ◆ Harmful cyclical patterns of behavior and beliefs about parenting
- ◆ Compounded and unacknowledged race-based traumatic stress
- ◆ Normalized unhealthy behaviors between family members



"I now recognize that it is not only intergenerational trauma that defines my ancestry; my bloodlines know intergenerational resilience as well. **It is with this resilience that I choose to move forward, disrupting the patterns of trauma as a future ancestor.**"

LARISSA CRAWFORD



"When we heal ourselves, we heal the next generation that follows. Pain is passed through the family line until someone is ready to feel it, heal it and let it go."

It's up to you to change 'generational narratives':
When they tell you,
this "runs in the family",
You tell them,
"This is where it runs the f*#k out."

Feeling the need to be busy all the time is a trauma response and fear-based distraction from what you'd be forced to acknowledge and feel if you slowed down.



If we carry intergenerational trauma (and we do), then we also carry *intergenerational wisdom*. It's in our genes and in our DNA.

—
KAZU HAGA

WAYS TO TAKE CARE DURING INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA

- Believe that the internal chaos can end with you
- Start to disrupt your repeated trauma response patterns
- Design a future that moves you further away from trauma
- Take action against the injustices that maintain your trauma
- Imagine the deepest, purest love, then deposit that love into yourself

IMPORTANCE OF SPEAKING TO A PROFESSIONAL

**DIFFICULTY
CONTROLLING
EMOTIONS**

**LACK OF
ENJOYMENT/SOCIAL
WITHDRAWAL**

**GRIEVING A
COMMUNITY/LOVED ONE**

**DISRUPTION TO
EATING/ SLEEP**

**JUDGING THEIR
THOUGHTS AND FEELING**

**INCREASED IN SUBSTANCE
USE**

**RELIVING
FLASHBACK/PAINFUL
EXPERIENCE OF PAST**

**IRRITABILITY/CONSTANT
WORRY**

HOPELESSNESS/HELPLESSNESS

RESOURCES

- Psychologytoday
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255)
- Crisis Text Line-text SIGNS to 741741 for free anonymous counseling
- SAMHSA National Helpline (1-800-662-4357)
- The Coalition for Immigrant Mental Health
- MentalHealthMondays
- Wellness Wednesday

CONNECT WITH US

For additional questions, please email

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