

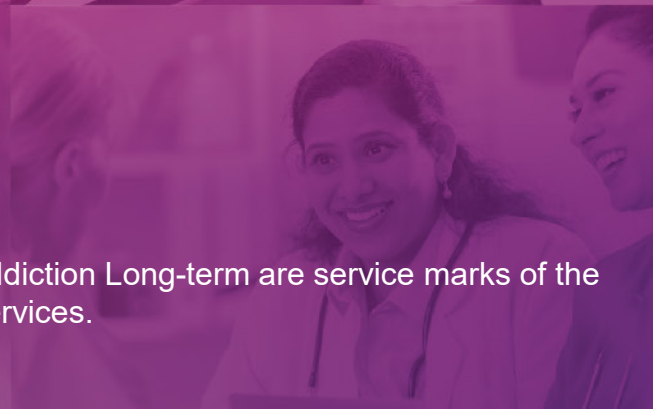


NIH
HEAL
INITIATIVE

Cascading Effects of Racism on African Americans Adjustment: Implications for Pathways to Drug Use Vulnerability

Velma McBride Murry, PhD

Vanderbilt University

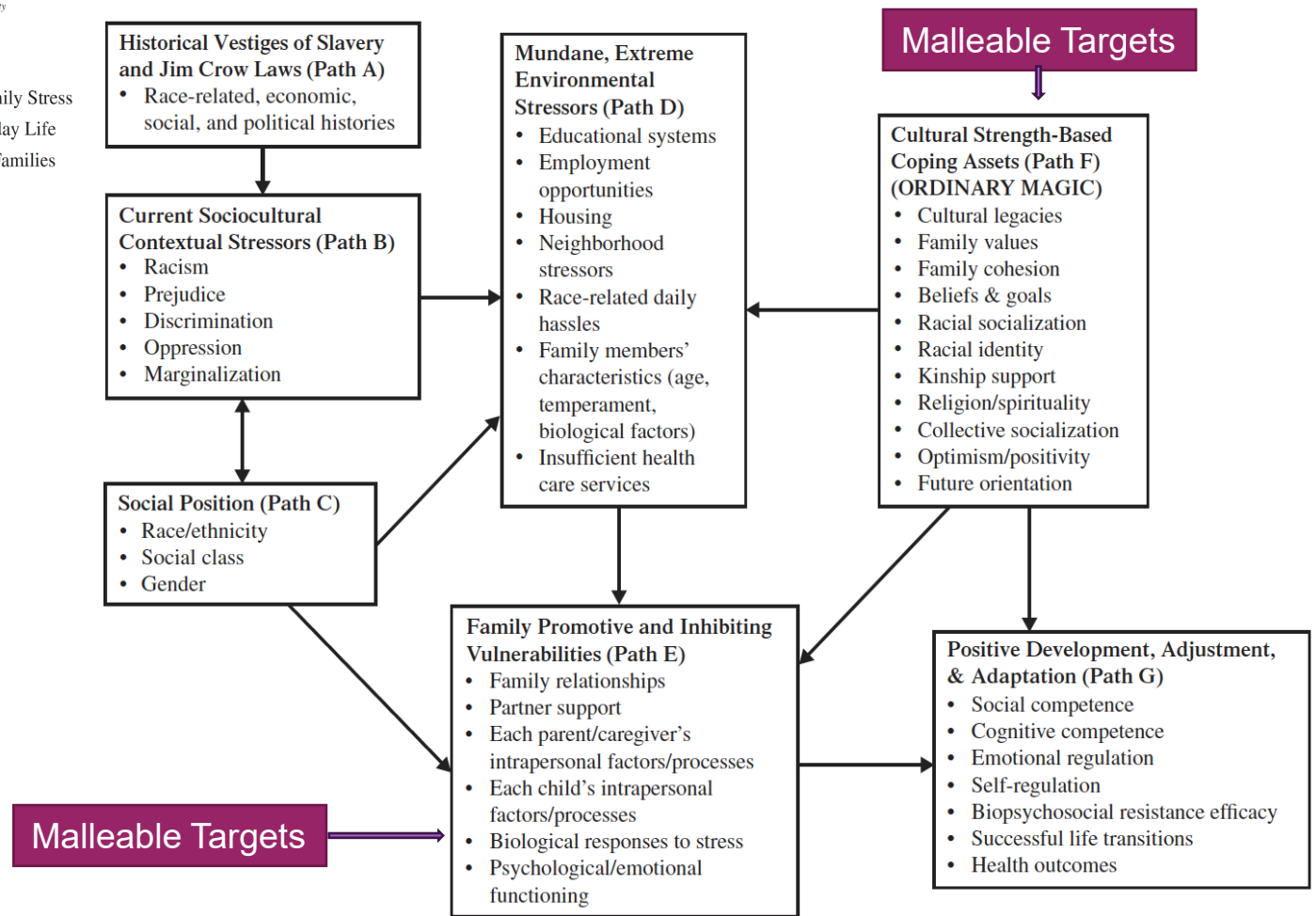


NIH National Institutes of Health
HEAL Initiative

NIH HEAL Initiative and Helping to End Addiction Long-term are service marks of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Excavating New Constructs for Family Stress
 Theories in the Context of Everyday Life
 Experiences of Black American Families

FIGURE 1. INTEGRATIVE MODEL FOR THE STUDY OF STRESS IN BLACK AMERICAN FAMILIES.



Stress is a major risk factor for drug use/abuse

- Impedes effective parenting
- Compromises family relationships
- Elevates risk for psychological and physical health problems
- Increases risk vulnerability
 - early onset and escalation of marijuana and alcohol use
 - greater likelihood of engaging in high risk sexual practices
 - Reliance on drugs
- It is not the number of stressors but the persistent occurrence of proximal hassles

Racism and its consequences for drug use vulnerability

- Racism remains a major challenge confronting African American families and constitutes a primary source of family stress and disparities that persist for Black Americans (DuBois, 1967; Murry et al., 2001; Murry & Liu, 2014; Peters & Massey, 1986; Williams, 2002).
- Among 10-year-old Black American children, early experience with racial discrimination was predictive of substance use five years later (Gibbons et al., 2012)

What can parents do? Examining the role of parental support on the negative relationship between racial discrimination, depression, and drug use among African American youth

Tamika C. B. Zapolski, PhD,
Indiana University Purdue University – Indianapolis

Sycarah Fisher, PhD,
University of Kentucky

Wei-Wen Hsu, PhD, and
Kansas State University

Jessica Barnes, PhD
Michigan State University

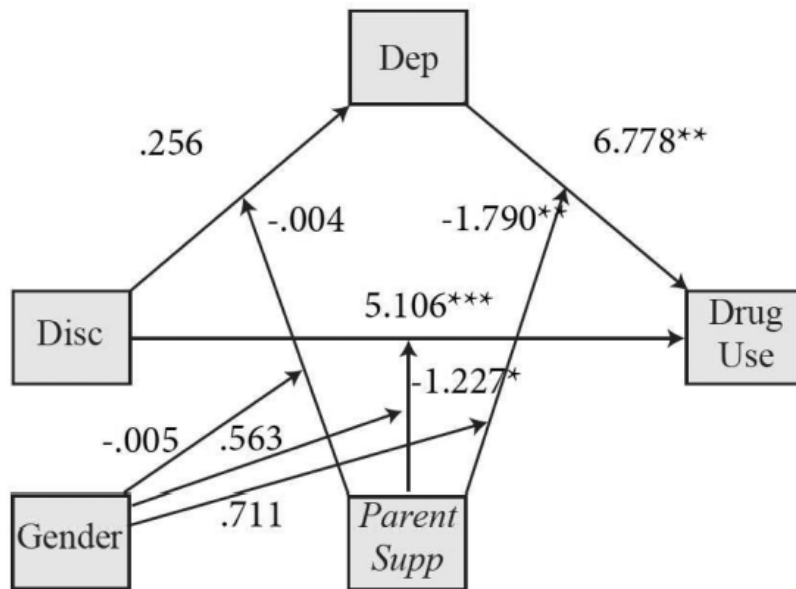


Figure 1. Depiction of structural model representing the pathways to drug use for African American youth based on experiences of racial discrimination, depression, and parental support. Only hypothesized pathways are presented. Not included in the figure, for ease of presentation, are disturbance terms and error terms. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

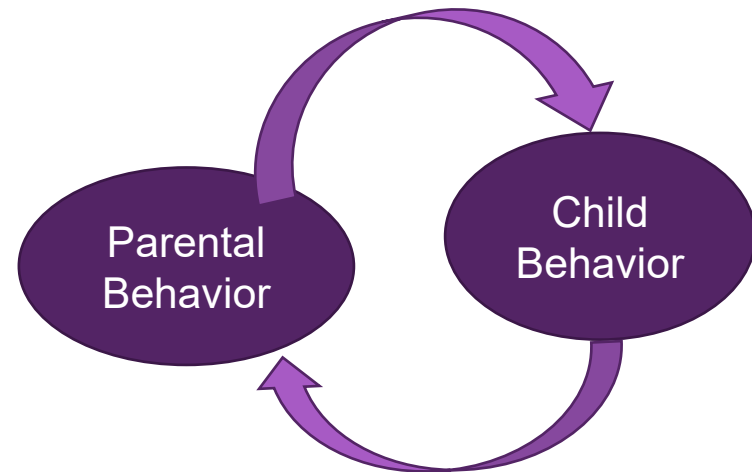
- Racial discrimination and drug use is mediated through depressive symptomology, for both male and females but stronger for males
- Racism was directly associated with drug use among males
- Parental support served a protective function
 - moderating the impact of depression on drug use
 - while protective for both effective for both males and females, was stronger buffer for males
 - Drug use risk was not impacted by the moderating the impact of racial discrimination on depression

Proximal Casual Developmental Cascading Model

- Social interactions and relationship between parents/caregivers and children:
 - facilitate routinized patterns over time (Spagnola & Fiese, 2007),
 - provide opportunities to examine mutual influences between parental adaptive/maladaptive behaviors and drug use among youth.
 - parental alcohol and drug use involvement predicted later adolescent problem behavior, which demonstrated reciprocal effects of child problem behavior and parental alcohol use 10 years later (Weissman et al., 2006).

• Conclusion:

- Problems in one generation can lead to similar problems in the next generation through the impact of family stress and parenting, and parent-child interactions.



Generational Timeline

Need for future research

How systemic racism cause and influence physiological and psychological development, coping and adjustment in families that in turn inhibit or increase risk for drug use, within and across generations?

Greater understanding of causal pathways through which elevated family stress and parental reactions to stress impact youths' neurological development that in turn forecast early initiation of drug use, as a coping process for potential neurocognitive deficiencies.

Upstream research and interventions that focus on the origins of social determinants of health disparities and drug use and move beyond focusing only on the end effects.

Take home message

- Sociohistorical context matters
- Families play a critical role in drug use among youth
- Being the gatekeeper and protective force can take a toll on families and communities
- Causal pathways to drug use and abuse are complex
- Preventive interventions need comprehensive, multilevel, and tailored to meet the needs of target populations
- Examine those that create and maintain the “toxic waters,” rather than focusing only those who are swimming in the “toxic waters.”