

Emotional Reparations:

Culturally Specific Sonic Therapy for Health
and Healing within African American
Communities

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Disclosure of Relevant Financial Relationships

- No conflicts of interest to report
- No financial disclosures to report

Remember to
complete Post-
Survey & CE
Evaluation

A Brief Anecdote...



Road Map

- History & Foundations of Music Thanatology
- Challenges and Critique of Music Thanatology



- Addressing Implicit Bias: An Ethic of Care
- Understanding Health as a Cultural Production



- Culturally Specific Sonic Therapy
- Sharing a Practical Resource: *Gilead*

Poll Question

Have you heard of the term
Emotional Reparations before?



Emotional Reparations

Impromptu and curated experiences of inner healing devoted to repairing the centuries of emotional and psychological harm inflicted upon Americans descended from Africans who were enslaved.



Thread



 Gumbo Ya Ya, Out NOW!! 
@YesAurielle

Gaslighting is making Juneteenth a federal holiday while banning critical race theory in schools, destabilizing COVID mutual aid efforts, refusing to defund and abolish police, and blocking reparations legislation.

Go play in someone else's face, America.

8:57 PM · Jun 15, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

2,363 Retweets **178** Quote Tweets **5,078** Likes

Emotional Reparations

Impromptu and curated experiences of inner healing devoted to repairing the centuries of emotional and psychological harm inflicted upon Americans descended from Africans who were enslaved.

Poll Question

Have you heard of the term
Music Thanatology before?

Poll Question

Are you familiar with the Marvel
Character *Thanos*?

Thanos>>>Thanatos>>>Thanatology



Music-Thanatology:

The use of harp and voice at the bedside of dying patients.

Healing can mean...

- A direct, unequivocal, and scientifically measurable cure of a physical illness
- Alleviation of pain or other symptoms
- Re-establishment of self-worth
- Personal empowerment
- Repairing one's relationships with friends, ancestors, the community, the Earth, and/or God
- Learning to accept that which one cannot change

Healing:

“Reducing pain, connecting with loved ones, emotional/spiritual growth, and transitioning into death.”

-Jennifer Hollis

Therese Schroeder-Sheker



“Although no cure was possible, a death-bed healing occurred, interiorly.”

-Therese Schroeder-Sheker

“Don’t leave them. Protect
them.” -*Therese Schroeder-Sheker*

Music-Thanatology:

The use of harp and voice at the bedside of dying patients.

Music-Thanatology:

The use of music and presence as a way to help people make meaning of death and suffering.

Example of a Music Vigil

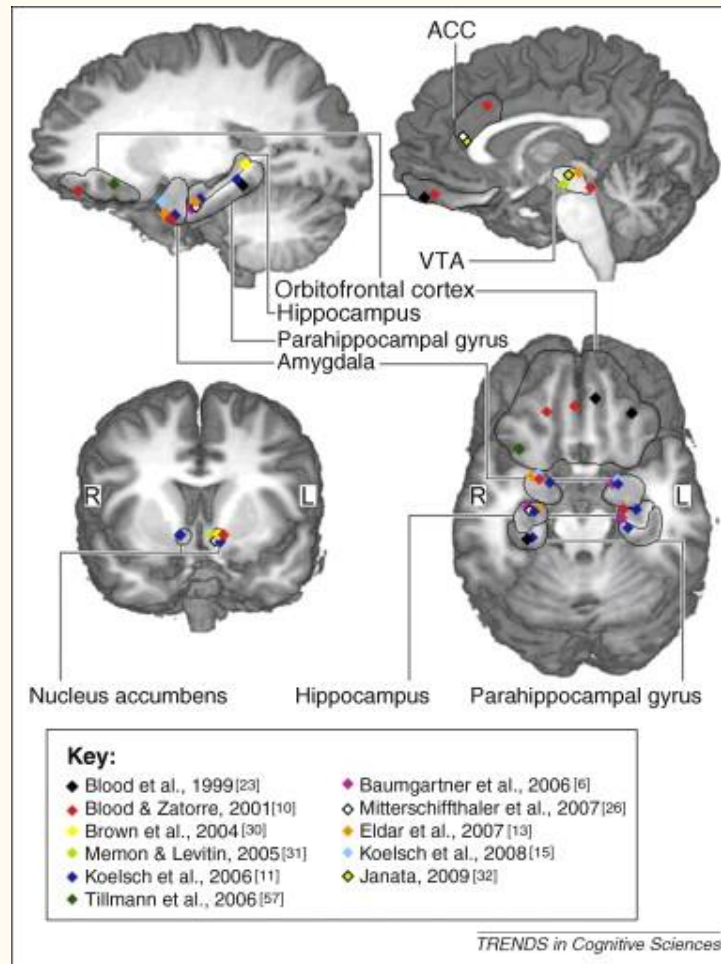
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WYLDkp0ng98>

Prescriptive Music

Music that constantly responds the physiological and psychological needs of a patient, moment by moment.

The Biological Impact of Music

“Functional neuroimaging studies on music and emotion show that music can modulate activity in brain structures that are known to be crucially involved in emotion, such as the amygdala, nucleus accumbens, hypothalamus, hippocampus, insula, cingulate cortex and orbitofrontal cortex. The potential of music to modulate activity in these structures has important implications for the use of music in the treatment of psychiatric and neurological disorders.”



Koelsch, Stefan. "Towards a neural basis of music-evoked emotions." Trends in cognitive sciences 14, no. 3 (2010): 131-137.

The Biological Impact of Music

“[fMRI] studies repeatedly reported activations of the amygdala, nucleus accumbens and hippocampus, reflecting that music is capable of modulating activity in core structures [sic] of emotion.”

Music Therapist vs. Music Thanatologist



Music Therapist vs. Music Thanatologist

Music Therapist

- Works with both sick and healthy individuals
- Variety of instruments
- Board-certified by American Music Association
 - Take music requests

Music Thanatologist

- Only work with end-of-life care
- Explicitly use harp and voice
 - Not Board-certified
- Do not take music requests
 - Not as widely known

Challenges and Critique of Music Thanatology

Notice Anything?



Challenges and Critique of Music Thanatology

Expand the Scope:

- Expand instrumentation
 - Expand diversity of practitioners

Implicit Bias

“The unconscious collection of stereotypes and attitudes that we develop toward certain groups of people, which can affect our patient relationships and care decisions.”

Pause

Questions? Comments? Points of Clarification?

Dr. Emilie Towne's Ethic of Care

“My goal is to paint a more accurate and encompassing picture of African American life in order to set the backdrop for an ethic of care that truly addresses the labyrinthine relationships that comprise any social group.”

-Dr. Emilie Townes

“Health is not simply the absence of disease, it comprises a wide range of activities that foster healing and wholeness...health is a cultural production in that health and illness alike are social constructs and dependent on social networks, biology, and environment.”

-Dr. Emilie Townes

Components of Health

“As it is embedded in our social realities, health also includes the integration of...”

- **Spiritual:** How we relate to the Divine
- **Mental:** Who we are as people who think and feel
- **Physical:** Who we are biologically, as emBODIED people

**Health is a
Cultural Production**

“Far too many of the traditional ways in which health-care programs are discussed and implemented in African American communities assume a Western paradigm...”

-Dr. Collins Airhihenbuwa

PEN-3 Model, Dr. Collins Airhihenbuwa (1989)

- Person, Extended Family & Neighborhood (**Cultural Identity**)
- Perceptions, Enablers & Nurturers

(**Relationships/Expectations**)
- Positive, Existential & Negative (**Cultural Empowerment**)

Dr. Towne's Analysis of PEN-3 Model

- Health Education
- Educational Diagnosis of Health Behavior
- Cultural Appropriateness of Health Behavior

Health Education

- Empower both individuals AND communities
- When providing care, seriously consider the role extended family members, neighbors, community leaders play in a person's health

Educational Diagnosis of Person's Health Behavior

- Investigate how people come to make certain decisions about their health

Cultural Appropriateness of Health Behavior

- Investigate root causes behind client's health/health behavior
 - “[R]esist moralizing behaviors that are unfamiliar to us and that we do not understand...” and instead encourage positive behaviors that promote good health and compassionately examine and seek to understand the behaviors we notice in clients that are harmful to health and take into consideration the behaviors’ “cultural, historical, and political context before attempting to change them.”

“Black health rests on our ability to take responsibility for our health and fight the individual and social forces that block liberating health and health care...”

-Dr. Emilie Townes

Enter the Chat!

1) How would you describe the culture you are in?

- a) Oakland culture?
- b) West Coast culture?
- c) Political climate/culture?
- d) Eurocentric/patriarchal culture?

Enter the Chat!



2) In what ways does being formed in/informed by these cultures impact the care you give your clients?

Enter the Chat!



3) COMMUNITY WISDOM

- a) How have you navigated/addressed these cultural realities?

Dr. Towne's Ethic of Care is founded upon:

- Compassion AND Justice
 - You need BOTH

The Importance of Lament

“[B]y putting words to their suffering, the community could move to a pain or pains that could be named and then addressed. Lament is, in a word, formful...when done as communal lament, it helps the community to see the crisis as bearable and manageable--in the community.”

We lament...

The Tuskegee Experiment from 1932-1972

- Neglecting care to 399 African-American men with syphilis for the sake of “research”
 - Denying them penicillin when it was discovered as a treatment for syphilis
- At least 40 spouses and 19 children contracted syphilis

We lament...

Medical personnel who believe black bodies are
less able to perceive pain

We lament...

Scientific communities blaming health disparities in African-American communities on unfounded biological beliefs rather than the result of unjust and inhumane social conditions

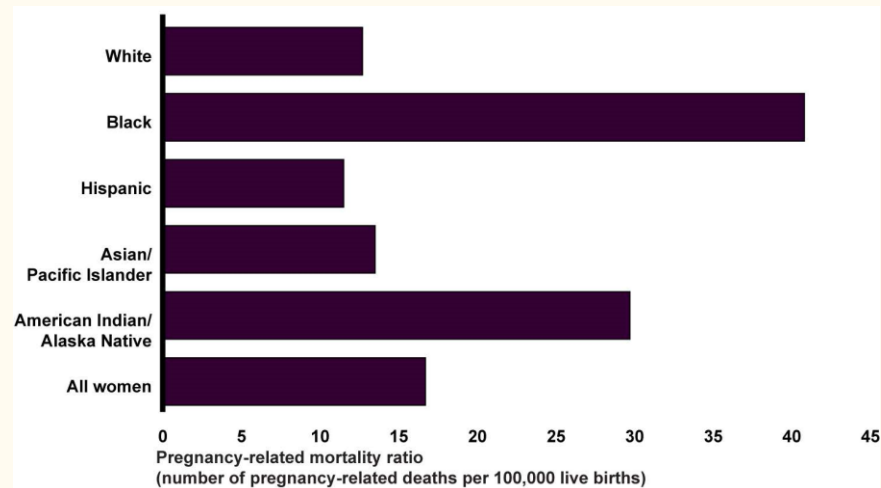
Provision of care must be:

- Directed to body and soul
- Realistic regarding the realities of social conditions and the impact they have on Black health
- Seek transformatory themes and practices that encourage a form of caring that HEALS the corporate body and soul

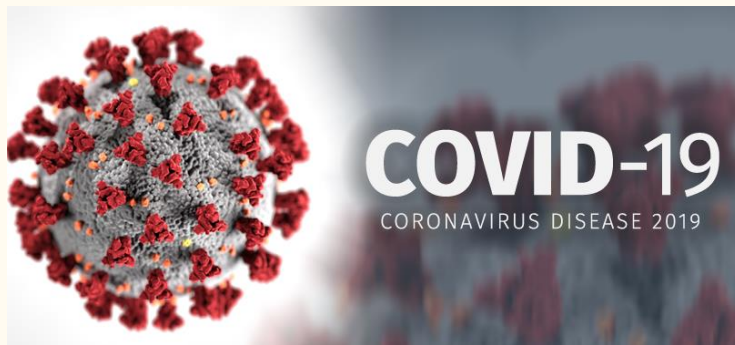
Pause

Questions? Comments? Points of Clarification?

Culturally Specific Sonic Therapy



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, September 2019. | GAO-20-248



According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health:

Black/African-Americans have the highest mortality rate of any racial and ethnic group for all cancers combined and for most major cancers.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health:

Black/African-Americans were 30 percent more likely to die from heart disease than non-Hispanic whites

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health:

Black/African-Americans were 50 percent more likely to have a stroke, as compared to their white adult counterparts

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health:

Black/African-Americans were 30 percent more likely to die from heart disease than non-Hispanic whites

Interviews with Ethnomusicologists & Death Doulas



Dr. Jean Ngoya Kidula, Professor of Ethnomusicology



The Rev. Dr. Jamie Eaddy, Death Doula





Enter the Chat!

What sounds have been healing for you?

“I come alongside people in order to help them envision what their end will be.”

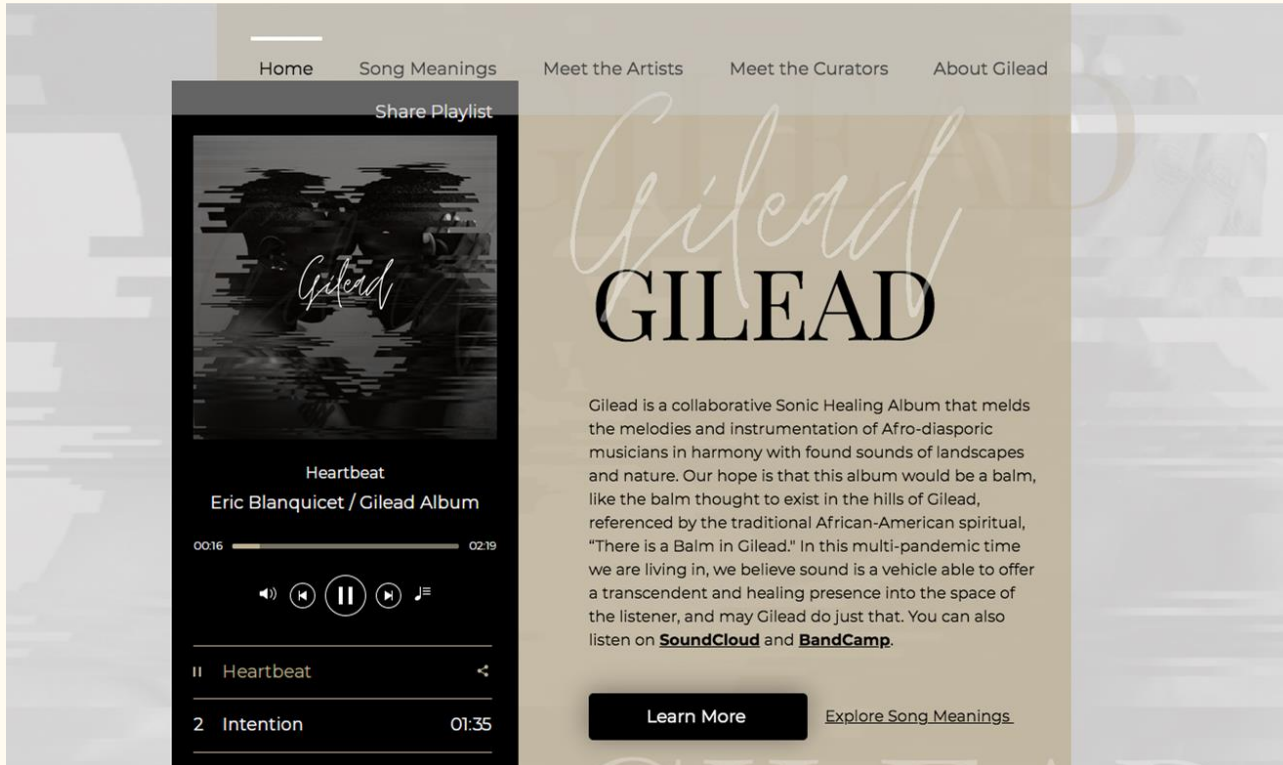
-Dr. Jamie Eaddy

Creating a Balm

“When we enter into genuine lament out of the recognition that we need, if not yearn for, a **balm** and not human-made [solution for all difficulties and diseases], then we open up the opportunity for God’s salvation and healing to shower us with transforming power such that we can and do seek to form a world that holds the opportunity for each of us to live into health and wholeness...

To create health and wholeness, an ethic of care, we need an erotic dimension of care in the form of “individual and collective creative energy that makes us feel what we are doing passionately and fully. The aim of our lives becomes making that which we do in our lives and in the lives of those generations yet to come richer and more viable.”

Gileadalbum.com



Questions?
Comments?
Reflections?

Remember to
complete Post-
Survey & CE
Evaluation

Thank You!

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