

Rise in  
School Shootings and School Violence  
and its Impact on  
African-American Students



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*African American Mental Health Training and Technical Assistance (AATA) Program*  
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We have no conflicts of  
interest to report

# Presenters

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Brown University, 1998  
Morehouse School of Medicine, 2003  
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# Global Health Psychiatry, LLC

We are ten community-oriented African American Psychiatrists who came together to address mental health needs of Black communities

- ❖ Speakers
- ❖ Authors
- ❖ Corporate Training Consultants



**Founding Members**

# Agenda

- ❖ **Introduction**

- ❖ **Topic A: School and Community Violence: A Historical Perspective**

- ❖ Black In America, An Uneasy Journey

- ❖ Structural factors contribute to violence in Black Communities

- ❖ Structural factors undermine the mental health of Black Youth

- ❖ Topic B: Expanding Opportunities for Mental Health, Wellness, Hope and Resilience among Black Youth

- ❖ Augmenting Resilience

- ❖ Hope, Optimism and Wellness in the service of Mental Health

- ❖ Topic C: Implicit Bias, how it contributes to health inequities and negative health outcomes

- ❖ Conclusion

# Objectives

- ❖ List two social determinants of mental health that influence school/community violence
- ❖ Identify three risk factors among youth more likely to engage in violence in the school/community violence and strategies to mitigate those risks
- ❖ Describe three programs to augment hope and resilience in BIPOC youth exposed to school/community violence
- ❖ Describe two practical tips and strategies community members can use to restore emotional/psychological well being in the wake of community violence

# Black In America, An Uneasy Journey

Historical factors that affect health and healthcare are related to a legacy of mistreatment of African Americans

- ❖ Displacement of millions of Africans over a 400 year period
- ❖ Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade
- ❖ Abolition
- ❖ Constitutional Amendments (13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>)
- ❖ Jim Crow Laws
- ❖ Civil Rights Movements

# Black In America, An Uneasy Journey

*Past events relate to contemporary events*

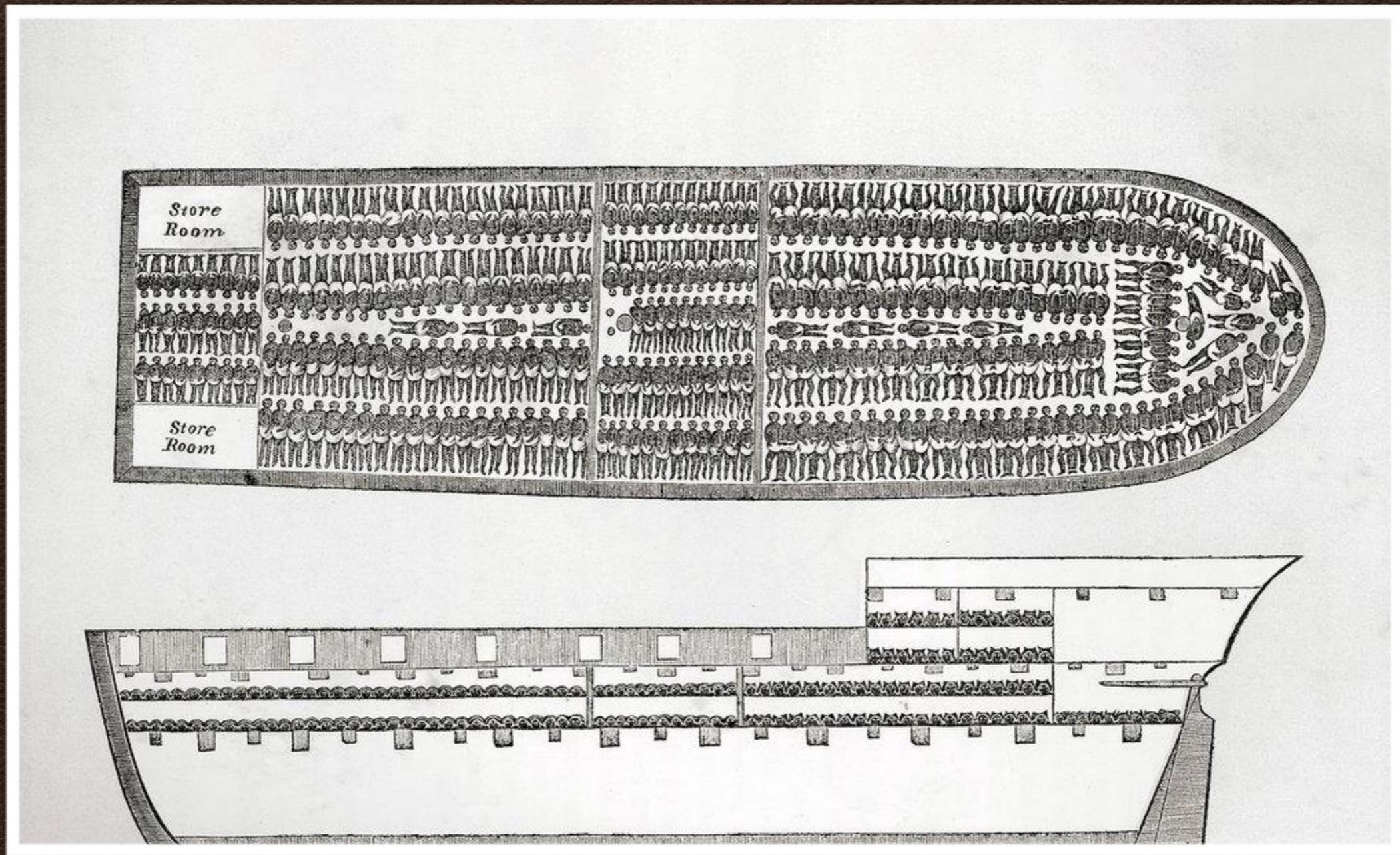
*e.g. African Americans have only had rights as full citizens in the U.S. for approximately 50 years*

- ❖ **1970's** Affirmative Action and Rise of Government Leaders
- ❖ **1980's** Rise of Visibility of African Americans e.g. TV, movies
- ❖ **1990's** LA Riots, Million Man March
- ❖ **2000s** Election of President Barack Obama

# Black In America, An Uneasy Journey

*TODAY: The U.S. along with the international global community continue to witness atrocious acts of racial injustice during a worldwide pandemic*

- ❖ **2010's** Increased media exposure of police brutality/killings of African Americans led to large community protests
- ❖ **2020's** Racial health inequalities during the Era of COVID-19 coincide with *massive* media exposure of police brutality/killings of African Americans leading to proliferation of community protests



“An 18th-century engraving depicting cross sections of a ship used to transport enslaved people from Africa to the Americas and the Caribbean”

*Smithsonian*



Arrival in Jamestown



Visibility  
in the 1990s



...and the 2000s



*Photos by USA Today*



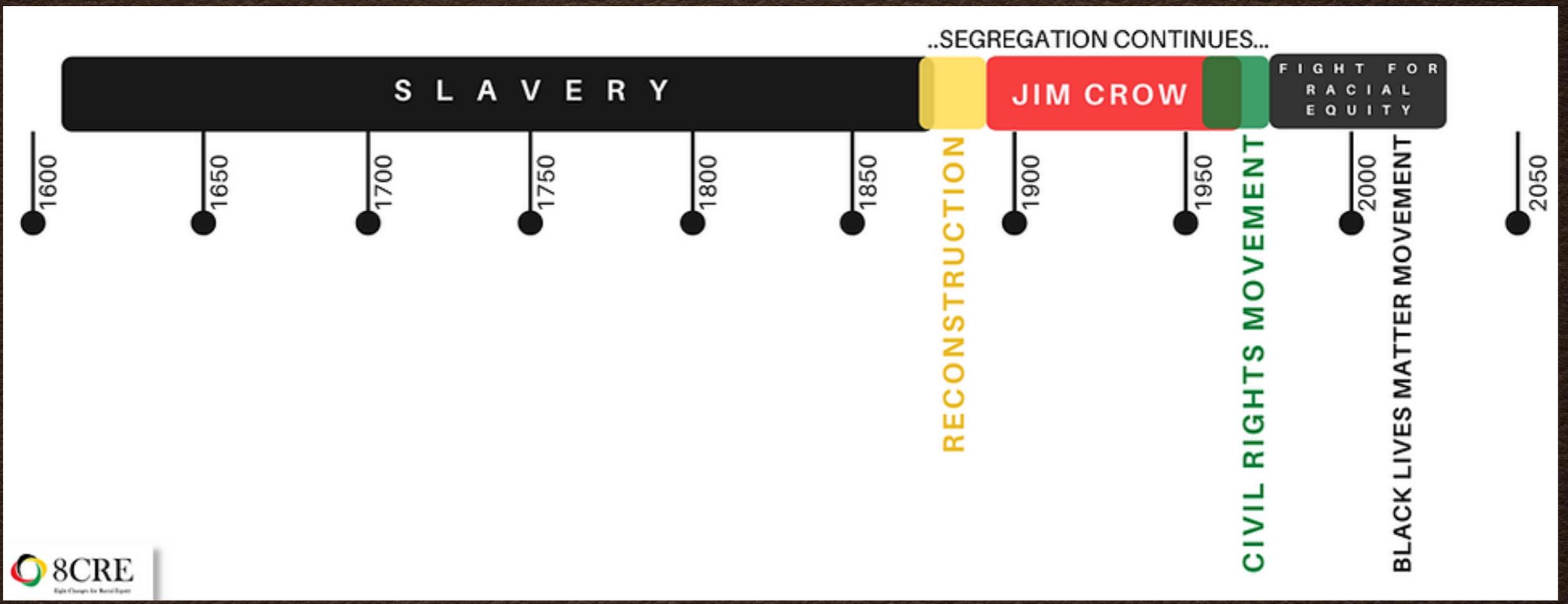
# Police Killings and Racial Injustice



In the 2010s and 2020s



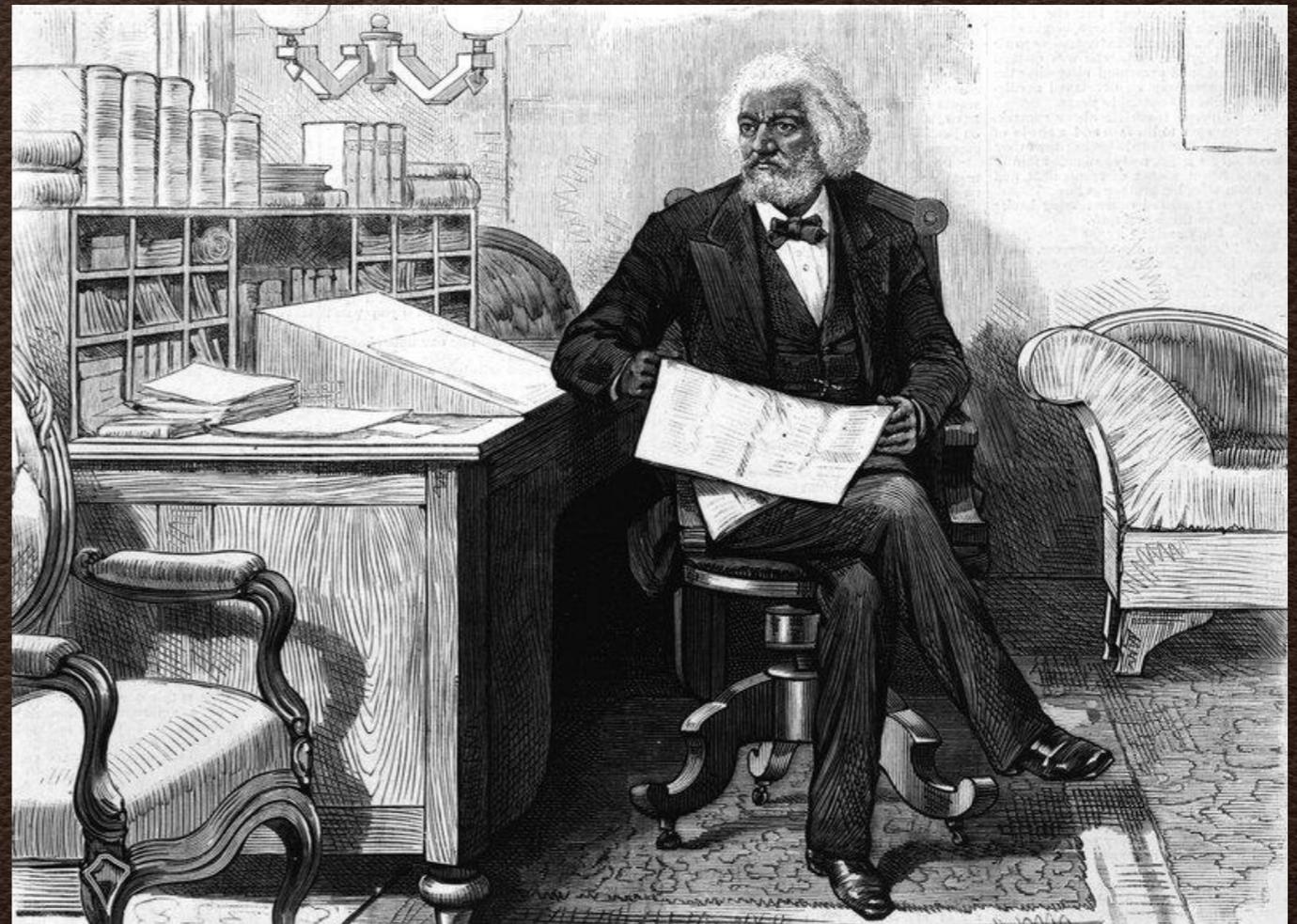
*Photos by NPR and LA Times*



Timeline of African American Historical Summary

“In North Caroline, to teach a slave to read or write, or to sell or give him any book (bible not excepted) or pamphlet, is punished with thirty-nine lashes, or imprisonment if the offender be a free negro, but if a white, then with a fine of 200 dollars. The reason for this law assigned in its preamble is, that ‘teaching slaves to read and write, tends to excite dissatisfaction in their minds, and to produce insurrection and rebellion.’”

*<https://glc.yale.edu/american-anti-slavery-committee>*





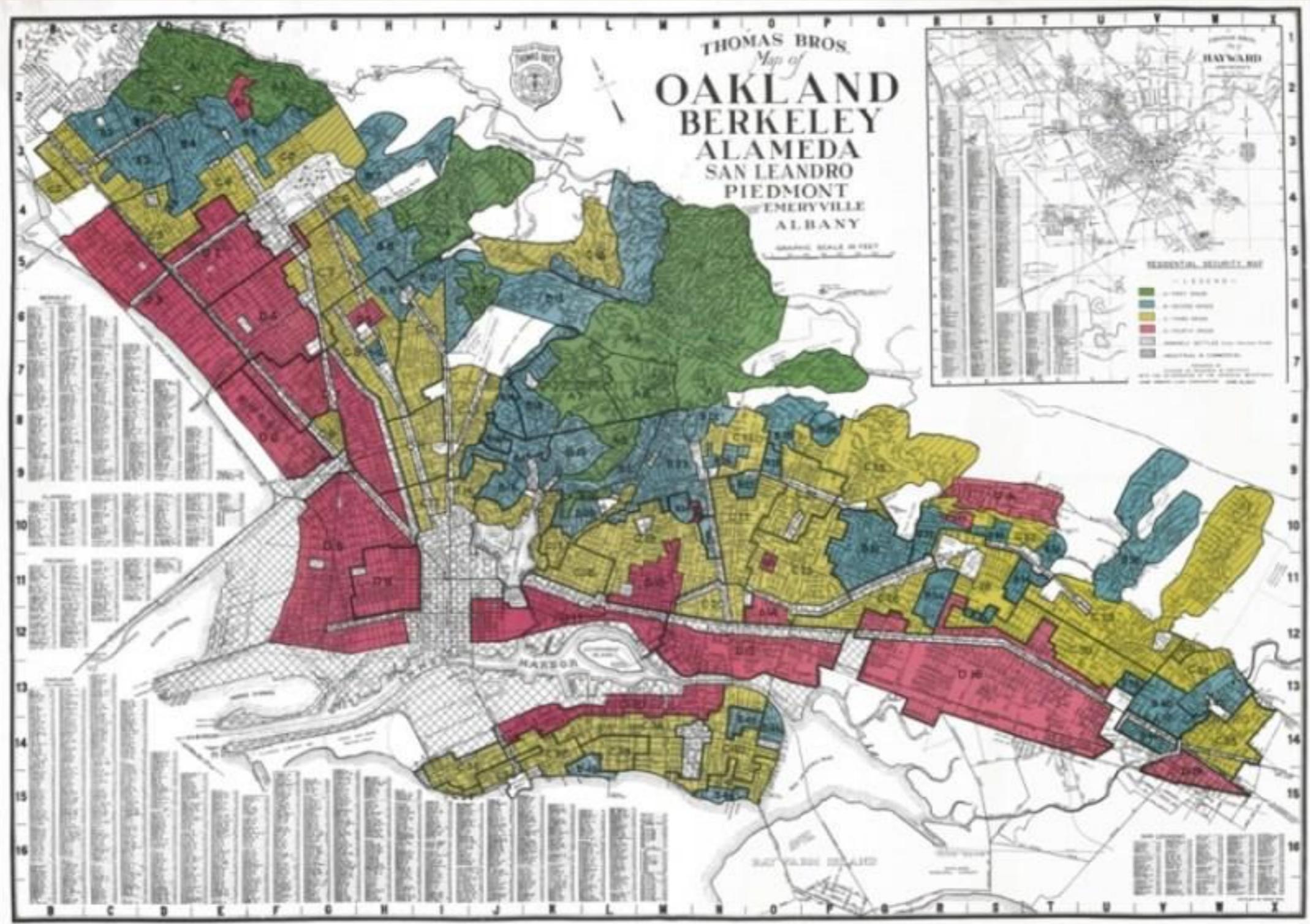
COLORED SCHOLARS EXCLUDED FROM SCHOOLS.

"If the *free* colored people were generally taught to read, it might be an inducement to them to remain in this country. **WE WOULD OFFER THEM NO SUCH INDUCEMENT.**"—*Rev. Mr. Converse, a colonizationist, formerly of N. H. now editor of the Southern Religious Telegraph.*

In those parts of the country where the persecuting spirit of colonization has been colonized, such exclusion has ceased.

## Segregation & Redlining: Effects on Education

1861-1865	End of Civil War	Abolition of slavery, 13th-15th Amendments
1876	Jim Crow Law	State and local laws that enforced racial segregation
1896	Plessy v. Ferguson	Segregation does not violate the U.S. Constitution as long as institutions are “separate but equal”
1917	Buchanan v. Warley	Racial discrimination in residential zoning is unconstitutional
1933	HOLC	Home Owners Corporation Act: Federal government began to provide federally insured home loans
1934	FHA, National Housing Act	HOLC becomes FHA, federally insured home loans are issued to middle income Americans
1938	FHA, Underwriting Manual	Used to determine the “soundness of a loan application”
1954	Brown v Board of Education	School segregation is unconstitutional
1964	Civil Rights Act	Outlaws discrimination based on race, religion, sex, and national origin
1968	Fair Housing Act	Discrimination is prohibited in the sale or rental of a home or giving a mortgage
1974	Equal Credit Opportunity Act	Creditors must provide reason for denials
1977	Community Reinvestment Act	Financial institutions are encouraged to meet the credit needs of all communities



<https://www.nbcbayarea.com/news/local/the-legacy-of-redlining-in-the-bay-area/2672891/>

# The Legacy of **Redlining** in the Bay Area explained



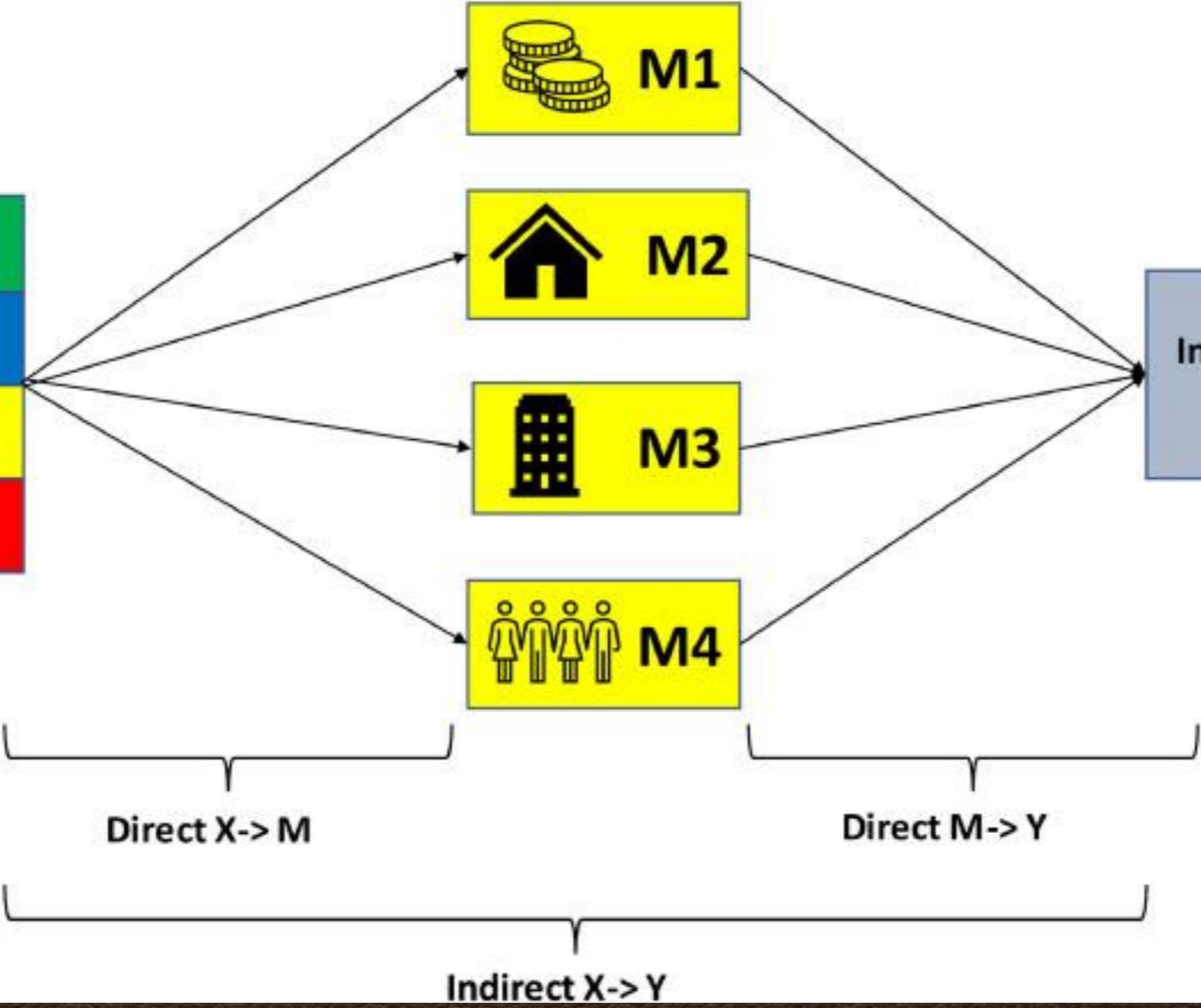
<https://www.nbcbayarea.com/news/local/the-legacy-of-redlining-in-the-bay-area/2672891/>

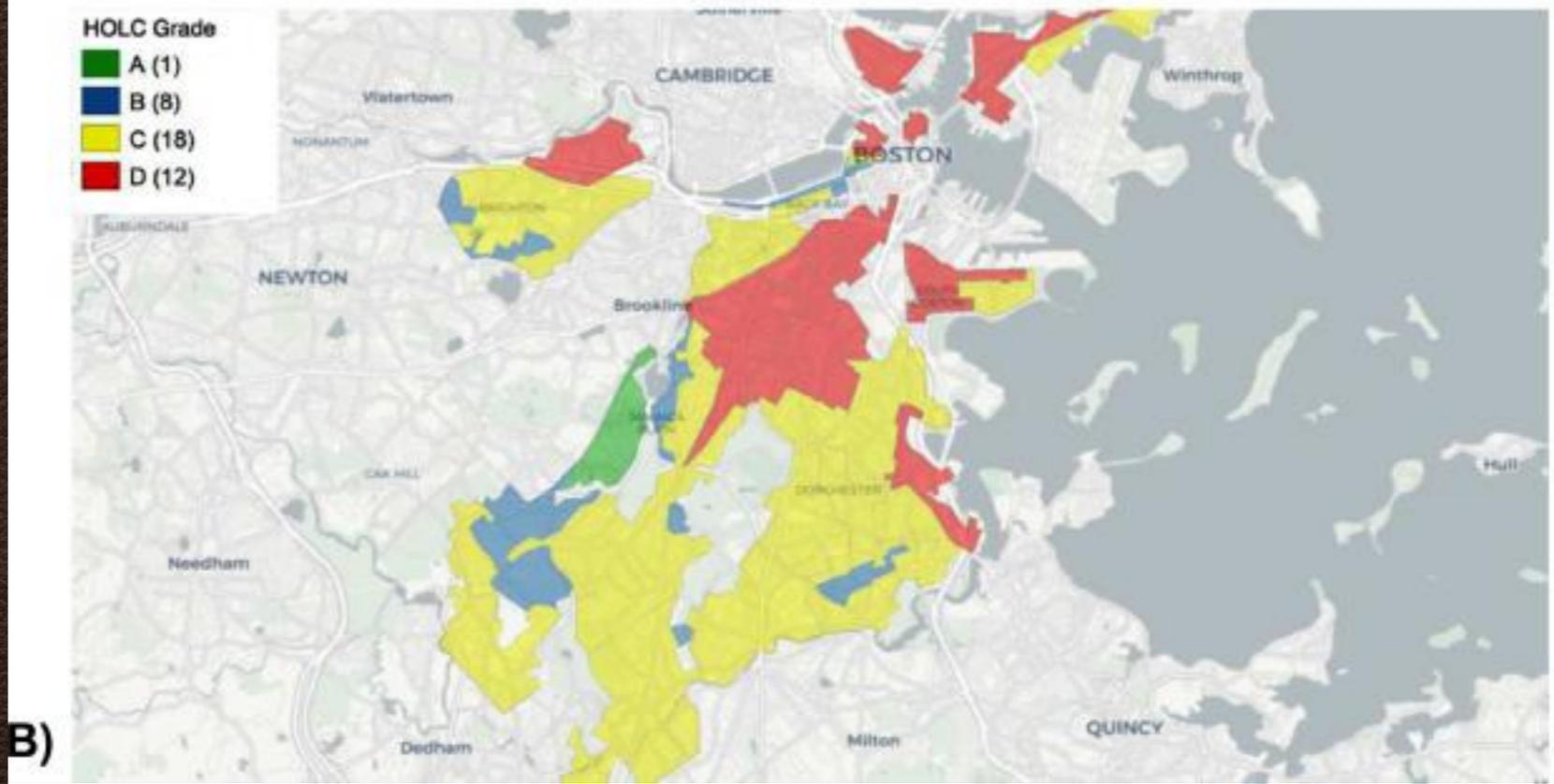
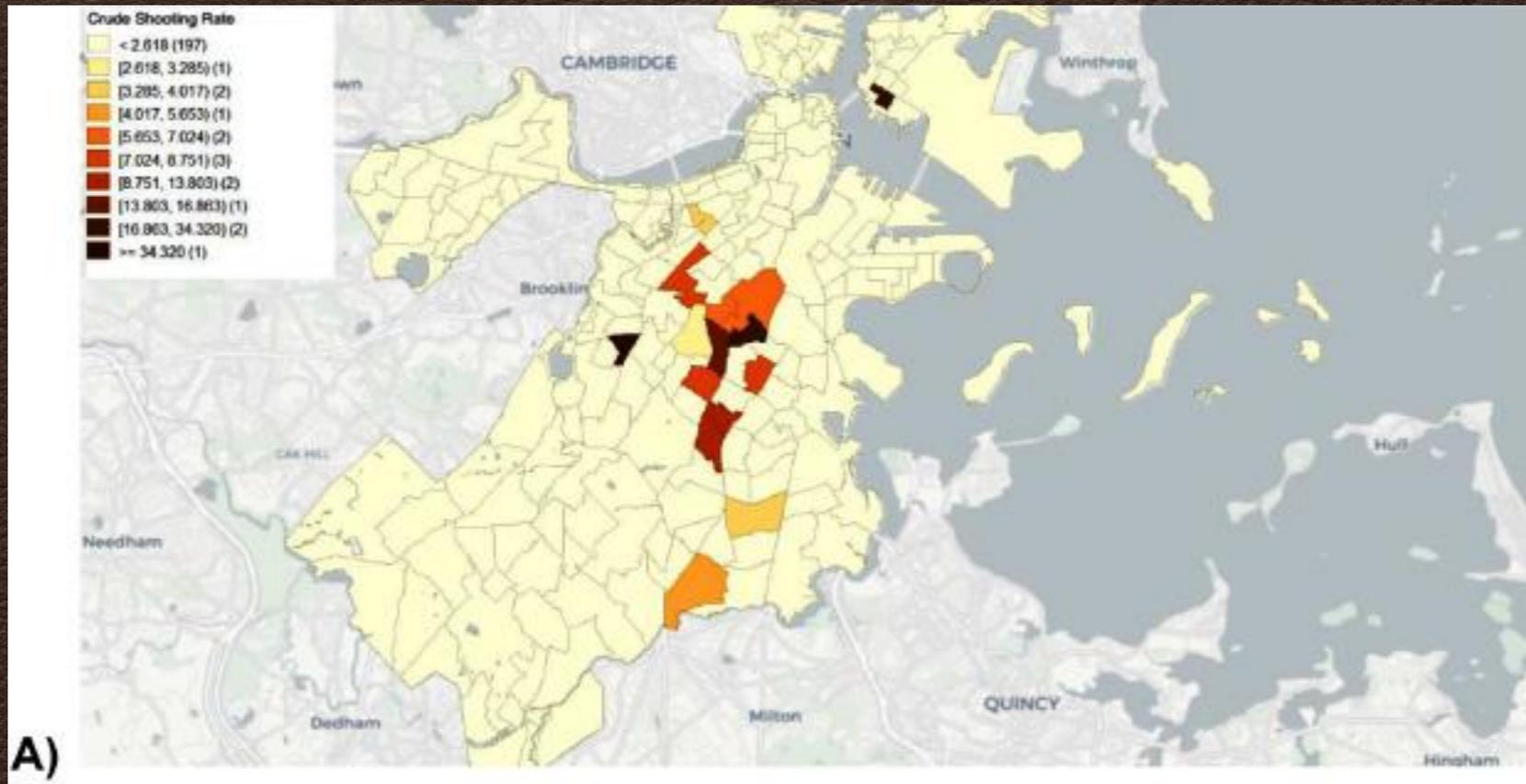


HOLC Classification  
(X)

Mediator  
(M)

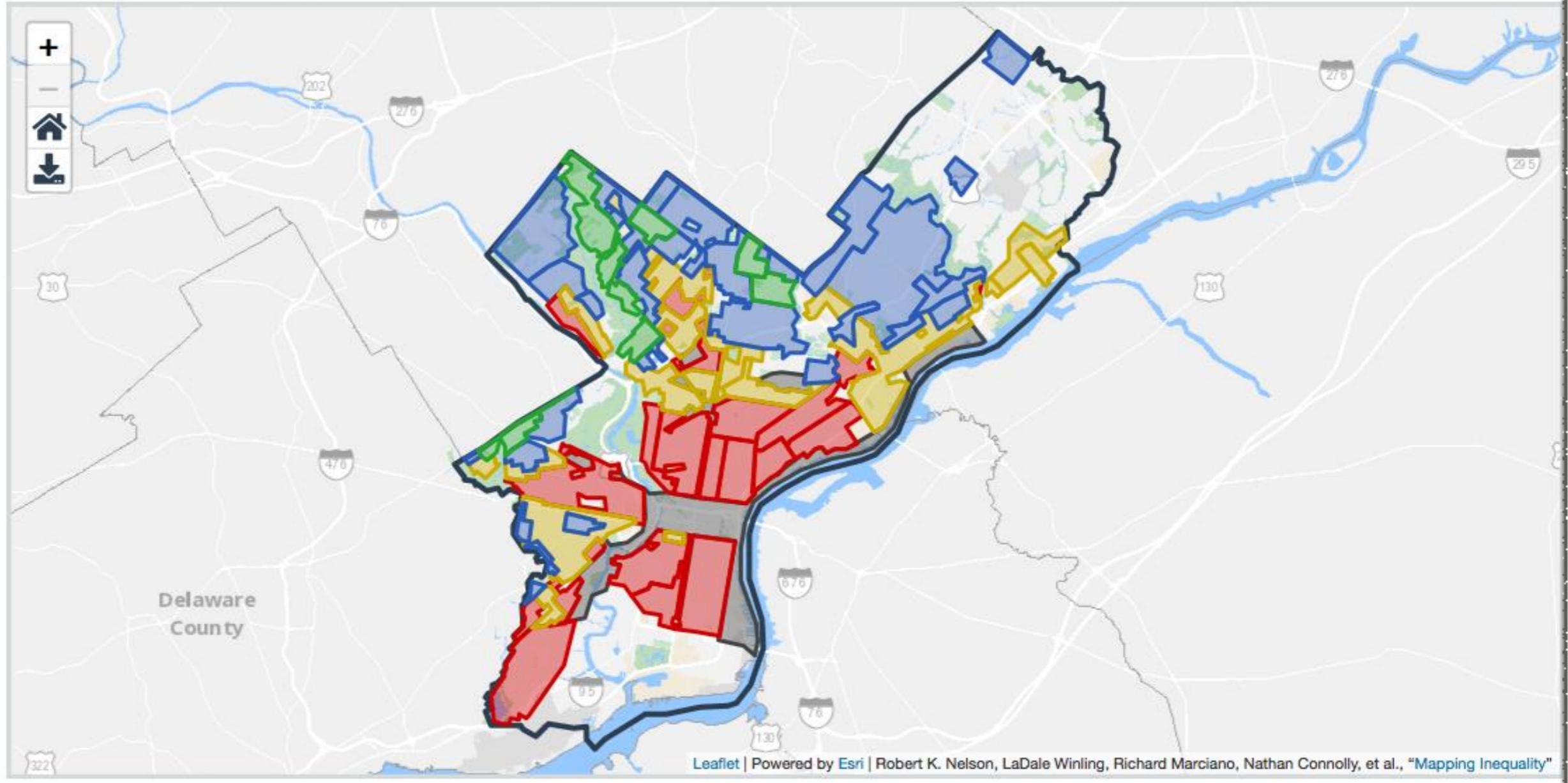
Firearm Incident Rate  
(Y)

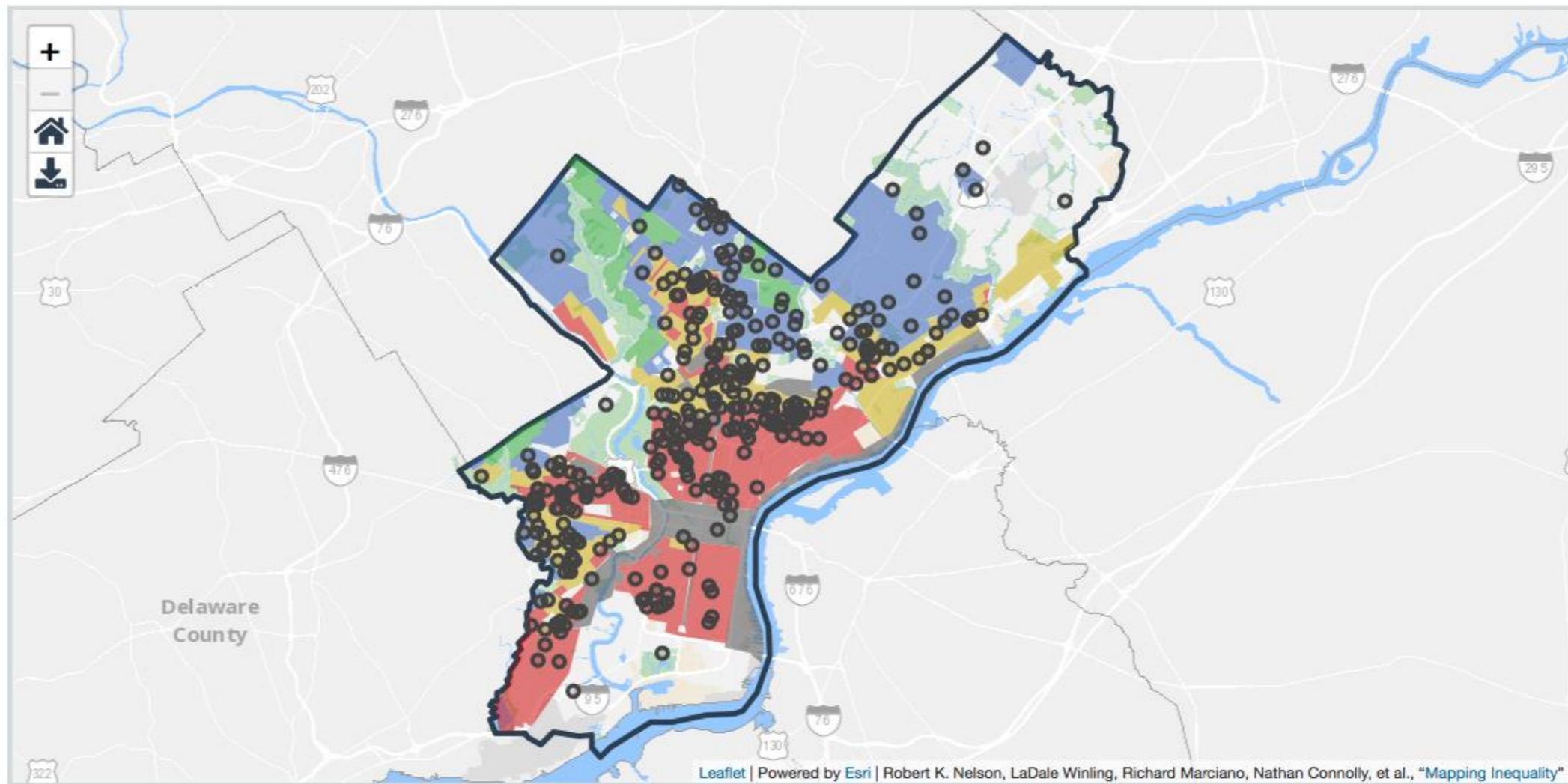




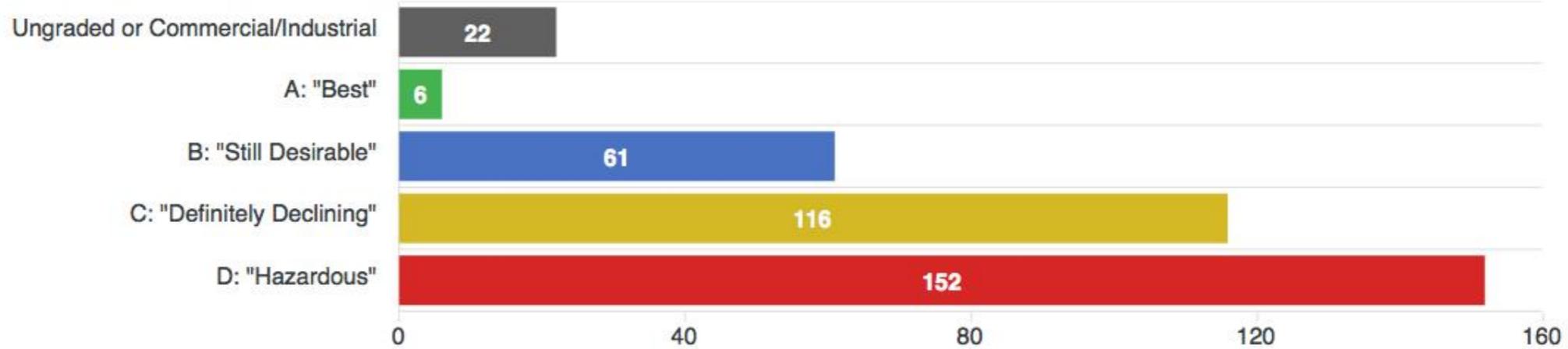
# 1937 Assessment Grades from the Homeowners' Loan Corporation

■ A: "Best"   ■ B: "Still Desirable"   ■ C: "Definitely Declining"   ■ D: "Hazardous"   ■ Commercial/Industrial

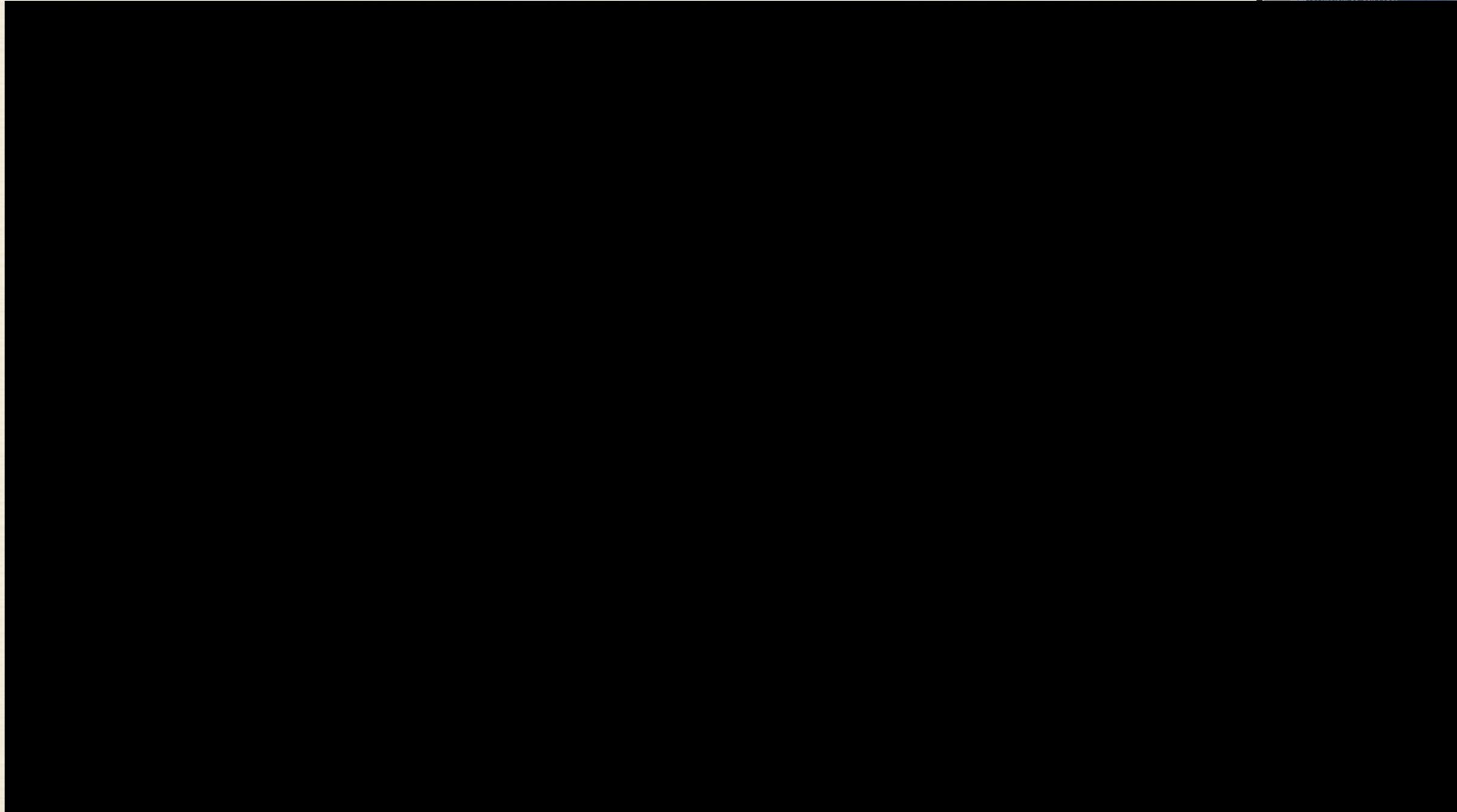




### Number of Homicides by HOLC Grade



# Philly principals fight for students as gun violence intensifies



<https://abc7news.com/gun-violence-school-principal-philadelphia-philly-crime/11162239/>



# **Structural factors contribute to violence in Black Communities**

**(Boyd et al 2022)**

- ❖ Neighborhood poverty, living in low income under-resourced communities
- ❖ Youth exposed to community violence at risk of lower academic achievement and less school engagement
- ❖ Exposure to community violence leads to discipline issues in school, trauma, and legal entanglements
- ❖ School and family context must be considered in youth exposed to community violence

# **Structural factors contribute to violence in Black Communities**

- ❖ Poverty is a central feature of community violence
- ❖ School personnel must be educated about trauma, community violence and its impact on black youth in the school and family context
- ❖ Community violence can negatively impact an individual's mental health, creating a sense of endangerment and distrust in other groups
- ❖ Adolescents are more susceptible to the effects of community violence

# **Structural factors contribute to violence in Black Communities**

- ❖ High exposure to community violence leads to increase internalizing sx like fear, anxiety and depression
- ❖ Children and adolescents exposed to community violence can develop school functioning problems eg, concentration problems, cognitive impairment, stressful intrusive thoughts, and low academic motivation among others
- ❖ Per the CDC and WHO exposure to community violence is considered an ACE

# **Structural factors undermine the mental health of Black Youth**

- ❖ Community violence associated with detrimental mental health outcomes for black youth
- ❖ Repeated exposure to community violence affects youth familial relationships and school experiences
- ❖ Youth exposed to higher levels of community violence have more negative perceptions of their parent
- ❖ Severe mental health issues like suicide have increased sharply among black youth

# Structural factors undermine the mental health of Black Youth (Esquivel 2022)

- ❖ Adverse mental health outcomes have been linked to exposure to community violence
- ❖ Research has uncovered a relationship between adolescent exposure to community violence and PTSD, depression, anxiety, psychological stress and complex trauma
- ❖ Exposure to community violence affects physical health of adolescents eg, elevated heart rate, change in cortisol production, worsening sx of asthma
- ❖ Exposure to violence in children and adolescents increases risk for MDD, and GAD

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- ❖ **Topic B: Expanding Opportunities for Mental Health, Wellness, Hope and Resilience among Black Youth**
  - ❖ Augmenting Resilience
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# Augmenting Resilience

- ❖ Parent support may mitigate future violence among males who witnessed community violence
- ❖ Family support can be a protective factor for youth victims of community violence
- ❖ Close and warm relationships with parents as protective factor for internalizing and externalizing sx among youth exposed to community violence
- ❖ Parent monitoring minimizes risk of youth witnessing or being involved in community violence

## **Augmenting Resilience**

- ❖ Resilience appears to be a protective factor against harmful outcomes of exposure to community violence (Esquivel 2022)
- ❖ School context could be a protective factor for black youth
- ❖ Strong emotional regulation skills supports resilience among adolescents

# Augmenting Resilience

- ❖ Youth need services that reduce their difficulties and augment their strengths
- ❖ Parent relationships, parent bonding and school climate have a prominent effect on Black Youth Mental Health
- ❖ Positive parent-child communication is a protective factor reducing depressive symptoms in children and adolescents who live in high-risk areas
- ❖ Students who perceive positive school climate report positive grades

# Engaging Schools in Student Mental Health

- ❖ Many youth experienced mental health issues due to social isolation from COVID-19
- ❖ How do we connect mental health professionals with schools to help young people who are struggling
- ❖ Funding stream to pay mental health professionals to provide these services within the schools (with serious intent)

# About The Steve Fund

Established in 2014, The Steve Fund was founded by a Black family who lost their loved one, Steve, to mental illness after he graduated from Harvard and City University of New York.

The Steve Fund was created to bring awareness and build support for the mental health and emotional well-being of young students of color.

# Purpose



PHOTO FROM SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



Today's presentation is an educational workshop focused on providing support for students of color who are dealing with loss, grief, and bereavement during the COVID-19 pandemic.

# Engaging Schools in Student Mental Health

- ❖ Customize the approach, one size does not fit all
- ❖ With more well-resourced schools coordinate logistics eg, physical space, identifying students, marketing the program, school personnel at event
- ❖ More success and accountability with single administrative contact

# Engaging Schools in Student Mental Health

- ❖ With less-resourced schools, start small then scale-up
- ❖ Establish committed corps to increase buy-in among stakeholders eg, students, parents and administrators
- ❖ “Fierce advocates” to ensure program continuity and ongoing motivation of stakeholders

# Engaging Schools in Student Mental Health

- ❖ Help educational leaders eg, principals, superintendents connect how mental health affects brain function and learning
- ❖ A primer in Neuroscience might help
- ❖ DEI personnel are allies in this effort

# Engaging Schools in Student Mental Health

- ❖ Strategic marketing to include more students
- ❖ Know your audience
- ❖ Some African-American students might prefer to participate in MH programs to enhance strength, mastery and efficacy vs programs focused on feelings/emotions

# Engaging Schools in Student Mental Health

- ❖ Social-Emotional Learning (SEL): “process of acquiring and applying knowledge, skills, and attitudes to achieve long-term relational and emotional goals”
- ❖ Create a school culture inclusive of SEL
- ❖ Support teachers to implement SEL
- ❖ Consider possibilities for peer leadership for SEL

# Preventing Youth Violence and Community Violence (CDC, Injury Center)

Strategy	Approach	Example Programs, Policies, and Practices
Strengthen economic supports (new)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual and household financial security (new)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tax credits (new evidence)</li> </ul>
Promote Family Environments that Support Healthy Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early childhood home visitation               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parenting skill and family relationships programs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nurse-Family Partnership               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening Families 10-14</li> <li>• Coping Power</li> <li>• Familias Unidas</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Provide Quality Education Early in Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preschool enrichment with family engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Parent Centers               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Head Start</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Strengthen Young People's Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal school-based programs               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job training and employment programs (new)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good Behavior Game               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies</li> <li>• LifeSkills Training</li> <li>• Steps to Respect</li> <li>• Summer youth employment programs (new)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Connect Youth to Caring Adults and Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentoring Programs               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Afterschool programs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Big Brothers Big Sisters of America               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After School Matters</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Create Protective Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modify the physical and social environment</li> <li>• Reduce exposure to community-level risks</li> <li>• Street outreach and community norm change</li> <li>• Improve school climate and safety (new)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Improvement Districts               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crime Prevention through Environmental Design</li> <li>• Alcohol policies (outlet density, pricing)</li> <li>• Compulsory education laws (new)</li> <li>• Safe Streets</li> <li>• Chicago Safe Passage (new)</li> <li>• School restorative justice programs (new)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Intervene to Lessen Harms and Prevent Future Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treatment to lessen harms of violence exposure</li> <li>• Treatment to prevent problem behavior and future involvement in violence</li> <li>• Hospital-community partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy®               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools</li> <li>• Functional Family Therapy</li> <li>• Multidisciplinary Treatment Foster Care</li> <li>• Caught in the Crossfire</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

# Hope, Optimism and Wellness in the Service of Mental Health

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## KEY POINTS

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- Resilience is a multisystemic dynamic process of successful adaption or recovery in the context of risk or a threat.
  - In contrast to the study of risk factors, resilience is a less prominent topic in the field of child and adolescent psychiatry.
  - Resilience is unanimously negatively associated with depression, anxiety and trauma symptoms in youth, and is therefore, meaningful for screening purposes in at-risk populations/situations.
  - Integration of the concept of resilience into routine clinical care is a valuable addition as it can enhance protective and promotive factors of mental health.
  - New technologies and advancements allow us to study the multisystemic processes of resilience in daily life and improve our understanding of resilience in children and adolescents.
-

# Hope, Optimism and Wellness in the Service of Mental Health

Masten's shortlist of multisystem resilience factors

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Sensitive caregiving, close relationships, social support;

Sense of belonging, cohesion;

Self-regulation, family management, group or organization leadership;

Agency, beliefs in system efficacy, active coping;

Problem-solving and planning;

Hope, optimism, confidence in a better future;

Mastery motivation, motivation to adapt;

Purpose and a sense of meaning;

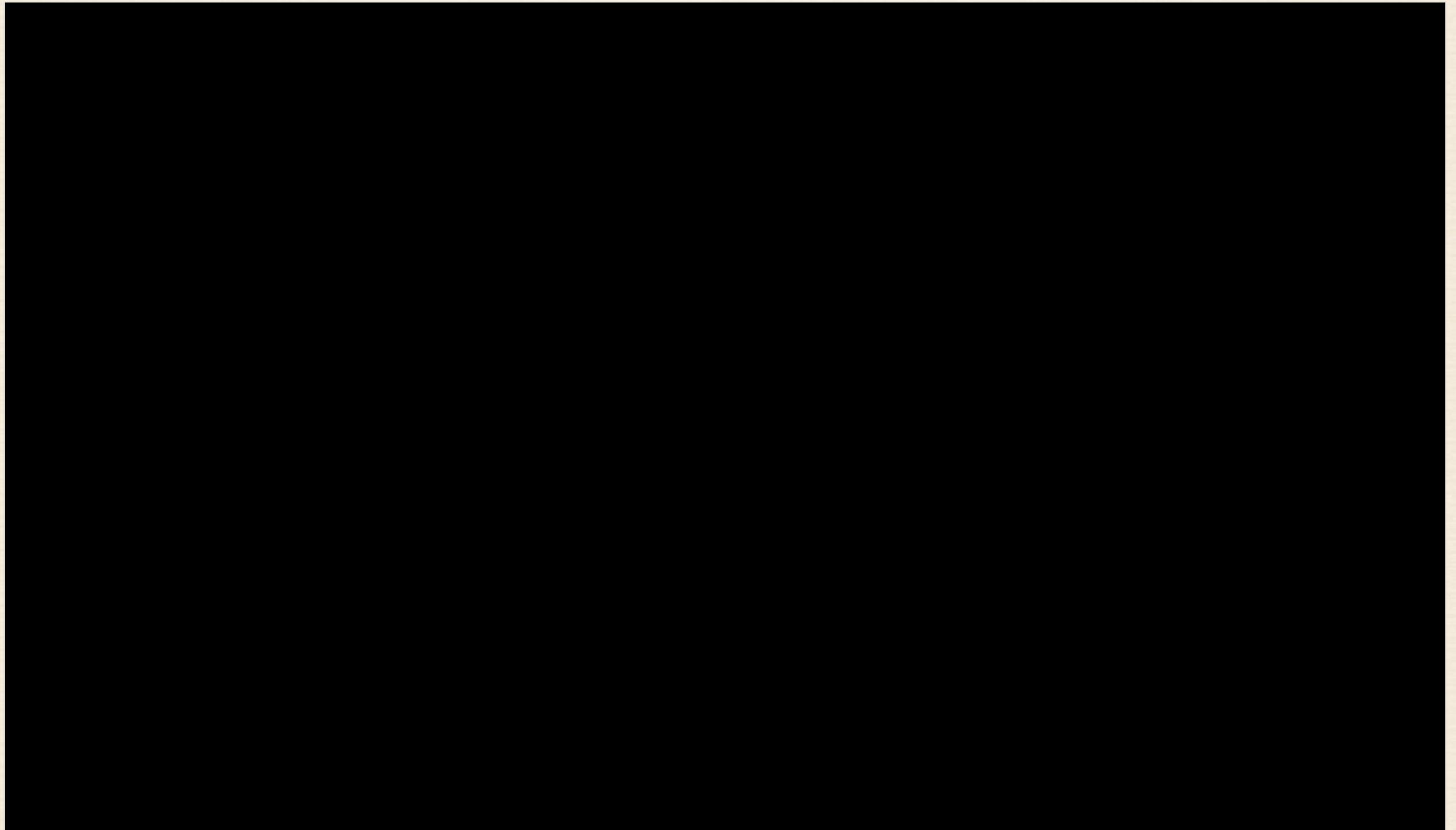
Positive views of self, family, or group;

Positive habits, routines, rituals, traditions, celebrations.

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Reproduced with permission from Masten *et al.* [9].

# Hope, Optimism and Wellness in the Service of Mental Health



<https://content.jwplatform.com/previews/K4ld3Vqh>



# Hope, Optimism and Wellness in the Service of Mental Health



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-RZYSTJAAo>



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## ❖ Conclusion

# Implicit Bias

- ❖ Concept that unconscious internalized beliefs or schema drive discriminatory behaviors without conscious intent
- ❖ Bias = the negative evaluation of one group and its members relative to another
- ❖ Explicit (direct) bias = awareness of evaluation of the group, believes evaluation is correct, able to act on it in real time
- ❖ Implicit (indirect) bias = unintentional, unconscious, activated quickly based on cues and influences perception, memory and behavior

# Microaggressions

- ❖ Described by Chester Pierce (over 50 years ago):
  - ❖ “Subtle and stunning” daily racial offenses
- ❖ Expanded by Sue et. Al. (2007):
  - ❖ “Subtle, daily, and unintentional racial slights committed against members of racialized groups”
- ❖ Similar to concept by Essed (1991)
  - ❖ “Everyday racism”

# Microaggressions: A New Taxonomy (Williams, 2021)

- ❖ 16 categories
  - ❖ Not a true citizen
  - ❖ Racial categorization and sameness
  - ❖ Assumptions about intelligence, competence, or status
  - ❖ False color blindness/invalidating racial or ethnic identity
  - ❖ Criminality or dangerousness
  - ❖ Denial of individual racism
  - ❖ Myth of meritocracy/race is irrelevant for success
  - ❖ Reverse-racism hostility
  - ❖ Pathologizing minority culture or appearance
  - ❖ Second-class citizen/ignored and invisible
  - ❖ Tokenism
  - ❖ Connecting via stereotypes
  - ❖ Exocitization and eroticization
  - ❖ Avoidance and distancing
  - ❖ Environmental attacks

# Racial Trauma as Curriculum Violence (Jones, 2020)

- ❖ “School-based racial trauma—a type of physical or emotional injury uniquely impacting Black and Brown children in school spaces”
  - ❖ “Often categorized as isolated and/or not reflective of school’s larger culture”
- 1) Curriculum violence—classroom activities used to teach about difficult histories;
  - 2) Digital racial trauma—racist images or video captured and shared through social media in school spaces;
  - 3) Physical violence related to racial trauma—acts of violence from student to student or teacher to student;
  - 4) Verbal intimidation or threats between students or from teacher to student.

## **Strategies to Address Curriculum Violence (Jones, 2020)**

- ❖ Help teachers to identify and examine curriculum violence
- ❖ Frame teaching as a reflective and reflexive process
- ❖ Support antiracist professional development trainings
- ❖ Ensure teaching includes narratives of joy and resistance
- ❖ Educational reparations

# Strategies to Address Curriculum Violence (Jones, 2020)

## ❖ Examples of questions for self-reflection:

- ❖ What historical events or situations am I asking that students examine and experience?
- ❖ Are my lessons focused primarily on Black and Brown histories when faced with trauma, pain or death? Why?

## ❖ Examples of questions to examine school curricula:

- ❖ Is this type of racial trauma happening in my schools? In my classroom? Are students forced to learn their history in ways that are ideologically violent?
- ❖ Essentially, can we envision an education that is trauma-informed without being traumatic?

# Thank You

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❖ [www.ghpsychiatry.org](http://www.ghpsychiatry.org)

❖ Facebook/Instagram/LinkedIn/Twitter: @ghpsychiatry

