

The Art of Being a Black Man

EXPERIENTIAL CURRICULUM FOR HIGH SCHOOL AGED PARTICIPANTS



The Art of Being a Black Man

A PROJECT OF THE
Brotherhood of Elders

Oakland, CA

The Art of Being a Black Man
Brotherhood of Elders, Oakland, CA.
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About Brotherhood of Elders

MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN MEN AND BOYS

The Brotherhood of Elders' origins can be traced to a simple, straightforward question asked of a small group of African-American men in 2010. The question was asked by Arnold Perkins, the former Director of Public Health for Alameda County and a longtime human rights champion and activist in the Bay Area. The question was simply: "Would you be interested in helping young black boys?" The responses, the interest and the subsequent actions were all extremely positive. And...as it is often said with social movements, the rest is history.

In 2011, the Brotherhood of Elders began meeting and shaping its direction. While exploring and entertaining a variety of thoughts regarding the organization's goals and direction, the Elders were steadfast in their commitment to shaping programs and interventions that would positively impact the lives of African-American men and boys.

In order to make their interventions as effective as possible, the Elders adopted an intergenerational approach by creating the Brotherhood of Elders Network- an intergenerational community of influential African American men who influence civic institutions to better meet the needs of African American young people. The network is comprised of three distinct groups. First, are the Elders for men 55 years of age and older; second is the Brotherhood Group which focuses on men 35 to 55; and third are the Warriors group comprised of young men from 20 to 35 years of age. While the Elders establish the strategic direction of the organization, the Brotherhood and Warriors groups provide tactical support and youth-centered advice and direction. Each group is intentionally organized to execute specific tasks of an overall strategy to improve the outcomes for African American young people in Oakland, California.

The Elders have established a partnership with The California Endowment which provided financial support to create this Manhood Development Curriculum. The Elders' goal is to train a cadre of Bay Area residents who will use the curriculum in schools, at churches, at youth and community centers as well as other places where the lives of African-American young men and boys can be touched.

Introduction

There is a powerful word among the Zulu in South Africa called ***ubuntu***. The word means that our humanity is found and nurtured in our extraordinary ability to love, connect, and prepare the next generation to create a world that is better than the one we found. In the spirit of *ubuntu*, we offer this tool kit to prepare African-American boys and young men to flex their collective might, in order to change our world. It is not an easy task to make a boy become a man. In fact, it is an impossible task. What is possible, however, is to open the pathways to manhood, nudging, pushing, and encouraging each young man to take their courageous first step on their journey. When all is done, we realize that becoming a man is not a recipe, or a seven-step process. But rather it is an art wherein young men make a choice to love, connect, and create a better world together.

The Art of Being a Black Man is a tool kit that offers one such pathway for African-American boys and young men. This tool kit was compiled by the best and the brightest minds America has to offer on the topic. These minds included professors, classroom teachers, researchers, evaluators, curriculum experts, and “brothas who just give a damn.” All poured their energy and souls into each word, hoping that one of the experiences found in the tool kit would leave an indelible imprint on the hearts and minds of our young men.

This tool kit offers structured activities designed to influence how young men think, act, and feel in preparation for their journey to manhood. The discussions and activities are meant to challenge and engage young men in dialogue, strengthen critical thinking, and build their emotional intelligence. This tool kit includes 70 games, activities and state-of-the-art strategies to support African-American young men and boys. Each activity provides detailed instructions and explanations for facilitating discussion and building community.

We offer this tool kit in the spirit of *ubuntu*! May we roll up our sleeves and revel in the Art of Being a Black Man.

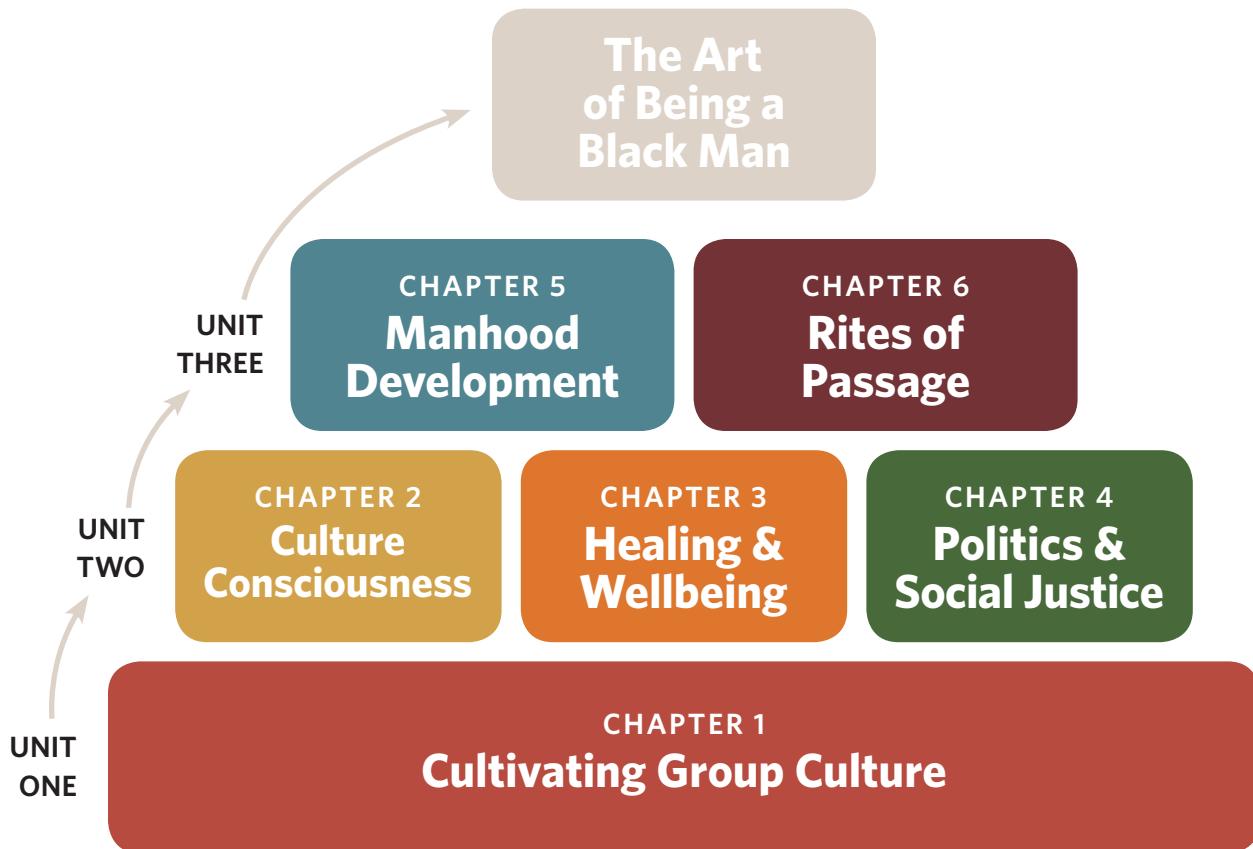
Shawn A. Ginwright, PhD



HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

This curriculum includes activities in six areas important for the development of African American young men. While each unit can be used at any time during the process, we recommend beginning with **unit one** activities, then move to **unit two** and finally **unit three** activities. Each unit is also color coded, and corresponds to the units identified below. This curriculum handbook is supported by additional resources, handouts, and Powerpoint presentations at THEARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN.COM. We encourage you to register at our website for updated materials and resources.

Building Blocks for Units



ELEMENTS WITHIN EACH ACTIVITY

Each activity within this guide is designed based on the principles of experiential learning, and consists of the following:

Who Are You?
nani wewe: who are you? (Swahili)

1. Remind yourself. Nobody built like you, you design yourself.

2. HOOK

- What are some questions you would rather not be asked?
- On a scale from 1-10 how well do you think you know the people in this group?

3. INTRO

This activity is designed for the participants to connect to themselves—their who we are is as important as what we think and what we do. Today in this exercise we will spend some time getting to know each other a deeper level through a process of our connection as well as to practice sharing things with each other that reveal our true selves.

4. OBJECTIVES

- Participants will reflect on their identity.
- Participants will respond to simple questions to reveal their sense of self.
- Participants will deepen their sense of community with group members.

5. MATERIALS PREP

- None

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Explain to participants that this activity will require participants to work in pairs for about 15 minutes. Each member of the pair will take turns asking each other questions called Content Questioning. In this process, the interviewer will ask one question over and over, while that interviewee answers it in different ways each time.

2. Explain that questions can be very powerful—even simple questions. When our brain is offered a question, it will go out and find an answer. During this questioning process, the answers of the interviewee will get more interesting and profound over the course of the exercise.

3. In order to prep your participants to create a safe space where they can be open and vulnerable, ask the following questions and chart their responses:

- Given how I have described this activity, what environment should we put in place to ensure everyone feels safe and comfortable enough to allow their minds to offer up real and profound answers?
- What are some reasons that might get in the way of someone being able to say something personal or vulnerable?
- Since you may feel uncomfortable in this activity, are there some reasons to allow yourself to be uncomfortable for a little while?

4. Get participants into pairs and ask them to sit facing each other. Ask one person to be Person A and the other to be Person B.

6.

5. Explain We are going to start with Person A asking the question and Person B answering. You will have one minute each to answer the question, “Who are you?” When A asks, “Who are you?” B answers. Then A asks again, “Who are you?” B answers again and again until time is up.

6. Encourage participants to take a moment to see what new answer emerges each time they are asked the question.

PERSON A: Who are you?
PERSON B: Share
PERSON A: Who are you?
PERSON B: Listen
PERSON A: Who are you?
PERSON B: A Black Man
PERSON A: Who are you?
PERSON B: Nod
PERSON A: Who are you?
PERSON B: An Intellectual

7. Remind the person asking the questions to stay neutral while asking the questions. Try to avoid facial expressions, nodding, laughter etc., and do not respond to the answers. Simply ask the question again.

8. After Person B answers, it will be Person A's turn to answer.

9. Using a timer, give participants one minute for each round, then switch.

After the round, you may choose to debrief the activity, or offer additional questions:

- Who are you?
• How are you a man?
• Who do you want to be?
• Who do you think you are?
• Who do you want to be?
• What has being African-American taught you?
• Who's an antioxidant to you?
• Who's are you going?
• What's stopping you?

An Inspirational Quote ①

To connect each topic to a sense of art, community, or social awareness.

A Hook ②

A quick and simple reflection question designed to activate your participants' curiosity and create a real-life connection between their personal experiences and the activity they are about to experience.

An Intro ③

Objectives ④

To articulate your learning targets and provide the highlights of what your participants will get from these activities.

A List of Materials and Things to Prep ⑤

To ensure each activity is well organized and well presented.

Instructions for Activity ⑥

A concise list of sequenced steps to introduce each activity, provide instructions, and facilitate discussions.

Debrief Questions ⑦

Three to five participants connect their experience in the activity to what they have learned. You can expand or contain the scope of an activity by tailoring these debrief questions.

The Closing ⑧

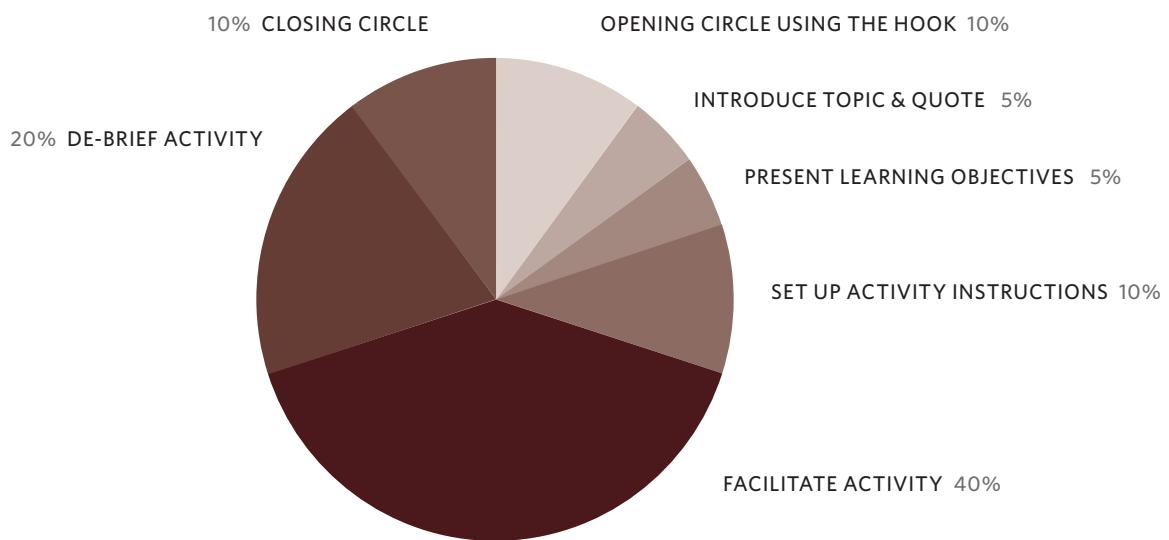
Ideally every participant should be offered a chance to respond to the closing question, as a checkout process. This will help facilitators take a temperature check of what participants learned/gained in the session.



TIME MANAGEMENT

Each activity in this guide can be facilitated in sixty to 120 minutes, depending on how you prefer to set it up. We don't offer time constraints in these activities because every facilitator will have their own take on how much time to allocate to each section. In general, experiential learning activities divide time in the following manner:

Time Allocation in Experiential Learning



MORE INFORMATION

For further support, additional handouts, and activity ideas, please visit:
THEARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN.COM.

Cultivating Group Culture

The success of any instructor in establishing the level of trust, vulnerability, and honesty that is required to engage Black boys and young men in a critical reflection of who they are, how they got here, and where they want to go depends largely on the classroom vibe that is established early in the year, and reinforced throughout your journey. The activities in the first four sections will help instructors to: ensure everyone knows each other's names, deepen relationships by sharing about each other, and establish group agreements and norms to support one another in deep discussions. In the last four sections we offer exercises to help reinforce the idea that the entire community of participants must engage, share, and contribute for the journey to be successful.

We offer four activities per topic in this section so that facilitators can establish strong community in the beginning, then revisit this section when your sense of community seems to dip, when participants lose motivation, or you just want to take a break from the serious work of becoming men and have some fun. The debrief questions in each section could be used at the end of any activity in that section. These debrief questions serve as a starting point—facilitators should add additional questions that are relevant to the group experience.

SOME HELPFUL TIPS FOR THE FACILITATOR:

- **Take risks.** Your participants will risk as much as you, so model everything, play every game.
- **Share deeply and honestly.** Whenever there are opportunities to go deep, offer your participants a look into who you are, what you stand for, and what you care about. Share your challenges with your participants, which will make them more open to sharing their own.
- **Validate everyone's needs and experiences.** Even when participants' behaviors seem to take the group off the target you are aiming for, look for what is motivating your participants' choices, validate their needs, and try to redirect their behavior.

IN THIS SECTION

[Introducing Me](#)

[Getting to Know You](#)

[Creating Group Ethos](#)

[Rituals & Routines](#)

[I Got You](#)

[Solving Problems Together](#)

[Ten-Point Plan](#)

[In Summary](#)

Introducing Me

mie : I, Me [Swahili]

Bob Marley isn't my name. I don't even know my name yet.

—BOB MARLEY

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will learn each other's names.
- Participants will learn about what is important to other members of the group.
- Participants will begin to take risks with each other by getting silly and creative with the group.

ACTIVITY

Artifacts

1. Have participants **form a seated circle**.
2. Ask each person to **find an item** in their wallet, backpack, or something they are wearing that says something about who they are (*i.e., a necklace they always wear, deodorant they always carry in their backpack because they are an athlete, or the picture of their mom that is their cell phone screenshot*) and **place it on the altar**. The altar is a sacred area or fixture used to hold items that carry a certain significance for a community. Often in our neighborhoods when we lose a loved one, we place teddy bears, cards, pictures, letters, and bottles on street corners to commemorate that person's life; this, in essence, is an altar.
3. Once each person has placed something in the middle of the circle, have each person **select an item** that is not theirs.
4. Ask participants to **take a minute to think** about who the item might belong to and what it represents to that person.
5. Go around the circle and have each person **guess whose item they think they are holding and what it represents to them**. Remind them to use peoples' names as this will help build a sense of community. If they don't remember the person's name, encourage them to ask so everyone can hear it again.
6. After each participant makes their guess, ask that person to **confirm** whether or not they are the possessor of that item.
7. If they are not the owner of that item, have the actual person **introduce themselves and explain** why that item is important to them.

ACTIVITY

Function!

1. Have participants **form a standing circle**.
2. Ask each participant to **invent some action to go with his name** (a fist in the air, a dance, a pose, or gesture) that will tell us a little bit about how they function in the world.
3. Then go around the circle and have each participant **say their name and demonstrate** their action to the group.
4. Now ask the group to **repeat** the name and action together.
5. This **continues** around the circle until each member has "performed" everyone else's name and action.
6. Close the activity with a **speed round**—have the whole group say each person's name and perform their gesture.

ACTIVITY

My Right-Hand Man

- 1.** Have participants **form a seated circle**.
- 2.** **Leave one seat empty** next to you.
- 3.** Randomly **select** one of the participants in the group and **call out their name** (remember we are still practicing names), and **ask them to come and sit** in the empty seat next to you.
- 4.** Have them **share** something about themselves that the group doesn't already know, or you can share something about the person that you selected.
- 5.** The participant in the circle who now has an empty seat to the right of them **selects a new person** who has not been called on and repeats the instructions until everybody has moved once.

ACTIVITY

Cypher "Name" Battle

For this activity you will need paper and pens.

- 1.** Explain to participants that today we are going to **create an acrostic poem** using each letter in our first name, and then circle up for a Cypher "Name" Battle or Poetry Slam!!
- 2.** Have participants **create a verse for each letter of their name**. For example, Deen might write:
 - D. for deeply invested in my community
 - E. for engaging in critical self-reflection
 - E. for enthusiastic to build community
 - N. for never giving up when I put my mind to something
- 3.** Then have them **think of a hook or a bridge** that will be added after every two verses. For example, "**They call me Deen, yeah, yeah, you call me Deen.**"
- 4.** **Give participants** your own example.
- 5.** **Encourage positivity** and add that they will be given **extra points** for incorporating other participants' names in a positive way.
- 6.** Once everybody has finished, **circle up** and have participants introduce themselves by **reading or performing their piece**.

DEBRIEF

- Why are name games important?
- What happens to our sense of community when we don't know each other's names?
- Has anyone ever given you a nickname that you didn't like?

Getting To Know You

azi : to know [IsiZulu]

By demonstrating that all peoples cry, laugh, eat, worry, and die, it can introduce the idea that if we try and understand each other, we may even become friends. —MAYA ANGELOU

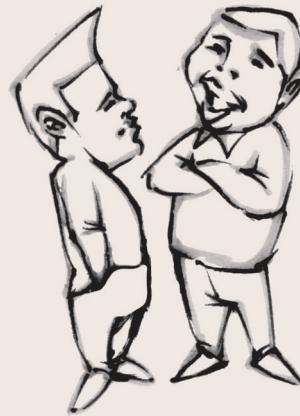
OBJECTIVES

- For participants to strengthen relationships with other participants
- To find commonalities amongst participants
- To provide participants opportunities to mix up, mingle, and work with every participant in a small group a few times
- To begin exploring themes and stereotypes of African American boys/men

ACTIVITY

Amoeba

1. Ask participants to **find a partner** who has something in common with them on a concrete level (i.e., *a shoe twin, same height, same birthday month, same number of siblings*).
2. Once they have found a partner, explain that their challenge will be to **find as many things in common** with each other as they can in five minutes.
3. Encourage them to **get creative** about their commonalities. *For example, they both play a particular sport, they are both from the same neighborhood, they were born in the same month.* Let them know you are not looking for obvious commonalities (*like they are both in the same school or in this class*).
4. Call, “**Time**” and ask for each group to **share** a few things they learned they have in common.
5. Now ask each pair to **fuse** with another pair so the pairs become **groups of four**; **repeat** the instructions.
6. **Continue** fusing until all the groups have joined into one large group. Have the large group **find at least three things** they all have in common with each other.



ACTIVITY

Move With Me, Brother

1. Have participants **sit in chairs in a circle**.
2. Ask one volunteer to **stand in the middle**. Make sure there are **no empty seats**.
3. The person in the middle **says**, “**Move with me, brother, if... you are wearing blue** [insert any description you like as long as it is true for that person].”
4. Then everybody in the circle who is wearing blue **gets up and moves** to a new seat.
5. The person who does not find a chair **becomes the next caller**.
6. Once you have done a few rounds, **create categories like music: Move with me, brother, if you love hip-hop; or stereotypes of Black men: Move with me, brother, if you have been pulled over by the cops for no reason.** Other categories could be, “**Something that is hard about being a man**” or “**Something I hope to get from this group**.”

ACTIVITY

Switch It Up

1. Ask participants to **stand up and find a partner** (someone they have not spent much time with yet).
2. Have them **greet and introduce** themselves.
3. Ask them to **turn back-to-back and change five things about their appearance**, within one minute. For example, they could tuck in their shirt, remove glasses, untie a shoelace, change their hair, roll up their sleeves or jeans, unbutton a few buttons on their shirt, etc.
4. When you call time, have partners **turn around and face each other**.
5. Within **one minute** both partners should try to **guess the five things** that have been changed.
6. Then ask them to each **share something new** about themselves that the other person doesn't already know.
7. Have them find a new partner and **repeat** this process a few times.

ACTIVITY

That's a Lie!

For this activity you will need paper and pens.

8. Have participants each **write down three things** about themselves based on common experiences or stereotypes of African American men. *For example, I have been pulled over by the cops four times for no reason; all four of my grandparents have high blood pressure; I am a great basketball player.*
9. But here is the twist: Two of the things they write down should be true and **one should be a lie**.
10. Each participant then takes turns **reading their list** aloud, and the rest of the group **writes down the one they think is a lie**.
11. The person who shared can **call on a few people to guess** their lie, then **reveals** which one is the lie.

Getting To Know You, continued

DEBRIEF

- **What did you like about this activity?**
- **What did you learn about the others in this group?**
- **What surprised you about the choices others made to share or not share about themselves?**
- **Why is it important that we build our sense of community in a class like this?**
- **What is challenging about a group of Black men sharing about themselves in this way?**
- **What is powerful about it?**
- **What might stop us from wanting to share important things about ourselves?**

Creating A Group Ethos

ubuzalwane : brotherhood [IsiZulu]

I believe in the brotherhood of all men, but I don't believe in wasting brotherhood on anyone who doesn't want to practice it with me. Brotherhood is a two-way street. —MALCOLM X

OBJECTIVES

- For participants to co-create the group agreements, routines, and rituals that form the foundation of the community
- For participants to define what they need from the group and instructor
- For participants to have the tools and language to navigate challenging moments as they arise
- For the instructor to create the founding belief that conflict will emerge in the class as a productive result of engaging in important discussions and ideas

ACTIVITY

Group Agreements

For this activity you will need index cards and pens.

1. Ask participants, “**How do you need your brothers in this group to behave in order to feel safe to share, learn, and have fun?**”
2. Explain that the group will participate in a process to **decide how they want to behave and interact with each other.**
3. Distribute an index card and a pen to each participant and ask each person to **come up with one or two suggestions** for what they would like (i.e., *have fun, respect each other, no haters, be willing to try, keep it real, etc.*)
4. Have participants **form small groups of three or four** and **share** what they wrote, why these things are important to them, and what their experiences have been in groups where these things weren’t in place.
5. Ask each group to **rank** their cards in order of their priority, with the most important thing on top.
6. Have one volunteer from each group **read** out their top card and explain why they chose it.
7. The facilitator (or a participant volunteer) can **chart** these top things from each group on the board.
8. After each group has shared their top things from the list, **ask** groups if there are remaining items in their sorted cards they think were not covered by the items already on the board. (It is likely that their second or third cards will have been shared by another group already.)
9. Explain to the group that **these four-to-eight agreements will form the basis of the group's code of conduct** in the class.
10. Flush out each agreement by **asking** the group:
 - **What will it look like to practice this agreement?**
 - **What would make someone not want to practice this agreement?**
 - **How will we, as a group, hold each other accountable to following these agreements that are important to all of us?**
11. Explain to the group that when group agreements aren’t followed or upheld by the community, it falls on the facilitator to maintain discipline, and that feels bad for everyone, so **the group should practice maintaining this “feel” of the classroom together.**

Creating A Group Ethos, continued

ACTIVITY

The Chronicles of Me

For this activity you will need a blank notebook or journal for each participant, Sharpies, old magazines, glue sticks, stickers, or other art supplies. Download and make copies of **THE CHRONICLES OF ME QUOTE LIST** from THEARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN.COM.

- 1.** Hand out blank notebooks and pens to each participant.
- 2.** Distribute **THE CHRONICLES OF ME QUOTE LIST**, and ask participants to glue their copy on the inside cover of their notebook.
- 3.** Ask participants to choose one of the quotes, and write it on the first line of the first page.
- 4.** Set a timer for **10 minutes** and instruct participants to free write for three minutes without stopping.
- 5.** Explain that if they get stuck they are to keep writing even if they just keep writing the word stuck, stuck, stuck or any other word until they find their way back to the topic.
- 6.** Now using Sharpies, old magazines, glue sticks, stickers, etc., have participants decorate the cover of their journal.
- 7.** You can have them do a daily, weekly or occasional free write using a different quote each time.

ACTIVITY

Young Brother, Who Are You?

For this activity you will need a marker and a piece of cardstock for each participant.

- 1.** Explain to participants that in African societies a person's name is an essential component of their identity. Because it is believed that a child's name can determine success in life, a special ceremony is held to name each child. In African American culture, many people decide to rename themselves using an African name to reclaim African heritage and separate themselves from the horror of slavery for which their last names are a constant reminder.
- 2.** Ask participants:
 - In what ways do you feel connected to an African heritage?
 - What does your name say about you?
- 3.** Explain to participants that they will spend some time researching African names to select a word or collection of words that represents how they would like to be seen by their community of peers.
- 4.** Write the following Web sites on the board (or ask participants to search "African Names"), and have participants spend 15 minutes researching various databases to find a word/name that appeals to them.
 - 20000-NAMES.COM/MALE_AFRICAN_NAMES.HTM
 - BABYNAMESORIGINS.COM/AFRICANBOYS.HTML,
 - NAMES-MEANINGS.NET/NAMES/MALE-AFRICAN,
 - BUZZLE.COM/ARTICLES/AFRICAN-NAMES-FOR-BOYS.HTML
- 5.** Distribute a piece of cardstock to each participant, and ask them to fold it in half lengthwise to create a name-tent that they can display on their desks.
- 6.** Have participants write their selected name on their name-tent, and how this name represents a quality they have, or how they want to be seen in this class. For example, a participant may share:
 - I chose Adisa, because I am one who is Clear about my goals.



continued...

- *I chose Bohlale, because I am one who is Wise.*

7. Once participants have shared, invite them to **keep their name-tents on their desks** and refer to each other using their chosen names.
8. Explain to participants that **we are given a name when we come into the world, but we can choose how people will call us. How we choose this can impact our sense of power, connection to our culture, and how we make choices.**

ACTIVITY Ubuntu—MeWe

I am because we are [Zulu]

Prep this activity by tearing out three or four magazine pages or printing 8.5" x 11" images online of pictures that can be used as metaphors to create a group name (i.e., a group of people climbing a steep mountain, someone scuba diving at the bottom of the sea amongst lost treasure, a school of fish all swimming in one direction).

Cut each image up into four or five puzzle pieces so that you will have one puzzle piece for each participant.

1. To start the activity **spread the puzzle pieces** randomly around the room.
2. Have participants **select** a puzzle piece, then **find the other participants** whose pieces fit together to complete a puzzle.
3. You will end up with **three or four small groups**.
4. **Ask** each group: **What does this image say to you about Black men?**
5. Have each group **create a group name** inspired by their image and discussion.
6. Once each group has shared their name, have all the participants **decide** on one of the names to use as their group name (i.e., "Success Climbers" or "Keepers of Truth").

DEBRIEF

- **What three words would you use to describe the "feel" of our community?**
- **How do the choices and behaviors of each of us impact our "ethos"?**
- **How can routines and rituals make us feel connected?**
- **What would make them feel trivial or silly?**

Rituals And Routines

inkambiso : *ritual [IsiZulu]*

It's the repetition of affirmations that leads to belief. And once that belief becomes a deep conviction, things begin to happen.

—MUHAMMAD ALI

OBJECTIVES

- To create a sense of community by creating rituals to greet and celebrate each other
- To create tools and processes to support group communication
- To create a closing tool to end each session

ACTIVITY

Shakes, Snaps, and Slaps

1. Ask participants to **find a partner** (maybe someone who likes the same basketball team as you or eats the same thing as you do for breakfast).
2. Have them **stand on opposite sides of the room** facing each other.
3. Explain that when you give the signal they should **walk towards each other, and when they get close enough, find a way to greet each other using a handshake, snap, or slap.**
4. Now ask each pair to **fuse** with another pair so the pairs become a group of four.
5. Ask each group to spend **five to ten minutes coming up with a handshake, snap, or slap** that will be unique to the group.
6. Once the groups each have an idea, have the whole group **circle up**.
7. Have each small group **model their greeting** for the rest of the participants.
8. Now as a whole group, **select one** of the greetings that the group will use to greet each other.
9. **Repeat** this process to create a ritual using words, gestures, and movements for ways participants can **agree, disagree, and celebrate their brothers** during group discussions and activities over the course of the year.
10. Now have participants **practice** by asking each person to find a new partner and practice all the gestures the class has come up with.
11. Give the group a discussion topic to **discuss** in pairs, and have a few participants share their thoughts.
12. Encourage participants listening to **use their gestures to agree, disagree, and celebrate** each other during the discussion.

ACTIVITY

Circling Up

The Pan-African flag was created by members of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association to serve as a symbol of solidarity and unity for African people across the world. The flag consists of the following colors: red, black, and green, which each hold symbolism. The red represents the blood that unites all African people and that which was shed and continues to be shed for their liberation. The black represents the people of African descent. Lastly, the green represents the land, Africa, and its natural wealth.

For this activity you will need one stick, glue, and colored ribbon in red, green, and black for each participant.

1. Tell participants that today they will work together to **make a talking stick** to help the group share space in group discussions.
2. **Explain** that while **this can be used during activities, discussions, and debrief, as well as a tool to bring out when there is tension or conflict within the group. It will also serve as a symbol of the community's positive thoughts, intentions, and hopes in their journey to deepen their knowledge of themselves and embrace healing for the Black community over the course of the year.**
3. For this reason, encourage each participant to **put their best intentions and positive spirit** into the stick.
4. Have participants **think quietly** for a moment about an energy they would like to charge the talking stick with (*i.e., an open heart, an ability to listen before jumping to conclusions, a calm presence, love, etc.*).
5. Have participants **select** one color of ribbon,



add **glue** to their stick, and then **wrap** ribbon around it from the top leaving 2-6 inches of ribbon dangling at the end.

6. Once everyone has wrapped their individual stick, have each participant **share the intention, quality, or skill** they will bring to the talking stick.
7. **Place** all the individual sticks in a pile in the center of the circle.
8. Using the white ribbon, **wrap** all the sticks together. This will now be used as the group's talking stick.
9. When having discussions with participants, **pass the stick around** the group as a symbol of whose turn it is to talk.

Rituals And Routines, continued

ACTIVITY

Help Me, Brother

For this activity you will need a paper bag, slips of paper, and a pen.

1. Ask participants to **think of one fear or worry** they have as Black men.
2. Explain that their **individual contributions will be kept confidential**.
3. Have participants **fold their paper** and **place their fear/worry in the paper bag**.
4. Explain that **the group will do a discussion process to share some of the concerns/fears of the group members**.
5. Explain that **the purpose of the exercise isn't to solve anyone's problem** (especially since the group won't know who wrote the idea) but **to explore some issues of concern that Black men have trouble talking about openly**.
6. Remind the group that **how they behave during this activity will determine the group's ability**

to really discuss an issue, versus making it feel unsafe or uncomfortable for anything productive to happen.

7. **Select one** of the issues and **read** it aloud.
8. **Facilitate a discussion** with the group by asking open-ended questions and steering away from the specifics of the issue. Some possible questions may include:
 - **Why might someone have this fear/worry?**
 - **Where might a worry like this come from?**
 - **How has our history contributed to a worry like this?**
 - **Who knows a story about a similar situation they can share?**
 - **What are some ideas or strategies someone could use if they felt this way?**
9. When you sense the discussion dying down, **move on** to another question, or **save the paper bag of fears** for another day's discussion.



ACTIVITY

Stop Light

To prep for this activity, the facilitator should make a jumbo traffic light by cutting out three large circles from poster board in red, yellow, and green. Stick these three circles on the wall or on the floor. You will also need Post-its.

- 1.** Explain to participants that **it is important that the group be part of creating routine and ritual and having a way to close at the end of each day or unit.**
- 2. Give each participant three Post-its.**
- 3.** Ask each participant to **reflect on the things they have learned** in the activity/unit you have just completed.
- 4.** Ask them to **think of one response** to the following prompts, and **place** on the stop-light:
 - **ON THE RED CIRCLE:** Write an idea of one behavior or thought you will stop.
 - **ON THE YELLOW CIRCLE:** Write an idea that you want to think about further.
 - **ON THE GREEN CIRCLE:** Think of something you will do as a result of what you have learned.
- 5.** Have participants **populate** the traffic light with their ideas.
- 6.** Have a few volunteers **read** out some of the ideas in each circle.
- 7. Discuss** the reflections as a group.

DEBRIEF

- **What do rituals do for us?**
- **What are some powerful rituals you have in your family?**
- **How have rituals been used in communities for healing, connection, growth, motivation, or marking transitions?**
- **What other types of rituals could we create?**

I Got You

aibekela : cover [IsiZulu]

The only justification for ever looking down on somebody is to pick them up. —JESSE JACKSON

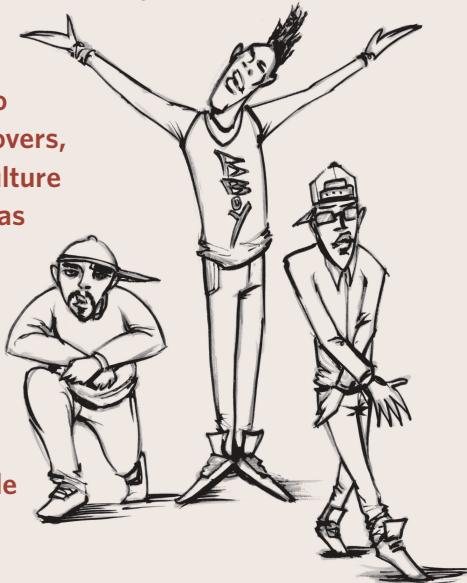
OBJECTIVES

- To engage participants in physical challenges
- To challenge participants to use their physical bodies and strength in nontraditional ways
- To establish a comfort and foundation of using physical activities to create somatic awareness, as a foundation to deepen later activities

ACTIVITY

B-Boy Rock/Paper/Scissors Battle

1. Explain to participants that hip-hop was invented by urban youth mainly as a rebellion against the disco era to which they could not connect or relate for a variety of social and economic reasons, but also as a result and expression of the struggles associated with life in inner-city communities. As the culture grew and developed its core elements: MC, DJ, GRAFFITI ARTISTS, and B-BOY/B-GIRL (BREAKDANCING), a dynamic of competition was created around these concepts. Often B-Boys would engage in dance battles as a means of gaining street credibility and name recognition. Battles were a way that neighborhoods would compete without violence. BREAKDANCING is a form of dance created by urban youth in the early 1980s. The term is derived from a technique DJs would use wherein they would LOOP OR REPEAT the BREAK in a particular song, believed to be the best part of the song by hip-hop lovers, hence, BREAKDANCING. From this dance culture and the other elements of hip-hop, such as graffiti and EMCEEING (MC or Master of Ceremony/"Move the Crowd" —Rakim), the title B-Boy or B-Girl was born to describe mainly those who were breakdancers but more broadly those who were immersed in hip-hop culture. Similar to turf battles today, young people of color continue to invent new ways to create, compete, and build community.



2. Divide participants into an even number of teams with a roughly even number of people per team (e.g., four teams of four people).
3. Explain that each team will be playing "Rock/Paper/Scissors" against one of the other teams, but with a twist. Instead of using their hands, they will use their whole bodies to represent rock, paper, or scissors. And instead of choosing individually, they will choose their symbol (rock, paper, or scissors) as a whole team.
4. The poses are a play on B-Boy / B-Girl poses as follows:
 - ROCK is down in a low-squat position with arms crossed in front.



continued...

- **PAPER** is standing up with arms spread wide and head tilted back (with attitude).
 - **SCISSORS** is like an “uprock” position standing with arms and legs crossed in front.
- 5.** To start the “battle,” two teams will line up facing each other about 5 feet apart. Each team has 10 seconds to pick their symbol for the first round.
- 6.** When the facilitator says “**go**,” each team will step towards each other and **make their pose** in unison. The winning team will get the **best two out of three rounds**. If any team members are not unified with the rest of their team (e.g., *making a different or unclear pose*), that team **loses** the round. Otherwise, usual “Rock/Paper/Scissors” rules apply (*rock beats scissors, scissors beats paper, paper beats rock*).
- 7.** If you have more than two teams, have two teams battle at a time and then have an “**ultimate battle**” with the final teams.

DEBRIEF (Optional)

- **What did you have to do to play this version of the game?**
- **What did you have to do to win a battle (i.e., act as a team, have unity of movement, etc.)?**
- **What activity can we learn from this energizer?**

ACTIVITY**Raised Fists**

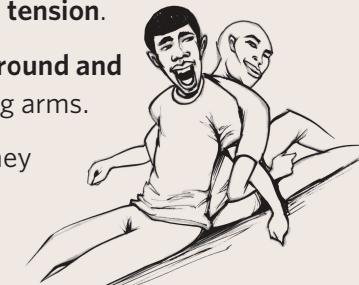
1. Start by having participants **find a partner** (perhaps by passing out a deck of cards and asking them to find the person with the same number as them).
2. Have each pair **sit on the floor facing each other**, and **place their feet together** with the tips of their shoes touching, and **hold hands**.
3. When you **count to three**, they must then **pull themselves up with mutual tension**.
4. Then ask the pairs to **turn around and sit back to back** while linking arms.
5. When you count to three, they must **pull each other up to standing** without unlinking their arms.
6. Next ask the participants to all **get in a tight circle** on the floor with their backs to the center of the circle.
7. Have everyone **link arms** with the two people next to them.
8. When you **count to three**, ask the group to **work together to stand up as a group**.

9. As you debrief you can **pass around the picture of Gold Medalist Tommie Smith and Bronze**

medalist John Carlos

after winning the 200-meter dash at the 1968 Olympics. This

was the first time the 20-second barrier was broken. This black power salute raised controversy at the time as it was seen as politicizing the Olympics. It remains a symbolic moment



I Got You, continued**continued...**

in the history of the American Civil Rights Movement. By this time, several prominent Black figures had been killed, including Medgar Evers, Malcolm X, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the country was seeing a shift from the civil rights struggle to the Black Power movement. There were few-to-no opportunities for the plight of Black people to be uplifted in global forums, so for these men to risk their athletic careers, commercial brands, and social livelihood by making this statement while the world was watching, was an example of Black men coming as close to sacrificing their lives for their people, without literally doing so.

ACTIVITY
Shrinking Island

For this activity you will need 10 square pieces of newspaper.

1. Divide participants into **groups of three**.
2. Give each group a **piece of newspaper** and ask them to **stand on it**.
3. Explain that each group is a community and the newspaper now represents their island.
4. Explain that everyone must keep their feet on the newspaper and have no part of their body touching the walls or the floor.
5. If any group falls off the paper, they are **disqualified** and must stand on the sidelines.
6. Explain that in the first challenge the group has **10 seconds to come up with a group name**.
7. Whether the group completes the task or not, let them know that **the island is shrinking** and that they must **get off the newspaper and fold it in half**.
8. Have them **get back on the newspaper** and ask them to **count to 100 in 30 seconds**.
9. Whether the group completes the task or not let them know that **the island is shrinking** and that they must get off the newspaper and **fold it in half again**.
10. Remind participants to **keep their feet** on the newspaper, and have no part of their body touching the walls or the floor.
11. **Repeat** until there is only one group remaining.



ACTIVITY**Down the River**

- 1.** Ask for a volunteer who is willing to trust his group of brothers to carry him down the river.
- 2.** Once a volunteer is selected, ask the remaining participants to **stand in two lines** facing each other.
- 3.** Instruct each person to **tightly grasp the arms** of the person across from them in the line.



- 4.** Now have the first pair at the end of the line **bend down slightly so the volunteer can sit** on their linked arms and be lifted back up.
- 5.** The volunteer should now **lie backwards, face up and arms crossed** over his chest so that most of his weight is spread out across the first few pairs.
- 6.** The pairs now must **lift their arms up and down to move the volunteer** gently on to the next pair. *If you have a smaller group the two at the end (nearest to the feet) can run to the front as the volunteer inches down until he has been carried all the way across the room.*
- 7.** If you have access to music you might want to **play the song** "Down by the Water."
- 8.** **Repeat** until each brother has been lifted down the river.

DEBRIEF

- **What did you like about that activity?**
- **What was challenging about that activity?**
- **Did you feel worried to be so physical with your group members?**
- **What do we gain by being able to be physical with each other?**
- **What did it feel like in your body during those activities? (Did you notice feeling your shoulders tense, your breath constricting, etc.)**
- **If you could ask one body part to talk right now, what awareness could it offer you about your sense of connection in this community?**

Solving Problems Together

hakuna matata : No problems/worries [Swahili]

You're either part of the solution or part of the problem.

—(LEROY) ELDRIDGE CLEAVER

OBJECTIVES

- To engage participants in creative problem-solving
- To reinforce the concept that how one solves a problem is as important as the solution
- To challenge participants to learn about themselves and their peers

ACTIVITY

Human Knot

For this activity you will need two ropes each 8-10 feet long.

1. Divide participants into **groups of five to six** participants each.
2. Have each group **form a circle**.
3. Have everyone **place** their right hand in the center of the circle with the **thumb up**. Then everyone should **reach** in with their left hand and **grab** someone else's right thumb.
4. **Make sure** that right hands are attached to left hands and make sure that two people don't have both of each other's hands.
5. **Send a pulse** around the group to make sure that everyone is connected (if not, exchange a few hands to connect everyone).
6. Explain to participants that they will now **work together to unscramble the knot and get back into a circle without letting go** of each others hands.
7. Once the small groups have completed the challenge, have the **whole group** form a circle and **make one giant knot to untangle**.

ACTIVITY

The Perfect Square

For this activity you will need two ropes each 8-10 feet long.

1. Divide participants into **two or three groups** (depending on the size of your group and how much open space you have).
2. Give each group **one 8- to 10-foot rope** that is tied off at one end so it forms a large loop.
3. **Place the loop in the center** of each small group, and have group members **stand around it**.
4. Explain to participants that **the challenge in this exercise is to be the first group to create a perfect square with the rope while wearing their blindfolds**.
5. Each group member **must have at least one hand on the rope** at all times.
6. Distribute a **blindfold** to each participant, and have them **prep the blindfolds** to place them over their eyes.
7. Once each person is holding the rope in one hand, they can **place the blindfolds** over their eyes and begin.
8. After **five minutes** have participants **freeze, remove** their blindfolds, and **assess** how close they came to making the perfect square.

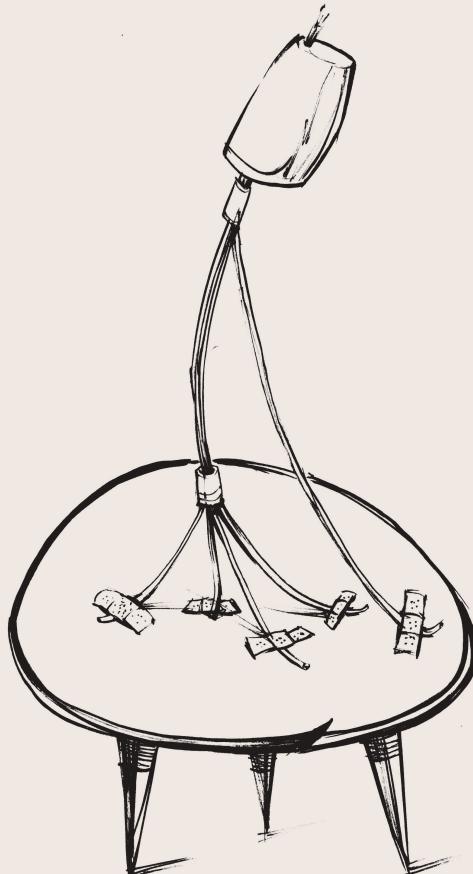
ACTIVITY

The Marshmallow Challenge

For this activity each group will need a paper bag with the following: 20 sticks of spaghetti, 1 yard of string, one marshmallow, and a piece of tape 1 yard long. (You can pre-rip the tape and stick it to an edge of a table, then have groups come get their tape.)

- 1.** Get participants into **groups of four** (perhaps by passing out a deck of cards and asking them to find three other people with the same suit).
- 2.** Explain that the groups must now **work together to build the tallest free-standing structure they can**. Remind them that “free standing” means it cannot lean up against anything, you may not hold it up, but you may use tape to secure it to the table.
- 3.** Give each group a paper bag with 20 sticks of spaghetti, 1 yard of string, one marshmallow, and a piece of tape 1 yard long. (You can pre-rip the tape and stick to an edge of a table, then have groups come get their tape.)
- 4.** Explain that **the entire marshmallow needs to be on top of the structure without tipping over the structure**, when you call, “**time**.”
- 5.** Give participants **18 minutes**, call “**time**,” **measure**, **celebrate**, and **debrief**.

When debriefing you can show this TED Talk: **MARSHMALLOW CHALLENGE.COM**.



Solving Problems Together, continued

ACTIVITY

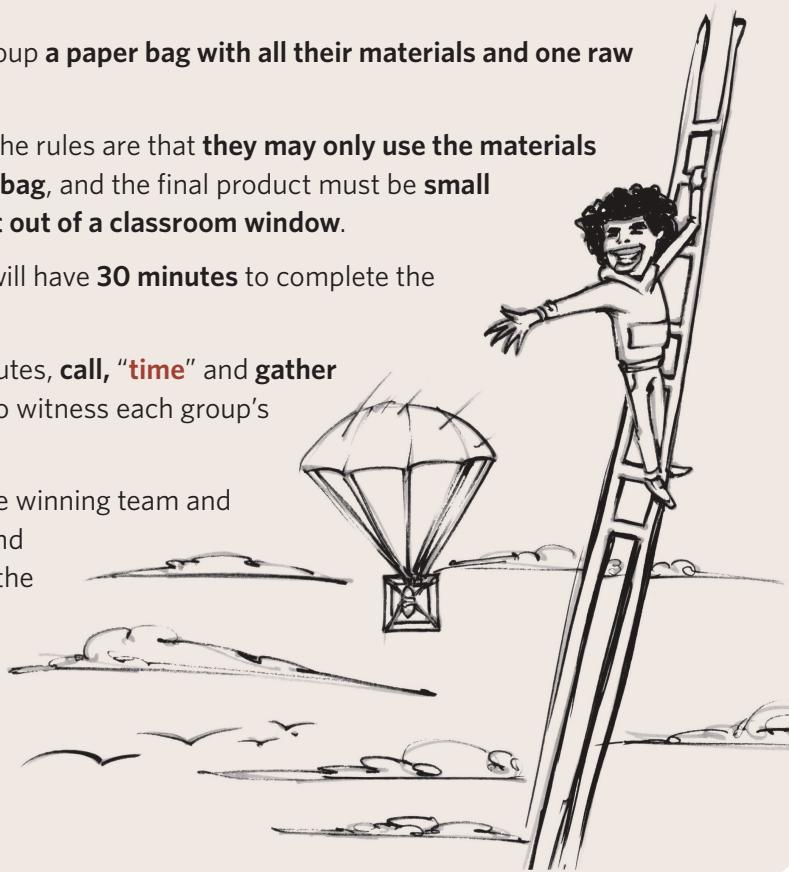
The Great Egg Drop

For this activity each group will need a paper bag with one sheet of newspaper, two pieces of paper, two paper plates, six drinking straws, tape (2 feet or less), glue (only for gluing things), one plastic or Styrofoam cup (32 oz. or smaller), 10 toothpicks, five Popsicle sticks, one balloon, one plastic spoon and one fork, one 24-oz. or smaller empty water bottle, one small Ziploc bag. You will also need one raw egg in its shell for each group. You can place each egg in separate Ziploc bags for easy clean up.

1. Ask participants to get into **groups of three** (perhaps by pulling names from a hat).
2. Explain that they will **pretend to be structural engineers whose challenge is to build a contraption that can hold an egg safely**. To test each structure, the groups will drop the structure (with a raw egg in it) from a classroom window.
3. The group whose **egg is still intact** after the fall will win **Engineer of the Year**.
4. Give each group **a paper bag with all their materials and one raw egg**.
5. Explain that the rules are that **they may only use the materials in the paper bag**, and the final product must be **small enough to fit out of a classroom window**.
6. The groups will have **30 minutes** to complete the task.
7. After 30 minutes, **call, "time"** and **gather the groups** to witness each group's egg drop.
8. **Celebrate** the winning team and the efforts and creativity of the whole group.

DEBRIEF

- **What did you like about that activity?**
- **What challenges came up for you or your group?**
- **What were some strategies you used to solve problems?**
- **What skills did you have to practice when working together?**
- **When did you have to step out of your comfort zone to accomplish the task?**
- **When did you give up and why?**



The Ten-Point Plan

kumi : ten [Swahili]

Few things help an individual more than to place responsibility upon him, and to let him know that you trust him. —BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

OBJECTIVES

- To ensure participants have closure of some form at the end of each section
- To establish a process of transition that acknowledges each participant's learning and growth during the section
- For participants to co-construct how they are becoming powerful, conscientious Black men

ACTIVITY

Black Panthers

For this activity you will need a yellow highlighter pen, and these downloads from THEARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN.COM:

- one copy of the **10-POINT PLAN POSTER TEMPLATE** and draw a sample on a board or poster paper
- one stapled packet for each participant with:
 - **THE WHAT WILL I LIVE AND DIE FOR WORKSHEET**
 - and the following Ten-Point Programs:
 - **WHAT WILL I LIVE & DIE FOR?**
 - **THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY'S TEN-POINT PROGRAM**
 - **THE HUMAN RIGHTS FIRST'S TEN-POINT PLAN FOR COMBATING HATE CRIME**
 - **THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION'S TEN-POINT PROGRAM**
 - **THE BAYVIEW YOUTH ADVOCATES YOUTH PLEDGE**
 - **ALIVE & FREE'S PRESCRIPTION TO END VIOLENCE & CHANGE LIVES**

1. **Explain** to participants that **the Ten-Point Plan** is an exercise to acknowledge **the learning and growth the group achieved in one unit of study, and marks a transition to a new unit.**
2. **Share** with them that **the process of creating a ten-point plan/program or a set of commandments to live by** will also allow participants to co-construct how they are becoming powerful, conscientious Black men.
3. **Inform** them that **by the end of the year they will have worked through all six sections in the Art of Being a Black Man: Community Building, Health and Well Being, Cultural Consciousness, Manhood Development, Leadership and Social Justice, and finally Rites of Passage, and we will use this same process at the end of each**



The Ten-Point Plan, continued

continued...

section to create a final document that will be framed and hung on the wall.

4. Divide the participants into **five equal groups**, perhaps by passing string or straws that are cut different lengths and having them find participants with the same length of string.
5. **Assign each group one of the TEN-POINT PROGRAMS** and give each group member a copy.
6. Have participants **read aloud** in a group and **highlight and make notes** about the parts of the document that resonate with them, questions they have, and how they might reword something if they wrote it today.
7. Once each group has gone through their document, have them each **share** out with the whole group three things that stood out to them.
8. Now ask them to **turn to the first page** of their packet **WHAT WILL I LIVE AND DIE FOR?** And take **15-20 minutes** to thoughtfully **answer** the questions.
9. For homework, participants should **take home the highlighter pen, handout packet and read** the other four documents.
10. Follow the steps in the next three activities, **BLUE SKIES THINKING. STICKER-DOT VOTING** and **I PLEDGE!** upon completion of each unit.

DEBRIEF

Close this session by asking each person to read what they answered for the final question on the **WHAT WILL I LIVE AND DIE FOR?** handout, and have each group member answer the question that is offered.

- **What is a question you would challenge your group members to answer about themselves?**

ACTIVITY

Blue Skies Thinking

For this activity you will need a stack of 8.5"x11" scratch paper torn in half, markers (at least one per participant), and a music player.

These steps will be done at the end of each of the six sections as you develop your ideas for the ten-point plan/program/pledge.

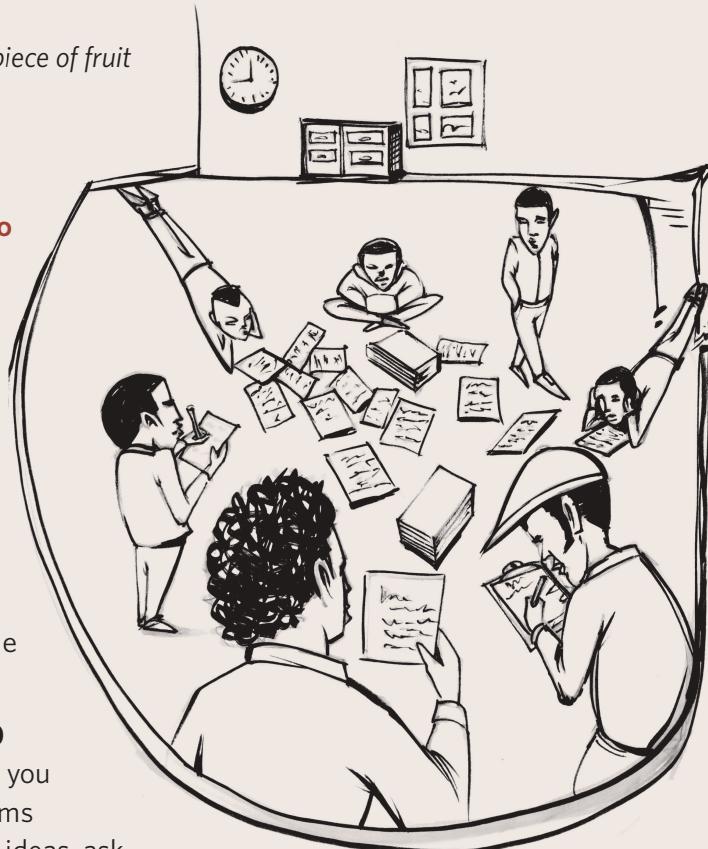
1. **Explain** to participants they will **engage in a group process to generate ideas for their 10-point plan/program/pledge using "blue skies thinking."**
2. If there are **parameters** they should consider in generating their ideas now is the time to do that. *For example, if you have any grant guidelines that specify what topics/ideas must get included in this document, or they are not allowed to use curse words, etc., you want to make that clear up front.*
3. Start by **reminding participants of the section they just went through** and some of the activities they did in the eight activities.
4. **Pass out multiple pieces of scratch paper and two or three markers** to each participant.
5. Ask participants to **do some "blue skies thinking"** and **write down ideas, issues, and topics** that they recall learning about in the section of the curriculum they just experienced. *For example, if the just finished the Health and Well-being section, they might write things like:*
 - Self-care for Black men is hard
 - My Mask = survival tactic
 - What is the impact of violence on my psyche?
 - TRIGGERS!!
 - Creating grounded lives



continued...

- Don't let myself get hungry—Carry a piece of fruit
 - Turn over my Saboteur
 - And so on...
- 6.** Explain that **blue skies thinking** is a process to get all ideas on the table so there are no right and wrong things to write down. It is just a brain dump!
- 7.** Remind participants that they should **write each new idea on a new sheet of paper** and **write large so we can all read it**.
- 8.** As they write down their ideas **encourage them to toss the slips of paper** onto the floor in the center of the room.
- 9.** Turn on music and give participants **10 to 15 minutes** to generate ideas. Once you have 20-30 ideas (or more) and it seems like the participants are running out of ideas, ask participants to **walk around the room and read** all the ideas that were written down. If they see the same idea on two different pieces of paper, they can **place them on top** of each other.
- 10.** Ask participants to **gather around** all the papers and **discuss** the ideas written. Ask for clarifying questions on any of the ideas, or ask for further elaboration if an idea seems unclear.

Now you are ready to do **STICKER-DOT VOTING**.

**DEBRIEF**

- What is one idea that stood out that someone else wrote?
- How was it to just write whatever came to mind?
- Is there something you didn't add that you later wish you did?



The Ten-Point Plan, continued

ACTIVITY

Sticker-Dot Voting

For this activity you will need three to five colored stickers per participant (dot stickers from an office supply store work great).

1. Explain to participants that **you would like to see which of the ideas they generated from “blue skies thinking” are most appealing to the group** as they think about turning two of them into their 10-point plan/program/pledge.
 2. **Distribute three stickers** to each participant.
 3. **Explain** to participants that each sticker represents one vote. They will walk around the room and place a sticker on the idea(s) they like most.
 4. **They can use all their votes on one idea, or they can use each vote on a separate idea.**
 5. Tell them they will still spend some time turning the ideas into a sentence next, so **don't worry if it doesn't make total sense yet**. Ask them to **put stickers on the ideas that were of most importance** or the ideas that really resonated with them.
 6. **Play music for five minutes.** Give them a three-, two-, and one-minute **warning**, if needed.
 7. **Call “time”** and ask participants to **add up all the dots**.
 8. Have participants **rank** them in order of the most stickers to the least and then focus on the top two or three ideas or the papers with four or more stickers on it.
 9. Before eliminating the other papers that did not receive as many votes, **ask the group if there are any that we should discuss that someone wants to make a strong case to keep in the running.**
 10. Then spend the rest of the time **talking about the remaining ideas** and why participants feel that idea/concept should be turned into an important line in the 10-point plan/program/pledge.
 11. As you come to the end of the session, **hand out one remaining sticker** to each participant (a star or some other color that has not been used).
 12. Ask each participant to **vote on their top idea** after having discussed each one.
 13. **Caution against the urge to start combining ideas.** When this happens things often lose their power and it gets muddy.
 14. Once participants have cast their final vote, **select the two ideas** that got the most votes and eliminate the rest.
- Now you are ready to do **I PLEDGE....**

DEBRIEF

- **How did it feel when your ideas didn't get selected?**
- **How else could we use sticker-dot voting in this group?**



ACTIVITY**I Pledge....**

For this activity participants will need paper and pen. You will also need markers and chart paper.

1. Ask participants to **find a partner**, perhaps by finding the person with the same number of siblings, aunts and uncles, or living grandparents.
2. **Remind them of the two ideas/concepts** that were selected through the sticker-dot voting process that they will be using to develop two lines of the 10-point plan/program/pledge.
3. **Explain** that participants must now work with their partner to come up with a line for each one. *For example: We pledge to exercise twice a week for the next three months. We pledge to stop using the "B" word when referring to our sisters or our brothers.*
4. Once they have worked for **5-10 minutes** on their two sentences ask them to **join another pair to form a group of four** and each **share** what they drafted.
5. Then explain that **the new group of four has 5-10 minutes to merge, edit, rewrite, or select** the best of to create two new or edited sentences keeping the best of what each pair came up with.
6. Once the group of four has worked for **5-10 minutes** on their two new/edited sentences ask them to **join another group of four to form a group of eight** and each **share** what they drafted.
7. Then explain that the new group of eight must **repeat** the process creating two new/edited sentences.
8. Once the groups of eight have completed the process have them **write each sentence on a large piece of butcher paper** so they can hang it on the wall for everyone to see.
9. Now the two groups of eight must **once more edit** (or keep, if they all agree) the two sentences and ultimately come up with two final sentences for the 10-point plan/program/pledge.
10. **Add the two final sentences** to your **10-POINT PLAN POSTER TEMPLATE**.

DEBRIEF

- **What excites you about the two new lines we have created for our 10-point plan/program/pledge?**
- **What challenges you about the two new lines we have created for our 10-point plan/program/pledge?**
- **What is the first thing you will do to take action on these two new lines?**

In Summary

A truthful evaluation of yourself gives feedback for growth and success. —BRENDA JOHNSON PADGITT

OBJECTIVES

- To reflect on the key experiences in each session
- To connect what one experienced to what one learned, and the meaning they make of it
- To learn about the different takeaways that came up for various participants in the session, and learn from one another
- To reinforce the idea that learning is unique to each individual

ACTIVITY

Prove and Improve

This is a good activity to do during the first few weeks of your program. For this activity you will need pens, index cards, flip chart, markers, and tape. Also, go to THEARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN.COM and download:

- A sample of **THE ART OF BEING A BLACK MAN LEARNING MAP**, and create it on chart paper or PowerPoint.
- **PROVE AND IMPROVE HANDOUT** (make one copy for each participant).

1. Explain that while you have goals and evaluation benchmarks that you would like to see as a result of the participants' involvement with **THE ART OF BEING A BLACK MAN** group today, they will be coming up with goals that the group hopes to see.

2. Share that **there are two broad types of evaluation: OUTCOME EVALUATION AND PROCESS EVALUATION.**

OUTCOME EVALUATION (also referred to as **SUMMATIVE EVALUATION OR IMPACT EVALUATION**) focuses on documenting the results of an effort. **OUTCOME EVALUATION** helps determine how a community and its people are different as a result of what was done. It examines the change that the efforts produced. To the degree possible, its aim is to "prove" that the community change effort was effective and beneficial. In addition to looking at changes that resulted in the community, **OUTCOME EVALUATION** can also examine how participation in the effort affected the young people and adults involved in the process.

PROCESS EVALUATION (also referred to as **FORMATIVE OR IMPROVEMENT EVALUATION**) provides information useful for improving the process used to bring about community change. **PROCESS EVALUATION** helps determine what might be done differently the next time a similar community change effort is implemented. If the aim of outcome evaluation is to "prove," the aim of process evaluation is to "improve." This type of evaluation is a catalyst for continual learning and growth.

3. Next **review** what was learned in the last unit with the participants and share the goals and objectives you have created.

4. Discuss and answer any questions.



continued...

5. Divide participants into **groups of four**, perhaps by passing around a basket that has four pieces of each various candy (i.e., Jolly Ranchers, Now & Later, Tootsie Rolls, Bazooka gum and butterscotch), and have them find the other participants with the same candy.
6. Ask participants to spend about **10-15 minutes brainstorming a list of possible evaluation goals** they think would be important as they complete **THE ART OF BEING A BLACK MAN CURRICULUM**.
7. Remind them that they should **think of both outcome and process**.
8. As they generate ideas have them **put each idea on an index card**.
9. Once they are done brainstorming have them **spread the index cards on a table**, and ask participants to **circle around** the table reading the various ideas. They can **stack duplicate items**.
10. Now split the group in **two large groups** by merging the groups of four.
11. Have **one group pick out the index cards that they believe are OUTCOME EVALUATION** (we will feel like a family, we will have a greater knowledge of our history) and the **other half pick out the index cards that are Process evaluation** (we will all show up on time and ready to participate, all participants will complete the journey, we will be challenged, we will have fun).
12. Now have **each group select the top five ideas** that they would like to turn into evaluation points and turn them into a question using the **PROVE AND IMPROVE HANDOUT**.

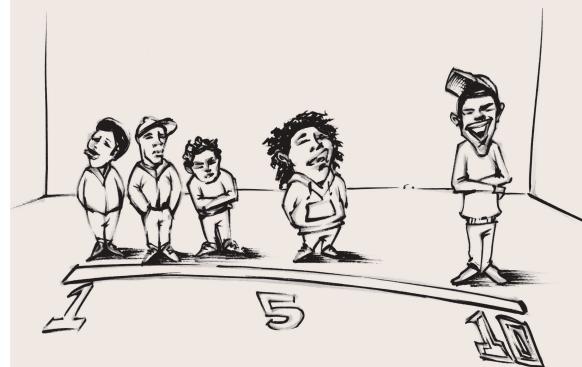
*Source: Reflect and Improve Tool Kit

ACTIVITY

On a Scale from One to Ten

This is a good activity to do about a quarter of the way into your program.

1. Place a long piece of **blue painters tape** on the floor—about 8 feet long.
2. Explain that **one end represents a one and at the other ten**.



3. Explain to participants that you will **call out a series of reflection questions**, and each person should **move to the place on the line** that reflects how they would respond to this question, on a scale from one to ten.

Some sample questions could include:

- **On a scale from one to ten, how much did you enjoy this session?**
- **On a scale from one to ten, how much did you share about yourself in this session?**
- **On a scale from one to ten, how much did you learn in this session?**

In Summary, continued

ACTIVITY Graffiti

This is a good activity to do at the halfway point in your program.

1. Explain to participants that **graffiti is a street art developed by youth living in urban areas, arguably an expression of ignored thoughts and voices whose canvas is created by artists who aggressively repurpose public landscapes to be heard and seen by a world that has blocked them out. Jean Michel Basquiat, a Haitian artist born and raised in New York, is an example of the potential, brilliance, and talent that exists within our communities. Basquiat began as a graffiti artist, ultimately becoming one of the most widely known and revered artists in the world with pieces selling for hundreds of millions of dollars. He and many other street artists are only carrying the artistic torch of our Egyptian ancestors who in a sense were the originators of graffiti through their creation of hieroglyphics, a pictorial art form painted along the walls of temples and monuments in Egypt that told stories, recorded history, and illustrated facets of life at the time. We often don't know how**

connected to our history we truly are, as we don't invent but update previous inventions to make them relevant and resonant for our times and environments.

2. Place several pieces of chart paper around the room.
3. Write one open-ended reflection question on each paper.
4. Give each participant a marker, and ask them to walk around the room to each piece of paper and write a few responses to each one.
5. If they see an idea from another participant that they agree with, they can write a check mark next to that idea.
6. If they see an idea that sparks another idea for them, they could draw a line from that idea to a new idea that they add, so people can see the connection.
7. Have participants read each other's comments, and discuss commonalities, themes, and unique ideas.



ACTIVITY

When You Are In My Seat

This is a good activity to do at the end of your program. You will need to download from THEARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN.COM and make one copy for each participant of the **MY YEAR IN REFLECTION HANDOUT**, blank greeting cards or paper, pens, envelopes, and music for this activity.

- 1. Explain** that **as part of our process to reflect all we have experienced** we are each going to write a letter that will be given to next year's participants as they embark on the journey of **THE ART OF BEING A BLACK MAN**.
- 2. Pass out** the **MY YEAR IN REFLECTION HANDOUT** and have participants **answer** the questions.
- 3. When** they are done **give them a blank greeting card or a piece of paper** and have them **write a letter or card** to future participants.
Note—if you have any special traditions or “surprise” activities you don’t want participants to spoil, make sure to tell them ahead of time not to write about that.
- 4. Have** participants **read** their letter out loud to the class.
- 5. Ask** participants to **sign** their letter so that future participants might recognize them as part of their community.
- 6. Seal** each letter in an envelope and store them in a safe place for the future.

DEBRIEF

Because these activities would be used at the end of an activity, no debrief is needed.

Cultural Consciousness

The power of Black men comes from our deep roots in African culture. Sometimes we are unaware that how we greet each other, our creative use of language, and even rituals like pouring libation are all rooted in African traditions. Too many Black men, however, experience an identity crisis as they search for connections in destructive images in the media. We believe a conscientious exploration of history can ground young men in understanding their roots. There are many qualities of African culture that will strengthen and deepen Black boys' knowledge of who they are.

African Americans have been taught to feel shame about ourselves—the texture of our hair, the fullness of our lips, or the way we talk... Slavery ended, but racism remains. This section is shaped by the South African Zulu term ***ubuntu***, which means one's humanity is realized in service and kindness to others. The term is a powerful reminder of how African people are interconnected, and the term *ubuntu* provides a way to understand how to connect to one another. By opening up the dialogue of where we come from, some of this shame can be identified as trauma-shaping and then released. From historical context this section will explore current culture and the ways that Black men have shaped and will continue to shape our culture today.

IN THIS SECTION WE EXPLORE A SERIES OF ACTIVITIES THAT PROVOKE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- **What does it mean to be African?**
- **What does it mean to be Black?**
- **Is being Black connected to being African? How so?**
- **How is Black culture connected to the Black experience?**
- **What does that hyphen between African and American represent for us?**
- **How is African culture embedded into our culture today?**
- **How can we create another Harlem Renaissance through a conscientious re-emergence of culture, artistry, and empowerment?**

IN THIS SECTION

The Black Box

Black & African

How Did We Get Here?

Lost and Found

Being an African-Centered Warrior

What is Culture?

Walk in My shoes

Black Man Time Capsule

The Black Box: Part I

nguvu : power [Swahili]

Power is the ability to define reality and to have other people respond to your definition as if it were their own. —DR. WADE NOBLES

HOOK

- Ask participants: **What are boxes? What purpose do they serve?**

INTRO

- Explain that **in our society boxes are used to categorize people. They are used to define what is right and what is wrong. For example, the box for a man is that he has to be strong, he can't ever cry, and he has to make money. For women, they are supposed to wear pink and be emotional. Today we are going to examine the boxes around being Black and African.**

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will examine their self-image.
- Participants will explore stereotypes about Africans and Black people.
- Participants will investigate their own ideas about Africans and Black people.

MATERIALS/PREP

- Chart paper
- Markers
- Tape
- Download from **THEARTOFBEING ABLACKMAN.**

COM:

- DIRECTION SIGNS** (make one copy per participant)
- FOUR CORNERS SIGNS** (make one set and place one sign in each quadrant of the room)



INSTRUCTIONS

- 1.** **Draw** two large boxes on separate pieces of chart paper.
- 2.** **Ask** participants: **What words, images, or phrases come to your mind when I say, "You're African."**
- 3.** Allow a chaotic **brainstorm** to erupt and **write** down all the words and phrases you can catch. Ask for two volunteers to come to the board to **help** you chart by **writing the answers in the box**—explain that the volunteers will write down as many of the ideas and comments they hear from their classmates as they can. **Review** their answers aloud.
- 4.** **Ask** participants: **What words, images, or phrases come to your mind when I say, "Black"**? **Chart** their answers. Ask a participant to **review** the answers and then **compare** the answers. Ask **What is the difference between the two?**
- 5.** **Place** the following signs at four corners of the room:
STRONGLY AGREE, AGREE, DISAGREE, and STRONGLY DISAGREE.
- 6.** Explain to participants that you will now do a **debate exercise** to explore the various perspectives in the group about being black and African. Explain that you will **read a series of statements**. For each one, participants should **stand under the sign that reflects their belief** about the statement.
 - **Black and African are the same thing.**
 - **Africans are better than Black people.**
 - **All Africans live in villages.**
 - **Most Black youth have been to prison at some point in their life.**
 - **The stereotypes about Black people are true.**
 - **The stereotypes about Africans are true.**
- 7.** **Choose** some of the things that came out of the brainstorm **to formulate some other statements**. *For example, if the participants said Black people are loud, you can use that as a statement.*

DEBRIEF

- **What did you learn in this exercise?**
- **When did you disagree with your peers?**
- **What surprised you about why you disagreed?**
- **What did you learn about your peers in this exercise?**

CLOSING

- **Where did these ideas about Black people and African people come from?**

The Black Box: Part II

ujasiri : courage [Swahili]

If you make a man feel that he is inferior, you do not have to compel him to accept an inferior status, for he will seek it himself. If you make a man think that he is justly an outcast, you do not have to order him to the back door. He will go without being told, and if there is no back door, his very nature will demand one.

—CARTER G. WOODSON

HOOK

- Write the quote above on a sheet of chart paper. Ask a participant to read it, and ask participants to discuss what it means.

INTRO

- Explain that **today we are going to examine the images of Black people that are in the media and examine their history. You may see some images that upset you and that make you angry—that is okay. The most important thing is that we stay open and challenge our own assumptions.**

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will explore the stereotypical images of Black people to understand the impact.
- Participants will critically analyze the impact of racist classic and contemporary imagery.

MATERIALS/PREP

- Computer
- Projector
- Download **THE BLACK BOX POWERPOINT** from **THEARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN.COM**.
- Speakers

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Explain** to participants that they are going to watch a slide show and to pay close attention to the images that they see. **Play** the **THE BLACK BOX POWERPOINT**.
2. Explain that **these images are used to do three things:**
 - **Brainwash black people to believe in the inferiority of Africans.**
 - **Divide and therefore control black people.**
 - **To perpetuate and maintain white supremacy.** White slave owners had to convince the slaves that they were superior in order to keep them enslaved. They had to make sure that Black people felt like they deserved to be slaves. Once legal slavery was abolished, it became even more important that negative images of Black people were made popular in order to ensure that whites maintained their social position.
3. **Ask** participants: **How do the images in this slideshow perpetuate white supremacy?**

DEBRIEF

- **What words came to mind when you were watching the slide show?**
- **What stood out to you or surprised you?**
- **Why do these images exist?**
- **What purpose do these images serve?**
- **How do these images impact Black people?**
- **How do these images impact white people?**

CLOSING

- **Has your view of media and popular culture changed after this activity? Why or why not?**

Black & African

mizizi : roots [Swahili]

A people without knowledge of thier past history, origin and culture, is like a tree without roots. —MARCUS GARVEY

HOOK

- Just because you put kittens in an oven doesn't make them biscuits. Are you really American?

INTRO

- Africans were kidnapped and sold into slavery all over the world. Many people of African origin have not reconnected with their true history and culture, which was stolen, hidden, and distorted in the process. In this activity, we are going to explore where we come from and what we believe about Africa. We will start with our own individual history and then go back to our shared history as African descendants.

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will explore terms they use to describe their racial and ethnic identity.
- Participants will analyze how society brainwashed us to believe negative images of Blackness.
- Participants will reflect on their identities as Black men/boys.

MATERIALS/PREP

- Gather the following documentary clips available on **YOUTUBE**: **ETHNIC NOTIONS**, **COLOR ADJUSTMENT**, and **BAMBOOZLED**. (Each clip should demonstrate how images of Black people have been distorted and negative. When we see these images and messages, we learn how to dislike who we are as Africans.)
- Chart paper or chalk or dry erase board

SETUP

- Place a sign with the following four phrases in each corner of the room:

BLACK

AFRICAN
AMERICAN

NIGGA

AFRICAN

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Ask participants **how do they racially identify**?
2. Allow them to **shout out** terms, names, phrases that are **written** on butcher paper or board.
3. Instruct participants that **they are going to participate in an activity that encourages them to understand racial identity**.
4. Ask participants to **stand together in the center** of the room.
5. Instruct participants that **this is a silent activity. NO TALKING!**
6. Ask participants to **choose** the corner that best represents how they identify, and silently **walk** to that corner of the room and remain there.
7. Ask participants to **reflect** on the following question: **What does it mean to identify this way?**
8. Ask participants to **discuss** their answer with the other participants in their corner.
9. Repeat **STEPS 4–8** with the following question prompts:
 - **Which corner represents the most positive idea? →**

Black & African, continued

- Which corner represents the most negative identify?
- Which term best describes your grandmother, mother or grandfather?

10. Have participants return to their seats and view the selected video clips.

- ETHNIC NOTIONS
- COLOR
- ADJUSTMENT
- BAMBOOZLED

DEBRIEF

- In these clips, how are the images of Black people distorted?
- Are they distorted in a positive or negative way?
- If you were from another race/culture, what would clips like these lead you to believe about our people?
- Where do these terms about our identity come from?
- In what ways are these images still with us today, and how do they impact us?
- What can be done to reclaim our African identity?

CLOSING

- What about the way you see yourself or other Black people changed after learning about how African images have been distorted?

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY

OPTIONAL: Give participants 48 hours to record or capture negative images in the media, commercials, or products that degrade African identity. They can use their cell phones to take pictures of billboards or capture commercials or record radio advertisements.

How Did We Get Here?

etholakele : found [Zulu]

Know from whence you came. If you know whence you came, there are absolutely no limitations to where you can go. —JAMES BALDWIN

HOOK

- Get participants into pairs using the **AFRICAN HEROES CARDS**. In their pairs, have participants discuss how they think Black people got to America. After a few minutes ask participants to share what they discussed. Chart their answers.

INTRO

- Between the late 1400s and the early 1800s, approximately 10-12 million Africans were kidnapped from their countries, primarily along the coast of West Africa, and sold into slavery. This process was called the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and it was one of several holocausts endured by Africans. Today we are going to learn a little more about this process.

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will be introduced to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.
- Participants will visualize the experience of the process of being captured.

MATERIALS/PREP

- Download from ARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN.ORG:
 - PASSAGE STRIPS** (make three copies)
 - ABDUCTION POWERPOINT**
 - VISUALIZATION REFLECTION SHEET** (make one copy per participant)
 - AFRICAN HEROES CARDS** (one card for each participant)
- Bike chain
- Hammer
- Post-its

INSTRUCTIONS

- Ask participants to **close their eyes** and **read** the following passage dramatically:

I want you to imagine that you are walking home from a long day of hanging out with your friends. You had a lot fun, ate good food, watched movies, talked, cracked jokes, and laughed like crazy. Now you are headed home still feeling good. All of a sudden, you feel a net drop over your body and pull you down to the ground. You struggle to get out, but the more you struggle, the tighter the net gets. You are dragged in this net and literally thrown into a van. The van drives off and you have no idea what is happening. You scream for help and suddenly feel a blow to your face as if someone has kicked you, and then you black out. You wake up to the taste of your own blood with your wrists and ankles in chains. Now there are several other people in the van in the same position as you. You try to plead with your kidnappers to let you go, but they don't speak your language, and every time you try to speak you are punched or kicked. After several hours, you arrive at the edge of some town with no one and nothing in it. You are dragged out of the van and realize that you are chained to the other people in the van. There are 20 of you, all Black, some male, some female, some children. You have to walk 10 miles into the town because there are no roads to drive on. Your ankles and wrists are bleeding from the iron cuffs. You feel weak and fall. You quickly try to get up, but the pain from your ankles is too much to bear. The line keeps moving and you get



How Did We Get Here?, continued

stepped on by the other people. Finally, you arrive at what looks like a church on a beach. You are thrown in a dungeon with no lights or windows. There are several hundred people in the dungeon. It smells like feces, vomit, urine, sweat, and dead bodies. You stay there for 30 days. There are no bathrooms and you only have the clothes that you were wearing the day you were abducted. You have been urinating and defecating in your clothes for 30 days. Once a day someone comes in and puts a handful of cold grits in your hands to eat. One day the door opened and you were all drug out of the dungeon. The woman chained next to you has been dead for two weeks and her body is decaying. Your kidnappers unchain her and throw her body in the ocean. You are put on a ship. You have no idea what is going to happen next. Slowly open your eyes.

Please remain silent.

2. Distribute the **AFRICAN HEROES CARDS** to each participant, and ask them to **get into pairs** by finding the person who has a matching card.
3. **Hand out** one passage strip to each pair.
4. Ask participants to **read** the passages and **discuss** them.
5. **Explain** that **these passages are first-hand accounts from people who were captured as slaves and from traders, dealers, and missionaries.** (Note: *This is a strategy to build community as participants pair up with people they don't normally work with.*)
6. Bring the group back together to **debrief**.

DEBRIEF

- What was it like to imagine what our ancestors went through?
- If you could say something to your ancestor that was kidnapped, what would you say?
- What thoughts were running through your head during the visualization?
- If you could do something to honor your ancestors, what would you do?
- How were conditions described by the passages?
- How has your view of Blackness changed after today? How will you make your ancestors proud after going through such a horrible experience?

CLOSING

- What did you learn today?

Lost and Found

etholakele : found [Zulu]

Whoever controls the images, controls your self-esteem, self-respect, and self-development. Whoever controls the history, controls the vision. —DR. LEONARD JEFFRIES

HOOK

- Show participants a clip from the movie **RIZE** at [YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=SO4IFDPIYFQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SO4IFDPIYFQ)
- After they watch the clip, ask them: **What did this clip demonstrate?**

INTRO

- Ask participants what they think the word “REPURPOSE” means. Chart their answers. Explain that **repurposing is giving a new purpose to something that may have had a different purpose in the past. It is similar to recycling. The clip that we just watched was an example of how we, as Black people, have been able to repurpose our culture in order to hold on to it. This is something that we have been doing for centuries. When our ancestors came to this country, they had cultural practices that were African in origin. They had languages, foods, and customs like we discussed in the body-mapping activity. When they were forced into slavery, they were forbidden from practicing their culture and from speaking their language. They had to recreate or repurpose their culture in order to keep some part of their heritage alive for us to have some connection to our homeland. We are going to explore what parts of our culture today comes from our African roots, and we will see how we can continue to repurpose our culture.**

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will unpack which parts of African culture remained throughout slavery and what was lost.
- Participants will begin to connect with African cultural origins.

MATERIALS/PREP

- Paper bags
- Download from THEARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN.COM:
- **REPURPOSE HANDOUT** (make one copy per participant)
- **AFRICAN HEROES CARD** (make one pair for every two participants)



Lost and Found, continued

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Give each person an **AFRICAN HERO CARD**.
2. Have them **find a partner** by finding the person with the matching card.
3. Explain that **today** we are going to look at **African-American culture** to see where there are still African roots. For example, Stepping is actually a form of dance that has African roots. Stepping is an African-American art form that was repurposed from the African Tribal Dance. When our ancestors were brought here from Africa, they were not allowed to do their traditional forms of dancing or play the drums. The slave owners feared that we were using those art forms as protest and as a way to organize for our freedom. As a result, our ancestors repurposed their cultural dance and the rich history of drumming into step dancing, using their bodies to make percussion sounds.
4. Give each pair one **REPURPOSING HANDOUT**.
5. Have groups **read** about the activity on their handout, and **discuss** the connections between African culture and practices, rituals, and cultural norms today.
6. Explain that while our culture today differs significantly from African culture, there are many beautiful examples of the links between Africa and our experience in America.
7. Explain that culture is about things that happened in the past, but also the evolution of practices by people today, and so in this exercise participants will connect their understanding of the past and present to a "cultural creation" for the future.
8. Give participants between **20 minutes and a week** to work on it, depending on the scale that you want to take the projects.
9. Have each group **present** to the class.

DEBRIEF

- Were you surprised by the African roots of today's Black culture? Why or why not?
- How did repurposing help us to survive?
- How can we continue repurposing to help our future generations to survive?

CLOSING

- Create a step to perform for the class.

Being an African-Centered Warrior

shujaa : warrior [Swahili]

The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid,
but he who conquers that fear. —NELSON MANDELA

HOOK

- Ask participants: **How do we know if we are being our best selves, and when are we living out of balance?**

INTRO

- Explain that **ancient Egyptian tradition used a code of conduct that regulated the lives of the men and women. The code was called MAAT and was based on a set of guiding principles. These principles were based on truth, balance, harmony, justice, reciprocity, order, and propriety.**

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will examine their character in relationship to MAAT.
- Participants will explore the principles of MAAT and how they may support decision-making in their daily lives.

MATERIALS/PREP

- Chart paper
- Markers
- Download **PRINCIPLES OF MAAT** from **THEARTOFTHEBLACKMAN.COM** and make one copy per participant.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Explain** that **ancient Egyptian tradition used a code of conduct that regulated the lives of men and women. The code was called MAAT and was based on a set of guiding principles. These principles are the world's oldest sources of moral and spiritual instruction and shaped Egyptian law, spirituality and civic life.** **These principles were as follows:**
 - Truth
 - Balance
 - Harmony
 - Justice
 - Reciprocity
 - Order
 - Propriety
- Have participants **offer** their own definition of each of the principles, *individually or as a group.*
- Discuss** each definition by having each participant give an example.
- Distribute** the **PRINCIPLES OF MAAT** to participants. Instruct participants that **they are about to reflect on their own character** in relationship to MAAT.
- Ask participants to **place a "1"** next to the statement if the statement is **FALSE**. **Place nothing** if the statement is **TRUE**.
- Have someone **read** each statement out loud. Then ask participants to place a "1" next to the statement if it is FALSE. *For example, for the statement:*
 - I have not made anyone cry. If you have made someone cry, place a "1" next to the statement.**
- After all the statements are read, ask participants to **add up** the total score.
- Have participants **share** and **discuss** their score.

DEBRIEF

- What came up for you as you filled out the MAAT?**
- What could you do to lower your score?**
- How could we hold each other accountable for our behavior in relationship to MAAT?**

CLOSING

- Where did these ideas about Black people and African people come from?**

What is Culture?

culture : isiko [Zulu]

The person who strays away from the source is unrooted
and is like dust blown about by the wind. —MOLEFI ASANTE

HOOK

- Ask participants “**What is culture?**” Chart their answers.

INTRO

- Explain that **we are going to work from a common definition for the purposes of the activity.** Culture is defined by Webster as: the attitudes and behavior characteristic of a particular social group. This includes language, food, traditions, customs, gestures, sayings, and overall the way that someone lives.

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will explore what makes culture.
- Participants will identify the importance of culture in defining identity.

MATERIALS/PREP

- Download from THEARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN.COM:
 - SAMPLE YORUBA CULTURAL SPOTLIGHT** and draw a sample on a board or poster paper
 - CULTURAL SPOTLIGHT HANDOUTS** (make one copy per participant)
 - CULTURAL FILTERS** (make one set)
- Index cards

INSTRUCTIONS

- Pass out a stack of index cards** to each participant. Tell them that **you are going to ask them a series of questions** and that they should **write one answer per index card**, and **write as many answers** as they can think of.
 - What words describe your personality?**
 - What is important to you?**
 - What do you value?**
 - What is something that you do often?**
 - What is something that you never do?**
 - What's your favorite food?**
 - What is something that your family does all the time?**
 - What is home?**
 - What is something that you say or hear often?**
- Have participants **spread** these cards around the floor, and **reflect** on commonalities and differences in their responses.
- Lay out the CULTURAL FILTERS** on the floor. Ask participants to **place** each of their cards under the filter that they think best matches what they wrote. *For example, WATCHING TV, VIDEOGAMES OR PLAYING BASKETBALL may go under CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS. HOT CHEETOS, GREENS, and CHEESEBURGERS could be placed under FOOD.*
- If participants disagree about where to place some of the cards, allow a discussion to emerge, and invite participants to decide where they want to place their own cards for themselves.
- Review** the categories and what people wrote under them. **Explain** that **these things represent culture and that today we are going to explore what culture is and how it impacts our identity.**
- Pass out the SAMPLE YORUBA CULTURAL SPOTLIGHT** handout, and **review** it with participants.
- Ask** participants: **What stood out to you? Which cultural practices are different from yours?**



8. Distribute the **CULTURAL SPOTLIGHT HANDOUT** to participants.
9. Have participants **reflect** on key cultural elements that inform their identity, and **fill out** the handout.
10. When they are done **hang** the cultural wheels around the room and have participants **share** how they filled out the handout with one another.

DEBRIEF

- **Where did African-American culture come from?**
- **How is African-American culture different from Yoruba culture?**
- **How was your culture similar to Yoruba culture?**
- **How much of African culture do you think is in African-American culture?**
- **How does culture impact your identity?**

CLOSING

- **What's one thing that you learned about culture today?**

Walk In My Shoes

rin : walk [Yoruba]

Hold fast to dreams
for if dreams die
life is a broken-winged bird
that can not fly.

—LANGSTON HUGHES

HOOK

- Play “**MALCOLM**” BY **GHOSTFACE KILLAH**. Ask participants what they liked about it and what stood out to them. Play “**MY LITTLE BROWN BOOK**” BY **DUKE ELLINGTON**. Ask participants what they like about it and what stood out to them.

INTRO

- Ghostface Killah sampled “My Little Brown Book.” Much of the art that we make now was inspired by a period in our history called the Harlem Renaissance. The Harlem Renaissance was a Black arts movement that started in the 1920s in Harlem, New York. Some of the most influential art, writing, music, and poetry ever created on earth was created during that time.
- It was so influential that we still use the art from that era in our art today. Today we are going to explore the artists and the art that was created at that time.

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will be introduced to figures from the Harlem Renaissance.
- Participants will expose the influence of the Harlem Renaissance on contemporary art.
- Participants will research and promote a Harlem Renaissance artist.

MATERIALS/PREP

- A music player
- Computers or smart phones
- Download from **THEARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN**.

COM:

- **HARLEM RENAISSANCE CHARACTER LIST**
(make one copy for each participant)
- **TWITTER FEED SHEET** (make one copy for each participant)



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Explain that nowadays we have social media like Facebook and Twitter, but back then, during the Harlem Renaissance, these tools weren't developed yet. Some of the greatest art of all time was created during that time frame, and we don't want to ever forget it. So, you are going to create Twitter pages for the Harlem Renaissance artists to expose our generation to the art and history of that time.
2. Hand out the **HARLEM RENAISSANCE CHARACTER LIST** and ask participants to **choose** one.
3. Explain that in this exercise participants will create a Twitter account and fill it with "tweets" as though they are the artist they choose from the Harlem Renaissance character list.
4. Distribute the **HARLEM RENAISSANCE CHARACTER LIST** and have each participant **choose** an artist.
5. Have participants **open a Twitter account** for this artist.
6. Explain that they must **publish at least two posts** a day about the artist. **If Twitter existed when they were around, what would they have posted?** (videos, quotes, pictures, excerpts from their songs or poems, facts about their lives, etc.)
7. Distribute the **TWITTER FEED SHEET** handout to participants and ask them to **log their posts each day**.
8. Send each participant to a computer to **set up Twitter accounts**.
9. After the month passes, **ask** each participant to **present** what they have learned to the rest of the class and **debrief** the process with them.

DEBRIEF

- How did people respond to your page?
- What do you admire most about your artist?
- What parts of their art do you see in contemporary art?
- What was it like getting to know this artist over the course of the month?

CLOSING

- Why is it important to remember things like the Harlem Renaissance?

Black Man Time Capsule

wakati : Time [Swahili]

The choices we make about the lives we live determine the kinds of legacies we leave. —TAVIS SMILEY

HOOK

- Write a letter from the perspective of your future great-grandchildren about yourself. What do you want them to say about you? What do you want your legacy to be?

INTRO

- In this class, we have studied our ancestors and the legacies that they have left behind for us. They painted a picture of what it was like during their lifetimes through art, writing, music, and speeches. They shared their hopes for us as the inheritors of their legacy. We are a product of their dreams. Now it is your turn to begin leaving a legacy for your descendants. Today we are going to build a time capsule that answers the question: What is it like to be a Black man in America today?

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will explore the idea of legacy.
- Participants will define the Black male experience in America.

MATERIALS/PREP

- Magazines (*Try getting Black magazines like Ebony, Jet, Essence, Source, etc.*)
- Scissors
- Glue
- Paper
- Garage Band or a studio
- Blank CD's
- Cameras
- Large sealable box
- Poster paper



INSTRUCTIONS

Arrange the chairs so that there are four chairs in the center of the room, and all the other chairs are arranged in a circle around them.

1. **Explain** that **you will be having a discussion using an activity called a “fish bowl.”** The four people in the fish bowl (or in the middle of the room) are the only ones that will be participating in the discussion verbally. The people on the outside are participating in two ways. They can write notes on a Post-it and hand it to one of the people in the fish bowl, or they can tap the shoulder of one of the people who are sitting in the fish bowl and take their place in the discussion.
2. Ask for **four participants** to volunteer to **sit in the chairs in the middle** and **one participant to be the recorder.** The recorder is responsible for writing down all of the key ideas that come out of the discussion.
3. During the discussion, participants may **say things that inspire you to ask other questions.** Follow the heat. Let the discussion go where it leads you.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- **What does it mean to be Black?**
 - **Why do you think that this is what it means to be Black?**
 - **What does it mean to be African?**
 - **What do you want your grand or great grandchildren to say about you in the future?**
 - **Why do you think that this is what it means to be African?**
 - **What are the positive and negative definitions of African and Black?**
4. **Explain** to participants that now they should make collages, drawings, write poems or songs, take pictures, etc. to put in the time capsule to leave for the next generation so that they can know what it is like to be a black male right now.
 5. Once participants have completed their pieces, have them **present** what they have to the rest of the group and then **place** it in the box. After all the items are in the box, **seal** it and **store** it for one year or more.
 6. **Open** the box with the next group of participants and **review** the contents.

DEBRIEF

- **What did you learn from the fishbowl?**
- **What was it like to create your own legacy?**
- **What do you hope happens to your time capsule?**
- **What are your hopes for the next generation? What do you want them to learn from you?**

CLOSING

- **What do you hope to be able to put in a time capsule 10 years from now?**

Healing & Well-Being

Black boys are conditioned to think of themselves as indestructible. Phrases like “I’m a be alright,” “I got this,” “I’m no punk,” and “Man Up” send messages to men that they shouldn’t take care of themselves. During slavery, Black men were forced to bear inhumane conditions where these messages may have kept them alive. While this thinking may have once assisted in survival, it is now causing deep rifts in the health and wellbeing of Black men. The statistics are loud and clear—African-Americans are 20 percent more likely to report having serious psychological distress than non-Hispanic Whites.¹ The disproportionate percentage of the population who experience poverty, struggle for employment, run single-parent households, or struggle to express emotions are just some of the indicators that make a focus on well-being critical.

But pre-slavery African men supported themselves and each other in many healthy ways. Notions of self-care, wellbeing, and health are not new. They are, in fact, very old, with roots in African practices, healing rituals, and a lifestyle that was more connected to the natural and spiritual world. In this section participants will reconnect with the healthy ways of support, love, and creative healing that were disrupted, and find new connections to wellbeing, peacefulness, and forgiveness. We will make connections between the legacy of slavery and how Black men were taught to disconnect from their emotions, suffer in silence, and have disproportionate responses to anger and triggers.

While the factors that created these conditions are clear, the health outcomes are detrimental. This unit focuses on healing and wellbeing. Healing is more than curing sickness and disease. Healing is the process of righting and/or mending the disequilibrium generated by spiritual, natural, physical, psychological, historical, and social imbalance or discord. The ultimate goal of healing is to re-establish and restore harmony and optimal human functioning. Through these eight activities participants will learn strategies and tools to practice greater self-care, make choices in alignment with long-term health, and become more aware of their emotions.

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Services, 2013

IN THIS SECTION

I'm Good

We Wear the Mask

Embodied Trauma

Shaking Off Violence in Our Body

Triggers

Turning Over Saboteurs

That Ain't Violent

Soul Seeds

I'm Good

nzuri: good [Swahili]

**Momma gettin' older feelin' pains in her shoulder.
I gotta stay focused and remain a little soldier.** —RICK ROSS

HOOK

- Create a **THROW UP WALL** by asking participants the following question, then charting every answer that they shout out. Allow the responses to be chaotic and messy so they feel that any response is a good one. Question: **What images come to your mind when you hear the phrase "Do You"?**

INTRO

- **The idea that self-care is only for a certain community is a way to prevent Black men from seeing it as something they should do for themselves. If Black men decide they don't want to practice self-care, or that self-care isn't for them, then the quality of our health care, the food we have access to, and the messages we receive in the media can all be lower quality. In this session we will unpack our connection and understanding of the concept of self-care, where those beliefs come from, and where they will take us.**

OBJECTIVES

- For participants to prioritize, visualize, and manifest a state of well-being
- For participants to unpack the concept of self-care
- For participants to develop their own plan for how they will care for themselves

MATERIALS/PREP

- Five half-sheets of paper per participant
- Pens
- Index cards
- Yarn
- Download **SELF-CARE REFLECTION HANDOUT** from **THEARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN.COM** and make one copy per participant.

SETUP

- Place three signs around the wall with the words BODY, MIND, and SOUL, in the center of the paper.
- Create a **MEDALLION TEMPLATE** for each participant by hole-punching an index card at the top-center, and string a length of yarn through it. Tie off the yarn so it forms a loop that participants can place over their heads.
- Make a sample medallion to show participants as an example.
- (*This is a very simple medallion but if time and resources allow for it you can get more creative. Have participants create medallions using Fimo clay, old tree bark, wood crafting pieces, create a collage on an old bottle or around the outside of a candle using images from hip hop magazines, etc.*)



INSTRUCTIONS

- 1.** Explain to participants that in this activity **the group will unpack what self-care looks like and feels like.**
- 2.** Let them know that **this will be a difficult challenge where they simply need to follow the instructions given by the facilitator.**
- 3.** Ask participants to **get into the following position** to simulate what it might feel like when we are not taking care of ourselves.
 - **POSE 1:** Bend your knees about 5 inches.
- 4.** Instruct them that **they are not to move.** (*Secretly, you will have the group hold each pose for four minutes in order to fatigue their muscles.*)
- 5.** For each pose, you will ask participants to **notice what it feels like in their bodies, what happens to their breath, and what feelings come up for them:**
- 6.** After about one minute ask participants to **notice** what they are feeling. **Repeat** this question every minute.
- 7.** After the **four minutes** have participants stretch out and take a second pose.
 - **POSE 2:** Stand against the wall and get into a squatting position.
- 8.** Ask another four minutes of asking what it feels like in this new pose have participants stretch out and ask the group: **What does it feel like when we are not taking care of ourselves?**
- 9.** Distribute three to five half-sheets of paper to participants.
- 10.** Ask participants to **write one thing** that happens to them when they aren't taking care of themselves on each piece of paper. *Some examples might be: I snap at my girlfriend more, I over-eat, I crave sugar, I don't sleep too well.*
- 11.** Have participants **spread their examples** on the floor, and cluster any ideas that seem similar.
- 12.** Ask participants if they **see themes or connections** in the examples they generated.
- 13.** Refer to the signs that say BODY, MIND, and SOUL, and have the group **throw out definitions** for each term.
- 14.** Ask participants to **group** their brainstormed examples under each of the categories. For any ideas that seem to fall into multiple categories have a volunteer **rewrite** the idea on another piece of paper so it can be placed under each category.
- 15.** Explain to participants that they will now **reflect on how they can increase self-care** in their daily routines in all three of these categories.
- 16.** Distribute the **SELF-CARE REFLECTION HANDOUT**, and give participants time to complete it.
- 17.** Have participants **share** their charts with a partner or with the whole group depending on the comfort level and size of the group.
- 18.** Ask participants to **pick** one of the quadrants to focus on for the month.
- 19.** Distribute a medallion template (*index card on a string, tree bark, Fimo medallion, etc.*) to each participant.
- 20.** Explain to participants: **On one side of the card, you are going to write the quadrant that you plan to focus on and on the other side you are going to write three things you will do to accomplish your self-care goal. You can decorate the card any way you choose.** (*Facilitator note: You can tailor this activity to your group. Some ideas include having participants find medallions in a hip-hop magazine as inspiration to design their own hip-hop medallion design, or take a picture of their finished product and post on Instagram to get feedback.*)



I'm Good, continued

21. Once participants have completed the medallions, give them **time to share** them with the class.
22. **Explain** to participants: **These medallions are for you to hang in your locker or in your car to remind you of your goal. We will be checking in with each other on these goals all month.**

DEBRIEF

- **Based on this activity, how would you define self-care for yourself?**
- **What was difficult about this activity?**
- **What excites you about the goal you chose?**
- **If you don't accomplish the goals you set for yourself, what would it tell you?**
- **What external factors could impact your ability to take care of yourself?**
- **What will you do to stay focused on the parts of your well-being that are in your own control when this happens?**
- **What would be different for you if you were able to integrate all your well-being goals into your daily routines?**

CLOSING

- **When Black people believe that they shouldn't practice self-care, who benefits?**

We Wear the Mask

kuficha : hide [Swahili]

Too many people spend money they haven't earned to buy things they don't want to impress people they don't like. —WILL SMITH

HOOK

- Ask participants to go on a visual scavenger hunt—work with a partner to walk around the campus for 10 minutes and find a visual example for each of the following concepts:
 - Freedom
 - Compassion
 - Balance
 - Peace
- Participants should take a picture using their cell phones, and then bring them back to share with the class.

INTRO

- Our consumption of popular culture moves us away from ourselves in many ways. From the music we listen to and the images of strength, manliness, and Blackness that we digest—all of these contribute to what Carter G. Woodson called the “mis-education of the negro” in the popular form. We build masks from mis-education. African-American males today come from a historic context that made masks necessary. There was a time when showing emotions like fear or weakness got us lynched. There are residues of this concept in our culture even today. In this session we will explore what these masks take care of and when they hurt us as a people.

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will define what it means to wear a mask and what purpose it serves in their lives.
- Participants will challenge themselves to remove the mask in the community space.
- Participants will identify the masks that they wear in their own lives.

MATERIALS/PREP

- Download the **WE WEAR THE MASK HANDOUT** from **THEARTOFBEING ABLACKMAN.COM** and make enough copies so that each participant can select one image.
- Plastic plain masks
- Glitter pens
- Glue
- Sequins
- Feathers
- Sharpies
- Paint

INSTRUCTIONS

- Ask participants:
 - What is the connection between this idea of the mask and the phrase “keeping it 100”?**
 - In times of slavery, how did masks help people survive?**
 - How do Black men wear masks even today?**
- Say that **masks can serve as tools to help African-American men survive and thrive with different groups and contexts—but they can come at a cost.**

What does it cost us, as a community/people, to need to wear these masks?

What do you think is different in communities where people don't need a mask?
- Explain to participants that **sometimes people have been wearing a mask for so long that they have forgotten they are wearing one, don't know what it's like when they aren't wearing one, or maybe are even more comfortable with the masked version of themselves.**



We Wear the Mask, continued

4. Explain that **the group will now do an activity to explore when/where they wear a mask.**
5. Have participants **select** one of the **WE WEAR THE MASK HANDOUTS**, and ask them to spend **a few minutes reflecting** on the questions and filling it out. They can respond to the questions with **words or images**.
6. Ask participants to **share** their reflections from this exercise with a partner.
7. **Explain:** Sometimes we wear masks to protect us from harm or to make us feel more comfortable or safe. Look at your **MASK TEMPLATE** and choose three words that stand out to you. On the inside of the mask, you are going to write a sentence about why you wear the mask.
8. Hand out plastic masks, markers, paint, decorations and glue. Explain that **we are going to make a mask based on the words that we chose. This mask will represent the things that we have to be sometimes in order to protect ourselves; here in this space we don't have to wear them, but we want to be aware of them.**
9. After participants decorate the masks, have each of them **share** their mask and why they wear it, or lay out each mask and do a **gallery walk**, and use Post-its to ask questions about each mask.

DEBRIEF

- **What was difficult about this activity?**
- **What excites you about this activity?**
- **Were you surprised by how often you wear a mask?**
- **Is wearing a mask "keepin it real"? Why or why not?**
- **How do masks benefit us? How do they hurt us?**
- **What is one thing that we could do as a community to make sure that everyone feels safe enough to not wear a mask?**

CLOSING

- **What is one difference between your real self and your masked self?**

Embodied Trauma

kiwewe : trauma [Swahili]

I set goals, take control, drink out my own bottle. I make mistakes but learn from every one. And when it's said and done, I bet this brother be a better one. If I upset you, don't stress. Never forget that God isn't finished with me yet.

—TUPAC AMARU SHAKUR

HOOK

- In this session we will explore what happens to your body and psyche when you experience violence or stress. Imagine yourself in a stressful situation. Notice what happens to your breathing. What happens to the pace of your heartbeat? Does your mouth feel dry? How would you describe the temperature of your body? Are you clenching your fist, are you rolling your eyes, are you holding your breath?

INTRO

- The human body is uniquely designed to respond to stress in ways that keeps us alive. When we experience stress, our bodies move into a fight, flight, freeze, or appease stance. The trauma response of the human animal is similar to that of most other animal species. Therefore, a person's response to trauma can be found in their roots as an animal or biological organism. Think of a deer in headlights, a panther speeding away, a grizzly bear attacking, or a possum rolling over to play dead—all of these responses are analogous examples of the smart ways we have learned to survive. In the human experience, however, traumatic reactions can become locked inside our bodies and get stuck there. As Black men, there are unique factors that create stress, and unique messaging that comes from our cultural conditioning that allow us to release stress or keep it trapped within us. In this session we will explore these stress responses and ways to detox from them.

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will learn about how exposure to stress creates a natural response that fits into one of five categories: FIGHT, FLIGHT, FREEZE, APPEASE, DISSOCIATE.

MATERIALS/PREP

- Download **STRESS RESPONSE SIGNS** from **THEARTOFBEING ABLACKMAN.COM** and make one set.
- As prep, download a video from **YOUTUBE** of a "trauma release of a polar bear" and "African dance as healing rituals."
- Using blue painters tape, create a wheel with five slices on the floor. In each slice, place one of the **STRESS RESPONSES SIGNS**:
 - FIGHT
 - FLIGHT
 - FREEZE
 - APPEASE
 - DISSOCIATE
- Write the following definitions on the board:

STRESS is any experience that changes one's normal coping mechanism. This may be expressed through changes in breathing, blood pressure, and patience levels, or anything that is out of normal for one's self.

TRAUMA is defined as any experience that overwhelms one's coping mechanism, as defined above.

- Video projector and laptop speakers
- Speakers and cell phone or laptop to access to Pandora music station
- Index cards



Embodied Trauma, continued

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Distribute index cards to participants.
2. Ask participants: **What are some things that stress a Black man out?**
3. Chart these responses on the board.
4. Ask: **How does the Black community's experience with these things differ from other communities?**
5. Now ask them to **think of ways that they cope with stressful situations** and **write** each idea on a new index card. (Some examples may include: Didn't go to class because I was in a fight with the teacher, punched someone, pretended like I didn't know what was going on, just listen to music and zone out, smoke weed, etc.)
6. Ask a volunteer to **read** the description of each of the responses.
7. Then ask participants to **place their index cards in the slice of the wheel** they feel best describes their coping mechanisms to stress.
8. Explain to participants that **our bodies have natural response mechanisms to help us cope with stress, and sometimes we shut those natural responses down, which causes us to go deeper into a trauma shaping.**
9. Explain to participants that **in nature, when an animal experiences a traumatic event, it naturally shakes as a way to reset the body, and reorient itself to its environment. This is what allows animals to experience the stress of the cycle of life (where someone is always trying to eat someone else!) without experiencing constant trauma.**
10. Show participants a **YOUTUBE** video of a polar bear shaking off trauma.
11. Have participants **reflect** on what they saw in the video.
12. Explain to participants that **shaking is one very natural way to detox the body from stressful or traumatic experiences. For some people, being able to identify when our bodies are in a stress response (like acknowledging "butterflies" in their stomach or the muscle tension in their neck) will help them remember to make time to "shake it off" later. Understanding the physiological mechanism of the fight-or-flight response can provide us a sense that the "machinery" of the body can be manipulated in a healthy, adaptive way to respond to stress. In the Black community, conditions like racism, poverty, or unfair laws create continuous, or chronic, stress. The stress gets locked into our bodies and makes us sick.**
13. Ask participants:
 - **What do you believe is the difference between stress and trauma?**
 - **Can you describe or share experiences that were traumatic?**
 - **Do you believe you have shaken off trauma?**
 - **Do you still feel the symptoms of this trauma?**
14. Tell participant that **you will give them a simple technique to help them deal with the effects of trauma.**
15. Ask participants to **reflect on a positive song that makes them feel good.** Explain to participants that **music and dance have always been used as medicine in traditional African traditions. Show examples from YOUTUBE.** We still use music and dance as medicine, but we sometimes just think of music as entertainment.
16. Explain to participants that **music can be one way we "shake off" stress in our lives. Ask participants what happens when you hear a**



song that takes you back to a good moment or a memory that makes you move or dance. That memory lowers your stress level.

17. Ask participants to throw out the **names of different songs** that have that effect on them.
18. Using Pandora and speakers, **play one of the songs suggested**, and ask participants to **listen with their eyes closed**.
19. With their eyes stilled closed, have participants **stand up and move and nod** their heads to the music.
20. **Ask** participants: **What are some ways you have seen people shake?**

OPTIONAL: *It would be ideal to now engage the group in some sort of physical movement together, to experience the power of “shaking” in an artistic form. Some options could include having participants show off their best dance moves, dividing participants into groups of five to create a step routine, or choreographing their own electric slide. Vary the activity to fit your group’s interest.*

DEBRIEF

- **What are some examples of people you see not “shaking off” their stress?**
- **What do you believe are the long-term consequences of not attending to our stress?**
- **How is shaking built into our culture?**
- **What are some affirmations you can use to help yourself find healthy ways to cope with stress?** (EXAMPLES: *This is just one moment in my life. Overall, I have more good moments than bad ones. I have friends and family who will help me through this.*)

CLOSING

- **How is developing sustainable self-care practices connected to movements of resistance?**

Shaking Off Violence in Our Body

vurugu : violence [Swahili]

Nonviolence means avoiding not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit. You not only refuse to shoot a man, but you refuse to hate him. —MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

HOOK

- What are some ways that Black boys are rewarded for being violent? (*Sports, friends, parents; You run away from a fight, your parents send you back out to fight.*)

INTRO

- The thirst for violence is salient in American culture. Violence is most manifest in Black men's lives—in the ways we express ourselves, how we are perceived, in policy, even among ourselves is through this lens of violence, and it's not healthy. It's the small and limiting box that we are put in. Because we are cast in this frame of violence, it blocks us from our other ways of being, and violence becomes the only avenue from which we experience emotions. It blocks our ability to feel and experience other emotions.
- Violence gets normalized and celebrated, and becomes toxic as it is held in. We have stopped noticing the physical, emotional, and mental impact of casual violence on our psyches. We think we can handle it, or we trivialize what we see and experience because we fear we can't stop or control it. In this activity we will conduct an experiment to better understand the impact a violent phrase can have on our bodies. This will require us to really tune into our bodies, feelings, and emotions to wake up a part of our consciousness that isn't always active in our daily decision making. We will then use an **EMOTION WHEEL** to identify and share emotions and triggers that arise.

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will explore their definitions and understanding of violence from an intellectual and somatic perspective.
- Participants will design a somatic experiment to test the impact of a violent verbal attack on their bodies.
- Participants will reflect on the benefits and consequences of becoming more sensitive and aware of violence in casual interactions.
- Participants will practice identifying and expressing various emotions using an **EMOTION WHEEL**.

MATERIALS/PREP

- Download from **THEARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN.COM** and make one copy per participant of each of the following handouts:
 - **VIOLENCE IN MY BODY REFLECTION FORM**
 - **EMOTION WHEEL HANDOUT**



INSTRUCTIONS

- 1.** Ask participants:
 - How would you define violence?
 - What do you think the impact of violence is on your psyche?
- 2.** Have participants get into groups of three and distribute the **VIOLENCE IN MY BODY REFLECTION FORM**.
- 3.** Ask each person in the group to design a “violent attack” by thinking about a violent phrase a person might say to them, and come up with a physical gesture to go along with that word and phrase.

For example, one person’s phrase might be, “You’re acting like a little bitch!” and their gesture might be to stick their middle finger up at them with a look of disgust. Another person’s phrase might be, “You’ll never amount to anything.” in a dismissive tone with their back to them.
- 4.** Explain to participants that each of us probably does a lot of work to block out memories of violence done to them, and it may seem weird or counterintuitive to talk about and share these challenging moments with their peers. However, sometimes to heal from these things we have to take them out, examine them, and then purge them.
- 5.** Invite participants to step out of their comfort zones to really find a phrase and gesture that has an emotional connection for them.
- 6.** To begin the exercise, the instructor should demonstrate by giving an example of a violent phrase that had an impact on them.
- 7.** Ask for three volunteers to come to the front.
- 8.** Explain that you (the facilitator) will share a real violent phrase that had an impact on you, and share a gesture with the volunteers.
- 9.** Once the volunteers understand the phrase

and gesture, they should “play it back” by saying that phrase and gesture over and over while the instructor observes and takes in the experience.

- 10.** Call “time” in 30 seconds, and share with the group your responses to the questions on the **VIOLENCE IN MY BODY REFLECTION FORM**:
 - What did that feel like?
 - What would you like to do right now to take care of yourself: escape or fight back?
 - Where did you feel this “attack” in your body?
 - How would you describe what happens to your body when you hear these words?
 - What are some other times when your body has a similar response?
- 11.** Ask participants if they have any questions or concerns about this activity.
- 12.** Have participants get into groups of four and begin the exercise. Explain that they should use the **VIOLENCE IN MY BODY REFLECTION FORM** to guide their reflection as they take turns creating poses. (NOTE: Depending on the size of your group and space constraints, you may have to ask participants to enact their “violent attacks” in low voices.)
- 13.** Float around the room to help groups get into the exercise.
- 14.** After everyone has taken their turn, bring the group back together.
- 15.** Explain that you will debrief the exercise in a moment, but to get back to a grounded place you’d like everyone to plant their feet on the ground and take a few deep breaths.
- 16.** Ask each person to now imagine a positive encounter they could have with someone; a time when they hear or experience something positive with another person. Ask each person →

Shaking Off Violence in Our Body, continued

to imagine this is happening, and **allow their bodies to flood with the positive emotions and sensations** they associate with this thought. Allow participants **a few minutes** to take this in.

- 17. Explain** to participants that because we have become so immune to violence, we forget how to express ourselves in other ways.
- 18. Distribute** the **EMOTION WHEEL** to each person, and have them **read** the definitions of the eight prime emotions.
- 19. Have** participants **find a partner**, and **share** a time when they had a conflict with someone.
- 20. Then** have them **describe** how each of the eight emotions came up for them in this conflict.
- 21. Have** participants **share** out how it felt to use these eight emotions to describe their conflict.

DEBRIEF

- **What did you think about this exercise?**
- **What were some of the emotions, ideas, and images that came up for you?**
- **After this exercise, how would you say violence impacts your psyche?**
- **Was anyone conscious that you didn't really let yourself get into this activity? What were some of the things you told yourself to stay disengaged from the exercise?**
- **What is important about making a somatic, or embodied connection between violent words and our physical bodies?**
- **Why would it be smart/wise for someone to want to stay desensitized to violence? What would this perspective toward violence take care of?**
- **What are some examples of how we have become casual about integrating violent words and gestures into our everyday interactions with each other?**
- **How can becoming more comfortable sharing emotions help the Black community deal with violence?**
- **What are some reasons we resist expressing our feelings more freely?**

CLOSING

- **What is one thing we could do to detox ourselves from the violence we have experienced?**

Triggers

sababu : cause [Swahili]

You're only one decision away... from a horrible day or a good day... what will you choose? —DR. JOE MARSHALL

HOOK

- What are some words/images that come up for you when you hear the words "downhill spiral"?

INTRO

• We have all had the experience of moving along in a good mood, when something triggers us to start to lose our sense of balance. Maybe it's someone bumping into you in the hallway, feeling too hungry, missing the bus, or a friend being rude. Our triggers can be big things or small things, but they can set us off on a downhill spiral that takes us to a bad place. In the African-American community we see too many instances of fights breaking out over something that may have seemed important in the moment, but seems trivial when compared to the outcome of someone going to jail, getting hurt, or worst of all, dying. As Black men living each day in a capitalist system, we have many reasons to feel stressed, but we also must be mindful of the slippery slope these spirals can take us down and the impacts they can have on ourselves, our loved ones, and our communities. In this activity we will explore ways to get control of our downhill spirals by noticing small triggers, and work toward creating grounded lives. The triggers that set us off may always exist and may or may not be in our control, but how we choose to respond to them is in our power. Building this skill set will make us more empowered.

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will learn what a downhill spiral is.
- Participants will remind themselves of the moments in life that begin the downhill spiral for them.
- Participants will create an action plan to intervene at multiple points in a downhill spiral to change the outcome.
- Participants will set some agreements and practices to change the trajectory of a downhill spiral.

MATERIALS/PREP

- Download from THEARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN.COM:
- **IF I SPIRAL THEN I... WORKSHEET**
(make one copy per participant)
 - **MY TRIGGERS CARDS**
(make one set for each pair)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Explain to participants that a **downhill spiral refers to those moments in life when things are going well, and suddenly something triggers us that makes us start to feel bad, panic, worry, or stress**. When we get caught in a downhill spiral it can feel like a domino effect of a series of things taking us down. Explain that in this session the group will explore some of the triggers that start their spiral downward, and develop strategies to intervene before we hit bottom.

2. Draw an enlarged version of the **IF I SPIRAL THEN I... HANDOUT** on the board, and walk participants through the spiral by sharing an example from your own life that started a downhill spiral for you. For example:
 - If I...let myself get too hungry.
 - Then I...start to get grumpy.



Triggers, continued

- *Then I...start snapping at people.*
 - *Then I... might go off on someone I care about (my girlfriend, my kids).*
 - *Then I...feel bad about myself.*
 - *Then I...eat a whole bunch of food.*
 - *Then I...just feel tired and energyless and want to crawl into bed.*
3. **Ask participants if they understand** how the activity works and answer any questions.
 4. Have participants **find a partner** to do a coaching process to **define** their triggers, and **intervene** before they go from bad to worse.
 5. **Distribute** the **IF I SPIRAL THEN I... HANDOUT** and **MY TRIGGERS CARDS** to participants.
 6. Ask participants to **read** through the triggers list and **find one** that resonates for them, or create their own.
 7. Ask them to **begin by writing that trigger in the first box** in the **IF I SPIRAL THEN I... HANDOUT**.
 8. Then ask them to **take turns as the “coach”** to walk their partner through the process of identifying what happens next, and where they end up.
 9. Once they have gone through the **IF I SPIRAL THEN I... HANDOUT**, **explain** to them that **we want to come up with strategies to help intervene at each point along the way**.
 10. **Demonstrate** how to do this using your example.

For example, if the first thing they picked was “letting themselves get too hungry,” the prevention strategy at the first point might be to carry a piece of fruit or a granola bar at all times, set a cell phone reminder to eat at certain times, or write a 30-minute lunch in their calendar so they don’t schedule over it.

Or if the issue was “a phone call from a family member,” the solution might be to always let those calls go to voice mail and call back only when you are in the space to handle it.

Another solution might be to set a favorite ring tone to that person’s phone number so that you are in a positive mindset when you answer.
 11. Give participants **a few minutes** to work together to **develop prevention strategies** for each of the points on their spiral.
 12. Have a few participants **share** their spirals with the group.

DEBRIEF

- **What were some common themes in the types of triggers we shared?**
- **Why do you think we allow ourselves to spiral?**
- **Do you feel excited about any of your prevention strategies?**
- **Which of these preventions feels the hardest/scariest to do?**
- **What was a time when you were able to catch yourself in a downhill spiral?**
- **What happens when we are spiraling downhill and don't realize it?**
- **How does becoming aware of our downhill spirals help us?**
- **In the African-American community, what are some common spirals?**
- **How is this spiraling process connected to some of the prevailing issues in the African-American male community?**
- **What feels unusual about talking about feelings and issues like this?**

CLOSING

- **What is most powerful about a group of Black men talking about these issues?**

Turning Over Saboteurs

aduwi : enemy [Swahili]

Everything negative—pressure, challenges—is all an opportunity for me to rise. —KOBE BRYANT

HOOK

- What was a time when you sabotaged something for yourself?

INTRO

- We are all guilty of thinking negative thoughts. According to the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, "On average a person runs about 15,000 thoughts per day in which at least half of those are negative." These negative thoughts can deeply compromise one's sense of healing and well-being. One term for these negative thoughts is **aduwi**, which is an Swahili word that means "enemy." We all commit conscious and unconscious mental sabotage throughout our lives—that's totally normal. But few people do the work to learn to recognize our Saboteurs and unpack what they say or why they are in our brains, and then get control of how they impact our actions. In this session we will use a peer-coaching exercise to let go of our Saboteurs.

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will identify negative voices in their minds (their Saboteurs).
- Participants will break old or limiting patterns.
- Participants will design systems and actions to change the way they deal with difficult life situations.

MATERIALS/PREP

- Chart the following coaching questions on the board:

- What is a behavior or action you keep doing that isn't actually serving you?
- How do you think this behavior is taking care of you?
- What experiences have you had that make this significant?
- How is this behavior impacting your life today?
- **CLOSING QUESTION FOR TODAY:** What is one way that you can still protect yourself from getting hurt, but also move your life forward?

- A river rock for each participant
- A black Sharpie
- Colored Sharpies
- Glitter
- Glue



Turning Over Saboteurs, continued

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Ask participants: **Do you ever feel like you have an dysfunctional family full of voices inside of you? How would you describe this family of voices?**
2. Explain to participants that **these voices are our "saboteurs," and could also be thought of as an inner critic, the judge within, or even the superego.** Often this voice inside us leaves us feeling deflated, discouraged, hurt, or even a little crazy. These voices may actually be the voice of our fathers, a critical teacher, or an ex-girlfriend—people we had relationships with who found a way into our psyches. Or sometimes these voices are our own deepest fears, worries, or insecurities that grab hold of us. What's cool is that usually this saboteur is trying to protect us from something, remind us of something, or caution us. Despite the often harsh words or negative outcomes, the saboteur always has a desire to serve us or keep us safe in some way.
3. Explain to participants that in this activity the group will work in pairs in a **peer-coaching exercise to find and name a saboteur** that once protected them but is now no longer serving them.
4. Read through the coaching questions on the board as a group, then walk participants through an **example of your own.** For example:
 - WHAT IS A BEHAVIOR OR ACTION YOU KEEP DOING THAT ISN'T ACTUALLY SERVING YOU? *I am quick with the jokes. Often it is all fun and games, but sometimes it just goes too far. Or if I feel like I am being judged or made fun of, my quick tongue will react before my brain even has time to process what is happening.*
 - HOW DO YOU THINK THIS BEHAVIOR IS TAKING CARE OF YOU? *Makes it so I hurt others before they hurt me. Makes people afraid to make fun of me.*
- WHAT EXPERIENCES HAVE YOU HAD THAT MAKE THIS SIGNIFICANT? *As a child I would get made fun of a lot, and so I learned to hit back hard with my jokes. First I would make fun of myself before others did, and then I learned to put others down.*
- HOW IS THIS BEHAVIOR IMPACTING YOUR LIFE TODAY? *People feel intimidated or scared to give me feedback or even hang out with me at times.*
5. Then ask:
What is a name you can give this saboteur? "Humor Smasher," "Not Laughing," "Cuts like a Knife," or even just "Knifey"
6. Have participants get into **pairs**, and have **one person be the PEER COACH and the other will be the CLIENT.**
7. The **COACH's job** will be to walk the **CLIENT** through the questions, listen to their responses, and help them find succinct answers to these questions.
8. Give participants **10-15 minutes** to work in pairs. Ask participants to **switch roles** halfway through the time limit.
9. Invite a few participants to **share** what they discovered about their saboteurs, and how they are protecting them.
10. Next, **give each participant a river rock** and have them **write** the name of their saboteur on one side of the rock.
11. Explain that **while we may never get rid of our saboteur (Knifey) completely, we may not need him/her in the same way that we did before.** Explain that while Knifey really protected us at one time, Knifey is now preventing us from moving forward in our lives.
12. Ask them to **thank their saboteurs for all**

the times they protected them and kept them physically or emotionally safe. They can let their saboteurs know that "Now I got this and have some other ways to handle these kinds of situations."

13. When they are done have them **turn over the rock**.
14. **Explain** that this side of the rock is a clean slate. Ask them to **describe** how they would like to handle (or how they already handle) these kinds of situations in the future.
Someone might say: "In the future I would like to walk away smiling and ignore the comment." "I would share with them that I am very sensitive to jokes and would rather not be made fun of," or "I will laugh along side of them, recognizing that they are not trying to put me down, but just finding a way to connect."
15. Once they have an example, ask them to **come up with a name** for this new person—this new way of handling a situation.
Examples might be: "The Communicator," or "The Connector."
16. Now have them **write** that word on the rock, and suggest that they can **add glitter or use different colored Sharpies** to decorate it.
17. When they are done, remind them that **they never have to get rid of that saboteur completely as they may need him or her from time to time, but that the side of the rock they want to display is the person they are becoming.**
18. Normalize again for your participants the idea that **everyone has a saboteur. It is our willingness to name, address, and make friends with our saboteurs that will move us forward to reach our full potential.**

DEBRIEF

- **What came up for you in this exercise?**
- **How would you define a saboteur?**
- **What are some great things about our saboteurs?**
- **How has your saboteur helped you?**
- **When might this saboteur be helpful in the future?**
- **What can you do to still protect yourself while staying connected to your authentic self?**
- **What will you do with this rock now?**

CLOSING

- **What is one way that you can still protect yourself from getting hurt, but also move your life forward?**



That Ain't Violent!

vurugu : violence [Swahili]

So what if I'm smokin' weed onstage and doing what I gotta do? It's not me shooting nobody, stabbing nobody, killing nobody. It's a peaceful gesture and they have to respect that and appreciate that. —SNOOP DOGG

HOOK

- Are violent feelings toward a person the same as violence? Why or why not?

INTRO

- In this activity we will take a careful look at how violent behaviors have slipped into our dating and relationship toolbox. While there are many examples of healthy and thriving relationships, many of us are exposed to unhealthy relationships. Relationships are hard because they require being in touch with ourselves, with another person, and making a choice based on what is best for our relationships, rather than solely on what is best for us. In our journey to sort out what "I" need, what "they" need, and what "we" need, it is possible to resort to overtly physically damaging behaviors into subtler forms of emotional control and coercion. As we become more conscious of what violence in our relationships can look like, we can become better equipped to connect with one another and create loving family dynamics. This activity will focus on violence in romantic relationships, but this analysis of what violence is can be applied to other relationships as well.

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will explore what relationship violence means to them.
- Participants will learn many examples of what violence in a relationship can look like.

MATERIALS/PREP

- Download the **IS THIS VIOLENCE? CARDS** from THEARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN.COM and make eight sets.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Ask participants:
 - Do you believe you have ever been violent in a relationship?
 - What has been the impact on the relationship?
 - What do you get from a romantic relationship with another person?
2. Explain that to deepen this conversation, participants will work in groups to sort a set of cards into behaviors that they feel are violent or not violent.
3. Ask participants to get into **groups of two or three** (depending on the size of your group).
4. Give each group a set of **IS THIS VIOLENCE? CARDS**, and ask them to begin **sorting**.
5. Call "time" after **10 minutes**.
6. Ask participants to **share** some of the questions or ideas that came up in their groups as they were sorting.
7. Ask groups if there were **cards they want to discuss as a group**, because their group couldn't agree on if it was violent or not.
8. Have participants **read** out a few cards and ask other participants to **share** their thoughts on why it could be considered violent, and how it could not be violent.
9. After the group has debated over a few cards, explain to participants that **these cards come from the work of** →

Haymish Sinclair, who developed an anger management system called Man Alive from working with men in the prison system. In his work, every one of these behaviors would be considered violent. This is because he defined violence as: emotional, verbal, physical and sexual.

10. Ask participants: **What percentage of the violence is physical vs. emotional?**
11. As participants call out answers, **turn their responses into pie graphs** to show the percentage split between emotional and physical violence. (Note: Your graphs don't need to be completely accurate, but can just be sketches to show the concept.)
12. Explain to participants that **about 85 percent of violence is emotional and falls under the desire to control or coerce another person.**
13. Ask participants to **return** to their cards and **sort** them under the categories of VERBAL, EMOTIONAL, PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL violence.
14. When groups have completed their sorting, **move** into the debrief.

DEBRIEF

- What came up for you in this process?
- What surprised you as you sorted your cards?
- Now that you see all these various examples of violence, do you see behaviors that you can identify in your own relationships?
- What types of relationships do these behaviors apply to?
- What are some ways that a romantic relationship can trigger a violent response more than a relationship with friends?
- If you had to select one of these behaviors to focus eliminating from your interactions, which would you choose?
- Can we always control the violence we do to others?

CLOSING

- What can you do to become more conscious of violent behaviors in a relationship?

Soul Seeds

ndoto : dream [Swahili]

**Wake up like every day's new to you,
dream beautiful and unusual.**

—MOS DEF, "GOOD NIGHT"

HOOK

- **What is more powerful in determining who we become: the inner world of our thoughts and beliefs, or our physical outer environments (like where we live or who we know)?**

INTRO

- **Regardless of the many ways Black men in America struggle, we can take solace in the idea that human beings are not born once and for all on the day their mothers give birth to them, but... life obliges us over and over again to give birth to ourselves. In this activity we will explore ways that we want to celebrate life, and the fact that we are living in each day and dream high dreams of who will become tomorrow. The strongest tool to overcome trauma, stress, and the debilitating conditioning of racism is for us to have hope, and dream that we can collectively and individually live a life of our choosing. What we have to decide is how we want to live our lives—what we will choose, then how we will act.**

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will explore life-debilitating and life-affirming sustaining practices.
- Participants will have a deeper understanding of what creates stress, unhappiness and fear in their lives.
- Participants will have tools to create love, peace, and wellness in their lives.

MATERIALS/PREP

- A **PLANTING KIT** for each participant:
 - Flower pots or containers of some sort
 - Flower seeds
 - Soil
 - Water
- Download from **THEARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN.COM** and make one copy per participant of the following handouts:
 - **A TALE OF TWO TREES HANDOUT**
 - **FIVE TRUTHS HANDOUT**
 - **MY SOUL SEEDS HANDOUT**
 - **99 SELF CARE STRATEGIES HANDOUT**



INSTRUCTIONS

- 1.** Distribute **A TALE OF TWO TREES HANDOUT** to participants.
- 2.** Ask participants: **What is the difference between these two trees?**
- 3.** Hear a few ideas from participants, then distribute to participants the **FIVE TRUTHS HANDOUT**.
- 4.** Ask participants: **What are the nutrients we know plants need? What are some toxins that could kill a plant?**
- 5.** Explain to participants that **they will now build a metaphor for their own lives**. Ask participants:
 - **What are some life toxins that could weaken their roots, or prevent them from growing like healthy plants?**
 - **What are some sustaining practices they could use to keep themselves healthy?**
- 6.** Provide each participant with a **PLANTING KIT** that contains a flower pot, soil, seeds, and water.
- 7.** Explain to participants that **our lives are like plants, and we need certain elements to grow. Even the plant that seems to be beyond saving can be restored with nourishment.**
- 8.** Have participants "assemble" their planters with soil and the seeds.
- 9.** Have participants **complete MY SOUL SEEDS HANDOUT** indicating what they will do in their lives to grow their Soul Seeds into flowers.
- 10.** Distribute the **99 SELF CARE STRATEGIES HANDOUT** and bring the group together to debrief.

DEBRIEF

- **How could you use the metaphor of a plant to talk about your life-affirming practices?**
- **What are some things that are like toxins in your environment?**
- **What are some life-affirming practices you could integrate into your daily routine?**
- **Your plant is also a reminder to take care of yourself. If your plant is dying, what does it mean for your own health?**

Politics & Social Justice

Critical thinking and political awareness is an important part of manhood for young Black men. Young men and women throughout history have led significant movements in our country. This section builds young men's critical and political awareness and encourages them to question the behaviors that they have been conditioned to accept in the world around them.

The activities within this unit explore the systemic structures that both limit and expand the possibilities for social change. We begin with an activity called **TAP**, which explores the connections between hierarchy and physical pain, which is largely what motivates people to follow unfair leaders and rules. The activity **THE BLACK MARKET** will introduce participants to the system of capitalism and unequal resources, and builds connections to the ways that access to resources determines communities' sense of self-worth and esteem. Through **THE ROCKS, THE MATRIX, and THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE** participants will explore the ways that people in power can manipulate those with less access to knowledge, resources, and education to ultimately benefit the one percent of the wealthy class. In the last three activities in this section participants will be led through a participatory problem-solving process to deepen their own analysis, research, and movements for social change using a youth-led structure for campaign building. Ultimately, participants empowered with the knowledge of social systems and structures should be empowered and enabled to use their knowledge for leadership and social change.

IN THIS SECTION

TAP

The Black Market

Rocks

The Matrix

The School-to-Prison Pipeline

My Life Is Mine

That's the One

Watchuknowaboutthat?

TAP

ngumi : fight [Swahili]

Nobody is as powerful as we make them out to be.

—ALICE WALKER

HOOK

- Do you agree with Alice Walker in this quote?

INTRO

FACILITATOR NOTE: This activity is a simulation of power and hierarchy, so the activity introduction should be very minimal and not give away the true objectives of the exercise.

- This exercise will let us explore how we will work together as a group. Let's all circle up to get started. Just try to participate to the best of your ability, and we will debrief your experience at the end.

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will have a somatic experience of hierarchical power.
- Participants will gain awareness of their own relationship to power.
- Participants will explore the difference between personal motivation and community empowerment.

MATERIALS/PREP

- Write the TAP instructions on a large piece of chart paper so all participants can see it easily:

- IF YOU ARE TAPPED ONCE, YOU MAY STAND UP.
- IF YOU ARE TAPPED TWO TIMES, YOU MAY OPEN YOUR EYES.
- IF YOU ARE TAPPED THREE TIMES, YOU CAN DO WHATEVER YOU WANT.
- THESE ARE THE RULES OF TAP.
- NOW REPEAT.

INSTRUCTIONS

FACILITATOR NOTE: This activity is designed to simulate hierarchy, and it requires you (the facilitator) to play the role of a grumpy, dominant and bossy jerk. As you set this activity up, make sure to have a stern voice, and be overly commanding. Ask one or two "meek" participants to speak louder, stay on task, or get focused. Don't overdo it or the participants will know that you are acting—but don't let up until the end.

1. Explain to participants that **you would like everyone to work together to do an activity.**
2. Ask all participants to **stand in a circle** so they can see the poster with the rules.
3. Have all participants **squat** on the ground and **clasp their hands behind their heads.**
4. Explain that this **activity is called TAP, and it entails participants repeating aloud, in unison** the following rules:
 - **If you are tapped once, you may stand up.**
 - **If you are tapped two times, you may open your eyes.**
 - **If you are tapped three times, you can do whatever you want.**
 - **These are the Rules of TAP.**
 - **NOW REPEAT.**
5. **Say** the rules with the participants a few times. When they get to the last line "Repeat," they should **repeat** all the rules again starting from the first line. They will continuously repeat these rules throughout the exercise.
6. Once they have the hang of the flow, ask them to **close their eyes and chant the rules** over and over.
7. After **three to four minutes** (participants will and should be uncomfortable during this time), **select one participant** to tap once on the back. That participant →

may now stand up but should keep their eyes closed and continue repeating the rules.

8. After **another 30 seconds, select two more participants** to tap once. Again, they may now stand up but should keep their eyes closed and continue repeating the rules.
9. Next, **select two participants** to tap twice. They may now open their eyes up but must remain squatting and continue repeating the rules.
10. After another minute, **tap a few participants three times**. They are now "liberated." They can do whatever they want.
11. **Give** the "liberated" participants a few minutes to do whatever they want. Oftentimes these participants will wander around the room, get a drink of water, put their heads down on their desks, or just have a seat. Sometimes the "liberated" participants will start tapping other participants on the back. **Allow them to do whatever they want**, but do NOT offer any suggestions. Make mental notes for the debrief.
12. **End** the activity by **asking all the participants to stand up**, stretch, and take a break.
13. **Bring the group together** and **ask** the following questions to reflect:
 - **What emotions came up for you in that activity?**
 - **How did you feel about me, the facilitator?** (Note: Many participants will be angry with you for making them endure that. Encourage them to be honest.)
 - **What were you thinking about during the activity when you had your eyes closed?** (Note: Many participants will distract themselves from the embarrassment of physical discomfort of the activity. Explain to participants that this is a resiliency tool we have—that we can mentally check out and go to a "safe space" in our imaginations when we aren't feeling good.)
 - **What did the people who were tapped do?**
 - **Could the liberated people have started tapping the others?**
 - **Did anyone think about revolting against me, the facilitator? Why didn't you?**
14. **Explain** to participants that this is an exercise to unpack the role of positional power. For our systems to work, we, as people, have to be conditioned to believe that someone is in charge and that our survival is dependent on them. People endure a lot of hardship before they collectively revolt. Since there were more people in the circle, and only one facilitator, you all could have easily overpowered me. We have to ask ourselves why you complied with my unreasonable instructions.

DEBRIEF

- **What experiences have Black people had that allows them to endure unreasonable expectations?**
- **How have the experiences of slavery impacted our behaviors?**
- **What role did I (the facilitator) represent in this activity?**
- **What are some ways young people "revolt" against teachers in schools?**
- **Could you identify a place in your body where the experience of the TAP exercise landed?**

CLOSING

- **People who want to reinforce hierarchy and power make us feel afraid for our physical safety. Throughout our history oppressors have connected their power to their ability to make people feel pain. How do our systems today continue to reinforce power through physical force?**

The Black Market

mali: Wealth [Swahili]

It matters little if you have the right to sit at the front of the bus if you can't afford the bus fare; it matters little if you have the right to sit at the lunch counter if you can't afford the lunch. —PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

HOOK

- If you believe a rule is unfair, does it give you the right to break the rule?

INTRO

FACILITATOR NOTE: This activity is a simulation of power and hierarchy, so the activity introduction should be very minimal, and not give away the true objectives of the exercise. It requires you (the facilitator) to shift roles from dominant and demeaning to some groups, and affirming and generous to other groups. As you set this activity up, make sure to not give away the true intentions of the activity.

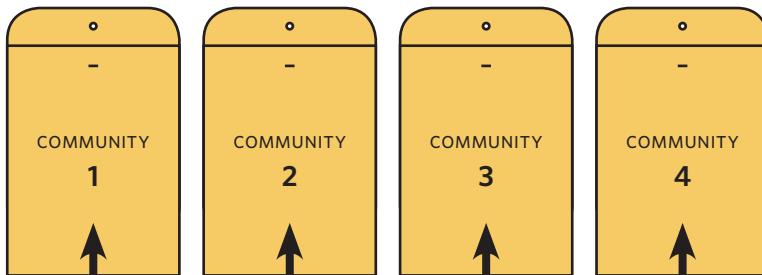
- We all have different opinions and perspectives about prevailing issues and needs facing Black men today. In this activity you will work in small groups to explore some of our various perspectives.

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will share opinions and perspectives about prevailing issues facing Black men.
- Participants will identify how their behaviors and attitudes shift when they experience a sense of lack or stress.
- Participants will analyze the values of equality, equity and justice.

MATERIALS/PREP

- Prizes for each of the winning team's members.
- Butcher paper.
- Four Manila envelopes labeled:
 - COMMUNITY 1
 - COMMUNITY 2
 - COMMUNITY 3
 - COMMUNITY 4
- Download **THE BLACK MARKET INSTRUCTIONS** from **THEARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN.COM** and make four copies. Each envelope should have the **SAME** set of instructions.
- Each envelope should also have the following resources in it:



- | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Instructions | • Instructions | • Instructions | • Instructions |
| • 4 Pieces of Colored Paper | • 2 Pieces of Colored Paper | • 1 Piece of Colored Paper | • 1 Piece of White Paper |
| • 4 Pieces of White Paper | • 2 Pieces of White Paper | • 1 Piece of White Paper | • 1 Black Marker |
| • 1 Sheet of Star Stickers | • 1 Paper Lunch Bag | • 1 Paper Lunch Bag | • 1 Colored Marker |
| • 1 Sheet of Circle Stickers | • 4 Colored Markers | • 2 Colored Markers | |
| • 2 Paper Lunch Bags | • 1 Black Marker | • 1 Black Marker | |
| • 1 Ruler | • 2 Glue Sticks | • 2 Glue Sticks | • 1 Glue Stick |
| • 1 Pack of Markers | | | |
| • 1 Roll of Tape | | | |
| • 1 Scissors | | | |
| • 2 Glue Sticks | | | |



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Divide your participants into **four groups** and **distribute one of the four community packets** to each group. Ask them **not to open** their packets yet. Don't reveal that while each packet will have the same instructions they will all have different resources in them. They will figure it out during the course of the activity.
2. Explain that **participants will have twenty minutes to complete several tasks within their community and the first community to finish will get a prize.** The tasks are designed to elicit conversation about their perspectives on issues facing men in the Black community.
3. Explain that **to complete the tasks, participants can only use the materials in the community packets and must follow the instruction sheet in their packets.**
4. Tell participants to **start**, and give them **time reminders every five minutes** so they can manage their time.
5. **Observe** the results. **Do not tell** participants that they have unequal resources or that they can collaborate with other teams. They might initiate **borrowing or sharing** with other groups. You can **allow** this if it happens spontaneously but don't encourage it and remind people that there will be a prize for the winning team.
6. As the authority figure, if people ask questions, **impatiently answer** that they have everything they need in the packets and that you've already explained all they need to know. Say things like, "**Think creatively,**" "**You're the only group complaining,**" or "**Turn to your community for the answers.**"
7. **Encourage** the team that has the most resources by praising the quality and creativity of their work.
8. **Check** other teams' work, and **if you want you can rip up something that falls short of the tasks outlined** (in terms of measurement or color, for example).
9. The **goal is for participants to organize the most effective, resource-efficient and fair use of resources;** optimally, they should all come together as one team and demand a prize for everyone. But usually, all the regular factors—competition, hoarding resources, stealing, mistrust, greed, wastefulness, etc., come into play.
10. When the first team to finish wins, **cheer** for them and hand them their **prize.**

DEBRIEF

- **What was your personal reaction in this activity?**
- **When did you notice that each group had different resources in their materials packets?** (NOTE: *Usually the participants with the least resources notice first, and the groups with the most resources notice last.*)
- **What did I (the facilitator) do in this activity that impacted your attitude?**
- **What real life experiences does this activity remind you of?**
- **Would it have been possible for everyone to win in this exercise?**
- **How did the idea of competition impact your behaviors?**
- **What are some ways you have been a victim of capitalism?**
- **What are some ways you, as a man, have experienced privilege from capitalism?**

CLOSING

- **What is one thing you can do to be more aware of how capitalism impacts your choices and behaviors?**

Rocks

jtiwe : rock [Swahili]

I shot the sheriff. But I didn't shoot the deputy. —BOB MARLEY

HOOK

- What does Bob Marley mean in this quote?

INTRO

- This exercise was adapted from an exercise by SOUL (the School of Unity and Liberation). It is designed to create a parody of the plight of urban communities that are caught between oppressive systems and the need to survive. It sheds light on the idea that sometimes when people are struggling for basic survival they are not afforded the long-term thinking to find the best sustainable solutions. As we go through this exercise let us try to notice what parts of this story are true for us in our environments today, and what things have been overly simplified. We will add our own insights and analysis to this story through our discussion and reflection.

OBJECTIVES

- For participants to explore how lower income communities are impacted by the decisions and choices of the rich
- For participants to analyze the behaviors of Black men as a response to oppressive conditions

MATERIALS/PREP

- Chart paper
- Markers
- Download the **ROCKS STORY HANDOUT** from **THEARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN.COM** and make one copy per participant.
- Pre-chart the two discussion prompt question sets:

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT PROMPTS

- How would you describe how these group members dress and talk?
- What skills and talents do you think they would have?
- What are some areas of “growth” they may have?
- What do you think your group cares most about?

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PROMPTS

- What strategy would you use to deal with the falling rocks?
- What are the pros and cons of your strategy?
- How would each of the other groups be impacted if your strategy was successful?
- Which of the other groups would you work most closely with to achieve your goal?
- Which of the groups pose a threat to you and your goals?
- What are some ways you could try to motivate this threatening group to fight for your cause, instead of having to fight against them?



INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Distribute** the story to all participants and read together. (You can read the story aloud, or give each participant time to read it alone.)
2. Divide participants into **three groups**:
 - GROUP A: Villagers who want to keep up the rescue effort
 - GROUP B. Crushed town residents
 - GROUP C. Filthy Richbanks and his friends
3. Have each group **sit together** and **try to get into the “mind-space”** of the group they were assigned.
4. Give each group **a piece of chart paper and markers** to take notes, and **draw pictures** to respond to the **CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT PROMPTS** you have prepped.
5. Have groups **share** out the **CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT** charts they created.
6. Next ask each group to work together to **develop a strategy** to address the problem presented in the story. Reference the **STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PROMPTS** to guide their thinking. **Explain** that each group will share out their strategies in **10 minutes**.
7. Have each group **present** their strategy.
8. After hearing each strategy, **ask** participants: **What are some criteria we should have in place for the final solution?** Have participants share their answers, then **develop a table** on the board with their criteria listed on the left column of the table. *Examples of criteria may include:*
 - Gets revenge
 - Heals the villagers
 - Punishes the people pushing the rocks off the cliffs
 - Ensures everyone has access to a decent job
9. Now **write** each strategy across the top row of the matrix, and **assess** each strategy against these criteria.
10. Allow participants to **debate and decide** which strategy they believe would create the most sustainable change for the villagers.

CRITERIA	IDEA 1	IDEA 2	IDEA 3
GETS REVENGE			
HEALS THE VILLAGERS			
PUNISHES THE PEOPLE PUSHING THE ROCKS OFF THE CLIFFS			
ENSURES EVERYONE HAS A DECENT JOB			

DEBRIEF

- **What makes it difficult for the villagers and Filthy Richbanks to see each other's perspectives?**
- **Is it possible to find a win-win solution that allows the “villagers” and “filthys” of our communities to co-exist?**
- **What are some fundamental values that a community needs to have in place to allow for peaceful co-existence of people with diverse incomes?**
- **How does the scenario in the falling rocks story compare to some of the problems in our own communities?**
- **Who would represent each of the groups in the story in our community today?**

CLOSING

- **Where do we see the Filthy Richbanks character in our own communities?**

The Matrix

mfumo : system [Swahili]

You have to be very careful introducing the truth to the Black man, who has never previously heard the truth about himself. The Black brother is so brainwashed that he may reject the truth when he first hears it. You have to drop a little bit on him at a time, and wait a while to let that sink in before advancing to the next step. —MALCOLM X

INTRO

- The movie *The Matrix* invokes a profound social theory that says all that we do, say, and think is a result of people's power relationships. The most insidious part of this system, called "hegemony," is that it tells us that this system doesn't exist. We have all been seduced by the American paradigm of what is beautiful, what success looks like, what we should all be and do. The "Matrix" of America uses this seduction to keep us from focusing on the things that will lead us to our own liberation. This is a form of control that allows some people to stay in power while others are oppressed.

HOOK

- Write this saying on the board:

NOTHING CONTROLS ME,
I'M AN INDIVIDUAL.
- Ask participants: **Do you believe this is true? Who thinks of themselves as individuals? What controls you?** Write their answers on the board in a **THROW UP WALL**. A THROW UP WALL is simply a messy brainstorm of all the participants' responses.

OBJECTIVES

- For participants to understand the concept of hegemony
- For participants to reflect on the ways they have bought in to an oppressive system
- For participants to design actions to resist an oppressive system

MATERIALS/PREP

- One red and one blue jelly bean in a Dixie cup for each participant
- The movie *The Matrix*
- DVD projector and speakers
- Write the following reflection questions on the board to guide their discussion:

- ACCORDING TO MORPHEUS, WHAT IS THE MATRIX?
- WHAT MAKES IT HARD FOR NEO TO BELIEVE THAT THE MATRIX IS REAL?
- IF THERE IS A MATRIX IN PLACE IN THE U.S., WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF IT?
- AS A GROUP, DECIDE IF YOU BELIEVE THE MATRIX IS REAL OR NOT?

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Explain to participants that **you will begin this session by showing a clip from *The Matrix* to explore the concept of HEGEMONY.**
2. Show *The Matrix* chapter "The Pill" where Morpheus shows Neo the red and blue pills and explains how the Matrix works.
3. Ask participants to get into **groups of four** to **reflect** on what they saw in the film.
4. Explain to participants that **there is a Matrix all around us, convincing us that we should value beauty, perfection, a certain body type, desire a particular kind of house, family, or relationship... and that the system is so powerful that when we are offered a truth that goes beyond the Matrix, our minds begin to reject it.** **This is what the programmers of the Matrix want us to do, because it allows us to stay "asleep" while they use us for resources.**
5. Ask participants: **What are some examples of how we could be asleep?** Hear a few and then **suggest** these as questions:
 - Why do we call ourselves Nigga?



- Why do we listen to music that degrades women, glorifies violence, and promotes the idea of easy money?
 - Why do we have so much Black on Black violence?
6. Give participants **a few minutes to discuss each question.**
 7. Ask them: **What if the programmers of the Matrix want us to behave this way? How would that benefit them?**
 8. **Distribute a Dixie cup** with one red and one blue jelly bean to each participant.
 9. **Say** to participants: **We live in a world where we are being controlled, and we don't even know it. We are asleep. The Matrix programs us to say "Nothing controls me, I'm an individual." Anyone or anything that threatens that belief makes us angry. But as soon as you realize the Matrix exists you will question everything around you. Is it real, or was it created by someone trying to control you? You have a choice now. On our journey to becoming powerful Black men we have a lot to learn, but a lot to unlearn. And it depends on your openness, willingness, and self-control to take down the Matrix and see ourselves for who we are, and make the world a place that reflects our true selves. Decide now: Which pill will you take? It's just a jelly bean, but let it be a symbol of what we believe and stand for.**
 10. Have participants **choose** their jelly bean and eat it.
 11. **Give participants paper and pens**, and ask them to **journal** on the following prompt:
 - What are some things you want to rethink about your life?

DEBRIEF

- What were some ideas that came up for you in your writing?
- What makes questioning the Matrix difficult?
- What does the Matrix want us to believe about Black men?
- What does it look like to resist the programming?
- What are some examples of ways the programmers of the Matrix destroy anyone or anything that questions the Matrix?

CLOSING

- Share one thing you will do that resists the programming of the Matrix.

The School-to-Prison Pipeline

jela: prison [Swahili]

And one day we must ask the question, 'Why are there forty million poor people in America?' And when you begin to ask that question, you are raising questions about the economic system, about a broader distribution of wealth. When you ask that question, you begin to question the capitalistic economy. —MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

HOOK

- According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, one in three Black men can expect to go to prison in their lifetime. Why do you think that is?

INTRO

- According to the NAACP in 2013, African Americans now constitute nearly 1 million of the total 2.3 million incarcerated population, and African Americans are incarcerated at nearly six times the rate of white people. Many people dismiss that as natural and that Black men somehow deserve to be in jail, but it is much deeper than that. The activity that we are going to do today will help shed some light on why there are so many of us in prisons.

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will understand the School-to-Prison Pipeline as a systemic issue.
- Participants will analyze how the school system reinforces the status quo.
- Participants will connect the system of chattel slavery to the prison system.

MATERIALS/PREP

- As background research for the facilitator:
 - Look up "PRISON LABOR BOOMS" on **GOOGLE**.
 - Find a **YOUTUBE** video that describes the value of prison labor to America's economy.
- Index cards
- Markers
- Stickers
- Download from **THEARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN.COM** and make one copy for each participant of the following handouts:
 - LEMONADE STAND BUSINESS MODEL TEMPLATE**
 - CHILDREN BEING PUSHED INTO PRISON HANDOUT**
 - LETTER FROM A PRISON CEO HANDOUT**

INSTRUCTIONS

- Have participants get into **five groups and distribute** the **LEMONADE STAND BUSINESS MODEL TEMPLATE** to each participant.
- Explain that **each group now represents a team of entrepreneurs who must develop the business model for the most innovative lemonade stand and produce a budget for how they would balance the stand's income and expenses.**
- Give group **five minutes** to work out their **business model and budget** in round one. Have each group **present** their ideas.
- After the first round, **explain** to each team of entrepreneurs that **the cost of healthcare, wages, and lemons has gone up, and each entrepreneurial team must now come up with a business model budget** that allows them to grow profits by 10 percent from round one while taking into account the additional costs to their resources.
- Have participants **create a new business model**, calculate their profits and **share** out their innovative ideas. A little bit into the time, **announce** that **the major competitors have all found innovative ways to double or**



triple their profits, so if each group doesn't find a way to keep growing they risk losing their businesses. Have each group **share** out their ideas.

6. Hear each group's ideas to increase their profits, then share that **none of them were able to outpace the competition who found innovative uses of technology to dramatically increase their profits. Upon further investigation, it turns out that these companies used prison labor to decrease their labor expenses, eliminate health care and unions, and still keep the labor in the U.S.**

7. Ask participants:

- **How did you improve your profits (income minus expenses equals profits)?**
- **How do the needs/demands of your workers get in the way of your profits?**
- **How could you increase the income while decreasing expenses?**

8. Explain to participants that in **this session you will explore the School-to-Prison Machine (called the "Prison Industrial Complex")**.

9. To begin, have participants get into five groups, and assign one of these roles to each group:

- THE MAINSTREAM NEWS/MEDIA
- THE BLACK COMMUNITY
- THE WHITE COMMUNITY
- THE HIP-HOP COMMUNITY
- FAMILIES OF THE YOUNG MAN

10. Distribute index cards and markers to groups.

11. Ask each group to imagine they represent the "voice" of this community. Ask them to imagine **they have just heard that another young Black man is being sent to prison for 10 years.** Channeling the voice of their community, they should **write one thing this community would say or feel upon hearing this news on each index card.**

12. Have each group share out their "voices" and post their index cards around the room.

13. Distribute a pack of stickers to each group, and ask them to **place** a sticker next to any of the "voices" that put the blame on the young boy, his family, or his community, and to circle any voices that assign blame to a system—like capitalism, racism, or failing schools and health care.

14. Calculate the percentage of total stickers versus circled statements. Usually there will be a larger percentage of stickered statements, which represent the idea that we blame individuals for getting caught in the prison system.

15. Explain to participants that **often individuals are blamed instead of systems, because it allows systems to function poorly and not be held accountable when, in fact, the system of capitalism wants to have people in jail to serve as low-cost labor.**

16. Distribute the **CHILDREN BEING PUSHED INTO PRISON HANDOUT** to each participant, and have them **review** the statistics, which are called "DISPROPORTIONALITY."

17. Ask participants:

- **Can you think of examples when you or your peers experienced harsher discipline than others? Share some of these.**
- **Do you know anyone who expects to end up in prison for most of their adulthood? What are some factors that cause this?**
- **What does it take to resist this thinking?**
- **What are some ways we can be allies for our peers when we see someone treating them unfairly?**
- **If standing up for someone else might mean that you would go down too, would you do it?**



The School-to-Prison Pipeline, continued

18. Distribute **LETTER FROM A PRISON CEO** to participants, and have them **read** it.

19. Ask participants

- **How would a mandate to keep the prison beds filled impact how prison sentences are given out in this state?**

20. Ask participants to **reflect** on the key ideas that were covered in this session.

Some key points to pull out include:

- **There are a disproportionate number of Black men in prisons (more in jail than in college).**
- **Our systems and communities make it feel like it is an individual's fault for being sent to prison.**
- **In fact, Black men experience harsher treatment and more violence than others, which results in getting caught up in the wrong side of the law.**
- **Companies and corporations want prisons to be full to help drive their profits.**
- **Our schools begin this trend by treating Black students disproportionately.**
- **Many Black men deeply embody this system by telling themselves they will end up in prison.**

21. Distribute the **SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE HANDOUT** to participants, and give them a few minutes to understand the information presented.

22. Explain that the **School-to-Prison Pipeline is like a giant machine, giving young Black boys experiences and messages that land them in prison**. To represent this idea, participants will now work in groups of four to five to **create a metaphorical School-to-Prison Machine**.

23. Have participants get into new **groups of four to five**.

24. Explain that each group should **imagine they are a living conveyer belt** that will send one of their group members through the machine, which ends in jail.

25. Each participant in the group should **take turns becoming one aspect of the School-to-Prison Machine, and act it out**. *They might be a teacher kicking them out of class, a cop following them as they walk home, or a friend pressuring them to break into a house.* Each group should **think** about the many experiences or messages a Black boy gets that send them through this journey.

26. One participant should **pretend** to be the "product" that goes through the machine and is spit out at the end.

27. Once each group **decides** on their machine, have them **bring the machine to life** in slow motion, then at a medium pace, and finally at a rapid pace.

28. Now **ask** them: **What messages/experiences would it take to shift the outcome of this machine from jail to a stable job and a happy family?**

DEBRIEF

- **What is the role prison labor plays in the U.S. economy?**
- **How is prison labor similar/different to slavery?**
- **If the Black male community wanted to "resist" the dominant theory that Black men belong in prison, what would we do?**

CLOSING

- **What would you like to tell all the Black men in prison today who never learned about the School-to-Prison Pipeline?**

My Life Is Mine

maisha : life [Swahili]

Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome.

—BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

HOOK

- Ask participants: **What is one thing that you would like to change about yourself or the way that you do things?**

INTRO

- Explain that **none of us are perfect**. We are all on a journey to be our best, and sometimes we fall short of that, but we should always try. We are actually very powerful and can do anything that we set our minds to and commit to. Today we are going to look at a process called the Problem Posing Process that will help us to shift things about our lives that we want to see change.

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will practice problem solving in their own lives.
- Participants will challenge themselves to stay disciplined.
- Participants will practice self reflection.

MATERIALS/PREP

- Notebooks for each participant to be used as PROBLEM SOLVING JOURNALS
- Download from **THEARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN**.

COM:

- PROBLEM SOLVING PROCESS HANDOUT**
(make one copy per participant)
- AFRICAN HEROES CARDS** (make one card for each participant)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Review the **PROBLEM SOLVING PROCESS HANDOUT** with participants using a problem that you are willing to share with them. They need to see you go through the process so that they understand how to do it themselves. *For example:*

Today we are going to take back our power. We have the power to control our own lives, and I am going to give you a process for doing it. The steps are identify, analyze, strategize, act, evaluate, and reflect. First step is identify. My problem is that I struggle with exercising regularly. Now I have to analyze the problem, which means that I have to figure out the who, what, when, where, and why of my problem. When I get home from work, I am too tired to work out, and I have trouble getting up in the morning. I figured out that I am too tired in the morning because I stay up late watching movies. I also hate the gym, and it is dark when I get off work, so I don't feel safe working out outside. Now it is time to strategize based on what I learned in analyze. Here are some options I can think of:

- OPTION 1: Work out before work**
- OPTION 2: Work out after work**
- OPTION 3: Work out during my lunch hour**

Based on the fact that I have a hard time getting up early, I think I will choose to work out after work, but I have to do something indoors. I am going to buy a workout DVD and work out at home. That way if I am too tired from work, I can take a nap first or drink a cup of coffee. I am going to try this for two weeks to see if I can keep it up.



My Life Is Mine, continued

Over the next few weeks I will take action, then evaluate how effective my action steps were.

To evaluate, I have to think about what success means to me. I would like to lose five pounds, but I also want to have more energy and sleep better. So I will keep track of both my weight and my energy levels to help me evaluate success.

The last step is to reflect. After six weeks or so I would reflect on how much effort I put into this goal, what I got out of it, and what I learned from it.

2. Hand out the **PROBLEM SOLVING JOURNALS**. Explain to participants that they are going to get two weeks to identify, analyze, and strategize and act on an issue that they are having in their lives.

Today in class we are going to identify and analyze a problem. This means you will write down a problem you are having, then start asking yourself questions to figure out the cause and impact of this problem.

3. After participants have filled out the identify and analyze sections, get them into **pairs** using the **AFRICAN HEROES CARDS**. Have them **share** what they have come up with in those two sections.
4. **Bring the group back together** and allow a few participants to **share** with the whole class if they choose.
5. Explain that for homework, **their job to is come up with at least three strategies** to solve their problem and try them out.
6. Over the next few class sessions **remind** participants to keep working on the actions they choose. You may choose to give them time to journal on what actions they have taken and what they are learning as a result.
7. After **two weeks** have participants **share out a final reflection** by presenting their problem-solving process at each stage (identify, analyze, strategize, act, reflect, evaluate).

DEBRIEF

- What did you learn about yourself in this process?
- How can you apply what you learned about yourself to other aspects of your life?
- Where else can you apply the problem-solving process?
- Why is it hard to solve problems in our lives? What holds us back?

CLOSING

- What can you do to help yourself stay on track to solving your problem?

That's the One

moja : one [Swahili]

Crime is increasing. Trigger happy policing. Panic is spreading. God knows where we're headed. Make me wanna holler and throw up both my hands. —MARVIN GAYE

HOOK

- Play “Inner City Blues” by Marvin Gaye and hand out the lyrics to participants to follow along. Ask participants to pay attention to what problems he outlines in the song. After playing the song, ask participants to share what issues they heard Marvin Gaye describing.

INTRO

- Explain to participants that **we are going to get a chance to explore our community to see what issues we see that need solving.**

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will identify what they think is the biggest problem in their community
- Participants will survey their peers.

MATERIALS/PREP

- Index cards
- Clipboards
- Pens

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Explain** to participants that now that they have had a chance to practice problem solving in their own lives, **we are going to broaden our scope and problem solve in our communities.**
2. **Hand out an index card and pen** to each participant and ask them to **answer** the following question with **one word: What is the biggest problem in your community?**
3. **Collect** all of the cards and have participants **stand** in a circle. **Spread** the cards out on the floor and ask a volunteer to **read** them.
4. Ask the participants to **group** the cards that are the same or similar. **Take out** any cards that are outliers (meaning that there is only one of them).
5. **Narrow** down to **four problems or less**. Have participants **vote** on the problem that they want to work on.
6. Explain to participants that you will **work on creating solutions to these problems in the next session**. **NOTE TO FACILITATOR:** Save the top four problems for the next session.

DEBRIEF

- **What are some ideas that you have that may help to solve this problem?**
- **Was the problem that was chosen by the class the one that you felt the most passionate about? If so, why? If not, which one did you feel the most passionate about and why?**

CLOSING

- **Do you think you can impact this problem? Why or why not?**

Whatchuknowaboutthat?

kujua : know [Swahili]

Commitment is a big part of what I am and what I believe. How committed are you to winning? How committed are you to being a good friend? To being trustworthy? To being successful? How committed are you to being a good father, a good teammate, a good role model? There's that moment every morning when you look in the mirror: Are you committed, or are you not? —LEBRON JAMES

HOOK

- Draw a chart on the board or on chart paper. It should have three columns. At the top of column one write: "WHAT DO YOU KNOW?" For column two, write: "WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?" For column three, write: "WHAT DID YOU LEARN?" Ask participants: **What do you know about this problem?** Chart their answers in the "KNOW" column. Ask participants: **What do you want to know about this problem?** Chart their answers in the "WANNA KNOW" column.

INTRO

- Identifying a problem is a great first step, and now to analyze the problem more deeply we will use the three levels of the chart we built in the hook to better understand the issue. This will help us design a better strategy to address the problem.

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will discover what they know and want to know about the problem that they chose for their project.
- Participants will research the political, social, economic, and historical impact of their problem.
- Participants will prepare a keynote presentation about their problem.

MATERIALS/PREP

- Chart paper
- Markers
- Download from THEARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN.COM:
 - **POINTS OF ANALYSIS POSTER** (draw a sample on a board or poster paper)
 - **POINTS OF ANALYSIS HANDOUTS** (make one copy per participant)
 - **ANALYSIS SHEETS** (make one copy per participant)
 - **STRATEGY GAME BOARD HANDOUT** (make one copy per participant)
- Computer Lab

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Post the **POINTS OF ANALYSIS POSTER**. Ask participants to **read** the points of analysis aloud. After each definition is read, ask participants if they have **clarifying questions**. After all of the points are read, ask participants to **categorize** the questions in the "WANNA KNOW" column by the points of analysis.
2. Split participants into **four groups**. Give each group an **ANALYSIS SHEET**. There are four sheets: POLITICAL ANALYSIS, SOCIAL ANALYSIS, ECONOMIC ANALYSIS, HISTORICAL ANALYSIS. Each group will be **responsible for analyzing the problem from their research angle**.
3. **Assign** the research as homework or set aside classroom time for the research.
4. Once research is completed, ask each group to **prepare a five-minute keynote** of their findings. As the groups present, get a volunteer to **chart** on the board in the "WHAT DID YOU LEARN?" category.
5. Next, ask participants to **write** down as many solutions to the problem as they can. **Read** all of the suggestions aloud. Pass out the **STRATEGY GAME BOARD HANDOUT**. Place the strategies at the bottom of the game board. **Move** the strategy up the board based on whether or not it meets the criteria. The ones that make it to the top of the board win. If there is more than one strategy left at the end of the game, ask participants to vote to decide.



DEBRIEF

- Why is it important to examine problems from so many different angles?
- Were you surprised about anything you learned in your research? If so, what?
- How has your perspective changed since you conducted your research?
- What excites you about this project?
- What do you hope happens as a result of this project?

CLOSING

- Do you think that you will change as a result of this project? Why or why not?

Manhood Development

This unit will engage a group of young men on their way to manhood to deconstruct toxic notions of masculinity, and reconstruct their visions of masculinity based on healthy, creative choices. The first section unfolds through a series of questions:

- Who are you?
- Who said you had to be that?
- Who benefits when you conform to a limited perspective of masculinity?
- What does it cost us to stay inside a box?
- What happens to men who do not follow social norms of manhood?

In the second half of this section we explore positive and progressive forms of masculinity that affirms our African identity and uplifts our humanity. The questions we explore in phase two include:

- What is a man?
- Where does anger come from?
- How does our need to stay manly manifest when we are hurt?
- What does this mean about your relationship to women?
- What privileges do men experience at the cost of women?
- What are my choices to liberate my mind in the midst of limiting systems?
- Who will I choose to become?

By the end of this section we hope participants will be able to define and unpack how they have come to know themselves as a man, and how their vision of manhood impacts the choices they make each day.

IN THIS SECTION

PHASE 1: DECONSTRUCTION OF MANHOOD

[Who Are You?](#)

[I'm the Man](#)

[Nigga Experience](#)

[Dear Father...](#)

PHASE 2: RECONSTRUCTION OF MANHOOD

[Anger Choice Map](#)

[Bitches, Queens, 'n' Ladies](#)

[Am I Sexist?](#)

[The Self-Made Man](#)

Who Are You?

nani wewe : who are you? [Swahili]

Remind yourself. Nobody built like you, you design yourself.

—JAY-Z

HOOK

- What are some questions you would rather not be asked?
- On a scale from 1-10 how well do you think you know the people in this group?

INTRO

- This activity is based on the belief that learning is relational—that who we are is as important as what we think and what we do. Today in this exercise we will spend some time getting to know each other on a deeper level, to both test the quality of our connection as well as to practice sharing things with each other that reveal our true selves.

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will reflect on their identity.
- Participants will respond to simple questions to reveal their deeper selves.
- Participants will deepen their sense of community with group members.

MATERIALS/PREP

- None

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Explain to participants that this activity will require participants to work in pairs for about 15 minutes. Each member of the pair will take turns interviewing each other using a process called Constant Questioning. In this process, the interviewer will ask one question over and over, while the interviewee will respond to the same question in different ways each time.
2. Explain that questions can be very powerful—even simple questions. When our brain is offered a question, it will go out and find an answer. In the constant questioning process, the answers of the interviewee will get more interesting and profound over the course of the exercise.
3. In order to prep your participants to create a space where they can be open and vulnerable, ask the following questions and chart their responses:
 - Given how I have described this activity, what agreements should we put in place to ensure everyone feels safe and comfortable enough to allow their minds to offer up real and profound answers?
 - What behaviors from others may get in the way of someone being able to say something personal or vulnerable?
 - Some of you may feel uncomfortable in this activity. What are some reasons to allow yourself to be uncomfortable for a little while?
4. Get participants into pairs and ask them to sit facing each other. Ask one person to be PERSON A and the other to be PERSON B.



5. **Explain:** We are going to start with PERSON A asking the question and PERSON B answering. You will have one minute each to answer the question, "Who are you?" When A asks, "Who are you?" B answers. Then A asks, the same question, "Who are you?" again and again until time is up.
6. Encourage participants to take a moment to see what new answer emerges each time they are asked the question. *For example:*
 PERSON A: Who are you?
 PERSON B: Shawn
 PERSON A: Who are you?
 PERSON B: A father
 PERSON A: Who are you?
 PERSON B: A Black Man
 PERSON A: Who are you?
 PERSON B: Scared
 PERSON A: Who are you?
 PERSON B: An Intellectual
7. Remind the person asking the questions to stay neutral while asking the questions. Try to avoid facial expressions, nodding, laughter etc., and do NOT respond to the answers. Simply ask the question again.
8. After PERSON B answers, it will be PERSON A's turn to answer.
9. Using a timer, give participants one minute for each round, then switch.

After the first round, you may choose to debrief the activity, or offer additional questions:

- Who are you?
- How are you a man?
- Who do you pretend to be?
- Who do people think you are?
- Who do you want to be?
- What has being African-American taught you?
- What's important to you?
- Where are you going?
- What's stopping you?

DEBRIEF

- How was this activity for you?
- What made this activity difficult or challenging?
- When you felt uncomfortable, what did you do?
- When else do you behave like this when you are uncomfortable?
- Did any of your answers surprise you? Why?
- What question would you want to ask your community if we did this activity again?

CLOSING

- What would be different in our community if we could be more open and vulnerable with each other?

I'm the Man

mtu : man [Swahili]

Why am I fighting to live, if I'm just living to fight?
 Why am I trying to see, when there ain't nothing in sight?
 Why am I trying to give, when no one gives me a try?
 Why am I dying to live, if I'm just living to die? —TUPAC AMARU SHAKUR

HOOK

- What is the first thing you learned about what being a man means in terms of what you are supposed to do?

INTRO

- The idea of “manhood” played a particular role in West African culture. Manhood was understood as equal and complementary to womanhood. The concept, “What good is my hand, without my fingers” conveys the ideas that manhood and womanhood were inseparable. These concepts changed over time, and now the contributions men make to the workforce, homes, and parenting have dramatically blurred with the roles women can play. While roles have blurred, perhaps the images of manhood have become more pronounced. The box of masculinity for many Black men is defined by not wanting to be thought of as effeminate or gay, which motivates Black men to work really hard not to be associated/connected with those ideas.
- This activity is an adaptation from the Oakland Men’s Project’s exercise from the early 1980s called “Act Like a Man.” We will use it to explore the ways in which the meanings we assign to “manhood” create unequal power in our society that are unhealthy for both men and women. This activity will begin a dialogue about gender socialization and its connection to violence. Through this exercise we will open up discussions about gender roles, how they are enforced, images of masculinity, and the way these elements connect to violence.

OBJECTIVES

- For participants to define masculinity, and what it means to be a man
- For participants to connect physical, embodied actions, and “shapes” to abstract definitions of manhood
- For participants to critique the boundaries of the box of masculinity
- For participants to explore the benefits and challenges of expanding this box, or stepping outside of this box

MATERIALS/PREP

- Post-Its
- Blue painters tape
- A cardboard box
- Flip chart

SETUP

- Using the blue tape, create a square box approx. 2.5 x 2.5 feet on the floor at the front of the room.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Distribute a stack of Post-its to each participant.
2. Ask participants: “What does it mean to act like a man?”
3. As participants talk, ask them to write key words or phrases on Post-its and place them in the center of the flip chart. Some things they might say are, “Men are strong, they are not overly emotional, they don’t cry, they’re not weak, etc.”
4. Once they have come up with 10 or more things or run out of ideas, draw a box with a blue marker around the Post-its and write, “I'M THE MAN” at the top of the flip chart.
5. Ask participants:
 - Do these ideas resonate with your sense of masculinity?
 - What percent of the time do you live inside this box?



6. Ask participants the following question, and write their responses on Post-its to place outside of the blue box.

What are some things that either you or other men you know do that are outside of this box?

NOTE: While participants may come up with “negative” qualities like needy or weak, also encourage them to think of positive human qualities like caring, nurturing, supportive, etc., as well.

7. Discuss the nature of the qualities and how they differ from those listed inside the box.
8. Now explain that **any time society creates a box for people to live in, it creates an urgency and pressure to completely conform to the stereotypes of the box—or become an outcast living outside the box. Either option can cause a great deal of trauma within a person, a family, or a community.** Explain that the group will now do a **sculpting exercise to explore the physical impact on men trying to live inside this box.**
9. Ask for a **volunteer to stand** inside the blue tape-box on the floor. This volunteer will become the **CLAY** and explain that you will demonstrate by becoming the **SCULPTOR**.
10. Explain that the SCULPTOR will first **mentally select one of the words** on the Post-its inside the blue box from the “I'M THE MAN” poster, and **visualize** what this word “looks like” to them.
11. The SCULPTOR will then **mold the man in the box** into the physical shape this word brings up for them. (NOTE: If you are concerned about the comfort level of participants being touched you may suggest the SCULPTOR ask the volunteer if they mind being touched/molded, or if they would prefer to be directed into the shape the SCULPTOR is imagining). For example, if the SCULPTOR chooses the word ANGRY, they may place the person



standing tall on a chair beating his chest like King Kong or the may have the participant contort his face and mold his arms into a clenched fist ready to punch someone.

12. Remind the group as well as both participants that **this should be done silently. The SCULPTOR can take a pose that the CLAY can mirror, or the SCULPTOR could gently “sculpt” the volunteer into the gestures they want them to take.**
13. Once the SCULPTOR is done molding, ask the volunteer to **stand frozen for about 60 seconds** and **think** about the physical position they have been molded into (this will feel like a long time).
14. As they stand there, **ask** them the following questions:
- **How does your body feel?**
 - **Do you notice yourself cramping up or getting tense anywhere?**
 - **Are you open or shut off to the group?**
 - **If this position were a three, show us how it would look if you took it to a level ten.**
15. Once they have stood there for about a minute, ask them to **express a word or phrase** that comes to mind. Ask them to just **keep repeating** the word or phrase over and over.

I'm the Man, continued

If you selected the word ANGRY, they might say, “**I'm the boss, I'm the boss, I'm the boss**” or “**Aggressive, aggressive, aggressive**,” etc. Or maybe you selected the phrase *protector of the home* but they interpreted the position they were molded into as angry. Regardless, let them express what it feels like to them without correcting them.

16. After the volunteer repeats this phrase five times, ask them to **pause and relax**.
17. Now **ask** the rest of the group:
 - **When do we first receive these messages?**
 - **Where do these messages come from. (Who is the messenger?)**
 - **What does it cost individual men to live inside the box?**
 - **What does it cost the community?**
18. Have participants form **trios** to **repeat** the exercise, and **assign** one person to be the SCULPTOR, CLAY, and RECORDER.
19. Ask the RECORDER to **observe** their group's process to report out.
20. Have each group **report** out.
21. Ask the group:
 - **Where do we hear the messages of what a man should do?**
22. Ask **three to five participants to represent each idea**, and **take a collective pose**. For example, if the group says that media influences what is inside the box, the group of participants representing the media might stand on a chair above the men in the box looking down at them with a video camera, or if fathers is another source of who defines the box, the group of participants representing fathers may stand across the room pointing at them or blocking them from leaving the box.
23. Ask each participant to **visualize** a strong Black woman in their lives, then **make a list** of all the qualities that woman possesses that they admire.
24. Ask them to then **reflect** on the list, and **circle each word** that they would not consider being masculine, or would consider to be negative in a man.
25. **Ask** participants: **How do you love these women for who they are, if all these things they are associated with are negative for you?**
26. **Explain** that **we have made it difficult for ourselves to explore masculinity outside of a small box, but, in fact, there are qualities outside of this box we may admire or benefit from cultivating.**

DEBRIEF

- **What qualities/actions/behaviors are missing from the box when you think of what manhood means to you?**
- **How often do you feel like you can step outside of the box?**
- **Do you know men that fit both inside and outside this box?**
- **What are the consequences for men who step outside the box?**
- **How do men keep each other inside this box?**
- **What would it mean to expand our definition of what this box can contain, or remove the box altogether?**
- **What self-destructive behaviors come from living inside this box?**
- **Who benefits from this boxed behavior?**
- **How do we make it safe for ourselves to step outside of this box?**

CLOSING

- **What is one way you will question what qualities live inside or outside of the box?**

Nigga Experience

Inzondo : hatred [Zulu]

To me, it's just a word, a word whose power is owned by the user and his or her intention. People give words power, so banning a word is futile, really. "Nigga" becomes "porch monkey" becomes "coon" and so on if that's what in a person's heart. The key is to change the person. And we change people through conversation, not through censorship. —JAY-Z, DECODED

HOOK

- Do you use the word "NIGGA"?

INTRO

- While the word "NIGGA" has been dressed up and popularized through the media and social norms today, it carries with it a loaded historical legacy of the violence, shame, and disempowerment perpetrated on African slaves, black communities post-slavery, and still in discreet circles of racists. Some members of the Black community have reclaimed and reappropriated this word today. It is used frequently to refer to friends as a term of endearment or in casual conversation. And yet the legacy of hatred is still captured in the word. The term "NIGGA" is dehumanizing, and it is the dehumanizing mentality that led to the first lynchings, then Black on Black homicide, then interpersonal violence in our communities. There are many who believe the word is embedded into our culture as a way to continue to control Black bodies.
- In this activity we will explore, examine, and unpack this word from various perspectives to assess if in an attempt to reclaim a part of our past and reframe it, we are not accidentally passing along a deep internalized violence and grief about our violent history. Perhaps we, as a people, have to hold this word ourselves before we can let it go. In a society that is still in the early stages of bringing about an awareness and consciousness about the impacts of slavery, it presents an edgy problem when Black communities want to use this word internally. We cannot ignore the fact that when "NIGGA" is used in the wrong context, by the wrong person, the term "NIGGA" still carries with it the hatred, and it can unlock in any of us a somatic trigger of rage, anger, and powerlessness. While the debate continues within Black communities, we continue to fight systemic oppression. In this activity we will explore the term "NIGGA" from a social, cultural, historic, and political lens.

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will discuss how the word "NIGGA" is used today.
- Participants will explore different perspectives on who is allowed to use the N-word.
- Participants will learn how language was used to control black minds during slavery.

MATERIALS/PREP

- Download from THEARTOFTHEBLACKMAN.COM:
 - WILLIE LYNCH LETTER
(make one copy per participant)
 - FOUR CORNERS SIGNS
(make one set)
- Find 8-10 images of "slave lynching" from the Internet to show participants. NOTE: These should be violent and provocative.
- The song "Nigga Experience" by Goodie Mob and a speaker system to play it
- A copy of Chris Rock's stand up, "Black People vs. Niggaz" from his 1996 *Bring the Pain* standup show



Nigga Experience, continued

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Explain to participants that **to begin the dialogue on the term “NIGGA”** and the pros and cons of the word, the group will **watch** Chris Rock’s stand up, “Black People vs. Niggaz.”
2. After the video, **debrief** participants’ response using the following questions:
 - **What do you think of Chris Rock’s distinction of the black community as Black people and “NIGGAS”?**
 - **What are some other distinctions within Black communities?**
 - **When is the term “NIGGA” most often used?**
 - **Who do you think is allowed to use the word “NIGGA”?**
 - **Who is not allowed to use the word?**
3. **Explain** to participants that **the term “NIGGA” was used in times of slavery to justify dehumanizing practices used by white people to control the slaves.**
4. **Distribute** a copy of the **WILLIE LYNCH LETTER** to participants, and ask them to **read** the letter.
5. Have participants get into **small groups** to **debrief** the letter.
6. As participants discuss, **spread the lynching images** around the room.
7. After participants have reflected on the letter, have them **move around** the room to silently take in the images.
8. Have participants **take their seats**, and ask them to **close their eyes and picture** this man Willie Lynch, visualizing what he looked like, who he was speaking to, and the response of the crowds he was speaking to.
9. Ask participants to hold this visual of Willie Lynch in their minds as you **play** the “Nigga Experience” song by Goodie Mob.
10. Have participants **open their eyes**, and **share**

out some thoughts they had as they connected Goodie Mob’s words with Willie Lynch’s.

11. Explain to participants that you will use **an exercise called “four corners” to create some dialogue about the term “NIGGA.”**
12. Place the four signs with the words **AGREE, STRONGLY AGREE, DISAGREE, and STRONGLY DISAGREE** in four different corners of the room.
13. Explain to participants that **you will read several statements.** After each statement participants should **decide** how strongly they agree/disagree, and **move** to the corner of the room with that sign. *NOTE: For some statements, participants will want to stand between two positions. When this happens, ask them to “try out” a perspective by going to one sign for the moment, because it will allow for a richer dialogue.*
14. For each round **read a statement** below and ask participants to **remain silent** as they **move** into the corner of the room that best reflects how they feel about the statement.
 - **Our violent history is embedded in the term “NIGGA.”**
 - **It is okay for Black people to use the word “NIGGA” with other Black people?**
 - **It is okay for black people to use the word “NIGGA” with any people, including white people and other folks of color.**
 - **It is okay for white rappers to use the term “NIGGA”?**
 - **Someone has to be my friend to call me “NIGGA.”**
 - **The word “NIGGA” still carries so much hatred that we should just stop using it.**
 - **Is it O.K. to use similar racial slurs that refer to other races (i.e., Chink, Cracker, Guido)?**
15. **Explain** to participants that **there are many ideologies within the Black community about the use of the word “NIGGA,” and that while socially it may mean one thing, politically it**



can mean another. In this class, designed to support Black men to navigate the social, political, and economic complexities of our world, you would like to see what level of action and commitment the group feels it can make around the use of this word.

16. Ask participants: When you hear the word "NIGGA," what images come to your mind?
17. Explain to participants that they should now all **imagine that they are in a debate** commissioned by the The Brotherhood of Elders to explore the use of the term "NIGGA" today.
18. Divide participants into **two groups**:
 - GROUP 1: In favor of using the word "NIGGA"
 - GROUP 2: Believes that the word "NIGGA" should not be allowed

You could invite participants to choose sides, or assign them to a side.
19. Ask each group to spend **10 minutes** **developing talking points** to defend their side of the issue, then **choose a KEY DEBATER** and **REBUTTAL DEBATER** to argue their points.
20. After the debate ends, ask the group: **Which side do you believe made the best case for whether or not we should continue to use the "N" word?**

DEBRIEF

- Based on this conversation what makes the use of the word "NIGGA" complicated?
- Do you believe language has power?
- What is the connection between our sense of empowerment and the choices we make about the language we use?
- Could we push ourselves to take a seven-day challenge to not use the N-word? If that seems too difficult, is there another seven-day challenge we could try?

CLOSING

- How do conversations about the use of the word "NIGGA" help empower Black men?

Dear Father...

baba : father [Swahili]

My father wasn't around when I was a kid, and I used to always say, 'Why me? Why don't I have a father? ... But as I got older I looked deeper and thought, 'I don't know what my father was going through, but if he was around all the time, would I be who I am today?' —LEBRON JAMES

HOOK

- What are some ways that you feel controlled by your past experiences?

INTRO

- In this session the group will reflect on their relationship with their fathers or father figures. The presence and quality of older male role models has long been an issue in the African-American community. Our relationships with our fathers/father figure (or lack thereof, in many instances) shape our first impressions of what it means to be a man, a partner, a role model, or a friend. In this activity we will explore the imprint the experiences we have had with our fathers has made on us, and consider what types of male role models we need to support our journey into our futures.

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will reflect on their relationships with their fathers.
- Participants will practice the skill of reframing.
- Participants will practice abstract thinking and emotional literacy.

MATERIALS/PREP

- Download **IDEAS IN PICTURES CARDS** from THEARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN.COM and make one or two sets, depending on the size of your group.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Explain to participants that you will begin this exercise with a **visualization to better understand their relationship with their fathers**.
2. Explain that the group will do a **one-minute meditation activity**. Invite participants to close their eyes.
3. While you lead participants in the meditation, spread the **IDEAS IN PICTURES CARDS** around the room. Say: Ask your mind to relax five times. Plant your feet on the ground and feel the earth below you. Take three deep breaths. Once you feel like your mind is clear, think about your relationship with your father. What is it like? How present is he in your life? Do you get along well? Do you argue? Do you feel like you know him? If your father is not in your life, how does that make you feel? I know it may be a little uncomfortable but I want you to stay in this space and challenge yourself to have this conversation with yourself. Okay, now open your eyes.

When you look around the room, you will see pictures spread out everywhere. Take a walk around the room and look at the different pictures. Take your time. As you look, I want you to pick the picture that best describes an image or a metaphor for the relationship you have with your father. Once you have found the right picture, pick it up and return to your seat.

4. Once participants choose a picture, have them each go around and **describe** why they made that choice. For example, the might



choose a picture of a large clock because they remember always waiting for their father to return or they might pick a picture of a two empty red chairs because they remember sitting on the porch listening to their father tell stories to all the kids in the neighborhood.

5. Encourage them to **use a nonverbal sign** if they hear one of their brothers say something that resonates for them. *For example, snap twice or thumbs up.*
6. As participants share, **chart some of the significant themes and skills** that come up. *For example, some themes may include: connection, mentorship, abandonment. Some skills may include: independence, survival, leadership, loyalty, guarded, protective, careful, cautious.*
7. **Thank** participants for their participation, and **explain** that **the relationships they have with their parents create one piece of who they are by defining where they come from.** But these early relationships do not determine where each of them will go. It is up to each of them to decide what parts of their daddy legacy they want to carry forward into their future relationships with others.
8. Explain that the group will now **repeat the visualization process** with a different set of prompts. Invite the group to **close their eyes**, and plant their two feet on the ground. **Say:**

Ask your mind to relax five times. Take three deep breaths. Once you feel like your mind is clear, I want you to imagine yourself in 10 years. What are you doing? Where do you work? Who are the people in your life? Now consider what it will take to get there. What type of mentorship from a male role model would help you on this journey? What will this mentorship offer you? How will it support you and keep you moving when you get distracted? When you have an idea of what this relationship will look like, move around the room and pick a picture that best describes the relationship you need with this mentor to achieve your dreams.
9. Have participants **repeat** the process of sharing what image they chose, and what quality of relationship it represents for them.
10. **Explain** that **sometimes our family offers us the types of mentorship we need, and sometimes we have to cultivate the right relationships.** Ask participants to **think** about a person in their life who could provide this type of mentorship to them.

DEBRIEF

- **What was difficult about this activity?**
- **What common themes came up in our stories?**
- **Do we believe that a father is necessary for everyone?**
- **What would you like to ask/say to your father?**
- **What types of qualities and skills are people looking for in role models?**
- **What are some ways you can ask for mentorship from the adults in your life?**
- **What are some ways you can cultivate mentorship from others?**

CLOSING

- **What is one positive way your relationship with your father has impacted you?**

The Anger Choice Map

hamaki : angry [Swahili]

Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else; you are the one who gets burned. —BUDDHA

HOOK

- Have you ever woken up on the wrong side of the bed?
- What determines if you will have a bad day—can you shift what starts out bad into a good day?

INTRO

- When we get very upset or angry at someone, many of us go through a cycle of emotions that happens in a split second and results in us deciding how we will protect, defend, or fight for ourselves and the things we want. This activity will explore the concept of an anger choice map, adapted from a process called Man Alive, developed by Haymish Sinclair and developed from work with male domestic violence perpetrators. It is a violence prevention tool that can be especially helpful in supporting Black men find positive and productive ways to deal with anger.

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will learn to identify their own patterns and responses when they experience anger.
- Participants will become conscious of ways they might use a “hitman” to protect themselves when they feel vulnerable.
- Participants will make choices about how they want to respond when they feel angry with someone.

MATERIALS/PREP

- Download from THEARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN.COM the following handouts:
 - **ANGER CHOICE MAP** (make one copy per participant)
 - **EMOTION WHEEL HANDOUT** (make one copy per participant)
 - **IT'S NOT WORTH IT** (make one copy)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Ask participants to **find a partner** and talk about a time in this past week when you got angry or had an argument with someone and thought, “What the Fuck!”
2. **Distribute** the emotion wheel handout to participants, and ask them to reflect on the story they just heard and shared with their partner.
3. Ask them: **What emotions from this wheel were present in that story?**
4. **Explain** that Black men are often steered towards feeling angry and are shut down from feeling other emotions that may actually more accurately describe how they are feeling.

In this session you will unpack the **ANGER CHOICE MAP** that depicts what happens when we become angry. This is a complex process, so it will begin with a story to describe what happens.

5. **Begin by reading** the story, “It’s Not Worth It” to the group:
A man went out one night to see a show with his girlfriend. As they were standing towards the front of the stage listening to the music, he feels someone shuffling through the crowd in an attempt to push past everyone and get to the front of the stage. To send a message to whoever was forcing their way through the crowd, he deliberately used his body to block the path. The man whose path was cut off got mad and aggressively shouted that he needed to calm down because he was just trying to get through. Out of reflex, feeling challenged, he wanted to respond →

with confrontation. In an instant, his fist clenched and he puffed up his chest ready to turn around and confront the man. With the touch of his girlfriend's hand and a flashback on situations like these that had escalated beyond control, he came back to himself and realized "It's not worth it."

6. Have participants get into **small groups** to **reflect** on the story using the following debrief questions:
 - **What do you think the main character was feeling in this story?**
 - **How do you think his "manhood" was challenged in this story?**
 - **When his manhood was threatened, what emotions from this Emotion Wheel do you think he was feeling?**
 - **Of all the emotions he was feeling, which one did he really express?**
 - **How did his choice to get angry mask some of those other feelings?**
7. Ask participants to get into **pairs**, and have each person **tell a story** of a time when they had a similar experience.
8. As each person shares, have the other person **use the EMOTION WHEEL to suggest some of the emotions** they believe their partner felt in this incident.
9. Now **show** participants the **ANGER CHOICE MAP**, and **walk them through the process**.

DEBRIEF

- **In your home today, what emotions are expressed most often?**
- **Of all the emotions on the wheel, which are hardest for you to feel/express?**
- **How does our experience of anger connect to our definition of manhood?**
- **What would shift in your relationships if you could express more of the emotions on this wheel?**
- **What makes it hard for men to really express multiple emotions?**

CLOSING

- **Think of a time when you "violated" a relationship with someone you cared about, and write a letter to them expressing your authentic feelings to share with the group next time.**

Bitches, Queens, 'n' Ladies

malkia : queen [Swahili]

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages and lifted over ditches and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages or over mud puddles or gives me the best place! And ain't I a woman. —SOJOURNER TRUTH

HOOK

- What are some beliefs about women embedded in this quote?

INTRO

- The use of objectification and de-humanization has been a tool used by oppressors to justify unfair laws and policies for centuries. Just as slaves were said to be three-fifths human to justify the system of chattel slavery, women are discounted today when they are objectified as sex objects, their feelings are discounted because they have "PMS," are expected not to be good at math or science, to be bad drivers—just to name a few prevailing thoughts. In this activity we will unpack the ways that the contributions of women have been minimized, and reflect on ways we can shift our thinking as Black men about how we want to build relationships with the women in our communities. Just as Black communities want white people to make amends for historic and current conditions of oppression, we, as men, have similar work to do with women. It is only when we all collectively engage in a healing process that we can make the world better.

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will unpack the subtle messages about women that enter a child's psyche from the media.
- Participants will explore how they have been shaped by the efforts of women.
- Participants will explore the ways sexist conditions, systems, and behaviors impact the African-American community as a whole.

MATERIALS/PREP

- Notebook paper
- Pens
- Manila folders for each participant
- Blank white paper
- Markers
- Post-its
- Lupe Fiasco's video: "Bitch Bad" from the Internet
- Computer and projector to show the video
- Download from

THEARTOFBEINGA

BLACKMAN.COM and make one copy per participant of each of the following handouts:

- **"BITCH BAD" LYRICS HANDOUT**
- **SEXISM & MALE SUPREMACY HANDOUT**

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Ask participants: **What are the things white people told themselves to justify slavery, violence, and oppression against Black men?**
2. Ask participants to **close their eyes**.
3. Explain that you would like to take a moment to **think about a woman in their life** that they love, and reflect on why they love her.
4. Instruct participants to **open** their eyes and **hand out** a blank sheet of white paper.
5. Ask participants to **place their chairs in a circle** and **write** the name of the woman they love in the center of the paper in big letters, and in each corner of the page **write four reasons** why they love her.
6. **Distribute a manila folder** to each participant , and have them **write** their name on the **inside cover**.
7. Ask participants to **place** their paper in the folder.
8. Ask participants: **What are some negative things that we hear or say about women?**



9. **Distribute Post-its** to each participant, and have them **write** as many negative words or statements as they can come up with on the Post-its. They should **write one idea per Post-it**.
10. Have participants pass their manila folder to the person to their left and then **place** two Post-its on the paper in the new folder.
11. They should **continue** this process until they get their own folders back.
12. Once they get their own folder back, ask them to **stand up** in front of the group and **say** the name of the woman they love, and **read** the Post-its aloud.
13. **Debrief** this part of the activity using the following questions:
 - **What would you feel if you knew that this woman you loved was called all the things on this paper?**
 - **Would you have the same reaction if the terms were not being used about a woman that you love? Why or why not?**
 - **Do you think how a woman dresses, looks, or behaves has a connection to what names she may get called? Is this okay?**
14. **Explain** to participants that **systems of oppression** are designed so that women begin to think less of themselves, which then empowers men to justify the ill treatment or **minimization of women**. Ask participants to **watch Lupe Fiasco's video** for one perspective on how this distortion may happen in our society.
15. **Distribute** the “**BITCH BAD” LYRICS HANDOUT**
Play the video and ask participants to follow along.
16. As they listen, participants should **underline phrases or words** that stand out as interesting to them on the lyrics handout.
17. After the video, ask participants to get into **groups of three** and **respond** to the debrief questions on their handout.
18. Now ask each participant to **reflect** on how a woman has shaped or impacted their identity.
19. Explain to participants that they will now do **an activity to write poems as a group**.
20. **Distribute notebook paper and a pen** to each participant.
21. Have participants **write** the following prompt on the first two lines:
 - IT WAS A WOMAN'S EFFORT THAT BROUGHT ME INTO THIS WORLD.
 - AND A WOMAN'S EFFORT THAT...
22. Each participant should **complete** the thought on the second line with their own idea, and **write an original third line of poetry**.
23. Then ask everyone to **fold** their notebook paper down so **the first two lines are covered**, and only the third (which they just wrote) is visible.
24. Ask each participant to **pass** their papers to the person on their left.
25. Each participant will now **read** the visible third line of poetry, and **write two new lines** in response, using whatever ideas pop into their heads.
26. After **one to two minutes**, each person should **fold** their notebook paper down to cover the poem's third and fourth line, so that only the fifth line (the last line they just wrote) is visible. Then they should **pass** their papers to their left.
27. **Continue** this process of writing two lines of poetry, **folding** down the paper so that only one line is showing, and **passing** papers to the left.
28. After five to six rounds, have each participant **write** one line in response to the visible line,



Bitches, Queens, N' Ladies, continued

then **complete** the poem by repeating the first line: IT WAS A WOMAN'S EFFORT WHO BROUGHT ME INTO THIS WORLD.

29. Have a few participants volunteer to **read** the poem they ended up with to the group.
30. **Ask** the group the following questions:
 - **How have women shaped each of us?**
 - **What is our responsibility as men to shift the narrative of women's contribution to our society's?**
31. **Distribute SEXISM & MALE SUPREMACY HANDOUT** to the group as inspiration.
32. **Make a table** on the board, and **label one column** "THE UNLIBERATED MAN" and label the next column "THE MALE ALLY."
33. Ask participants to **generate the behaviors of unliberated men and what the male ally would do instead.**

DEBRIEF

- **What do you think about the woman who calls herself a bitch?**
- **Where's the confusion about who is a lady, a queen, or a bitch?**
- **What's your responsibility—how will you participate in the oppression of women; what will you do to step out of it?**
- **What happens when we forget that every woman is an important contributor to someone else's life?**
- **When you consider the ways a woman's effort has shaped you, what are some ways that our society might trivialize these contributions? Are they in fact trivial?**
- **How would our experience of manhood shift if women's contributions were made more visible and important?**
- **How would this support the African-American community? How might it hurt us?**

CLOSING

- **What will you say or do the next time you see a man doing one of the unliberated behaviors from our list?**

Am I Sexist?

egal : equal [Haitian Kreyol]

The emotional, sexual, and psychological stereotyping of females begins when the doctor says, "It's a girl."

—SHIRLEY CHISHOLM

HOOK

- How is our understanding of manhood connected to our understanding of womanhood?

INTRO

- There are a multitude of differences between White men and Black men; however, the system of sexism that allows for the oppression, discrimination against, and marginalization of women is one systemic system that unites men of all races. From birth, Black women must battle against both sexism and racism to live their lives. This activity will help men explore the ways that every man benefits from a sexist system, whether or not they politically or consciously buy into that belief system. Black men who understand that women's issues are critical issues that impact their own lives will help lift the level of consciousness and can become allies for women, instead of bystanding benefactors of an unfair system.

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will define sexism.
- Participants will make connections between relational and structural power dynamics between men and women that allow sexism to exist.
- Participants will unpack ways that all men benefit from a sexist system at the expense of greater community wholeness.

MATERIALS/PREP

- Painters tape.
- Download the **I SPY SEXISM HANDOUT** from **THEARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN.COM** and make one copy per participant.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Ask participants what they think the word "SEXISM" means. Chart their answers.
 2. On the board or chart paper write:
- SEXISM** is prejudice or discrimination based on sex—this includes any behavior, condition, or attitude that foster stereotypes of social roles based on sex.
3. Ask a participant to **read** the definition out loud.
 4. Ask participants:
 - **What are some ways you have experienced racism?**
 - **How is racism similar to sexism?**
 - **Can you think of any examples of sexism?**
 5. Explain to participants that **women experience sexism in a number of ways. One way is economical**. For example, women often make 30% less than men for the same job. **Another way that women experience sexism is social**. Listen to this quote for example:

"What's the worst possible thing you can call a woman? Don't hold back, now. You're



Am I Sexist?, continued

probably thinking of words like slut, whore, bitch, cunt (I told you not to hold back!), skank. Okay, now, what are the worst things you can call a guy? Fag, girl, bitch, pussy. I've even heard the term "mangina." Notice anything? The worst thing you can call a girl is a girl. The worst thing you can call a guy is a girl. Being a woman is the ultimate insult. Now tell me that's not royally fucked up."

—JESSICA VALENTI

6. Ask participants:
 - What does this quote say about how women are treated/valued?
 - How is our experience and definition of manhood connected to women's experiences?
 - Given the struggles Black men have before them, is it a priority to think about what women are going through?
7. Using painters tape, demarcate four spots in the room.
8. Write "ANSWER A," "ANSWER B," "ANSWER C," or "ANSWER D" respectively on a piece of paper, and place at each of the four demarcated spots.
9. Explain to participants that you will read them a series of multiple choice questions, and that they should move to the space that represents the answer they believe is correct.
10. Read each multiple-choice statement from the **I SPY SEXISM HANDOUT**, and have participants guess which answer is correct.
11. After each one, have a few participants say why they think the answer they chose is correct, then reveal the right answer. Hear a few responses of reactions from participants after each one.
12. Bring the group back together.
13. Have participants read through the statistics from the **I SPY SEXISM HANDOUT**, and circle the ones that seem most unfair or surprising.

DEBRIEF

- What new awareness came up for you in this session?
- What are some ways that our systems and structures have impacted women negatively?
- Who do you think has it worse—Black men or women?
- How do men benefit from sexism?
- In what ways are all people hurt by sexism?
- What are some things we could do differently to help women feel less victimized?
- How will you conduct yourself now? How are you supposed to behave now?
- Do you call a woman "queen"?
- Do you open up doors?
- For women of color, what's worse, racism or sexism?

CLOSING

- What is one thing you can do to become an ally for women's rights?

OPTIONAL ADD-ON EXERCISE**Gender Studies Fishbowl**

1. If possible, **invite** a group of women to be part of a fishbowl exercise, where **the women sit in a small circle in the middle of the room, and your male participants form an outer circle as observers**. The value of the fishbowl is that it allows men to get a peek into the thoughts and feelings of women, so they should try to make the women feel as though they are having an intimate conversation without men in the room. This will be challenging because women are conditioned to shift around men, so prepping the women and men ahead of time is key to making this an insightful process.
2. **Prep** the women with the following reflection questions, then allow them to have a conversation as they respond to each one.
 - **What does it mean to be a woman?**
 - **Who influenced your development?**
 - **How do you know you are a woman?**
 - **What role have men played in making you feel empowered?**
 - **What role have men played in making you feel disempowered?**
 - **What would you like men to do differently?**
 - **What are some things an “unliberated man” does?**
 - **What are some things a “liberated man” does?**
 - **If you were raising a young man, what are some things you would hope he would know about himself?**
3. During the fishbowl, the men should stay **silent** and just **observe or take notes** about the things that they hear.
4. After the session, **thank** the women for participating, and hold a **debrief with just the men**.

DEBRIEF

- **What did you learn when listening to the fishbowl participants?**
- **How did it feel not to be allowed to talk?**
- **What are some things that women think about?**
- **What are some things that women worry about that men don’t have to?**
- **What would you like to say/share with the women who participated in the fishbowl today?**

The Self-Made Man

huru: independent [Swahili]

The most incredible architecture
Is the architecture of Self,
which is ever changing,
evolving, revolving and has
unlimited beauty and light
inside which radiates outwards
for everyone to see and feel.

With every in breathe
you are adding to your life
and every out breathe you
are releasing what is not
contributing to your life.
Every breathe is a re-birth.

—ALLAN RUFUS

HOOK

- What is the most admirable accomplishment you have ever heard anyone share?

INTRO

- While we are all shaped by our history, our environment, our experiences, and the people around us, we cannot deny the power of our thoughts and imagination in propelling us forward into the life we want to create for ourselves. As Black men, it is time for us to empower and embolden ourselves with powerful visions of the accomplishments we will have and the meaningful contributions we will make in the world around us. In this activity we will delve deep into our psyches to uncover the core values most important to us, then activate our creativity and imagination to set goals for how we will bring those values to life.

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will identify values that are important to their core sense of self.
- Participants will consider how systemic oppression might be impacting their sense of self, or choice in practicing core values.
- Participants will learn how to advocate for themselves when two values are in conflict.
- Participants will sharpen their analysis of how to navigate challenging circumstances and still get the outcomes they want

MATERIALS/PREP

- Download from [THEARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN.COM](#):

COM:

- **ART OF BLACK MANHOOD MAGAZINE COVER**
(make one copy per participant)
- **VALUES CARDS** (one set for every three participants)
- Index cards
- Pens

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Have participants get into **small groups of three**.
2. Give each group **a set of VALUES CARDS**, some index cards, and a pen.
3. Ask participants to close their eyes, and **imagine they are at their 65th birthday and retirement party celebration**.
4. Have each person **write some of the things they hope will be said about them** at the celebration. They should **write each idea** on a separate index card.
5. Now ask each person in the group to **share** the ideas on their cards, while the remaining group members listen.
6. After listening, the group members should **look for value cards** that reflect what they believe is at **the essence of what was shared**. *For example, if someone says they hope to hear that they were a good husband, father, and brother, the value of family might be at the core.*
7. Explain that if the groups don't find the exact value they are looking for, they could **offer their own words** as well.
8. Have groups **repeat** this process until each group member feels that they have **three to five words that represent their core values**.
9. Now ask participants to **imagine that it is 30 years from today, and they are being celebrated on the cover of a popular magazine—Art of Black Manhood**.
10. The cover of the magazine will **highlight several of the accomplishments** they have achieved in their lives.
11. Each of the achievements will be deeply **grounded in the values** they feel are most important to them. *For example, if someone selected the value of creativity, a headline might be that they are successfully selling their own line of clothing, they were the head engineer in building a completely solar-powered house, or they designed 3-D computer software that helps people lose weight.*
12. Along the side of the magazine, they should have **a "celebrated for" box** that lists the values they selected. Such as "Celebrated for: Creativity, Connectedness, and Family-Oriented."
13. In the middle of their magazine they can **draw a picture of themselves in 30 years, or several pictures** to illustrate the headlines they select.
14. After each participant has developed their magazine cover, let each one **share** their covers with the rest of the class.

DEBRIEF

- **What came up for you as we did this exercise?**
- **What did this activity reveal to you about your values and dreams?**
- **What was exciting about hearing your peers' magazine-cover accomplishments?**
- **What are three things you are doing today that are likely to get in the way of your goals?**
- **What are three things you are doing today that will lead you to your goals?**
- **Which of your values do you feel you most embody in your day-to-day actions today?**

CLOSING

- **What gets in the way of you making choices from your highest values?**

Rites of Passage

Life transitions are important stages of healthy development. Rites and ceremonies designate transitions toward manhood. Often, young men were given “guides” to help them strengthen the skills and knowledge associated with each stage of development. While there are many aspects of African culture that remain with us today, rites of passage ceremonies have been misunderstood and/or lost altogether. A rite of passage marks in a young man’s life the mastery of competency necessary for productive adulthood. It is not a celebration or a party, but rather a recognition that the young man has moved one step closer to adulthood. This means that there are often several stages or “rites” in the adolescent years that culminate in a last passage into adulthood. The activities in this section can be done one at a time, as the culmination to a section within the curriculum, or as a series of rites.

THREE P'S TO RITES OF PASSAGE

There are three components to rites of passage ceremonies.

Preparation. Before any rites of passage process a group of men must determine what age appropriate skills, knowledge, and abilities in which the young man or men must demonstrate competency. Preparation can be a physical, emotional, or intellectual challenge, or a combination of all three. Each young man should be given a time period to master the predetermined skill set.

Practice. Each young man will need a guide, or “mentor,” who will support him in achieving mastery in the identified skill. The mentor should also have achieved mastery in the skill. For example, if the skill requires that the young man master two common African rhythms on the drum, the guide should be able to teach these rhythms.

Performance. Each young man must demonstrate competency or mastery of the skill and knowledge to a group of elder men who established the rite process. This performance takes place at the end of the designated time period given to the young men for practice.

The elders must determine if the skill was mastered, and if so, provide a significant symbol, token, or gift that marks the successful completion. A celebration is then appropriate after the mastery has been achieved.

IN THIS SECTION

COMMUNITY:
Can You Hold It Down

CULTURAL CONSCIOUSNESS:
Do You Know Who You Are?

HEALTH AND WELL BEING:
Go Hard!
Keep Cool

MANHOOD:
It's Your Life

POLITICS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE: It's on You

COMMUNITY

Can You Hold It Down?

kaka : brother [Swahili]

Revolutions are brought about by men, by men who think as men of action and act as men of thought.

—KWAME NKRUMAH

HOOK

- Have you ever been part of a group where you didn't feel connected? What did it feel like?

INTRO

- Explain to participants that over the course of this program **we have been working on building and strengthening our community and brotherhood. Now you need to show that you have learned the value of community and can hold space for your brothers.**

OBJECTIVES

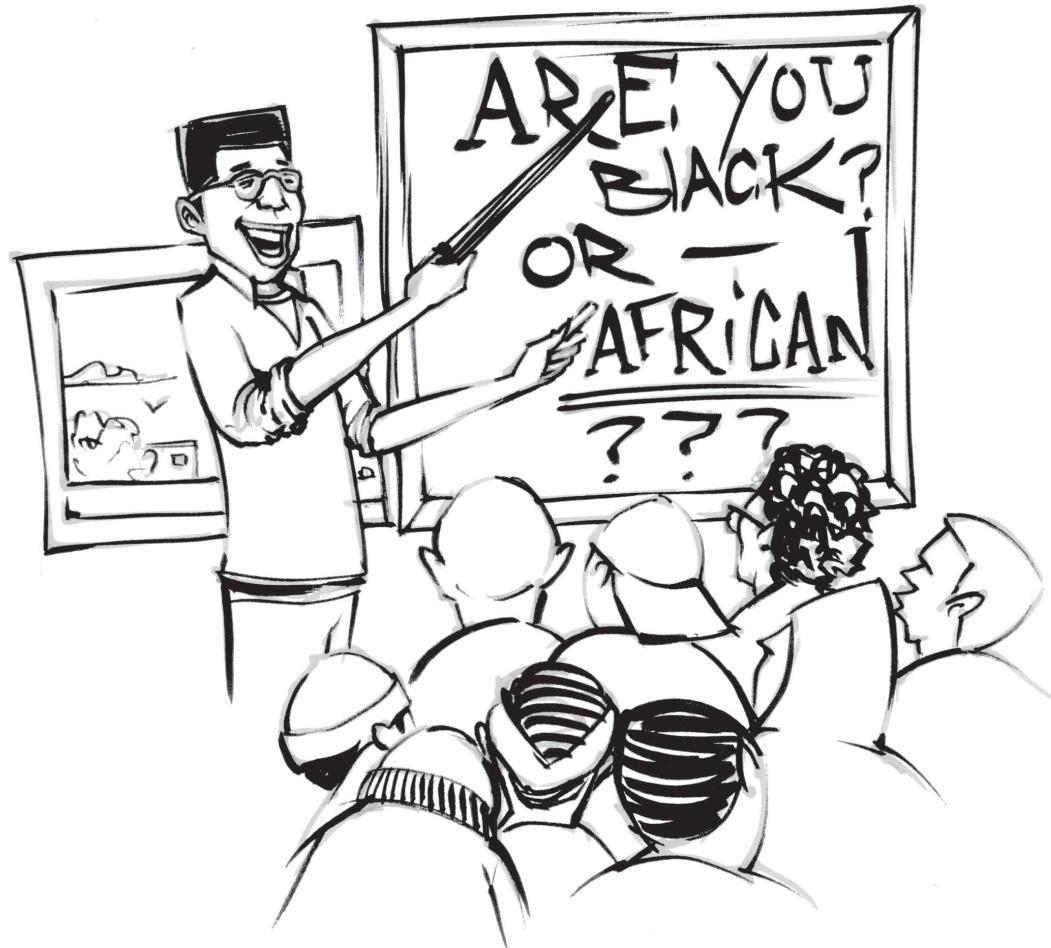
- Participants will demonstrate knowledge of what it takes to build and maintain community.
- Participants will demonstrate the connection between values and community.
- Participants will graduate from the community stage of the program.
- Participants will conduct workshops for their peers.

MATERIALS/PREP

- Download from **THEARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN.COM:**
 - **VALUES CARDS** (make one set)
 - **WORK THE WORKSHOP GUIDE** (make one copy per participant)
 - **ADVANCEMENT FORM** (make one copy per participant)
 - **CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION** (make one copy per participant; or, create an icon or symbol to represent a stripe earned after each rite of passage)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Spread** the **VALUES CARDS** all over the floor.
2. Give participants **two minutes** to **pick a value** that they feel they needed to practice in these sessions to build community as brothers.
3. Have each participant **share** the value that they chose and **why**.
4. After all the participants have shared, get them into **pairs**. *If participants chose the same value, they can partner up; otherwise, they can choose a partner.*
5. **Pass out** the **WORK THE WORKSHOP GUIDE** to each pair. Explain that they must **plan a workshop that teaches the group about the importance of that value**. They can use any activity they like, as long as they follow the structure.
6. Give participants **one week to a month to complete their workshops**.
7. **Set aside** enough classes for your participants to present their workshops to their peers. *If you can, involve the rest of the school or organization in the workshops or plan for them to participate in a local conference.*
8. When participants are ready to present their workshops, ask them to each **invite two or three elders** they feel can vouch for the ways that they are practicing this value in their lives outside of this class. These **elders must attend** the workshop presentation for the participants to earn their stripe.
9. After all workshops have been completed, **debrief** with participants.
10. **Complete** the **ADVANCEMENT FORM** for each pair to decide whether or not they met the challenge.

**DEBRIEF**

- What was difficult about this rite of passage?
- What did you learn about your community?
- What did you learn about yourself?
- What were you good at?
- What do you need to improve?
- If you had the chance to do this again, what would you do differently?

CLOSING

- When participants have successfully completed the challenge, host a completion ceremony.

CULTURAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Do You Know Who You Are?

nani wewe? : who are you? [Swahili]

Unless man is committed to the belief that all mankind are his brothers, then he labors in vain and hypocritically in the vineyards of equality. —ADAM CLAYTON POWELL

HOOK

- Have participants get into groups of three to reflect on these questions: **How do you define cultural consciousness? What other questions do you have about cultural consciousness?**

INTRO

- Explain to participants that over the course of this program **we have been working on understanding and learning our culture.** Now you need to show that you have cultural consciousness, which means that you can look at and talk about Black and African culture and challenge the negative images that you see.

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will demonstrate knowledge of their culture.
- Participants will educate their community about their culture.
- Participants will graduate from the cultural consciousness stage of the program.
- Participants will conduct a Black culture campaign at their school and online.

MATERIALS/PREP

- Download from **THEARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN.COM** and make one copy per participant:
 - **ADVANCEMENT FORM**
 - **CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION** (or, create an icon or symbol to represent a stripe earned after each rite of passage)
- Poster paper
- Markers
- Tape

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Review** the Cultural Consciousness topics with participants:
 - **THE BLACK BOX:** We talked about how we, as black men, see ourselves and how the world sees us and where those images came from.
 - **BLACK & AFRICAN:** We explored the ways that we consider ourselves to be both Black and African.
 - **HOW DID WE GET HERE:** We visualized what it was like for our ancestors when they were kidnapped and sold into slavery.
 - **LOST AND FOUND:** We learned about the many things in our culture today that originated from Africa.
 - **BEING AN AFRICAN-CENTERED WARRIOR:** We learned the principles of MAAT.
 - **WHAT IS CULTURE:** We explored the importance of culture in defining identity.
 - **WALK IN MY SHOES:** We explored the heroes and sheroes of the Harlem Renaissance, one of our proudest moments in history.
 - **BLACK MALE TIME CAPSULE:** We thought about our legacies and what we want to leave for future generations.

2. **Explain** to participants that **in order to show that you have an understanding of Black culture you must start and manage a Facebook page that shows what you have learned in this section of the curriculum.** You must each post at least once a day for one month something that will inspire Black people to love themselves more while helping others to understand us better. You can post information about heroes, the slideshow about stereotypes, music, articles, and opinion pieces. The key is to start and →

maintain conversation on your page. You must get at least five people each to like the Facebook page. In addition, as a group you must come up with a Black love symbol and slogans, use the content to make posters, and place them all over the school/center/community. Be prepared for folks to write on them or tear them down at first, but over time, they will stop. This poster campaign must go on for at least a month.

3. After the campaign has been completed, **debrief** with participants.
4. Complete the **ADVANCEMENT FORM** for the class to decide whether or not they met the challenge.

DEBRIEF

- What was difficult about this rite of passage?
- What did you learn about your community?
- What did you learn about yourself?
- What were you good at?
- What do you need to improve?
- If you had the chance to do this again, what would you do differently?

CLOSING

- When participants have successfully completed the challenge, host a completion ceremony.

HEALTH AND WELL BEING

Go Hard!

moja pendo : one love [Swahili]

Avoid fried meats which angry up the blood. If your stomach disputes you, lie down and pacify it with cool thoughts. Keep the juices flowing by jangling around gently as you move. Go very light on the vices, such as carrying on in society. The social ramble ain't restful. —SATCHEL PAIGE

HOOK

- Distribute paper and pen to each participant. Explain that when you say "go" you want each person to write down as many examples of ways they take care of themselves as they can think of. Call "**GO!**" and give them five minutes to speed-write. When time is up have participants share their examples with one another.

INTRO

- Explain to participants that over the course of this program, **we have been talking about what it means to be healthy as a Black man in America and all of the barriers that we face to being healthy. Now you need to show that you understand the value of self care with regard to physical fitness.**

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will set a personal fitness goal and challenge themselves to meet it.
- Participants will reflect on their experience.
- Participants will graduate from the Health and Wellness stage of the program.

MATERIALS/PREP

- Download from **THEARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN.COM**:
 - FITNESS LOG HANDOUT** (make one copy per participant)
 - ADVANCEMENT FORM** (make one copy per participant)
 - CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION** (make one copy per participant; or, create an icon or symbol to represent a stripe earned after each rite of passage)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Hand out the FITNESS LOG.**
- Ask** participants: **What goals do you have for your physical fitness?** **Chart** their answers.
- Explain** to participants: **Now we are going to measure our self love. Fill in your fitness goal at the top of the fitness log. You will fill out the sheet over the next two weeks. This is purely the honor system. Your fitness is only your responsibility. Once you have completed it, you will receive your Health and Wellness stripes.**
- After the **FITNESS LOG** has been completed, **debrief** with participants.
- Complete** the **ADVANCEMENT FORM** for the class to decide whether or not they met the challenge.

DEBRIEF

- What was difficult about this rite of passage?**
- What did you learn about your community?**
- What did you learn about yourself?**
- What were you good at?**
- What do you need to improve?**
- If you had the chance to do this again, what would you do differently?**

CLOSING

- When participants have successfully completed both health and well being rite of passage challenges, host a completion ceremony.



HEALTH AND WELL BEING

Keep Cool

tutu : cool or fresh [Yoruba]

My father was a slave and my people died to build this country, and I'm going to stay right here and have a part of it, just like you. And no fascist-minded people like you will drive me from it. Is that clear? —PAUL ROBESON

HOOK

- What does "Doing You" mean to you?

INTRO

- Explain to participants that over the course of this program, we have been talking about what it means to be healthy as a Black man in America and all of the barriers that we face to being healthy. Now you need to show that you understand the value of "doing you" with regard to mental and spiritual well being.

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will set a personal mental/spiritual health goal and challenge themselves to meet it
- Participants will reflect on their experience
- Participants will graduate from the Health and Wellness stage of the program

MATERIALS/PREP

- Download from THEARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN.COM and make one copy per participant:
 - **ADVANCEMENT FORM CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION** (or, create an icon or symbol to represent a stripe earned after each rite of passage)
 - "Discipline" by Dead Prez and a music player and speakers to play

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Play "Discipline" by Dead Prez or a song that you use to keep yourself grounded.
2. Explain that we all must find the things that make it possible for us to stay grounded and healthy spiritually and mentally. To show that you understand that, you are going to make one of the following:
 - A book of inspirational quotes that will help you to stay grounded
 - A mixed CD of songs that will help you to stay grounded
 - A book of poems
 - A video talking about what you do to stay grounded (sane, focused, connected to the things that matter the most), or combining several video and photo clips that express your process for staying grounded
3. After participants complete their projects, set up a gallery walk or stations where they can listen to each others CDs and watch each others' videos.
4. After the presentations, debrief with participants.
5. Complete the **ADVANCEMENT FORM** for the class to decide whether or not they met the challenge.

DEBRIEF

- What was difficult about this rite of passage?
- What did you learn about your community?
- What did you learn about yourself?
- What were you good at?
- What do you need to improve?
- If had the chance to do this again, what would you do differently?

**CLOSING**

- When participants have successfully completed both health and well being rite of passage challenges, host a completion ceremony.

MANHOOD

It's Your Life

maisha : life [Swahili]

Where there is no vision, there is no hope.

—GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER

HOOK

- What's something you dreamed about five years ago that has now come true?

INTRO

- Explain to participants that over the course of this program we have been talking about what it means to be a man and what manhood isn't. Now you need to show that you understand the value of setting goals and making strides towards them. After all, our lives are our own responsibility, and life is what you make it.

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will visualize their future selves.
- Participants will set life goals, and challenge themselves to take small steps towards achieving them.
- Participants will reflect on their experience.
- Participants will graduate from the Manhood/Masculinity stage of the program.

MATERIALS/PREP

- Download from THEARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN.COM and make one copy per participant:
 - STEPPING STONES HANDOUT
 - ADVANCEMENT FORM
 - CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION (or, create an icon or symbol to represent a stripe earned after each rite of passage)
- Poster paper
- Markers

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Ask participants to close their eyes and visualize themselves five years from now. What would their dream life be? What would your life look like if it was exactly what you wanted it to be? Where are you? What are you doing? Who is around? How do you feel? Where do you live? What do you do for a living? Now open your eyes.
2. Hand out poster paper and markers. Explain that we are going to draw what we saw in the visualization. This process is called vision boarding. You are going to draw your ideal life five years from now.
3. After participants complete the visions boards have them present them to the class, or get them into groups and have them present them.
4. Hand out the **STEPPING STONES WORKSHEET**.
5. Ask participants to choose one item on their vision board to start working toward.
6. Explain that they are going to map out the steps that they have to take to accomplish that goal. The steps can be small. A small step is still a step. For example, if you want to become a physical therapist, the steps could be:
 - 1) Research two colleges online that have physical therapist programs.
 - 2) Talk to the coach of the football team to identify possible internship opportunities to support the injured athletes.
 - 3) Research one sports injury per day to understand the healing and recovery process.

7. Allow participants to **share** their stepping stones with the class. Give them **three weeks** to make some progress towards their goal.
8. **Check in** with participants on their stepping stones **once a week**.
9. After three weeks, ask participants to **write a reflection** about how well they stuck to their goals. Break them into **small groups** and let them **share** their reflections and **ask for support** from their brothers on the things that they are struggling with.
10. Hold a **discussion** with the class about the successes and challenges of setting and keeping goals. **Share a goal** that you struggle to keep and one that you were successful in keeping.
11. **Debrief** with participants.
12. **Complete** the **ADVANCEMENT FORM** for the class to decide whether or not they met the challenge.

DEBRIEF

- **What was difficult about this rite of passage?**
- **What did you learn about your community?**
- **What did you learn about yourself?**
- **What were you good at?**
- **What do you need to improve?**
- **If you had the chance to do this again, what would you do differently?**

CLOSING

- When participants have successfully completed the challenge, host a completion ceremony.

POLITICS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

It's on You

aksyon : action [Haitian Kreyol]

My mama always used to tell me: If you can't find somethin' to live for, you best find somethin' to die for.

—TUPAC AMARU SHAKUR

HOOK

- There is a saying that says “If you are not outraged you are not paying attention.” What is something you are outraged about?

INTRO

- Explain to participants that over the course of this program we have been talking about politics and social justice and how we have a responsibility to do something about the things that we see as unjust. Now you need to put those words into action. You are going to be agents of social change through awareness campaigns.

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will engage in a social awareness campaign for an issue of their choice.
- Participants will decide what social issues matter the most to them.
- Participants will engage the community in social change.
- Participants will graduate from the Social Justice and Leadership stage of the program.

MATERIALS/PREP

- Download from **THEARTOFBEINGABLACKMAN.COM** and make one copy per participant:
 - **SOCIAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGN HANDOUT ADVANCEMENT FORM**
 - **CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION** (or, create an icon or symbol to represent a stripe earned after each rite of passage)
- Board or chart paper
- Markers
- Materials for the campaigns (for example for a painting, they would need paint, canvas, etc.)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Explain** to participants that we will be practicing a form of protest called campaigning. A campaign is not like a march or rally, it is more about bringing about awareness of the subject or issue.
2. **Create** a THROW UP WALL using the questions: **What is a social issue that you are for? What is a social issue that you are against? For example: I am for birth control being available to anyone who needs it. I am against tracking in schools.**
3. **Discuss** the ideas that were brainstormed as a group, ask participants to **clarify** any that seem confusing.
4. Have participants form **small groups of three to five**.
5. Have each group **pick one issue they are for and one issue they are against** from the brainstormed list.
6. **Chart** the list below on the board or on chart paper. Explain that now that each group has chosen their social issue, they have to **decide how they will take action**. Here are some options:
 - **A LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN:** Write a letter to a government official about the social issue you are for/against and getting your peers to write letters about the issue.
 - **A PETITION:** Collecting signatures from people in support for or against the issue that you choose.
 - **AN ARTISTIC DEMONSTRATION:** A play, song, street theater, painting, drawing, poem, poster campaign, etc. that makes the audience think about the social issue.





- **A TEACH-IN:** A workshop or series of workshops that teach the community about the social issue.
7. Ask participants to **choose** as a group the campaign that speaks to them the most. Once they have chosen, give them time to **research the strategy** and their social issues using the **SOCIAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGN WORKSHEET**.
 8. Once participants have completed their projects, ask them to **reflect** on the effectiveness of their project. **Did anything change because of their project? What did they learn about social change?**
 9. **Debrief** with participants.

DEBRIEF

- **What was difficult about this rite of passage?**
- **What did you learn about your community?**
- **What did you learn about yourself?**
- **What were you good at?**
- **What do you need to improve?**
- **If you had the chance to do this again, what would you do differently?**

CLOSING

- When participants have successfully completed the challenge, host a completion ceremony.



Be the Change Consulting works with organizations to transform them into rich learning centers, poised to meet their mission. We work with clients to shift **organizational culture** and **programmatic practices** through engaged consulting, experiential learning, hands-on coaching and dynamic facilitation. Be the Change Consulting's workshops and organizational consulting sessions have helped hundreds of organizations raise the quality of their programming to meet this growing need, and ultimately increase youth enrollment and retention. We teach by being and doing: our learning experiences model facilitation strategies to captivate multiple learning styles, provoke curiosity and simulate an intentional learning community that practitioners can replicate with youth. We believe in the principle of cascading leadership—strong practices start at the top of an organization and flow throughout to every member of the staff team. Organizations with clearly defined and aligned organizational practices have higher rates of retention and staff development—so that staff are supported to learn and grow.

Among the areas we find to be the most critical indicators of organizational sustainability are:

- Cultural Relevancy
- Staff Development and Supervision
- Strategic Planning and Program Development
- Teambuilding and Creative Problem Solving

Contact us at info@bethechangeconsulting.com.

LOVE DOES NOT BEGIN AND END
THE WAY WE SEEM TO THINK IT DOES.
**LOVE IS A BATTLE,
LOVE IS A WAR;
LOVE IS A
GROWING UP.**

—JAMES A. BALDWIN