Depression among African Americans (Male & Female)

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Depression among African Americans is a very common issue which mostly goes undetected due to the lack of education, medical services and poverty. Depression is one of the most common mental issues that African Americans face.

The people in the community experience these mental conditions, especially depression due to unmet needs and other ethnic related issues. African Americans are more likely to experience the mental health problems by a 20% margin higher than the general American population (ADAA, 2018). This is hugely contributed to by the living conditions and other societal problems being lower on other parts of the country compared to the African American community. One of the greatest preconditions that result to such high percentages of African Americans being depressed is the exposure to high rates of violence in the community. The risk of a member of the community having PTSD is by over 25% compared to the general population.

Many of the affected people in the community tend to take a mental health condition such as depression as a sign of weakness and therefore do not seek medical help. Of the 45.7 million African Americans in the U.S.A. 16% have been diagnosed with a mental health condition. Historical conditions such as slavery and racial discrimination among the members of the community has resulted into socioeconomic problems within the community. These problems have further added to the current mental health problems experienced within the community.

Many of the cases of depression within the community go unreported due to social norms within the community as well as the lack of understanding of what mental health conditions are including depression. African American teenagers are 2.1% more likely to attempt suicide than white teenagers in the United States. Due to their economic conditions, 15.9% African

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Americans are not covered under any health insurance policy. Due to this and other similar predispositions, only 54.3% of the population of African Americans were able to receive treatment from depression in 2011, compared to 73.1% of the white Americans (MHA, 2019).

The information available on the internet is very comprehensive when illustrating the causes of depression among African Americans. However, the information available does not cover the economic consequences of the issue for the affected community as a whole or for individuals living in the community.

The issue of depression among African Americans has perpetuated the status quo of depression in the community. This arises after a depressed person within the community engages in activities such as violence acts which cost others valuable assets or influence them in other negative ways, resulting to them being depressed too. The cycle of violence and depression within the community can be stopped through implementing policies which can help reduce the weight of the issue. Some policies which could be implemented include (in order of priority; from most prioritized to least prioritized): Job creations for African Americans; Most of the cases of depression within the community of African Americans can be traced to poverty. Through creating jobs for the African Americans can be very effective in combating depression within the society. Education; through providing education opportunities for children within the community, the fight against depression can be very successful. Through educating the future generations on depression, its causes, and mitigation techniques, the fight against depression is almost won (Ward, 1995, p. 192). Although this policy does not have immediate effect on the community, it is a great long-term solution. Availing cheap medical services; many depression

cases go undetected and therefore untreated due to the unavailability of qualified medical services. Through availing quality medical services at cheap prices, people afflicted by depression could seek assistance and get it easily and therefore reduce depression in the community.

Research in this field has been done many times before. For instance, a study was done on communalism, family cohesion, and family support in suicide ideation and depression in college students who are African American (Harris & Molock, 2010). The study which constituted of 188 African American individuals of both male and female genders, revealed that high levels of family cohesion and family support resulted in low chances and levels of depression and suicide ideation. The elimination of the depression-causing factors from the affected people's lives is bound to be successful in combating the health issue. Implementing of the above-mentioned issues is a sure way to increase the health of the depressed people in the African American community. The cost of implementing the above strategies is very minimal compared to the results of the strategies. Approximately half the budget assigned to respective fields by the U.S. government should be used to implement the strategies mentioned above. Even though the cost may seem a bit too much, it is important to keep in mind a famous saying "No pain, No gain". The reason why job creation is the most prioritized policy is because it has immediate effects and has ripple effects on the society. Most African Americans are depressed due to poverty. Those who are not directly depressed by unemployment are indirectly depressed by unemployment in that their depression is caused by others who are not employed.

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To create jobs for the African American community requires devotion and strategic operation. The strategy main goal is to advocate for those who are poor and unemployed in the community to look for jobs. The most crucial people in the strategy are the community leaders, the depressed themselves, and family members of the depressed. They are most crucial participants in the strategy. The depressed people in the community are generally known by the community members and leaders. The leaders are used to identify them. The adults who are depressed within the community first have to be encouraged and gently nudged to get out of their inactive state of poverty and out into the world to look for jobs. The responsibility of encouragement lies with their family members or close friends. Once they are willing to look for a job, the community leaders could then be used to vouch for them to the industry leaders. This would highly increase the chances of them being employed within industries as opposed to when they go to search for the jobs alone. Once they have secured jobs, the last step is to have their family members monitor them to ensure that they maintain their jobs.

Reduction of poverty in the African American communities creates a sense of security and prosperity within the community. Most important of all, the security that a job brings is bound to reduce depression levels among the affected individuals. In the long run, employment results in elimination of poverty and crimes which result from poverty. This happens when the employed person gets free of his/her depression and learns to focus on what is important health wise to them. The children of the person are more likely to get quality education up to the completion of college level. The certificates that they get from the college are bound to score them a good paying job which repeats the cycle and breaks the cycle of poverty in the society.

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