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AFRICAN AMERICAN CONFERENCE ON DISABILITIES

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Trauma: The Effects of the Pandemic on African American Families

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>> Good morning, everyone. This is a great time to check your audio levels. I will be starting here in about 3 minutes. Please take the opportunity to check those levels and there will be more people coming into the room.

>> I did post instructions in the chat for accessibility if that's helpful to anyone.

>> Good morning everyone. We're going to do an audio check here. Take this opportunity to adjust your levels. We're still letting people in. We're about 1 minute to start. Thank you very much.

We're going to give it about 30 seconds. We still have people coming into the room. Thank you very much for attending this morning. It's a great time to adjust your audio levels.

>> It's 10:01 and I want to welcome everyone to the meeting today. I was reminded in our last session how important it is to take a breath and go slow for these presentations. So I'm trying to live that as I kind of orient everyone to the Zoom ecosystem today.

I've been posting some instructions in the chat, and I will continue to do so. But I wanted to verbally orient folks where some things are located. So we have captioning going on today. You can go down to the bottom of the Zoom screen and click the live transcript or closed captioning button to turn on the transcription. There's a subtitle option, there's also a transcript option. There's also a separate link if you prefer that or if anything happens during this session. Next we have two ASL interpreters working. They are co-hosts in the participant lists so their names should be near the top of the list. As we get going here, we're going to be spotlighting them. They're going to be the only camera that you'll see during the presentation. So as hosts we're going to try to force their videos to the front. Another way you can control that is using the pin video option. So you can find their names on the list, right click, and pin their video for you. If you move your mouse up to the top right-hand corner of the screen, there's a little button that says "view" if you click that button there's all sorts of options how the video shows up in view. I would recommend the side-by-side gallery mode for the best ASL experience, but this is for you how to control how you want. As we're at capacity in this room and we're joined by people watching on Facebook. Facebook is kind of our overflow room and the way to make sure that accessibility happens there, is when the presenter is going to be sharing their screen, we're going to only have the ASL interpreters on so that will persist over to Facebook. It does mean you're not going to be able to see the face of our wonderful presenter except at the beginning and at the end. With that I'm going to turn it over to Natalie Luna rose to do the inductions and I'll look for technical questions to help. Thank you very much and welcome everyone.

>> Natalie Luna Rose: Good morning, thanks, Nick. I'm Natalie Luna Rose, the outreach communications manager for the Arizona Center for Disability Law. I want to say good morning



from sunny, Tucson, Arizona. I'm looking at the chat and we have people anywhere from New York to California and I know the majority of you are freezing right now and it's going to be 75 here today. So just wanted to throw that out there. So you can think warm thoughts.

So we are on our fourth session of the African American Conference on Disabilities, and before we get to our speaker, let me thank our sponsors. The Arizona Center for African American Resources, Valley Toyota Dealers, Arizona Developmental Disabilities Council, the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Sonoran UCEDD, IAH which Nick and John are part of. Arizona Statewide Independent Living Council, Diverse Ability Incorporated. Valley of the Sun United Way and of course the Arizona Center for Disability Law.

So our speaker today is Dr. Carlian Dawson. She is with the Arizona center for African American resources. She is a long-time educator, has been educating and consulting and working on these issues for the last 30 years. But most importantly, she is a mother and a grandmother of 8 grandkids. I hope I got that right.

DR. DAWSON: You got that right.

>> And she does have some family here today and we're really excited to have her. And before I turn it over to Dr. Dawson, I just put a link in the chat to our survey. And I'll post it again later. But if you want to fill that out for us today, that would be much appreciated. So Dr. Dawson, I'm turning it over to you.

DR. DAWSON: All right, thank you, Natalie. I am going to stop my video now. And I'm going to share my screen. There we are. Everybody can see, correct?

So welcome. Welcome. Again, my name is Carlian Dawson, and I am with the Arizona Center for African American Resources. I am the director of education for Arizona Center for African American Children and I'm excited to be with you all today. I have just been looking forward to doing this today and to make sure you're in the right place, we're going to be talking about trauma and the effects of this pandemic on African American families. So now, I do have some few graphics. I want to make sure I'll do a lot of talking to ensure that all of our -- that everybody here today will be able to hear and know what's going on.

What I first -- what I first want to share with you all is this. The information that I'm going to be covering in this workshop can be a little difficult to hear sometimes, you know? It can be a little challenging to understand and process. But I want you to know that it's not my goal to make any of you feel sad or bad. That's not what I'm trying to do. It is not my goal to shame anybody. That's not me. And of course I'm not trying to blame anyone for anything. This is not a personal attack on you. But I do, however, want you to feel some discomfort. There may be some discomfort and that will be okay, because it's in that discomfort that we grow. So with that being



said, I want to start, since we're talking about how trauma affects the effects on the pandemic on African American families, I just want you to know that the trauma that African American families are experiencing today didn't just start in this pandemic. So we're going to take a fly, a flyover just to see how this trauma started and where we are today and what it's doing today. Just very -- I'm not going to go very in depth with this. I just want to do a little fly-over. Okay? So when you think about that, African-Americans, since our abduction, we've been a global enterprise for America. Since we first arrived in 1619. And I'll speak a little more about that in a moment. There wasn't a moral compass on these abductions. There wasn't. And since then our contributions on the national wealth has happened during our enslavement; it happened in our emancipation. It happened in the civil rights. And it's still happening in this pandemic. Let me just kind of break this down for you. You see, the legal -- trauma on African-Americans has a legal beginning. Everything in the world has attempted to kill us. But still here we are. This legal beginning began in 1619 with 20 slaves who were brought here -- who were abducted and brought here and landed in Jamestown and they had a very harsh winter. Coming from some place very warm to someplace very cold. And like all the colonists also, it was a very harsh winter. And if you know it's harsh on the colonists, it was even harder on these 20 slaves, but they survived.

And then you look at the Declaration of independence. 1776. We were so excited, America, when we became independent. But that independence didn't extend to the life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness of people who looked like me. Then the U.S. Constitution. The enslaved Blacks that couldn't even count as 3/5 of a person. We weren't even allowed to vote. It was the 14th Amendment that granted citizenship and equality to African Americans emancipated after the Civil War. Then you've got the Emancipation Proclamation, it freed the enslaved. To do what? They couldn't read. And they only knew what they had been doing. And what they had been doing was taking care of people through growing food, taking care of livestock. They did all the that. And in that reconstruction, they started to flourish. And enjoy and they enjoy for a moment, they were allowed to vote, they were actively participating in the political process. They owned land. They started to seek employment and use other public accommodations. Until people saw them doing better than themselves and they did not like that. So then they started in the 1900s rolling back through the circular 3591 to make slavery illegal, they actually had Black codes come out. So when slavery was abolished at the end of the Civil War, southern states create these Black codes and laws which aimed to keep white supremacy in place. Black codes attempted to economically disable freed slaves forcing the new African Americans to continue to work on plantations and remain subject of racial hierarchy within the southern society. This is the trauma, the legalized trauma. Black code set a precedence for the Jim Crow laws. And the Jim Crow laws were state and local



statutes that legalized racial discrimination. So you see and this mass incarceration which continues today. Where money is still being made off like bodies.

So this racism is structural. And it's where all our national documents and government actually support what's going on. Because if it's for all of us, it would have been changed. The structural racism expressed through patterns of social institutions, government, organizations, schools, and you think about all of these things, we couldn't even be judged by peers of our own in courts. We were not allowed equitable education. We were not given bank loans in order to build our wealth. Building wealth started with buying a house. And if you can't buy a house, there's no way to start to build your wealth.

And then it became systemic. When you think about the structures in place and then the systems, our systems reaffirm the policies and practices carried out by the established institutions. I listen to Dr. Warren Stewart senior who last week made this comment. He headed up getting the MLK day successful here in Arizona, the holiday. Well, he said that the systemic racism injures and/or kills more African Americans daily than all diseases combined. But what I like is how Dr. Trisha Rose from brown university talks about it. She says it's interlocking gears of structural racism which is the housing and the criminal justice, the media. The education. Finance. All of these gears interlock. And when one turns, they all turn. They're all impacted. And what they do is they give us this false sense of inclusion. We think we're doing well, and then a gear turns.

So we ended up inching our way toward a true democracy, and a republic, but never totally embodying them. But what ends up happening is all of these interlocking gears, when they move forward, we get caught in the grind.

So for all of these years, we've had the 246 years of brutal enslavement, and I'm not going to name all of these. But imprisoning people to do unpaid work, employment discrimination, school education discrimination, cultural erasures and attacks. Driving while black, living while black and so much more. All trauma. So it was more -- we've had more than 400 years of trauma that continues today. And this is now it's 158 years since the Emancipation Proclamation and we're still going through trauma.

I like this saying from the Maasai tribe. The Maasai tribe, they always ask when they meet each other, their greeting is "how are the children?" Because they know that if the children are doing well, the true strength of a community is determined by that. By their well-being. And we know if we ask how are our children, they're not doing well. Their education is being defined by their zip codes. We've got children, 3 and 4-year-olds being expelled from prekindergarten. We've got children who, while playing, being shot. We've got children who, while having temper tantrums are being sprayed in the face with pepper spray. How are our children? Our education is still unequal



for Black and Brown children, and our scars are invisible. Our children are experiencing these things. While they're developing the institutional racism, the explicit and implicit attitudes based on their structural system of racism. We've got the affects -- all of this effects where they live. It affects their quality of life. It affects their income, it affects the type of food they eat. It affects the exposure to pollutants, access to clean water, clean air, adequate medical treatment. All the criminal justice contact. Little stuff, you know. Little stuff. But it's the implicit and explicit biases in this institutional racism that harms us most. You think about the explicit. We all understand when it comes to explicit bias. We all can agree on those major things. We know that it's important that we treat people fairly or we know that the law is there to serve and protect all of us. But the implicit biases erode coming in. Those implicit biases, those things I believe that I don't even know myself sometimes what they are. It's the racial discrimination. Did you know that any kind of discrimination against a person based on their skin color is illegal? Yeah. It's illegal.

Racial harassment. We can't harass people. We're not supposed to. That's illegal. Because of all that we have a violent society. People not liking us for the color of our skin. The color of our skin being weaponized. And then alienation. The more we try to fit in, the more we see we don't fit in. All of that impacts child development.

And so, my good friend shared this with me. The effects of historical trauma is still real. It ravages the body. When you think about ravaging, when you think about the fires that were here in Arizona, how they just ate up the path when it was going through, it cleared out whatever was standing there it cleared out that structure. And the one thing about something being ravaged, once its eats its way through and clears it up, you look back, it's left its damage behind. You can see the pathway that was left behind. You could see what was left over. And that's what's happened to us. The ravages of trauma have gone through, but there is some lingering effects we look back. It's engulfing. Whether you're in a pool or an ocean, if someone pushes you under water and surprising you and you don't catch your breath, you are engulfed in water and you will fight to get out of that. It's engulfing. It's overwhelming and awful. How many of you had to take some castor oil in your day, and you know how awful that tastes, even if you put sugar in it. And it's long-lasting. So you see, enslavement is still impacting us today. When I think about the evidence of all the weight that we've been carrying, even up through this last election, how we look back as soon as the inauguration happened, everybody I talked to talked about the weight that was lifted from them with this new administration who finally said "I see you." This historical trauma we've experienced is in our DNA. The trauma comes to us two ways. By nature, through our genes. You can't change that. And through nurture, through our environment. That can be changed. So when you get the interaction of both of them, one can have an impact, an impression over the other. Hostile



environments affects our DNA. So when we have unclean water, when we have air that's not filtered or clean, it affects, it causes a hostile environment to our DNA, our epigenetics and causes an interaction that is just negative. And it ends up causing a lot of health challenges. And these health challenges can be anything from asthma to diabetes, heart conditions, obesity, you name it. These chronic diseases are driven by a stressful environment. And what happens after that is we become stigmatized and get blamed. Has anyone ever said to you well, just get over it? Nobody is in slavery now. Get over it.

Just do what the police tell you to do. When they tell you. And you've got people now, I mean children now getting hysterical when parents are stopped by a police officer for whatever reason. Children just becoming hysterical because they don't want their parents to die. We're still being traumatized. We're still being traumatized. Let me share this with you. Because this speaks to why we are being seen today. In this trauma. The adverse childhood experiences. This is trauma that happens between birth and 18 years old. And this traumatic events, they have a negative lasting effect on our health and well-being. It comes in three categories. Abuse, household challenges and neglect. And anyone with six or more of these they predict would have 20 years less in life. About 67% of our population has at least one ACE. Adverse childhood experiences are the single greatest unaddressed public health threat facing our national today. If you take all that issue about how we got to this traumatic moment in our history, put that at the bottom of adverse childhood experiences. And that's where Black and Brown people and disabled people fall into place. That's where we are. And then we get to the adverse childhood experiences. And what that does is it disrupts your neural development. It completely changes the way your brain develops. Because now you're seeing everything through a traumatic lens. And because of that it has a negative effect on your social, emotional and cognitive development. And because of that, we do things, we adopt these negative health risks. We try to self-soothe, cover ourselves, ease the pain. And we do things like drink too much. Drugs. Whatever it is to get rid of the pain. And we end up opening ourselves up for diseases. Social problems. And an early death.

So when you think about this, the trauma, the effects of the pandemic on African American families, all of that surprised us all in 2020. When the country announced that an epidemic was going on, the Black community was already in a pandemic. We had already been in one. We were running behind in everything good and ahead in everything bad. Prior to 2020, the pandemic of discrimination and racism, they've long contributed to the negative emotional and physical health outcomes of African Americans. COVID-19 pandemic just highlighted this fact, and we were dying 3 in a thousand. With the corona. And so you think the pandemic really -- it was a great equalizer.



Because what it did was, this event caused Caucasians to see African Americans in a light never experienced before. Because the pain that they were in. You think about it. When the racial and similar risks happened with George Floyd, and I hate what happened to that man, especially witnessing it on TV. But he wasn't the first person we saw. And he won't be the last. But why was that so important that day? How could people see this now? Because for the first time Caucasians were now at a place where they had lost jobs. Losing homes. Didn't know where their next meal was coming from. Didn't know how to handle what was happening. We had been there before. So when it happened, although it was horrible, and we don't want to be in a panic, but our body tells us we know how to get out of this. We've been here before.

And because of that, they could then see, they could see. With the wealth gap, our wealth gap is a tenth of Caucasian's right now. Their 188,000 to our 18,000. It doesn't make any sense. And the insurrection. It would have been a blood bath had it been primarily us. And when you've got leadership talking about it's okay to hit them upside the head, that was hard. And if you think of all the trauma again. Losing our homes to fire and to water, floods, and then COVID-19.

So racism has been hard on us for a long time. And it's a common belief when you think of racism that somebody is better than somebody else. I like what Dr. Rose says. She says that normalizing and legalizing a whole bunch of things that include our history, our culture, the institutions, things that affect us. That routinely advantage Caucasians while giving us chronic adverse outcomes. Yeah, that's what it gives us.

So before this pandemic, all of us could agree. We understood, even if we didn't have anything, we understood what we were doing. We knew that we lived in a community. We could see and touch our families and friends. I could hug my grandchildren. Hug my children. They could see and touch and hug me. We could all be together in the same space at the same time. You know, I had some relief because in the words of those great philosophers, the OJs, I live for the weekend. Because that's when I knew all my family would come together. I could be around and appreciate them and see them. On Sundays. But since the pandemic, most of us, we don't trust being around anybody. Do we take the vaccination or not? We need to protect ourselves and stay away. Physical distance. I say physical distance not social distance. Wear that mask. We work in fear. We feel insecure about our ability to work effectively. We're always even more so questioning ourselves. Because we're concerned about what's going on. And when you think about in the schools, our children really are facing some challenges in school.

The structure of life has changed for them. It's gone from being out with their friends, gathering, eating, going wherever they want to go. Talking and bonding and working together. To where they stay home, they go to school online. Getting online is challenging. Trying to learn



online, without the interaction of friends is challenging. They've got a multitude of things they're looking at and trying to do.

So this pandemic has been excruciating to our bodies, our minds, our emotions, our spirits, our physical well-being. Our mental well-being. Failure is not the end. When you think about all that's happening, what's happening to our bodies right now is an allostatic overload. That's an overload of stress. A stress that's in our minds and in our bodies, and it leaves that mark those like fires ravaging the desert or the forest. And when you get too much overload of stress, it has to come out and it comes out in various ways. But first it's the hearing of all that stress. Getting all that, that's a physical weathering on our bodies right there. Just hearing and seeing, it weathers the body. And it really makes your body look different. It's like if somebody were to give you a nice, soft, piece of leather and you lay that leather out in your backyard just for a year. I guarantee you go back to pick it up and find it and look at it again, it will be unrecognizable. This soft piece of leather will have turned to a hard chip. Something that if you try to break open, there's nothing to do it. And the damage to the exterior of that leather. But if you think about what's happening on the inside, that's where the allostasis comes in. That overload of stress that is just overbearing and it really wears a body down. And we have had, as a Black community, an overbearing rate of stress through post traumatic stress disorder. Through the racial discrimination. All of those things that happened to us.

So the good news is like -- this is really -- is this our new normal, but I'll tell you this. Resilience is possible. We've lived through some bad stuff. We've lived through it. And we still survived. Would he still thrive. Actually we still flourish. Don't you ever wonder how? You see that's why I want to share all this with you, but I want you to understand that we can still be successful. Explicit biases are overt and more widely agreed upon, and I talk about that. When people know it's wrong to do something, people don't want to admit -- oh, you're Black, stay back. Stay in the back of the bus. No. They want to do that -- implicit biases. Those are covert and sometimes we don't even know they exist inside of us until they start to come out. We can't always see obvious even when the obvious is right in front of us. When I say I believe all children should have a quality education, but covertly, I send all these little Black boys and girls to the office to get them out of my class for disruptions that I would not have done for anybody else. We can get out. I'm going to show you this too. I'm excited. This is what I want you to see and understand. This is the piece. How do we get out of this?

Conscientization. This is the process of becoming aware of the contradictions that exist within oneself and in society and we're gradually being able to bring about personal and social transformation. I believe in equality for all children. So if I believe that, what am I going to do to



make that happen? If I have a contradiction, it will come out. So let me just show you how sometimes we can see things and not see things. What is it? Why? Let me show you this. Look at this. I want you to count the number of F's. I'm going to give you 15 seconds to count the number of F's that you see in this slide. You ready, go.

Okay. I know most of you probably came up with 4F's. Most of you did. Some of you counted 5, some counted 6. And a few of you counted 7. Yeah, there were 7 F's. And you see, we can't see what's in front of us, because we're used to pronouncing words a specific way until it's not pronounced that way, we skip right over it. We can get the four F's quite easily. These three F's quite easily. Finished, files, and scientific because they sound like F's. Because there are four F's that sound like V's and our brain skips over them. That's a lot like conscientization. We skip over stuff. I'm going to give you a high overview of this. This is one of my favorite slides. This is all about relational regulation. How an individual connects with another individual in teaching and talking and they're connecting in the neurobiology in their brain and when that connection happens, the younger person grows and prosper. With this, when you think about the connection, during infancy, I want to share this with you. Interactions with parents and other caregivers, it actually shapes the way our bodies handle stress. So when a newborn is hungry or scared, there's a flood of cortisol and other hormones that cause the baby to cry out. The caregivers soothes him or her, that experience helps to teach that young brain how to turn that stress pathway off. And builds trust with the care provider. Because when they cry, someone comes.

In here, if a caregiver is afraid of something, she's going to give off this fear. And through that, babies pick it up. You wonder why African American children, here in Phoenix, Arizona, die faster than any other babies under 12 months old after being ill. After birth. You think about it, what's happening is the stress level of mothers, regardless of income, is so high, is causing the babies to die at a higher rate. Babies can't handle all that stress. They feel and sense and know. And it's important that we reflect what's right. When something's inside us, it comes out in a way that we may not know. And that's that conscientization. We may not know how it got there, but it's there. And Dr. Perry says that trauma is a psychologically emotional response to an event or an experience that is deeply distressing or disturbing. And that event can vary. It can vary.

The Native American brothers and sisters call trauma a deep wound to the soul. And it really begins the process of a slow death. And that slow death began when we were forcibly removed from Africa.

Here's another one of my favorite slides. We talk about stress. There's good stress. We all have stress in our lives. And fortunately some of this stress is good. We need it. When you're getting ready to run a race or take a test, that stress is predictable. You know, you expect



you're body gets amped up just a little bit. It's moderate. It's nothing that's going to kill you. Sometimes we may feel like that test is going to be too hard, but it's not. It's in a controlled environment. And we learn from it. If we didn't do so well the first time, we come back again and work on improving it. But when the stress is negative, bad, abusive, and unpredictable, you don't know when it's going to happen. One day you're good, the next day is up again. It's severe. And it happens, it's prolonged. If it's continuous and it leaves your body very vulnerable. All stresses, this is good, but it's this stress, this unpredictable stress that really wears the body that causes damage that we sometimes have a hard time living through.

And this right here, I understand, we need to understand that how we engage people, the way we regulate, the way we have relationships really make a difference. People hurt people and cause dysregulation, but also people also cause regulation. And in our brain, when we are regulated, when things are going well, we have a sense of comfort when we are loved and we are satiated and have the right environment around, we belong. All of that makes a difference. And it causes us to be able to move up and form relationships that are good and healthy. And in those healthy relationships, it causes us to reason. We can reason and think well. All of those things are good for us. We can engage. We start to our brain stem, looking at how we process information. We know that -- and when all is well, we can reach the top part of our brain a lot better. As opposed to when things are not. For example, in thinking I always say that for most of us, African Americans, we are at the alert state, wherever we are. And that may be higher now. But I believe that we walk around in an alert state at a minimum. And by that I mean we are always amped up a little bit. With enough where we can really still function and think, but it's not our best. Our best, and sometimes we can get there, when we're in a place where we are calm and relaxed and people accept us. We can speak our minds and talk. We can reach our cortex for higher-order thinking. That's when we do our best work. And when we get alert, it's always when you know you're alert, you look around and you're the only you. And you're watching what you say. You know. When you know that you're the only you, you kind of look and think, okay, what am I going to be faced with today? You just are on a higher sense of alert. You're just a little hyper. And so then, if it gets worse, you're going to be at an alarmed state. And this alarmed state causes you to be emotional. So the higher you go up the ladder, up the chain of stress and fear, the less well you are to think and comprehend. And so what our goal is, is really to work with our children. Work with us, ourselves. To make sure that we stay down here. As close to calm as possible. So that we can teach our children how to stay calm. And how to work through things.

Our kids, as a principal, children would come in my office and when they would come for a fight and I would say what's going on. They looked at me, they looked at you, and that was enough



because that put them in an alarm. And they were in a fight-or-flight. So what when I talked with them and found out what was going on, what caused it was nothing to do with what was going on in school. Our children respond the best way they can, in the environment that they're in. Because of what's happening in their lives. All of that trauma leads us to an early death. So we need to make sure we are working and helping our children be calm. How to regulate. Keep themselves regulated. And keeping themselves regulated means just being in control of who I am.

So beyond resilience, we have to flourish. We can flourish. We can prosper. We can have a continuous sustained, steady, strong, and grow well. That's who we need to be. And how do we do that? Just like adverse childhood experiences causes adversity, positive childhood experiences, going through bad stuff, but then having some positive experiences, and you know, we know how to do that. We know how to come around people. And build them up. So with all the things that have happened to us, all we need to do is have somebody who is supporting us. Just one person can make a difference. One person who truly cares and loves you can make a difference, and can set those positive experiences in place.

Things like having a family that carries about you. Things like making sure that somebody stands by you when you're in difficult times. Things like having a community and enjoying the traditions of your culture. All of that. You know how it felt when your big sister or big brother came to your aid? Or if you look and you saw no food in your house but yet somehow Mama made a meal out of something? All of that makes a difference in the positive experiences that our children feel. We need to make sure that our children know that we're there for them. And if nothing else, I can't buy you a vacation. I can take you on a camping trip in the backyard. If we can't go in the backyard, we can go someplace, to the park, and have a good day, pretending to camp out. We can do some things, even in physical distancing. There are things that we can do.

So we've got to flourish. We've got to flourish.

Thank you all for being with me today. Here is my contact information. And office phone number. Are there any questions?

>> Okay.

>> Dr. Dawson, if you want to end your screen share and turn on your camera.

>> Okay.

>> All right. Thank you, Dr. Dawson. This was an incredibly powerful presentation, not just with everybody's comments in the chat, but personally I want to say thank you it was very thought provoking and you just came right out of the gate and I think everybody appreciated that. So we're going through the chat. So if you have any questions. Thank you for putting Dr. Dawson's email. I did put out your Gmail so you might get some emails as well there. I apologize.



DR. DAWSON: That's quite all right. This is all kind of skimming through the top, but I would love to, if needed, I could talk with individuals a little bit more in depth.

>> Natalie: Okay. So any questions? A lot of still kudos to you. For a presentation. Wait for a minute or two.

To answer a few more questions that I can answer. A copy of this PowerPoint, we will put Dr. Dawson's email again in the chat. And you can email her. As far as a recording the presentation, we are working on it will be on Facebook afterwards and then we are working on getting all the presentations from this year's conference on the Arizona Center for Disability Law website. We will send out an email when that is all up. And I will put -- okay. Here's a question from Dorothea Williams, Dr. Dawson. Can you clarify how the IQ is connected to the mental state? I'm not sure if I'm reading it right. Are all people with intellectual disability presumed to be in the right place of fear? Thank you.

DR. DAWSON: That's a very good question, Dorothea. This was -- I'm not saying that IQ is connected to mental state. What I'm saying is that the trauma that someone is, is connected to how they perceive and can respond in that mental state. Okay? Is that helpful?

>> Next question. How can we not pass this trauma on to our children but the knowledge of our history?

DR. DAWSON: That's a very good question. I really like that. And what you want to do is make sure that we teach them how to regulate, how to handle an address with words, what their feelings are. And teach them their history. People need to know who they are and where they come -- from where they come from. They need to know that. And having that information will allow them to really grow more healthy. As they matriculate through school.

>> Next question. How do we help organizations embrace information such as this?

[Laughter]

DR. DAWSON: Keep talking. Keep talking. Keep working with them. Share what you know. I challenge every professional person I know to speak up for me when I'm not in the room. Say something on my behalf. Don't let silence happen when words come out of someone's mouth that you know are not right. Because then you are compliant to what's happening.

>> Natalie Luna Rose: The next question. The example you gave with the letter F's you may have talked about this but can you share with us how you make yourself consciously aware when you're missing all the letter F's.

DR. DAWSON: That's a good question, Jasmine. A scotoma you don't know is there before it's brought out. Some people may not know what's inside, but when this information is presented to



them, be willing to hear and accept. For example, when you go buy a car, you try to get a car you think that no other color exists on the road during that time or very few. So you may say I'm going to get this lavender car. And you may say to yourself I've never seen a lavender car. And as soon as you get on the road every car that comes by you is lavender. You think why didn't I see that before? It wasn't important. Now that it's important, it's there. And you see it. Don't deny it.

>> Next question is from Monique Robinson. Any suggestions how to encourage or assist my African American boys who are stuck at home during this pandemic who seem to be getting a little depressed.

DR. DAWSON: Oh, I feel for them. I do, I do. Because this is hard for children, period. And boys, I know there's going to be some rambunctious little boys that want to be out running and jumping and play. The thing is when they're in school. We can't keep school going all day for them. Do some things, plan some things with them that's fun. Even in the house. You can plan scavenger hunts, something fun, and put some special treats for them that they can find. Something that's going to kind of jazz them up a little bit and let them see. Do something special. Have a calendar, and let them go through and help you decide what's going to happen on those days on the calendar, even down to cooking. I know they make a mess. I know they make a mess. But when they make that mess, most of the things that the kids do, if they cook it, they're going to eat it. Board games are fun. Yeah. I love doing puzzles. I like doing the puzzles and I have on my iPad. I love that. It just kind of relaxes me. But puzzles, and if you can get something that looks like them, that's even better. Something they enjoy. Putting together erector sets. All those little connecting toys that can get their brain working. All those kinds of things. Make it fun. Make life fun. Just because we're in a COVID doesn't mean we can't have fun with our children and our families still. It's just going to happen in a different way.

>> Natalie Luna Rose. . Thank you for that. Can you speak to paid provider's impact on trauma -- can you speak to paid provider's impact on trauma versus layperson encounters?

DR. DAWSON: Paid persons -- I'm not sure I'm understanding the question, but in case I don't, please you can clarify with me. With individuals who are working, you're saying, and get paid for their work, and encounter people who are not?

>> Natalie Luna Rose: Yes.

DR. DAWSON: And the drama they're experiencing?

>> Yes.

DR. DAWSON: Okay. Well again when an individual talks with you, our job isn't to tell them what it is or what's wrong with them or what they need to do. Our job as the paid professional is to listen to them. People do know and can bring something to the table. But if we listen to them, we



will get more buy-in from them as a professional than not. So listen. Hear. See them. For who they are and for what they bring.

>> Natalie Luna Rose. . Thank you. There was a question from Facebook. Thank you. Can you share the reference to the work of a Dr. Bruce blank. I'm sorry I missed the last name.

DR. DAWSON: Dr. Bruce Perry. He's my mentor. I have been studying for three -- four years now under Dr. Bruce Perry on the newer sequential model for caregivers. And Dr. Bruce Perry talks about the impact that trauma has on the mind and body. And how it influences and works through people. It is an amazing work. And as a matter of fact he and Oprah Winfrey have a book coming out this spring and if you get a chance to buy it, I can't think of the name of it right now, you might want to do that. And there's preorders you can make on it now. But Dr. Bruce Perry is an amazing person. He's a neuroscientist and a physician and again, he's my mentor. And I can't say anything but wonderful things about him.

>> Natalie Luna Rose. . Thank you. Next question from darian. What advice do you have going forward when families continue to be helicopter parents when their child is over 18 and capable. But because he/she is disabled, parents think they have to do everything. What is the best approach?

DR. DAWSON: You know, I have a child with a disability. And I understand -- she's bipolar. And you want to be there. You want to help. And even in when she is not successful at doing something, you know, you just have to let them experience and be there and do that. I know now that she comes to me when she needs me. I don't want her to experience bad stuff. I don't want her to go through negative things. But I know now that I just can't -- I can't take care of all of that. So I'm there when she needs me. And I know parents, it's hard to let go. It's hard. But that's what we have to learn to do is to let go. And let that child -- we've got -- not all at once, but just a little bit of time. Let them get out, let them do something. Because they are independent thinkers. They can get around. And they will be successful. They have a disability. That's all. It just means that they're doing things differently. It may not be the way you do it, but they're going to do something differently. That's all. I hope that's helpful.

>> Natalie Luna Rose: I think so. Thank you. Next question. Do you think that the pandemic has provided opportunities to African American families?

DR. DAWSON: Did it provide opportunities?

>> Yes, that's the question.

DR. DAWSON: Oh. It may have so -- one of the best opportunities it provided was connection. Was families to connect and be together. That was one opportunity. Some families really started to get more creative. I saw where one brother and is your invented a puzzle company



on African American puzzles. And when we have issues and things like this, yeah. Good does come out of it. I've gotten to know -- we've been married 35 years, and I've gotten to know him even better during this time. We've talked. And we talk all the time. But we talk even more now. And I know that when I have conversations not even with my children, I listen and hear for different things. We have gotten some things out of this. And I think another thing that we've gotten out of this, I don't know if this is where you're headed, but I'll tell you this. I think we're being seen more now. People can see us now. Our words matter more now. Than they did before. Before when you talk about this, people will say things oh, there she goes again. Can't you guys just get over this stuff? You're not enslaved anymore. They didn't know that that stuff was still in our DNA. Because we kept seeing it's been repeated over and over again. Now they can see. They see me.

>> Thank you.

From Jan Garrett. Do you know organizations large or small of African Americans with Disabilities?

>> Do I know organizations large or small?

>> Of African-Americans with disabilities. I'm guessing organizations such as yours.

DR. DAWSON: You mean the ACDL and our organization, AZCAAR? That's two right there.

>> Natalie Luna Rose: This is true. How can we make a difference with young adults who might not have had their PCEs?

DR. DAWSON: Be that person. Positive childhood experiences. Provide them the experience, talk with them. Let them know you care about them. That's all it takes. Just you. You care about them. You show them. You be there for them.

>> Thank you. Next question. What supports have you found that work best for self-regulation in relation to trauma?

DR. DAWSON: Oh. The best and one of my most favorite is to breathe. I don't have to go anywhere to breathe. I can take a deep breath and start to -- and start to regulate myself. Drinking some water. Drinking a glass of water. Going for -- Dr. Perry talks about taking short little doses of like going for just a 60-second walk can make a difference. You may not be able to take 45 minutes, which can take 45 -- but you can take 45 60-second doses of interactions. Walking out in the sun shine. Walking to the mailbox and back. Doing something to get yourself out and back in again.

>> Debbie writes are there differences in how to provide services to people of color, is there research, ACEs-like studies specific to the trauma of racism?



DR. DAWSON: Not that I know of. But people don't care what you know until they know that you care. To me that's one of the best things to do. And people know you care. It makes a difference.

>> Here's another related question. As a community, how can we limit the number of ACEs in the Black community?

DR. DAWSON: How do we limit the number of ACEs in the Black community again is there are families who are in need. It's really looking at all those protective factors that we have out there and helping families know that they can reach out. Having a service to reach out to. And having a contact made in that service. Don't just tell people to call the this church that's going to be -- that gives out funding to help you with your rent. Give them the name of the person at that church to call. That helps people. Give them the name of a contact at the food bank. That helps people. You know, let them know who it is. Because people who are in need, it doesn't take much to cause them not to follow through. And if you get one little thing that comes up, it's enough to deter them. So give them as much as you can. To help them with whatever it is that their need is.

>> Going through a few more questions. Very active chat. Thank you everybody. Any advice for parents dealing with children who have virtual schooling as a result of the pandemic crisis that still exists?

DR. DAWSON: I'm sorry. I was reading the chat. This is a good one, too. This one says my husband and I are an interracial couple married for 31 years. We are now foster parents. He is hands-on and a great role model but doesn't really engage the infants and toddlers he leaves that for me to do. I'm concerned the babies aren't getting our best. I would like your thoughts. And I'm glad that the babies have you to engage with, but yes they need his engagement too. They need to know both sides, that this is a mother-father and the interactions are different with each. We don't want children, when they just interact with one side, to be afraid of the other. So that interaction from both sides is important. And not to say they'll be afraid, but just that it makes it easier in life to be able to interact with both those parents. He is needed. The children need to see his face in their face in talking with them and reading stories with them. Thank you.

>> This is a related question. Any advice from parents who have children dealing with virtual schooling as a result of the pandemic crisis that still exists?

DR. DAWSON: Let school be school. They're there, and sometimes looking at that Zoom or that video is very difficult to do for a child. I heard someone say one of the little girls was on a Zoom so she took her computer outside and the teacher kept asking where are you going? She said keep talking I can hear you. She was outside riding her bicycle. But just let the children -- I think the schools are really doing a good job of this. Because they have it for a certain amount of time and



then they stop, they interact. Teachers are learning that they cannot keep that engagement going for so many hours. They've got to stop every few minutes. And the younger the child, the more breaks that you give them. The more time you stop and have them do something else. Get up and stretch. Jump around. Play music. Let them jump around and get back and sit down again. It helps them learn. As a matter of fact there's a lot of research on our most powerful learning points is at the beginning and the end. So when we start and stop, we're helping our brain hold on to information at lot more effectively with those starts and stops.

>> Thank you. I just want to remind everybody that our next session on Thursday with our attorney Amanda Glass will be addressing the needs of students with disabilities during COVID-19. It's a workshop for parents and other caregivers who are dealing with children at home during this time. And as a parent, I am -- and a child that does have some difficulties with school, will definitely be a session to tune in on. So if you have not registered, please do so. And that one is in the evening to accommodate parents who are working. And that will be from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Okay. Let's see if we have any more. A lot of good information going on in the chat. If I have missed your question, please put it back in the chat. I'm not trying to, but it's a little easy to do when it's moving quickly as possible. Marisa writes teachers are doing their absolutely best but the system is failing our children with disabilities. There is disparity in Internet access how can we advocate for better services.

DR. DAWSON: That's one thing we have to do is advocate for better services because all our children aren't getting what they need to get in terms of Internet services and the disparity there. Teachers are doing their best. Teachers need to understand, really, not just how social emotional learning impacts our children, but how trauma impacts them and the children. And when they can get something to help them with that, that will help them. That would help them with their children, the students that they have.

>> I just put the registration link for our special education session. So I'm sure that questions such as Maria's and others like that will be touched upon in that session.

And let's see. Is there please if I've missed a question, we have a few more minutes if I've missed anything, please put it in the chat. There's great questions on the information on the book that Dr. Dawson referenced, what happened to you, conversations --

DR. DAWSON: That's right. That's the name of the book.

>> Conversations on trauma, resilience and healing. And it will come out in April. By Oprah Winfrey and Bruce Perry.

We've got another one here. We do have a few minutes. I just want to say so much gratitude to the ASL interpreters and the captioner working so hard in today's session. They have



been phenomenal for this whole conference, and we really could not do this without them. So thank you so much.

Michelle writes any advice for applying this specifically to children of color with disabilities?

DR. DAWSON: It's the same. Children with disabilities, they have a disability. That's all. They understand. And they will work with you. It's just you actually working with them. Thank you, Francine.

>> I also want to remind our other session will be on Friday at 10:00 a.m. This is the 10th year of the African American conference on disabilities, our founder fathers will be hosting that session. It will be fun. And it will give you a history of how this came to be and how this year's conference has really blown our expectations. With the number of people that have registered. The people who we've been able to reach coast to coast, and border to border. So thank you so much. And yes, Tasha, this is an amazing session. Like I said, all the presentation recordings will be posted later on the ACDL website. We are still working on that. There's a lot of stuff to try to get through. So and there is a great question. Where is the link for the survey? I'm going to put this in right now again for everyone. Really would appreciate you filling that out.

It looks like we could end a little early unless anybody had any other questions. Dr. Dawson, did you have any final words?

DR. DAWSON: I just want to say thank you to all of you for coming and staying. I appreciate it. You all are wonderful. Thank you for the comments too. I really appreciate it. If you have any questions or comments, you know how to get in touch with me.

>> If you have any follow-up questions concerning the recording, give us a couple of days and -- or next sessions, I have put my email. So if there is not anything else, again thank you Dr. Dawson. This was amazing. And thank you again to our sponsors. And we hope to see everyone again very soon.

Have a great day, everyone!

