



TAMICKA MONSON
— COUNSELING LLC —



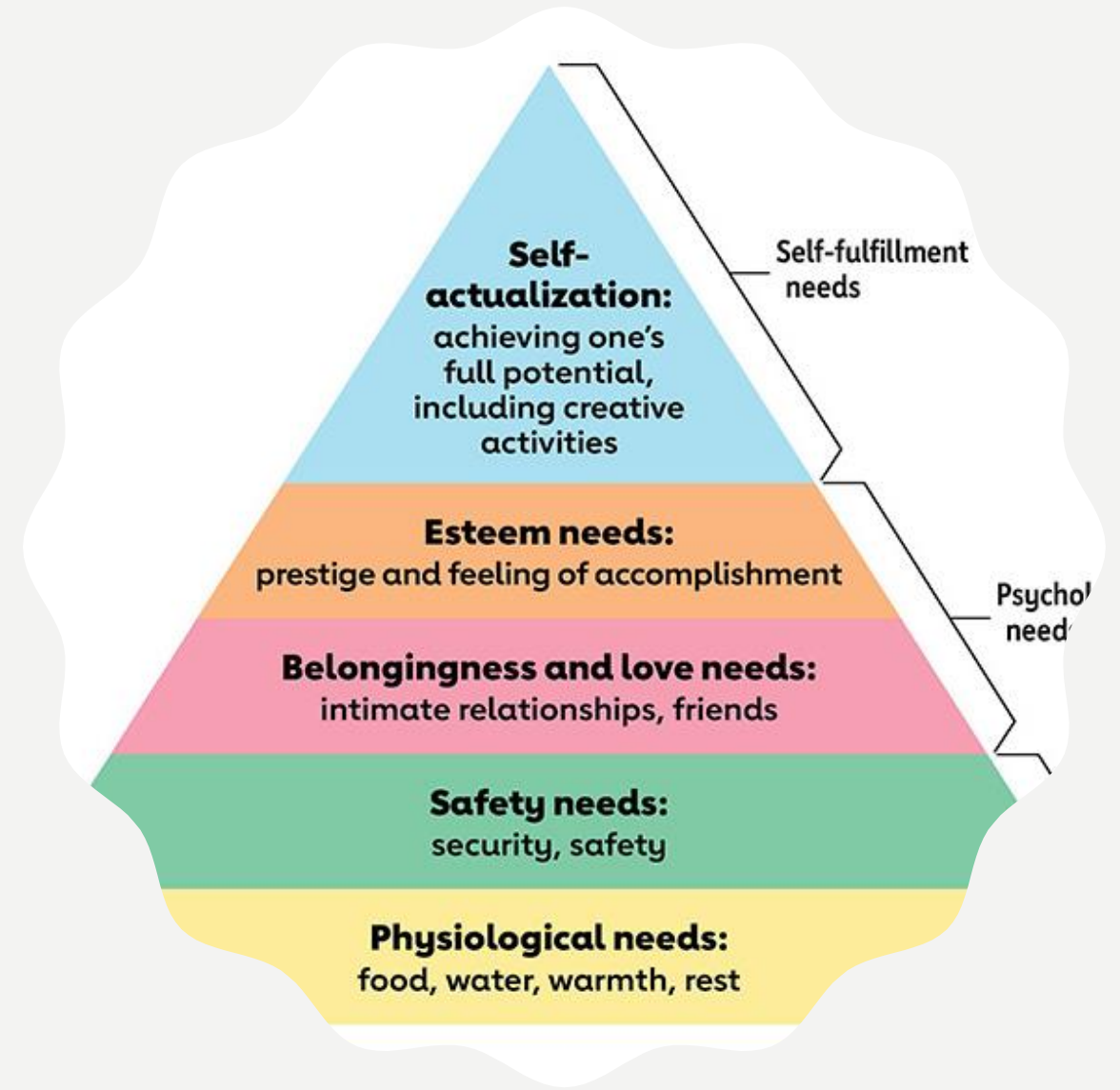
INSTILLING BLACK DIGNITY

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INHERITED AND RACIAL TRAUMA: UNDERSTANDING ROOTS

- Slavery
- Redlining and gentrification
- The war on drugs and mass incarceration
- Police brutality
- Poverty
- Discrepancies and racism in governmental policies, education, healthcare, mental health care, and education

- Thus, some Black Americans are still stuck in survival. It is not that they don't care or that they don't know what they are doing.



BLACK KIDS BILL OF RIGHTS (ADOPTED FROM UNKNOWN AUTHOR)

1. I have the right to make mistakes and not have to be perfect.
2. I have the right to follow my own values and standards.
3. I have the right to express all of my feelings, both positive and negative, in a manner that will not harm others.
4. I have the right not to be responsible for others' behavior, actions, feelings, or problems.
5. I have the right to be uniquely myself.
6. I have the right to feel scared and say, "I'm afraid."
7. I have the right to my own needs for personal space and time.
8. I have the right to be playful and frivolous.
9. I have the right to make friends and be comfortable around people.
10. I have the right to change and grow.
11. I have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
12. I have the right to be happy.

TO MAKE MISTAKES AND NOT HAVE TO BE PERFECT...

There is a fine line between allowing kids to not be perfect and to make mistakes and enabling them. However, for those who parent or work with Black kids, the line is even finer.

[Bow talks to Devante.](#)

TO FOLLOW MY OWN STANDARDS AND VALUES...

- A Black kid, even in a White family, is not a White kid.
- Many times, Black kids who grow up in predominantly White spaces (schools, families, etc.) feel like they do not fit in with Black or White people. Because White and Black people have different ways of showing up in the world, there is often a disconnect.
- Even Black kids in predominantly Black or otherwise diverse spaces struggle with fitting in, for Black people are not a monolith.



**TO EXPRESS ALL
OF MY FEELINGS,
BOTH POSITIVE
AND NEGATIVE,
IN A MANNER
THAT WILL NOT
HARM OTHERS**

- Emotional expression amongst Black kids is often suppressed. If showing anger, it is seen as aggression. If showing happiness, it is seen as non-compliance that needs to be tamed, or suspicious behavior.

BLACK PARENTING AND EMOTIONAL SUPPRESSION, TOXIC PHRASES

*Note: These are toxic phrases. There are many Black families who do not use these terms!

Stop all that crying,
or I will give you
something to cry
about.

What happens in
this house stays in
this house.

I'm not one of your
little friends.

I will knock you
into the middle of
next week.

I brought you in
this world, I can
take you out.


You are too blessed
to be stressed./You
are just a kid.

Keep playing with
me.

You depressed?
Depress those
dishes.

Get my belt.

You're just like
your...(dad, mom,
etc.)



NON-BLACK PARENTING AND CARETAKING AND EMOTIONAL SUPPRESSION

Minimizing, passivity, or lack of awareness

Universality in the child's struggle

Talking, rather than listening

Speaking for rather than creating a space

Attempting to explain the Black kid's words rather than allowing them to use their own language (a version of whitesplaining)

TO NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR OTHERS' BEHAVIOR, ACTIONS, FEELINGS, OR PROBLEMS

- As a Black kid, there are unwritten rules to being Black. As much as non-Black people live in denial, the reality is many Black parents must tell their kids:
 - To never leave the house without their ID
 - Don't "touch nothing, look at nothing, or ask for nothing"
 - To be overly compliant with cops
 - To avoid doing the dumb stuff kids their age do, even though kids are entitled to make mistakes and grow

TO BE UNIQUELY MYSELF

- This one goes along with following one's own standards and values.
- When Black kids are struggling with mental health/neurodivergence, support is needed.
- However, the history of psychology and education on Black children is dark, with many being misdiagnosed with intellectual disability or behavioral disorders.



TO FEEL SCARED AND SAY, “I’M AFRAID.”

- For kids, saying they feel scared may look like acting out.
- Is the child acting out due to developmentally appropriate behaviors, overwhelming emotions, racial trauma, or all the above?



- [Disenfranchised grief](#)
- Racial battle fatigue
- White people are positively reinforced repeatedly for their performance (even if subpar) or POCs ideas.
- As a Black person, one must work twice as hard for half of the credit. This lack of recognition can lead to self-fulfilling prophecy or perfectionism (opposite ends of the spectrum).



TO MY OWN NEEDS FOR PERSONAL SPACE AND TIME



TO BE PLAYFUL AND FRIVOLOUS

- Black kids face so many expectations, even from Black caregivers and teachers.
- They must grow up fast and shoulder much responsibility.
- Let Black kids play!



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TO MAKE FRIENDS AND BE COMFORTABLE AROUND PEOPLE

Black kids have the right to be comfortable and safe around others.

Before you dismiss something as “not a big deal” put yourself in the Black kid’s shoes.

Often Black kids are chastised or ignored when confronting racism against them.

TO CHANGE AND GROW

- As Black kids approach adolescence (and even prior), they are adultified. Boys are seen as threats, and girls are seen as sex symbols.
- Comments like “he looks old for his age” or she is “fast” plague Black children’s minds and color the way they see themselves.





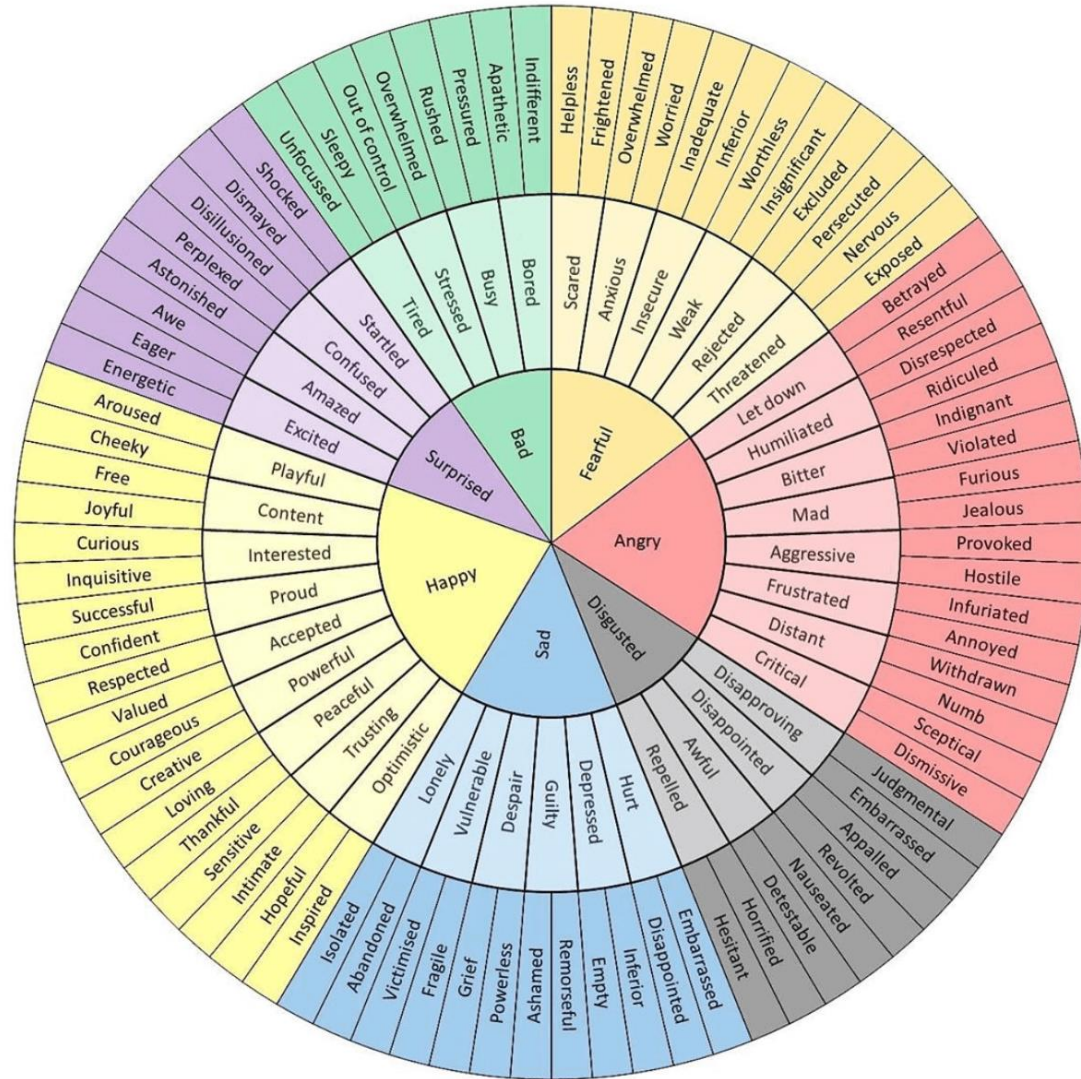
TO BE TREATED WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT

- Presentation matters and has roots back in slavery.
- Clothing and hair – It is important in Black culture. If you are a parent of a Black kiddo, please learn how to do your child's hair.
- Immerse yourself in Black culture, not in a way of appropriation, but to understand and help them. Representation matters.
- Make sure they are involved in groups with kids that look like them.

TO BE HAPPY

- Black kids deserve to express happiness, to cultivate joy, without it being seen as mischievousness.





FOSTER DIGNITY IN

Body image – including hair and skin tone

Expressing Emotions – Develop language around feelings

Strengths and Recognition – Help them find their strengths.

Circle of Support – Talk to them about who is in their corner, who has their back.

The Future – Talk to them about their future.



STRENGTHS IN BLACK CULTURE

Collectivism

Hard work ethic

Self-advocacy

Joy (esp. in tumultuous times)

And many more!



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- Black kids have seen enough death, enough discipline, enough disaster.
- Also, love is not enough. They need strengths-based therapeutic approaches.



HUMILITY

Examine your own racial identity.

Check yourself first: your racial bias and microaggressions, your privilege, your **motive**, your unmet needs and unhealed trauma. Little Black kids become adults.

Check your friends and family secondly.

Learn and unlearn about Black children.

Don't assume you know what it is like to be a Black child now, even if you were a Black child years and years ago.

Recognize your privilege, check your privilege, and use your privilege.

Whether you are Black, White, or another race, advocating for Black kids is not about you.

When you want to check out of showing up for Black kids and people, **don't**.

FOR COUNSELORS: COMMON COMPLAINTS

- Little empathy
- Too quick to apply universality
- Lack insight into Black culture: Black people don't want to explain certain things
- Defensiveness
- Stances are too known
- Invalidating
- Asking stupid questions (i.e., want clients to educate you)
- Don't study on their own from Black people (You rely on Brene Brown and Robin DiAngelo because it is comfortable and easy)
- Make it about themselves (remember complain, blame, explain)

A FEW QUICK TIPS

- Ask, don't assume.
- Empathize, don't pathologize.
- Try to **connect** with the Black kid's feeling of disempowerment before trying to **correct**.
- Let the Black kid be.
- Don't ignore the painful events happening in the world and how it affects Black kids.
- Understand that some Black and poor families are still in survival. Don't judge.
- Parents: Give your Black kid a few Black mental health days a year (in addition to regular ones).

RESOURCES FOR ADULTS

- *Black Fatigue: How Racism Erodes the Mind, Body, and Spirit* by Mary-Frances Winters
- *Colin in Black and White* Netflix series
- *Fearing the Black Body* by Sabrina Strings
- *Grieving While Black* by Breeshia Wade
- *How to Be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi
- *I'm Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness* by Austin Channing Brown
- *Our Slavemasters are Keeping Us From Mental Wellness* by Tamicka Monson <https://subcultureweekly.net/?p=988>
- *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome* by Joy DeGruy
- *Racial Battle Fatigue* https://teach.ucmerced.edu/sites/crte.ucmerced.edu/files/page/documents/racial_battle_fatigue_-_handout.pdf
- *The State of Black Girls* https://thestateofblackgirls.org/?fbclid=IwAR3Ffm5laDj2ecNMuTeg4H5OHBZNcKDoxpAajqSa3JllvMzlhXxNlPz_k6Q
- *The Truths of Transracial Adoption: Evaluating Impact and Considerations for Care*
<https://open.spotify.com/episode/0QVvtQqzRfHLOEL9rDxeDG?si=957754f511bb42cb>
- *The Unapologetic Guide to Black Mental Health* by Rheeda Walker
- *Think Again: The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know* by Adam Grant
- *When They See Us* Netflix series
- *Women of the Movement* Hulu series
- *For Kids: Ghost Boys* by Jewell Parker Rhodes