

**Barbershop Talk:  
Grief and  
Bereavement in Black  
Fathers  
After the Loss of a  
Spouse/Partner**

Presented by  
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## DISCLAIMER

The content of this presentation is provided as **general information** only and is not to be used or relied on for any diagnostic or treatment purposes. This information is not intended as, nor should it be construed as, clinical, or professional advice or opinion.

Please consult your health care provider before making any health care decisions for guidance about a specific medical or mental health condition.

**Simply calling or texting 988 or chatting  
988Lifeline.org will connect you to  
compassionate care and support for mental  
health-related distress. #988Lifeline**



# Objectives

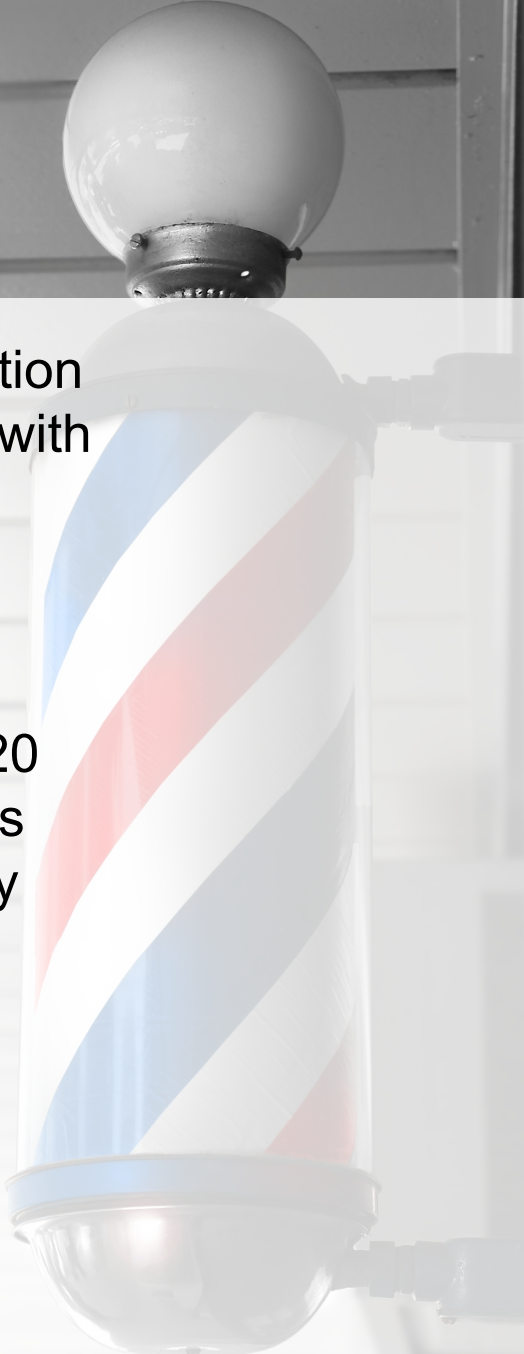
- Identify challenges that Black fathers face after the loss of their spouse/partner.
- Describe grief and bereavement in Black fathers.
- Explain principles and practice of self-care.
- Identify skills for barbers working with black fathers after the loss of their spouse/partner.



# **Grief and Bereavement in Black Fathers After the Loss of a Spouse/Partner**







The Census Bureau found in its 2021 Current Population Survey that since 1968, the number of children living with two parents has dropped across all races.

**For Black families:**

- 37.9% of children lived with married parents in 2020
- 3.4% of Black children lived with unmarried parents
- 46.3% of Black children lived with their mother only
- 4.5% of Black children lived with their father only

(PsychCentral, 2023)



**NETFLIX**

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[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxdtAJomd\\_0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxdtAJomd_0)

### **Black Fatherhood**

"There's so much negative imagery of Black fatherhood. I've got tons of friends that are doing the right thing by their kids, and doing the right thing as a father....."

~ Will Smith

### **Fatherhood**

"It humbles you. You start to realize you don't have all the answers."

~ John Legend

### **The Gift of Fatherhood**

"I love being a dad. Fatherhood is the best thing that could happen to me, and I'm just glad I can share my voice."

~ Dwyane Wade

### **Loving His Children More Than Anything Else**

"I love, love children. I love being a dad. It's one of the joys of life. In fact, you can take it all away from me tomorrow, but don't take away my children."

~ Idris Elba



# Relationship Breakup/Divorce

- A breakup is the end of a committed romantic relationship between dating/married partners.
- Divorce is the legal dissolution of a marriage.





# Parental Incompetence

- An incompetent parent is one who may emotionally, physically or psychologically abuse a child.
- An incompetent parent may not be able to care for their own needs and be financially struggling to accommodate for the basic needs of the child (i.e. health, safety and nutrition).



# Maternal Spouse/Partner Loss

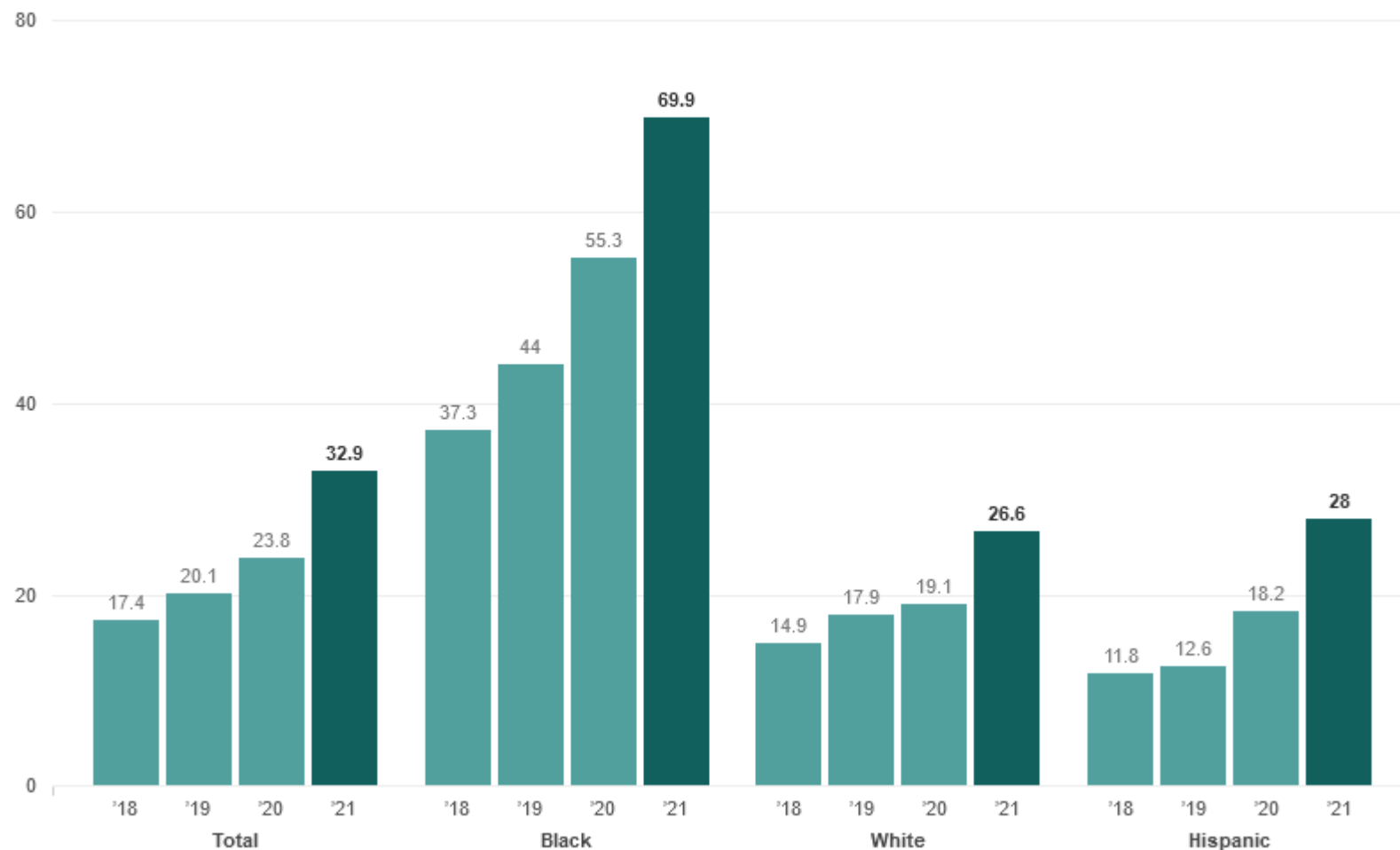
The World Health Organization defines a maternal death as the death of a woman “from any cause related to or aggravated by pregnancy or its management (excluding accidental or incidental causes) during pregnancy and childbirth or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy.”

(Simmons-Duffin & Wroth, 2023))



## U.S. maternal mortality rates rise between 2018 and 2021

Maternal deaths per 100,000 live births



National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Credit: Ashley Ahn/NPR

# Grief/Bereavement

**Grief** is the natural reaction to loss.

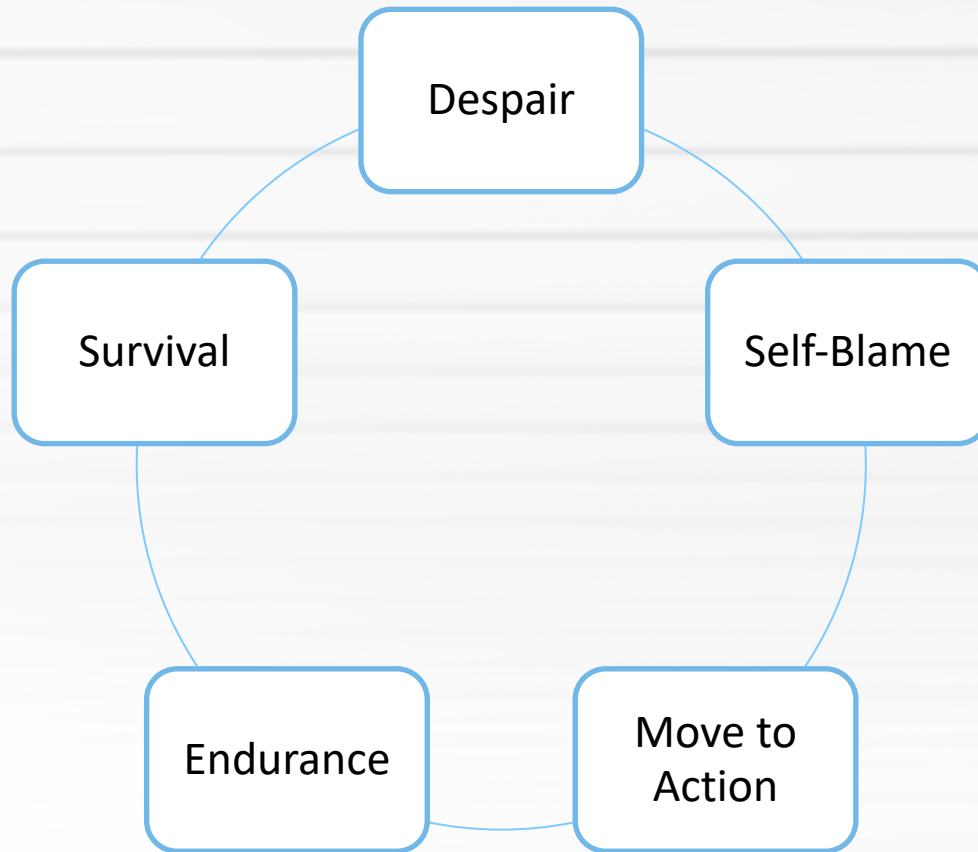
**Bereavement** is the grief and mourning experience following the death of someone important to you.





# Black Grief

## The Five Stages of Black Grief



# Prolonged Grief Disorder

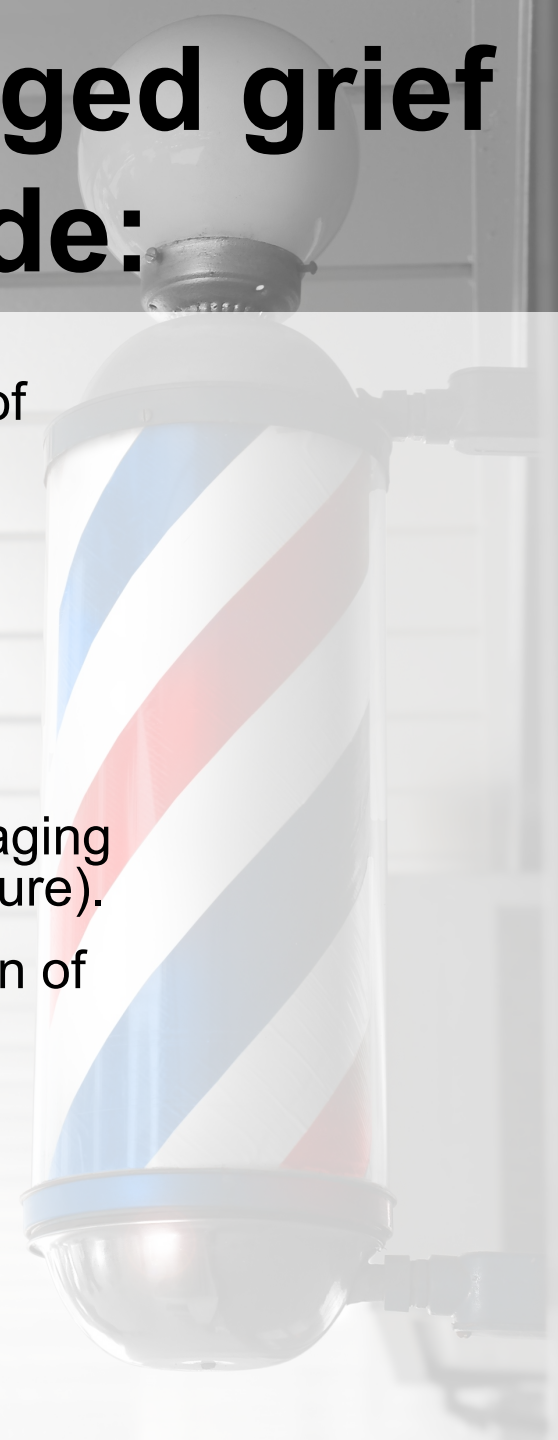
- Prolonged grief disorder (PGD) is a condition in which grief symptoms last longer than 12 months. Sadly, without treatment, PGD can persist indefinitely, and new symptoms can emerge. (i.e., depression and substance use...)



# Symptoms of prolonged grief disorder include:

- Identity disruption (such as feeling as though part of oneself has died).
- Marked sense of disbelief about the death.
- Avoidance of reminders that the person is dead.
- Intense emotional pain (such as anger, bitterness, sorrow) related to the death.
- Difficulty with reintegration (such as problems engaging with friends, pursuing interests, planning for the future).
- Emotional numbness (absence or marked reduction of emotional experience).
- Feeling that life is meaningless.
- Intense loneliness (feeling alone or detached from others).

(APA, 2022)



# Practical suggestions to help move toward healing after the loss of a spouse/partner

- Acknowledge the loss.
- Mourn the loss, the open expression of one's thoughts and feelings regarding the death of a loved one.
- Recognize that grief is unique, there is no right or wrong way to grieve.
- It is okay to express feelings openly.
- Take your time with personal belongings of your spouse/partner.
- Even if a spouse/partner dies, the memory of them does not die.
- Take care self and family by eating healthy foods, exercising, and getting plenty of sleep (if applicable, sleep while kids are at school).





# Other Losses

- Loss of health
- Losing a job
- Loss of financial stability
- Retirement
- Loss of a cherished dream
- A loved one's serious illness
- Loss of a friendship
- Loss of safety after a trauma
- Selling the family home



# **Barbershop Talk: Grief and Bereavement in Black Fathers After the Loss of a Spouse/Partner**

**Barbershop Talk**



# A Brief History of Black Barbershops

- Central hub in the neighborhoods/community, where black men show up every three to four weeks,
- The black barbershop originated on the front porch, in the back yard, or other noncommercial venues.
- Black barbers and customers have a close relationship.
- It is a place of trust.



A close-up shot of Ice Cube smiling broadly, wearing a brown fedora and a brown jacket. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a store interior with shelves and a sign.

**MGM**

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TRAILER**

<https://youtu.be/BH5kMAHANr0>



# The Barbershop



" Photo by author and photographer, Antonio Johnson, from the book "You Next"

# The Barbershop





# The Barbershop



<https://s3.amazonaws.com/bncore/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/147242-e1460635169303.jpg>

# Barber Chair





# Better Health Can Start at the Barbershop

- Health promotion programs implemented in barbershops have successfully improved health outcomes and education among Black/African American men.
- Barbershops and beauty salons have shown success in improving health outcomes for adult patrons.

(Ansong-DePass, 2022)

- "If you want to find a place where you're likely to find a number of Black men who are willing to talk about health, the barbershop is the place to go."

(Williams, 2020)

- African American barbers are not formally trained to address mental health issues, they do provide a venue for their clients to express and address issues affecting their lives.



# Goals

- Become health **advocates** in their communities.
- Increase knowledge of health disparities in their communities.
- Promote self care (\*clients).
- Decrease the stigma attached to mental health.



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# Thank You!



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Questions?

