

RACE, LAW ENFORCEMENT & BLACK MALES

ACTIONS REQUIRED TO SHIFT THE PARADIGM

Panelists' Recommendations & Action Steps | June 17, 2020

FOREWORD

The escalation of events igniting recent civil unrest highlights the economic, health care, social, and criminal justice disparities that Black Americans and racial minorities experience daily across the U.S. Many medical associations and health science scholars, now more than ever, openly echo this undeniable truth: racism is a public health issue. UNC-Chapel Hill's North Carolina Translational and Clinical Sciences (NC TraCS) Institute agrees and seeks to participate in raising consciousness for action that addresses systemic racism.

On June 17, 2020, NC TraCS' Community and Stakeholder Engagement (CaSE) Program Director, Lori Carter-Edwards, PhD facilitated ***Race, Law Enforcement, and Black Males: Actions Required to Shift the Paradigm***. Five esteemed guest speakers acknowledged the challenges brought by racism and described experiences Black males live through that others do not. They identified the strengths and importance of law enforcement, and shared strategies to support the relationship between Black males and law enforcement.

The statements in this document represent the various opinions, recommendations, and actions expressed by the webinar panelists. Their feedback is grouped under six categories:

- 1) police reform
- 2) school safety
- 3) mental health
- 4) rights awareness
- 5) personal advocacy for change
- 6) taking collective action

VIEW the WEBINAR

View the recorded webinar at go.unc.edu/race617

SPEAKERS

FACILITATOR

Lori Carter-Edwards, PhD

Associate Professor, Public Health Leadership Program
Gillings School of Global Public Health
Director, Community and Stakeholder Engagement (CaSE) Program
NC Translational and Clinical Sciences (NC TraCS) Institute

WEBINAR PANELISTS

Jayne Morgan, MD

Director of Innovation, Piedmont Physician Enterprise,
Piedmont Healthcare, Atlanta, GA
Mother of CNN Journalist and Correspondent, Omar
Jimenez, arrested in Minneapolis, MN while covering
the aftermath of the death of George Floyd

Wes Bellamy, EdD

National Public Policy Chairman, 100 Black Men of
America, Former Vice-Mayor of Charlottesville, VA,
Current Political Science Department Chairman at
Virginia State University, Founder and Co-Chairman of
the Black Millennial Political Convention

Rev. James D. Gailliard

Pastor of Word Tabernacle Church in Rocky Mount,
NC Representative of the North Carolina General
Assembly, District 25

David Perry

Assistant Vice Chancellor and Chief of Police,
UNC-Chapel Hill, Past President of the Florida
Police Chiefs Association, Past President of
the International Association of Campus Law
Enforcement Administrators

Lloyd Bradsher

Orange County, NC Sheriff's Office (retired)



This event was co-sponsored by the [UNC-Chapel Hill Office for Diversity and Inclusion](#)

POLICE REFORM

The police reform bill needs clearer language, as it is currently vague, non-specific, provides no sustenance and provides an excuse to unnecessarily use deadly force.

We have to be careful how we frame advocacy to “defund the police.” The strategy of using jarring language helps bring attention to the conversation, but the bigger need is to look at municipal budgets across the country and more closely examine the funds that are being devoted to policing.

- We need to shift our philosophy from focusing on policing to focusing on public safety. Many police officers in the field do not have the training to also be social workers or mental health advocates.
- We should devote more resources to allow for trained individuals to accompany police officers on their calls to provide the added support that police are often not trained to provide.
- We need to take the law enforcement training and support approaches that are already working across the nation and replicate them in other areas.

We need to think about law enforcement in a different way and redistribute the resources needed to make a real change.

- Every call to 911 is funneled to the police, even if they are not equipped to address it. Police should not bear the entire duty for all calls to service.
- A public safety model is more appropriate and viable as long as the resources to support it are not being siphoned from the police department.

Every police chief’s mission should be to apply gentle, relentless pressure to root out bad police, being bold and forthright with staff about expectations.

We need to consider national law enforcement standards.

- The training requirement in place for new police officers, compared to other professions, is low. As such, we cannot expect officers to be fully equipped for all situations.

We need to enhance efforts to recruit a more racially diverse police workforce.

- Enhanced efforts may include recruitment through sources such as institutions of higher learning, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).
- We should examine the recruitment, hiring, and accreditation practices of law enforcement agencies.
- Training officers should closely examine the practices of their recruits. They need to pay close attention to their behaviors, see what they are like outside of work, and get a good sense of their character.

SCHOOL SAFETY

We need public safety in schools, but not “policing.”
How we frame this is important.

- Police maintaining good relationships with schools is similar to maintaining good relationships in communities – service works better.
- Service that involves tension or threats to respect will not be as successful.
- Police should respect and serve, not harm, no matter how challenging the student is.

School Resource Officers (SROs) are needed to ensure safety in schools, but they need to be trusted. They need to be seen as a friend and need to be a part of the community.

RIGHTS AWARENESS

People need to be informed of their rights when engaging with police.

- Information, resources, and empowerment are key.
- People should know who to turn to when they encounter a “bad cop.”
- People need to understand their rights, and what they can and cannot do during an interaction with police.
- NOBLE (National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives) conducts a “Know your Rights” seminar.

MENTAL HEALTH

Officers need to be screened more carefully prior to entering the police academy.

- Law enforcement sometimes attracts those with fantasies of carrying guns and harming others. Such branding is hard to change within communities that are being policed.
- We need extensive psychiatric screening to gain a better understanding of whether someone is capable of managing the responsibilities of being a police officer.

We need to de-stigmatize mental health and address the lack of adequate numbers of mental health providers.

- Faith communities need to participate in this de-stigmatization.
- Mental health is tied to student success in schools. We tend to focus on treating symptoms and not factors that may address the cause of mental health issues in school.

PERSONAL ADVOCACY FOR CHANGE

Take a moment to breathe and realize we will be OK.

- With the collective of older, younger, and Blacks who are willing to focus on what they can do for themselves, this is the spirit to catapult what we do in a different direction.
- Become a critical thinker, and do not let emotions take control.

We need to take advantage of this turning point to better our society, going beyond protests to sustainable and long-term models for achieving change.

We all must be willing to challenge ourselves to do the internal work.

- While we can educate ourselves about options for better training and screening of police so that we can speak intelligently to local officials, it is important that Whites recognize and acknowledge the reality that Blacks live in a different America. There is no way to fully ensure a safe place to go and no way to prepare them for what they will experience.
- Black men want to be respected — with recruitment and training of police to focus on how to treat and respect Blacks during interactions.

We all, and Whites in particular, should become more educated in local policies and how they affect our local communities.

- Change has to start locally.
 - » Does your area have a civilian police review board? Do they work with local law enforcement?
 - » Are you aware of your District Attorney's policies for prosecution?
- Educate yourself.

We should consider how we can be more involved and active in our communities.

- We should participate and engage with our leaders routinely to encourage their involvement in these important conversations.
- Blacks must engage in advocacy now, as prior movements have done:
 - » Register to vote
 - » Participate in the census
 - » Mobilize collectively
 - » Run for office
 - » Be civically educated and engaged

TAKING COLLECTIVE ACTION

Systemic and institutional racism still manifests in segregation on Sunday mornings and in lack of submission to Black church leadership, which must change.

We need to address manipulation around shared language, including misinformation about black-on-black and white-on-white crime rates.

We need to re-build our infrastructure so that marginalized and Black communities are not simply “policed” with no other institutions and systems available to support them (e.g., education, healthcare, employment).

We need to have an honest conversation about raising up an economy that supports Black people, addressing economic injustice first and foremost.

Blacks need to increase their own political capital in order to see true policy change.

- Research and participate in advocacy through national and community-based services and programs on issues of health, education and economic empowerment.
- Since Blacks are not a monolithic group, they need to incorporate all of their different ideas and come together in a way that encourages true policy change.

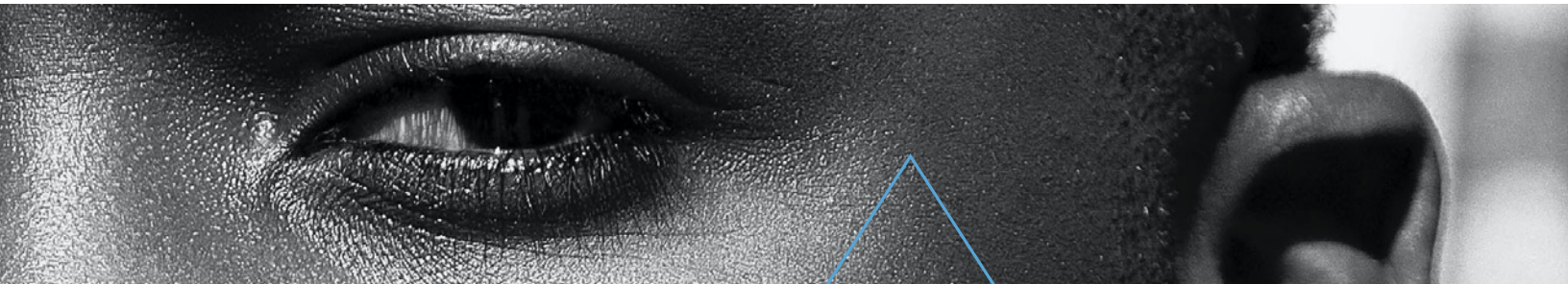
We need to support each other, believe in each other, and love each other. Though times are traumatizing and difficult to live through, we owe it to our ancestors and future generations to press on.

A special thank you to the following for event organization, advertising, and materials:

NC TraCS CaSE Program: *Lori Carter-Edwards, Alicia Bilheimer*

NC TraCS Communications: *Michelle Maclay, Daniel Nuttall*

Layout & design: *Chad Henderson*



Development of this document was supported by the North Carolina Translational and Clinical Sciences (NC TraCS) Institute (NIH-UL1TR002489). The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the NIH, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, or the NC TraCS Institute.
v.20200923 | tracs.unc.edu | diversity.unc.edu

cover photo by Justin Essah on Unsplash