NAMICon 2020
A Virtual Event • July 13-14
Together Toward Tomorrow
Youth Resilience in Communities of Color, Community Participatory Research

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The AAKOMA Project, Inc.
Lessons from The AAKOMA Project 501(c)(3) nonprofit (How It’s Done)

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Founder

YOUTH RESILIENCE IN COMMUNITIES OF COLOR, COMMUNITY PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

NAMICon2020 Virtual Event
July 14th, 2020
At the AAKOMA project, our mission is to help diverse teenagers and their families achieve optimal mental health through dialogue, learning, and the understanding that everyone deserves care and support.
All too often, Americans view mental health care as a privilege for the wealthy and feel unwelcome or disconnected from traditional providers. At the AAKOMA Project, we are working to change that perception. We believe that everyone—regardless of background, income, or identity—deserves optimal mental health.

We define optimal mental health as:

- recognizing mental health challenges when they arise
- understanding where to go for help
- supporting friends and loved ones to seek help
MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF PEOPLE OF COLOR
Barriers to Care

Generally, mental health disparities for people of color exist in four areas:

1. Decreased access to/less availability of mental health services -
   Includes issues with costs; insurance; availability of clinics and hospitals esp. for mental health concerns.

2. Lower likelihood of receiving required services -
   As a result of abovementioned reasons; cultural stigma; failure to acknowledge mental health needs.

3. Experiences with poorer quality of care -
   Lack of cultural competence of providers and treatments; provider bias.

4. Underrepresentation in the field of mental health research:
   Both in the role of participant and researcher.
PATIENT CENTERED RESEARCH
Improving the Status Quo

How can we improve provision of care and diminish the service provision gap across racial groups?

Direct examination of current levels of knowledge and attitudes of youth of color surrounding the field of mental health many inform better practices.

Means of reducing barriers to care and research involvement:

• Cultural competence
• Developing alternate and innovative forms of tx to improve access and availability
• Promoting mental health awareness
• Community collaboration
Objectives of our Research

1. For participants to understand the details of Comparative Effectiveness Research and Patient Centered Outcomes Research.

2. For participants to learn about the general knowledge and attitudes of youth of color surrounding the field of mental health treatment and research.

3. For participants to understand and be able to apply the tenets of CER and PCOR in similar communities to increase mental health research engagement.
Healing Starts in the Heart

PCORI ENGAGEMENT AWARD
Engaging Black Faith Communities to Address Mental Health Disparities via Curriculum Development

Goals of our Funded EA Project:

1. Build a network of African American youth patients, leaders, caregivers, parents, community members and other stakeholders invested in developing skills in PCOR and CBPR.

2. To evaluate and identify:
   a) Factors that help or hinder Faith Based Mental Health Promotion
   b) Factors necessary to support training in PCOR and CER

3. To collaboratively develop a patient and stakeholder focused training curriculum in PCOR, CER, and CBPR for African American youth mental health.
EA Project: Accomplishments

~ Engaged 15 faith communities across the project period to create our stakeholder network.

~ Recruited a total of 203 individuals to participate in survey completion and group discussion (with 17 focus groups completed).

~ Primary Outcomes:
  Curriculum Creation
  Capacity Building
  Community and Patient Engagement
Adult’s Understanding of CER and PCOR

Youth’s Understanding of CER and PCOR
Healing Starts in the Heart

OUR FUNDED PCORI PIPELINE TO PROPOSAL (P2P) PROJECT
Building Capacity and Reducing Barriers to the Inclusion of Underserved Black Youth and Families for Behavioral and Mental Health Patient Centered Outcomes Research

• Our P2P project has sought to develop a partnership between researchers, patient-partners, and stakeholders.

• We work to build capacity for community partnerships to create research questions and submit PCOR research proposals.
P2P Project Goals

1. Strengthen relationships between researchers, patients and stakeholders.

2. Build capacity for community partnerships to create research questions and submit PCOR research proposals.

3. Engage partnerships in research process and development of dissemination and implementation plans.

4. Successfully establish an infrastructure for patients, caregivers, and other stakeholders to increase engagement in research, dissemination and evaluation.
Mental Health Research and Care for All

Tiers of our P2P Project

Tier 1 - COMPLETE
• 9 months
• Build a sense of community.
• Develop a network.
• Establish community trust.
• Identify recruitment strategies.
• Develop CER* ideas.

Tier 2 - COMPLETE
• 12 months
• Lay groundwork for proposal.
• Complete all PCORI trainings.
• Develop a workplan.
• Identify potential community partners.
• Develop CER questions.
• Identify other sources of funding.

Tier 3 - COMPLETE
• 12 months
• Write funding proposal based on CER questions.
• Present to the community CER questions.
• Expand community partner networks.
• Submit letter of intent of funding.

PCORI Funding Announcement
• Funding decision announced.
• This funding and approval will permit implementation of the intervention with Black youth
• Implement Intervention!

*CER- Comparative Effectiveness Research is the direct comparison of existing health care interventions to determine which work best for which patients and which pose the greatest benefits and harms.
P2P Project: CER Question Development

With our team, we developed CER questions with our community and patient partners that addressed:

1. The need for a trauma based treatment intervention for youth members of their geographic community.

2. The needs and current resources of this population.

3. The community’s cultural sensitivities was of importance to the group.
P2P PROJECT OUTCOME

March 2018 → Letter of Intent ACCEPTED

Spring 2018 → Addressing Disparities Grant SUBMITTED

INITIAL SCORE:

41

STRONG WITH MINOR WEAKNESSES
RECENT EXAMPLES OF OUR WORK UNDER COVID-19
COLLABORATION

Thank you to:
Rev. Dr. James E. Victor & Mrs. Victor
Sister Freddie L. Archer, Esq.
Rev. Sabra Jones
Deacon Warren Brooks
(AAKOMA Project Board Member)
Sister Kimberly Garnes

Mount Olive Baptist Church and the AAKOMA Project
Presents
MENTAL HEALTH WEBINAR

#COVIDCare
CONSIDERATIONS FOR PEOPLE OF COLOR

SATURDAY MAY 2 @ 11:00 A.M.

Dr. Afreec Bilal-Noble
Founder, The AAKOMA Project, Inc.

Rev. Dr. James E. Victor, Jr., Pastor
Register at www.mtolivebc.org
NAME THE ISSUES

COVID-19

Relatives and friends mourned Larry A. Hammond, a former Zulu Mardi Gras king, on April 22.
Issue 3

Issues 1 and 2 have tremendous mental health impacts on African Americans, people of color and marginalized populations.
3
BEST CULTURAL PRACTICE

Use "Mother/Father" Wit

- "If you gonna worry, don't pray, if you gonna pray - don't worry"
- "Sunshine is the Best Disinfectant"
- "The ancestors are with you"
4

BEST CULTURAL PRACTICE

I'm Gen X (Forgive Me)

YOU GOT TO:
• Get Up
• Get Out (Not Really)
• Get Something

Multigenerational family sheltering in place
1 STAY CONNECTED

2 STAY INFORMED

3 MOTHER/FATHER WIT

4 GET UP
Free Resources
https://aakomaproject.org/outreach%2Fawareness
Free Virtual Psychotherapy
Teens & Young Adults

LEADING MENTAL HEALTH NONPROFITS HELP NORTHERN VIRGINIA THROUGH THE COVID-19 CRISIS

The AAKOMA Project and the Boris Lawrence Henson Foundation join forces to help Northern Virginia's communities of color.
Nevertheless, She Persisted

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Thank you!