



Black Applied Behavior Analysts

# BABA CONFERENCE

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**DETROIT, MI**

The Effects of Trauma and Resiliency In Black American Women

## Abstract

This study explored the effects of trauma and resiliency among 10 Black women across the United States. Participants' ages ranged from 27 to 82, and all had experience living in foster homes in their childhood. The goals of this research were to: (a) explore participants' experiences with childhood trauma; (b) identify particular resilience factors as described by each participant; and (c) offer insight for identifying particular factors for resilience and coping strategies among Black American women. A transcendental phenomenological research design was used. This type of study allowed for a phenomenon to be researched through the participants' lived experiences, those data were then examined and interpreted through the lens of resilience theory (Garmezy, 1991). The findings suggest that participants were able to survive their childhood experiences because they had access to community resources, such as community pools, public libraries and people who invested in them. In an effort to move past their childhood trauma, these participants accessed higher education and, in those systems, endured more injury. Black women must be protected in these environments. Studies show that Black women often carry the responsibility of protecting themselves (Masten, 2014). Further exploration demonstrates that when Black women who have suffered trauma operate in environments that don't share that responsibility, there is a potential for further harm. The misnomer "strong Black woman", or the superwoman archetype (Woods-Giscombé, 2010), can prove to be harmful for her healing journey. The goal of this research is to teach practitioners to use culturally responsive tools to support Black women supervisees and the families they serve.



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## Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of the presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Define trauma and understand the potential effects of that trauma
2. List and define the 5 foundational concepts of Resilience Theory as outlined by Norman Garmezy (1991)
3. Identify 5 behaviors that are commonly mislabeled and learn the true nature of those specific behaviors that may be seeped in trauma
4. Describe how cultural responsiveness impacts the supervision of Black clinicians and service delivery within the Black community