

Check out [Code WACK!](#)'s latest podcast, the first of two featuring Dr. Howard Pinderhughes, professor at the University of California San Francisco, discussing trauma and its impact on individuals and communities.

Show Notes

The tragic effects of structural violence & community trauma

Click here for [podcast transcript](#)

Click here for [Dr. Pinderhughes' biography](#)

You grew up in the Boston neighborhood of Roxbury, which was the scene of three days of rioting in 1967, an event that is said to have "[sparked Boston's racial unrest](#)." Can you tell us about your personal experience with community trauma and how it has informed your work?

"...we developed this framework called 'adverse community experiences,' which really, for me, was rooted in what I experienced and saw happen to Roxbury growing up and how structural forces and factors and systems and institutions essentially destroyed a vibrant neighborhood and placed the vast majority of people in Roxbury in harm's way - harm from what we have come to understand now as structural violence."

How has the study of trauma evolved through the years, from its initial focus on post-traumatic stress disorder in military veterans?

"...over the last 15 to 20 years, we've come to understand, okay, it's not just veterans coming back from war who are exhibiting these symptoms. We have young people and families and, and adults who are subject to that in their own communities. And in fact, what we understand is post traumatic stress disorder cannot be called post because it's a persistent everyday experience of danger and of exposure and victimization."

How can trauma affect a community?

"It increases the hypervigilance, the folks that have it, it impacts their ideas of possibilities and opportunities. It creates a situation where as a community, there's just a narrative that gets developed where there's the expectation of violence. It's the

expectation of trauma....And there's really the belief that there's not much they can do about it. And it doesn't help when law enforcement is part of that trauma.”

Is there a link between psychological trauma and health?

“[A] study was done among 10,000 middle class, mostly white members of Kaiser San Diego. And they found that ...four or more exposures to adverse childhood experiences results in increased ... chronic disease or emotional or psychological problems as an adult...”

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[Join Healthy California Now](#) *- a coalition working toward a California single-payer system. Individual and organizational membership available*

[Join Physicians for a National Health Program](#) (PNHP) *to join the national campaign for to improve and expand Medicare to all residents of the U.S.*

Helpful Links

[Roxbury, Quiet in Past, Finally Breaks Into Riot. Why Did Violence Occur?](#) *(The Harvard Crimson)*

[The forgotten riot that sparked Boston's racial unrest](#) *(Boston Globe)*

[Adverse Community Experiences and Resilience: A Framework for Addressing and Preventing Community Trauma](#) *(The Prevention Institute)*

[Understanding How Trauma Affects Health and Health Care](#) *(Center for Health Care Strategies)*

[Historical Trauma as Public Narrative: A Conceptual Review of How History Impacts Present-Day Health](#) *(PubMed Central, National Institute of Health)*