
Past, Present & YOUR Future:

*Beginning to Break and Understand
Generational Traumas to Build
Generational Understanding of
Success*



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WORKSHOP PACKET

*“When you’re in a
dark place, you
sometimes tend to
think you’ve been
buried; perhaps
you’ve been planted.*

Bloom...”

Jamaal W. Gosa

Jamaal Gosa was born in Elizabeth, NJ and graduated from Linden High School in Linden, New Jersey. After he graduated high school he attended Cheyney University, the first Historically Black College & University (HBCU). Then transferred to Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) which he received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Liberal Studies. After graduation he stayed at IUP to earn his Masters in Adult Education and Communications Technology.

As an undergraduate student at IUP Jamaal became a co-founder of a peer mentoring organization, Creating Higher Standards (CHS). The focus of the organization was to create a space where marginalized students can support one another academically, and socially while at a PWI. Currently Jamaal is working as Senior Fellow in the Heinz Fellows Program at the University of Pittsburgh. The Heinz Fellows Program is for forward-thinking, social justice-oriented individuals who are interested in advancing equity in education. Fellows will work in urban schools in collaboration with teachers, staff and school leaders to support students in academic, social, and emotional growth while building knowledge and skills necessary to work in urban contexts. Jamaal's dream is to work in Urban Education with students from grades 6-higher education.

Jenny Sak

Jenny Sak, a Cambodian-Laotian American, was born and raised in Philadelphia, PA.. She graduated from The Pennsylvania State University in the Spring of 2015 with her Bachelor of Arts, in both, Crime, Law and Justice and Sociology. After graduation, Jenny went to Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) and earned her Master's in Student Affairs in Higher Education.

While at IUP, she worked with the Haven Project and Health and Wellness Promotion to raise awareness of relationship violence and abuse, in addition to raising awareness for student health issues and developing initiatives and events that focused on their personal, social and mental wellness. In addition, she interned at the Center for Multicultural Student Leadership and Engagement where she developed a six-week series focused on "Leadership in a Multicultural Society". Jenny Sak is currently the Assistant Director for The Paul Robeson Cultural Center (PRCC) at Penn State University (University Park Campus). As the Assistant Director for the PRCC, she is responsible for assisting with the operations, management and responsibilities of the center (advising, supervision, programming, advocacy, trainings, etc.), overseeing BLUEprint, (an internationally certified peer mentoring program/organization sponsored by the PRCC), and serving as the NASPA Undergraduate Fellows Program (NUFP) Campus Coordinator, a platform that introduced and exposed my passion for higher education and student development. Jenny dreams of being the founder of her own University and educational pipeline programs to college with the K-12 public school systems in diverse communities of color.

CONTENTS

Introduction & Objectives for Workshop	4
Defining Trauma for Workshop	6
The Traumas of Our Communities	7
Phase I: Unpacking & Reflecting on the Past Self	8
Puzzled Brain	9
Phase II: Contributions (OF) and (TO) the Present Self	10
Heavy Hands.....	11
Phase III: Foresight for the Future	12
Walk of Life	13
Our Wildest Dreams	14

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

“Our Ancestors’ Wildest Dreams” a dream it is -- Through education, many of us (and not so many), have had the opportunities to gain access to knowledge and understanding that our ancestors did not have the privilege of receiving due to slavery, history of racism and discrimination, genocides, civil and cultural wars. Because of them, we are here today; we are educators, doctors, lawyers, business owners, scientists, writers, billionaires, CEOs and so much more. Yet, we were never prepared for a world where we can see our successes as our own achievements nor accept them for what they can be.

They told us, "you have to be twice as good as them to get half of what they have", but what they did not tell us is what this actually means, or how to feel when we do get what they have, but yet, still do not want us there. Everyone speaks of breaking generational curses and traumas that have created challenges and barriers for communication, love, acceptance and internal freedom, but no one ever really gave us the tools to unpack and understand what those traumas mean to us and how it is deeply rooted in our communities, values, morals and understanding of life. More importantly, what we still lack or cannot see. This can show up in the form of our insecurities, fears of failure, how we engage with others and so on.

Through this workshop, we hope to turn our ancestors’ wildest dreams into stories of healing, community and understanding so we can build for our future legacies and lead by breaking the cycles of intergenerational traumas that have prevented us from building an awareness for our own generational success.

OBJECTIVE:

Our objective and hope is to help participants unpack areas of their lives that have contributed to both their failures and successes in college, and after, so we can build legacies of healing, community understanding and break cycles of traumas that prevented us from acknowledging how far we’ve come and how far we still have to go.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Watch a voice over video titled, **“Past, Present & YOUR Future: Beginning to Break and Understand Generational Traumas and Building on Generational Success”** and follow along with the packet to experience and complete our workshop.

“Although slavery has long been a part of human history, American chattel slavery represents a case of human trauma incomparable in scope, duration and consequence to any other incidence of human enslavement.”

– Dr. Joy DeGruy

Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America's Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing

*“Great things
never came from
comfort zones.”*

– Neil Strauss

“No one knows how precious you are. You are a diamond in the rough and with a little polishing, you will shine,” Pa whispers softly. His gentle words bring a smile to my lips. The mother may not give me the love I crave, but I know what it feels like to be loved.”

– Loung Ung

First They Killed My Father, A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers

*“The pain you deal with today will strengthen
you for tomorrow!”*

Definition of TRAUMA

: an injury (such as a wound) to living tissue caused by an extrinsic agent.

: a disordered psychic or behavioral state resulting from severe mental or emotional stress or physical injury.

: an emotional upset.

: an agent, force, or mechanism that causes trauma.

SOURCE:

Trauma. In *Merriam-Webster.com*. Retrieved April 5, 2020, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/trauma>

The Traumas of Our Communities

As the daughter of immigrants, there are many differences in the world that exist between me and understanding my place in society, specifically the American society – a nation I was born into in 1992. I often ask myself if I really exist because my existence is almost always invisible in spaces where there is a room full of people, yet I still feel alone. How can I not pass what I manifested if I don't heal from it? How can I not want this for my future, my own legacies, if I cannot accept it for what it is, or can become?

I keep a lot of my experiences (let's call them what they are now -- traumas), to myself, not because it did not happen, not because it did not manifest itself into who I see myself to be today, not because it can contribute to my broken relationships, not because it can show my deepest innermost fears... so what is it? It's, in fact, is ALL of those things -- that is why. I was too ashamed to admit how my past has truly affected my entire being. Do I regret having these experiences, not really, but it is teaching me how I experience and see the world. Because I see my journey, as what society would label it to be -- "shameful, different, not us".

The fear of judgement and pride plays a big part into why I have not yet healed fully from traumas and triggers, nor do I like to share my experiences so publicly. Working with students in higher education, specifically the community of color, a community I myself identifies and affiliate myself with, I have gained knowledge and insight on how one can heal and grow through community. We have integrated our traumas in the way we see success, the way we trust people, what we value and how we pass down "traditions" and how we build our families and foundations. This is why I am sharing parts of my trauma with you all today -- to help expose and increase an understanding of how my generation traumas are connected to my generational success.

- **J. Sak (April 2020)**

My family was born and raised in southwest Alabama. Being in the deep south my family lived on dirt roads about 15 miles away to the nearest town. My family raised money through share cropping, and hard labor. Also, in the deep south my family lived through poverty, prejudice, racism, and segregation.

Education for my family was not a priority, survival was. Which concluded to my grandparents not completing high school. As teens my grandparents had to balance working in the fields and long travels for schooling. These same schooling issues were passed down to my parents which influenced their children which continued generational problems. Education for my parents was critical for them to reimage life outside of their small dirt roads in the south. Both of my parents graduated high school and continued to earn a college degree or certification in a trade. My mother was the first person in our family to earn a bachelor's degree at Stillman College. Her desires came from perseverance and faith which was strongly implemented with her Christian/Baptist background. While parenting these same beliefs for my brother and I, some of my other family members had different values.

My family's traumas lead to constant overthinking and questioning if I was good enough to be successful. Which also led me to think, how would I learn to be a strong black male when my father passed away at a young age. How important is education if everyone around me doesn't care about it and is not equitable for everyone in my family? Why does healing for my family result in substance abuse not therapy. Why do backdoor routes get popularized compared to integrity in my family? How do I overcome this?

- **J. Gosa (April 2020)**

Phase I: Unpacking & Reflecting on the Past Self

This phase represents parts of our lives that we barely remember but have contributed to our growth and understanding of expectations, values, “growing”, and where we are told how we should see ourselves, or how we are seen as an individual.

PUZZLED BRAIN

(Clear Your Mind)

LEARNING OUTCOMES: *Participants will...*

- Be able to articulate three components or areas of their lives that contributed to who they are in the present day. **(skill)**
- Begin to narrate aspects of their life that are interconnected with experiences related to trauma and build and awareness for traumas that presents in various forms of their personal identity. **(awareness)**
- Increase their knowledge on traumas that presents in the forms of family beliefs, values, insecurities, success and growth. **(knowledge)**

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Watch **Phase I** in the workshop video. Utilize the “**PUZZLED BRAIN**” activity to guide your reflection and unpacking of information. *Print the template on the next page if you can to complete the activity. If you are not able to, you can use a blank sheet of paper.*
2. Think about 3 components or aspects of your life that you want to focus on for this activity.

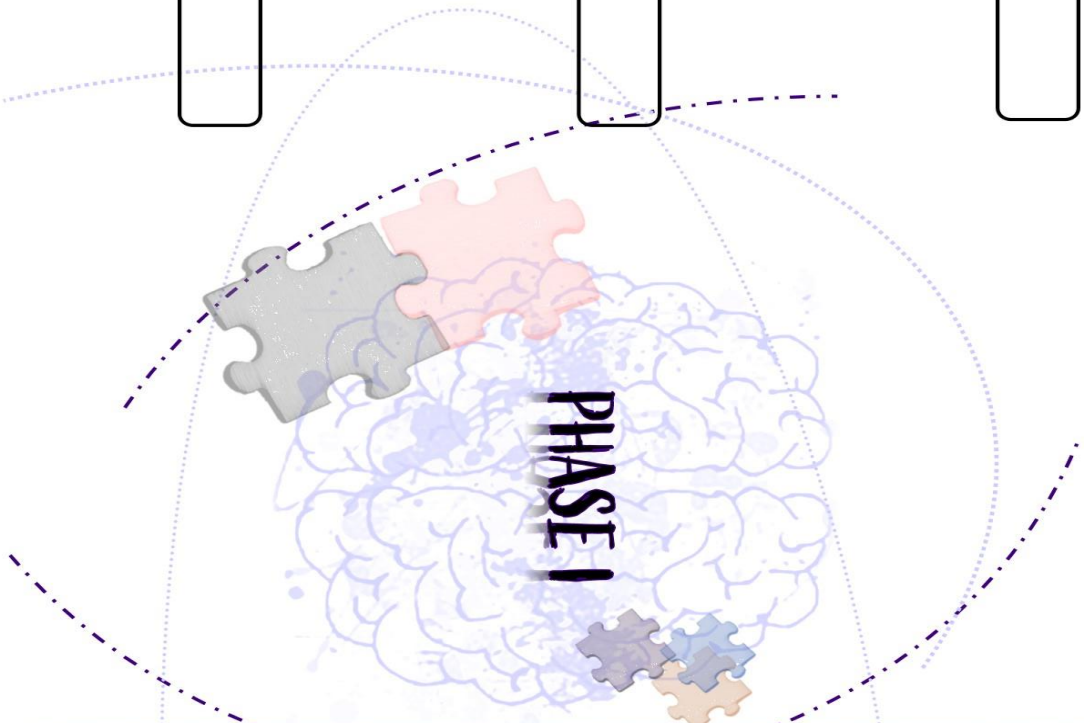
NOTE: The experiences are broken in phases for ease of understanding, but the phases may not be sequential for everyone. You may have encountered and became cognizant of these experiences later in your life by speaking with older members of your family and community so you will more than likely think about where you are first and how you got to this moment (Present Day, Phase II).

3. On the left side of the paper, write those aspects in the header boxes (see example in workshop video).
4. Under the header boxes, write down the subpoints related to your header. Use the questions below to unpack and guide your reflection for those three aspects.
 - What happened?
 - What led you here?
 - Who was there?
 - What did you gain or learn and why was it necessary to who you are today?
 - What resources or platform have “rooted” your growth and advancement?
 - What prevented progress?

with a target and focus on, family, aspiration/education & personal growth

5. On the right side of your paper, write it all out, and rewrite if you need to (may take multiple times with multiple perspectives). Once you complete, **Phase I** entry, watch **Phase II** in the workshop video & complete the “**HEAVY HANDS**” activity sheet.

Puzzled Brain



Write hard and clear, about what hurts." - Ernest Hemingway

A large, rounded rectangular area with a light beige background and horizontal black lines, designed for writing.

Phase II: Contributions (OF) and (TO) the Present Self

*This phase represents where an individual is at in the present day of their life (emotionally, personally, physically, mentally, professionally, etc.). This phase reflects on what you are “holding”, what you have and what you are experiencing now that is connected to what you have held/hold (**Phase I**).*

HEAVY HANDS

(WHAT THESE HANDS HOLD)

LEARNING OUTCOMES: *Participants will...*

- Will think and reflect on current components/aspects of their lives that connect or reflects those in **Phase I. (skill)**
- Increase an awareness for current challenges in aspects of their lives that are connected to past contributions. (**awareness**)
- Gain knowledge for how they view their past experiences in relation to their experiences today and for knowledge they have now that they wish and needed in their past. (**knowledge**)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Watch **Phase II** in the workshop video. Utilize the “**HEAVY HANDS**” activity to share connected experiences in your past to present day, you. This can include your achievements, professional aspirations, values, networks, and so on.
2. Print the template on the next page if you can to complete the activity. If you are not able to, you can use a blank sheet of paper and draw out what your hands are “holding” currently.
3. Complete each corner by answering the four questions below in relation to the components/aspects you focused on in your “**PUZZLED BRAIN**” activity sheet.
4. Under the header boxes, write down the subpoints related to your header. Use the questions below to unpack and guide your reflection for those three aspects.
 - How does life differ from 5-10 years ago?
 - What challenges are you navigating now that your past contributed (TO)?
 - What contributions are impacting the growth & experience (OF) the present?
 - How do you view the past now (advice, knowledge, values, skills, abilities)?
5. Once you complete, **Phase II** entry, watch **Phase III** in the workshop video and complete the “**WALK OF LIFE**” activity sheet. After you have completed the activity sheet, finish watching the workshop video.

HEAVY HANDS

PHASE II



"Just because I carry it all so well doesn't mean it's not heavy."

PHASE III: Foresight for the Future

This phase represents the part of our life we are hoping to one day see (our anticipation, aspiration, education and career achievements, family, networks, etc.). This includes projected fears, challenges, results, individual intentions and what they hope to be “free” of & build for the future legacies.

WALK OF LIFE

(Where We Have Been Gives Us Where We Are Going)

LEARNING OUTCOMES: *Participants will...*

- Reflect & share their stories and experiences to reflect on what they want, anticipate and foresee for themselves and their future generations to follow. (**skill**)
- Increase their awareness for things that are plaguing them and their communities through generational teachings and shared “trauma”, (**awareness**)
- Will gain knowledge on different aspects or components of their future that they should prepare for or do different from generation past. (**knowledge**)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Watch **Phase III** in the workshop video. Utilize the “**Walk of Life**” activity to map out the path you want to create and see for you. See below for areas to reflect on.
 - Goals
 - Intentions for the Future
 - Fears for Future
 - “Free(dom) From...”
 - What will you need to prepare for?
 - Where you want to or see yourself going?
 - What pieces are missing? What needs to be connected or “let go”?
2. After you have completed the activity sheet, finish watching the workshop video.

Four rounded rectangular boxes for notes or reflections, arranged in a 2x2 grid.

A large speech bubble containing seven horizontal dotted lines for writing.

WALK OF LIFE PHASE III

Means
"SOMETIMES IT'S THE JOURNEY THAT TEACHES
YOU A LOT ABOUT YOUR DESTINATION" - DRAKE

A large rectangular box with a dotted border for writing.

A large rectangular box with a dotted border for writing.

GOALS

Five horizontal dashed lines for writing.



Our Wildest Dreams



Bloom...