

Big Boys Don't Cry, Black Boys Don't Feel...

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Community Violence & Young Black Males

- **Interpersonal and community violence is rampant in some urban, impoverished neighborhoods**
- **The prevalence of violence within these neighborhoods is such that all individuals are at risk of exposure but African American males experience a uniquely higher risk**

Case Study: **Derrion Albert**



Critical Context

- **Urban African American boys and adolescents growing up in these neighborhoods develop a fearless and hyper-vigilant persona as a coping mechanism to ward off becoming victims of violence**

Critical Context

- **Even those young males who do not perpetrate violence via gangs and other activities are both proximally and distally affected by violence**

Hyper vigilance among these young males cause them to worry about becoming victims of interpersonal and community violence

Critical Context

- **Further, they are often ashamed of the fact that although they might engage in various forms of resistance, they are unable to shield or protect themselves from violence**

Shame & Worry

- **This study analyzes the phenomena of community violence amongst Black males through these two lenses**
- **SHAME-** an overwhelmingly powerful emotion that is associated with feelings of worthlessness, inferiority, and damaged self image
- **WORRY-** the anxiety that comes with keeping uncontrollable realities or feelings private from the outside world. Worry is the after-thought of shame.

De Hooge, I; Zeelenberg, M and Breugelmans, S. (in press). Restore and protect motivations following shame. *Cognition and Emotion*

Jakupcak, M.; Tull, M., & Roemer, L. (2005). Masculinity, shame, and fear of emotions as predictors of men's anger and hostility. *Psychology of Men and Masculinity, 6*, 275-284.

Shame & Worry/Albert's Case

- **In the case of Derrion Albert, his beating death may be viewed as not solely premeditated but his persona may have placed him at greater risk of becoming a target of community violence**

Take-aways

- **The physical and mental health implications associated with growing up in violence-ridden neighborhoods also have implications for the healthy development of masculinity among urban African American males**

Take-aways

- **Individual behavioral responses to violence may cause them to engage in violence but **public and social policies (education, public housing, economic)** that adversely affect their neighborhoods and communities also **contribute to the perpetuation of violence and unhealthy masculinity development****

Final Words...

- **We suggest instead that Albert's violent death reflects the interplay of a number of factors, both individual and structural. By simply punishing the four young accused men we may exact justice but will not end the cycle of community violence that encroaches on the lives of all residents of communities like Altgeld Gardens. Integrated, systemic approaches to eradicating community violence are required.**