



BUILDING RESILIENCE IN
AFRICAN AMERICAN

FAMILIES

PREVENTION & EARLY INTERVENTION

**It's not just about the child.
It's about the family!**



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FAMILY HEALTH & SUPPORT NETWORK, INC.



Background

The Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) was approved by California voters to provide a 1% tax on personal income over \$1 million in order to expand and transform the county mental health service system. It became effective January 01, 2005.

This funding allows the County of Riverside the opportunity to provide services in the areas of Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI). Per the MHSA, a comprehensive community planning process was completed that utilized the expertise of the community and community leaders. In alignment with the MHSA, Riverside University Health Systems—Behavioral Health (RUHS-BH) has included the transformational concepts to develop a community-driven, culturally competent, wellness focused PEI plan that targets individuals and families across the age span, with special attention to underserved cultural communities.

The “Building Resilience in African American Families” (BRAAF) Prevention and Early Intervention programs are offered to the underserved African American population of the desert region.



Youth Program Component:

- BRAAF offers two (2) “Africentric Youth & Families Rites of Passage” (ROP) after-school programs. One for boys and one for girls. Middle school age youth (11-13) and their families are encouraged to apply.
- Programs run for the entire length of the school year (from October to June). Families can only participate once and youth participants cannot be committed to other program during enrollment in ROP. A full commitment is required for the optimal outcomes.
- Programs are facilitated in four (4) hour sessions, and include outings, retreats and extracurricular and enrichment activities. Transportation (pick-up from local schools and return home), healthy snacks and a hot nourishing meal is provided each program day.
- Girls’ ROP runs on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM
- Boys ROP runs on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM.

Parent & Family Program Component:

BRAAF programs are designed to serve the whole family. Consequently, parent participation is mandatory for youth participation in the Rites of Passage programs. Others involved in the child’s life are welcome and strongly encouraged to participate in the parent and family services offered:

- Guiding Good Choices Parent Certification Course | Mandatory for parents of ROP youth
- Monthly Empowerment Meetings | Mandatory 6 out of 9 meetings
- Bi-monthly Parent Support Group
- On-site or in-home individual, group, and/or family therapy.
- Graduation and Elevation Ceremony | Mandatory

Building Resilience in African American Families Programs (BRAAF)



The PEI community planning process, which included focus groups, community forums, and survey completion, resulted in the identification of culturally-tailored parenting services and after school programs for the African American population as a priority and necessary intervention for the underserved African-American population of the Desert Region. Consequently, Riverside University Health Systems—Behavioral Health established new programs to service the African American population within the Desert Region of Riverside County. This program includes the provision of three (3) Evidence Based Practices (EBP's). The County of Riverside accepted the proposal of the Family Health & Support Network, Inc. and granted the organization the provision to administer and provide all three EBPs as one comprehensive program within the desert region.

Family Health & Support Network, Inc. has enthusiastically provided this set of creative and innovative prevention and early intervention services to the underserved African-American population of the Desert Region since 2012 with overwhelming success.

PROGRAM GOALS

The primary program goals of this project are to reduce the risk of developing mental health problems and to increase resiliency and skill development for the African American population of the Desert Region. The program provides services in culturally appropriate settings, incorporating African-American philosophies and traditions. The setting for service delivery is non-traditional and assists participants in feeling comfortable seeking services from staff that are knowledgeable and capable of identifying needs and solutions for African-American families and individuals.

The services are designed to work together in a unique approach to prevention and early intervention services. Family Health & Support Network, Inc. engages the African American community by working within the community and collaborating with schools, community organizations, faith-based organizations, and other individuals, groups, and/or services that have the trust of, connection with and desire to build resiliency in African-American families.



Africentric Youth & Family Rites of Passage Program (G-ROP)

Emphasizing youth interacting with other youth to develop positive life styles, and positive solutions to life problems by recognizing their strengths, their talents and abilities is the core concept of the Africentric Youth & Family Rites of Passage Programs. This highly therapeutic culture specific after-school intervention seeks to build character in young African-American youth. The concept of building character we feel, will ultimately translate into better school performance, more respectful behaviors, stronger family bonds and community assets.



Under the guidance of well-trained and committed staff, experts from the community and a council of Community Elders who have a genuine commitment to their passage youth will internalize the Afrocentric principles by which youth and their families can become constructive contributors to their families and community, through a positive appreciation of themselves and their culture.

Who Qualifies . . .

- African American youth in middle school;
- African American youth and their parents/guardians who have experienced racism, discrimination and violence;
- African American youth and their parents/guardians identified through the criminal justice system, diversion programs, churches and religious organizations, community-based programs and local schools; and
- Meet the minimum criteria as defined and set forth in the PEI Screening Tool.

When, Where and How Long . . .

The Desert Region Africentric Youth & Family Rites of Passage Programs are facilitated at the beautiful, culturally rich BRANCH House in Palm Desert, California.

Girls Rites of Passage

Tues-Wed-Thurs-Fri

4:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Boys Rites of Passage

Tues-Wed-Thurs

4:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Transportation, healthy snack and a hot nourishing meal is provided each program day.

The Rites of Passage Programs are staffed by qualified and highly trained Youth Development Workers, Program Clinicians, Program Directors, and a Administrator, all of whom have unique knowledge of the African-American culture and a sincere commitment to building resilience in the African-American families of this region.

Responsibility

Respect

Restraint

Reconciliation

Reciprocity

Realness

Reason

Interconnectedness

Interdependence

Inclusivity

Participatory

Patience

Perseverance

Sacrifice

Spirituality

Cooperation

Sharing

What's In It For My Youth?

Rites of Passage programs are a leading intervention for African-American youth. We provide a safe, programmatically rich, no cost program to African-American boys, girls and their families. Our facilities are culturally rich, comfortable and meet the highest standards and requirements in the industry. With our emphasis on evidence-based practices, positive skill development and high cultural regard combined with our supportive therapeutic approach, our program is a highly effective solution for youth.

The program offers a life-changing experience for boys and girls as they strive to examine, explore, dissect, articulate and most importantly develop strategies that will help to eradicate the inter-generational challenges experienced by young Black males and females.

The goal of Rites of Passage is to simulate a culturally rich environment that presents practical strategies, techniques and solutions through the presentation of interactive modules of skills and knowledge, expert presenters, best practices and resources that will assist youth in developing realistic models and concrete recommendations they can put into practice in their own lives and communities. The modules are designed to offer programming and intervention strategies that are psychologically and cognitively appropriate for African-American youth. Rites of Passage becomes a place for transformative action and communication where youth, elders and staff can share intellectual, emotional, spiritual and cultural opportunities for growth and development that improves the quality of life for African American youth and their families.

We have purposely infused a discovery engine to help provoke meaningful knowledge. Our youth are exposed to Art, Science & Technology, Culture & History, Literature, Creativity & Innovation, Media & Communication and Thought & Opinion.

Youth receive consistent and caring discipleship from skilled and committed staff. Meeting the needs of our youth and helping them to discover themselves is the key to our success. Only within this context of a safe, trusting and supportive environment — along with strong parental and community involvement can long-lasting changes and empowerment be instilled.

Creative and innovative methods are utilized to explore a wide range of topics that help African-American youth internalize the Africentric principles by which the program is built upon:

The program encourages and supports academic achievement, however building character is not an academic undertaking, therefore our programming primarily focuses on strengthening awareness of moral obligations and the moral significance of choices (ethical consciousness), enhancing the desire to do the right thing (ethical commitment) and improving the ability to foresee potential consequences, devise options, and implement principled choices (Africentric competency). Specific language is used to reinforce core values - Responsibility, Respect, Restraint, Interconnectedness, Interdependence, Patience, Perseverance, Sacrifice, Spirituality, Cooperation, and Sharing – and we are firm and consistent in our teaching, advocating, modeling and enforcing these pillars of character in our youth.

In addition to the knowledge, skills and practice youth receive at the program site, the program is fueled with extracurricular and enrichment activities, weekend retreats, cultural and educational outings, opportunities for travel and opportunities to give back through community service projects.

What's In It For Me?

Monthly Parent Empowerment (MPE) is a fun, socially interactive, culturally-relevant intervention for parents and guardians of ROP participants to improve their effectiveness as the primary positive influence in the lives of their youth. MPE empowers parents to succeed and reinforces parents' sense of pride in themselves, their community, their history and race. MPE is built upon the following guiding principles:

1. Parents want what is best for their children.
2. Parents know best what they need to be effective parents.
3. Parents learn best when they are involved in selecting the topics they want to focus on.
4. Given the right information and resources, parents will make the best choices for their children.

A fun parental meet-up facilitated by compassionate staff in the context of an empowering culture that:

- Treats parents with respect
- Believes that parents want their children to reach their fullest potential
- Supports the entire/extended family
- Establishes an inviting family gathering place

Parents are required to attend a minimum of six (6) monthly empowerment interventions per ROP cycle.

- African Culture—Ancient Africa BC/BCE
- Racism/Oppression
- Social Etiquette
- Physical Health & Hygiene
- African Culture—Ancient
- Self-Esteem / Self-Discipline
- Anger Management
- Effective Communication
- Drugs
- Gang Diversion
- Inclusivity—Diversity
- Father/Son Relationships
- Male/Female Relationships
- Dreams Path of Life
- Health, Exercise, Nutrition & Cooking
- Conflict Resolution
- Rules and Consequences
- Anti-Bullying
- Racial Profiling
- Domestic Violence & Abuse
- The Hidden Rules
- Money Sense
- Respect— Family & Community
- Social Media Dangers
- Post Secondary Education & Careers

Guiding Good Choices:

Completing the 5 week Guiding Good Choices (GGC) certification course equips parents to utilize contemporary discipline techniques, cultivate healthier relationships, become a superior advocate, communicate effectively accept the unique characteristics of their children, and raise confident children. Completing the Guiding Good Choices Workshop is mandatory in order that the child participates in the after-school component of the program.

Mandatory Course for Parents



Dr. David Hawkins and Dr. Richard Catalano developed the program based on the social development model, which holds that strong bonding to positive influences reduces problematic behaviors, such as delinquency and substance abuse. Combined research has identified both risk and protective factors in the development of behavior problems. Risk factors include a low level of communication between parents and children, poorly defined and communicated expectations for children's behavior, excessively severe and inconsistent discipline, and high levels of negative interaction or family conflict. Protective factors include regular communication or parental warmth and affection, presentation of clear and pro-social expectations, monitoring of children, and consistent and moderate discipline. Guiding Good Choices (GGC) is a prevention and early intervention program that provides user with the knowledge and skills needed to guide children through early adolescence. The program seeks to strengthen and clarify family expectations for behavior, enhance the conditions that promote bonding within the family, and teach skills that allow children to resist making poor choices. Sessions are interactive and skilled based, with opportunity for parents to practice new skills and receive feedback, and use video based vignettes to demonstrate parenting skills. Families also receive a family guide containing family activities, discussion topics, skill-building exercises, and information on positive parenting.

The program is divided into five two-hour sessions. Each session has a particular theme and parents are given activities to complete at home with the entire family.

How Do I Apply For Services?

The Family Health & Support Network, Inc.'s Building Resilience in African-American Families (BRAAF) program is offered to the African-American population of the Desert Region. The programs are funded by Riverside University Health System—Behavioral Health and all services are absolutely free to participants, and transportation assistance is available if needed.

If you are interested in participating in any of the services offered please contact us:

**Family Health & Support
Network, Inc.**

BRANCH Institute

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Palm Springs, CA 92262

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Robbie Peer, CEO

Tanaya Hall, Program

Administrator & Girl's Director

James Lockhart, Boy's Co-Director

Jamiah Hall, Boy's Co-Director



All program and services are nationally accredited.

OUR MISSION

To lead and support a network of compassionate individuals in the provision of quality programs and services that empower vulnerable children, youth, and families.



www.fhsnet.org