

**Black Lives Matter Movement and Healthy Neighborhoods Peer Exchange Session**  
**October 7, 2020**  
**2:00-3:00 pm**

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**Presentation Slides:**

- <https://hpb.d.box.com/s/uknc3x7zr3tjzpa26jivhinyxvaujnb7>

**Participants:**

- [Susannah Abbate](#) (Snug Harbor Cultural Center & Botanical Garden)
- [Brian Archie](#) (Create a Healthier Niagara Falls Collaborative)
- [Nathalie Arzu](#) (The RISE Project)
- [Caitlin Falvey](#) (New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene)
- [Dionne Grayman](#) and Kerry Smith (We Run Brownsville)
- [Charita Johnson James](#) (CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute)
- [Duane Kinnon](#) (Friends of Brownsville Parks)
- [Rosa Marruffo](#) (Edible Schoolyard NYC)
- [Alexandra Mesick](#) (Clinton County Health Department)
- [Siobhan Ollivierre](#) (GirlTrek)
- [Amanda Prenoveau](#) (Clinton County Health Department)
- [Leah Russell](#) (Near Westside Peacemaking Project)
- [Lisa Turner](#) (Clinton County Health Department)
- [Amy Shire](#) (NYU Langone/Department of Population Health)
- [Tamara Greenfield](#) and [Tara Singh](#) (Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety, Building Healthy Communities)
- [Nupur Chaudhury](#), [Bronwyn Starr](#), and [Liz Ward](#) (New York State Health Foundation)
- [Casey Allred](#) and [Phil Bors](#) (Healthy Places by Design)

**Recording:**

- <https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/iBn3Lv31aeLjQv2z05I1mthhOvWVx7ewbZkDhTxlHfoAKo18xdgpIMJEaMDuA84.7-gzcrQ0vQbZ--7y>  
Passcode: %80\$tgRY

**Resources and Reading offered by Speakers and Participants:**

- My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies, by Resmaa Menakem
- Colorizing Restorative Justice: Voicing Our Realities, by Edward Charles Valandra
- White Fragility, by Robin DiAngelo
- How to Be an Antiracist, by Ibram X. Kendi
- Me and White Supremacy, by Layla Saad
- Whistling Vivaldi: How Stereotypes Affect Us and What We Can Do, by Claude Steele
- <https://unitedway-cny.org/> (21-day Challenge Regarding Racial Equity)
- <https://thechallengernews.com/2020/09/black-students-are-also-dying-from-covid-1619/> (article speaking to COVID-1619)
- <https://www.amazon.com/COVID-1619-Curriculum-Racism-America/dp/0910030553>
- <https://www.soulfirefarm.org>

## **Agenda:**

### **I. Welcome, Overview, and Intros**

Brian Archie, from [Creating a Healthier Niagara Falls Collaborative](#), led a discussion on the impact of the Black Lives Matter movement on healthy community work. Dionne Grayman, co-founder of [We Run Brownsville](#), spoke to how their thinking and planning have both deepened and been made clearer during COVID-19 and COVID-1619.

### **II. Discussion: Black Lives Matter Movement and Healthy Neighborhoods**

*Brian Archie, [Create a Healthier Niagara Falls Collaborative](#)*

Brian shared about Create and Healthier Niagara Falls Collaborative's (CHNFC) justice work, insights, and shifts due COVID-19 and to the national response against police violence. The Collaborative had to adjust from in-person gatherings to a virtual platform to continue service to their community. They conducted online information sessions on COVID-19 and an emotional workshop series to help navigate stress, grieve, and loss during this difficult time. Their walking club was put on hold but the Collaborative continued with singular walks to show communal support. They found that Zoom fatigue was present and the lack of social connectivity was extremely difficult.

The Collaborative has embedded civic engagement in all aspects of their work. Their Community Conversations Project is an example that increases racial equity through voter registration and bringing the community together. This program is held online. The group has been reading books including *White Fragility*, by Robin DiAngelo, and *How to Be an Antiracist*, by Ibram X. Kendi, to motivate people to a place of action.

*Dionne Grayman, [We Run Brownsville](#)*

Dionne shared how [We Run Brownsville](#) was started in 2015, supports members sustaining healthy lifestyle choices, strengthening existing advocacy skills, and developing leadership abilities by training women who have never run before to complete a 5K race. Brownsville has the shortest life expectancy in the city and the preventable death rates more than double those of white individuals. Their mission is to provide a judgement-free, brave, and liberated space for women of color in the community. We Run Brownsville developed pillars of wellness which include physical, mental, social emotional, and financial wealth.

At the height of COVID-19 infections in June, when rates in the rest of New York City had flattened to about 19%, rates in Brownsville was at 54%. As a result of COVID-19 and COVID-1619, We Run Brownsville decided to take time to really own their work as a resistance against oppression by reimagining, recreating, rediscovering, reconnecting, and refining their thinking, work, and language.

They wanted their message to be culturally responsive. However, they found the language of social distancing was used as guidelines to keep New Yorkers safe and in Brownsville it was used to criminalize behavior. With the help of Power of Two, We Run Brownsville, developed a flyer for young people including: "Don't Pass It, You Could Get It, Don't Share It, You Could Give It, Don't Dap it, You Could Die." It was a double-sided postcard including resources and was done in both Spanish and English and distributed to the community.

We Run Brownsville addressed the mental health crisis by creating a pilot program to address the harmful effects of institutional and structural racism in the wake of COVID-19 and COVID-1619 in Brownsville. They are in the second month of this initiative and have hired two mental health professionals, counselors, and therapists to work with women within We Run Brownsville as a pilot. They have since received requests for assistance from the community.

Through their farm-to-table program, they are purchasing fresh produce from Ms. Brenda. She provides pictures and recipes in the bags to help introduce new foods.

### **III. Group Conversation**

Attendees were invited to follow up and ask questions.

- Please provide additional context around COVID-1619.  
Reverend William Barber from North Carolina referenced the term COVID-1619. The virus amplified the sickness of the disease that was already present. The disease of COVID-1619 refers to the 401 year history of racism in this county.
- What's worked well, or not, when folks strive to be in solidarity or folks are attempting to do this work in a different way?  
In Brownsville, it has worked well when we led with our values and make them implicit. It has not worked well we felt that we were not listened too and other used our space for their priorities.

In Niagara Falls, when working with others it's critical to have trust, understand lived experiences, and ensure missions and visions are aligned.

Listen to the recording for additional conversation.

### **IV. Next Steps**

Please join us for the final Healthy Neighborhoods Learning Collaborative and Building Healthy Communities Peer Exchange Session on October 21, 2020 at 2:00 pm. The session will focus on community resiliency and social connection.