A blue-tinted portrait of Frederick Douglass, an older man with a full white beard and hair, looking slightly to the left. The background is a solid dark blue.

**"I AM FOR THE 'IMMEDIATE,  
UNCONDITIONAL,  
AND UNIVERSAL'  
ENFRANCHISEMENT OF  
THE BLACK MAN, IN EVERY  
STATE IN THE UNION"**

FREDERICK DOUGLASS, 1865

**Moving Young Black Men Beyond "Their Risk Factors"**  
**Protective Factors for Their Mental Health & to Thrive**

# What Is Resilience??

## The Capacity to Overcome Adversity

*Resilience is the capacity of individuals to overcome adversity and do well in spite of exposure to SIGNIFICANT adversity ... and is shaped by the interactions between an individual and their environment.*

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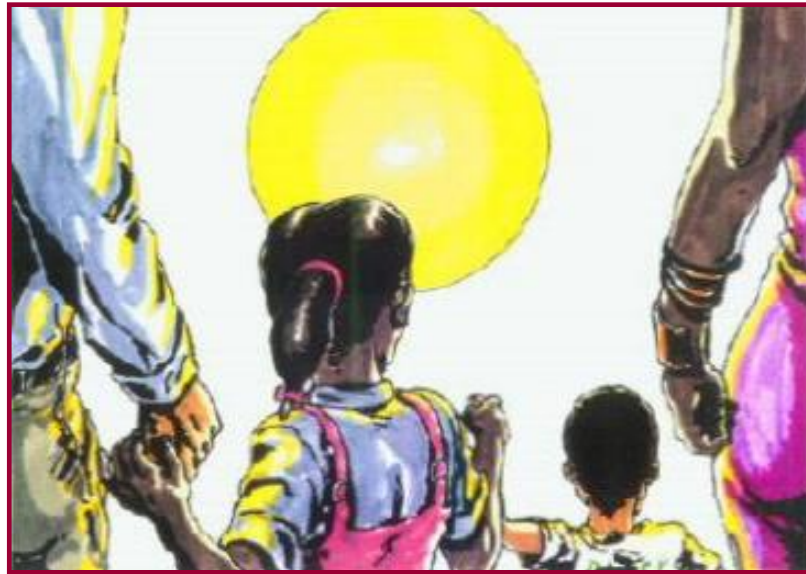
*It is the interaction of these sets of processes that mediate the effects of stressors/trauma and facilitate the achievement of POSITIVE outcomes.*

## Topics/Flow

- Who is MEE? What Does MEE Do?
- Background – What Brought MEE to This Place?
- Stressors and Trauma: Moving Beyond Survival Mode
- Other Validating Experiences
- Failure Is Built In: The Social Determinants of Health (*Disparities*)
- The Mental Health Treatment System Is Broken
- Resiliency: Moving Beyond Survival Mode
- Evaluate This – Why a Protective Factor Approach

# MEE's Mission Statement

To be the leading provider of culturally-relevant, cost-effective and socially-responsible “behavioral health intervention campaigns” for hard-to-reach (low-income) urban/ethnic audiences.



## About MEE

- Extensive Experience: audience research, public health communications and social marketing
- IRB-approved to conduct community-based participatory qualitative research with hard-to-reach urban and ethnic audiences
- Specialists in developing persuasive behavior-change messages
- Campaigns use traditional and non-traditional (grassroots) methods; deliver measurable results
- Based in Philadelphia; offices in Atlanta, Columbus and Los Angeles

# MEE's Public Health Experience



- Teen Sexuality, Pregnancy Prevention (1991)

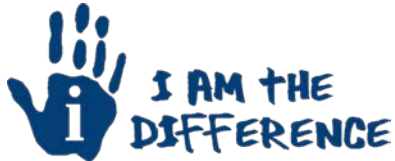


- HIV Prevention | Testing | Treatment (1991)

- Opioids/Marijuana/Tobacco/Alcohol (1991)

- Teen Dating & Youth Violence (1993)

- Early Childhood Literacy & Development/Parenting (1994)



- Physical Activity & Nutrition (1998)

- Foster Care & Aging Out (Transitioning) (2003)



- Boys and Men of Color Mentoring (2003)

- Mental Health/Community Mental Wellness (2009)





# Public Health / Health Disparities Campaigns



# The Basic Model of Communication





# What Brought MEE to This Place



# What Brought MEE to This Place

## Expanding Opportunities for Young People



- Employment
- Adult Mentoring
- Youth Development (Life Skills)
- Self-Efficacy & Leadership



# How Stress and Trauma Manifests

- Acting Out ... Angry, Mad, Mean ... Quick Tempered
- Ability to Focus ... Paying Attention ... Disconnecting from Family & Friends
- Risky Sexual Behavior ... Overeating
- Numbing Yourself ... ... Cutting Yourself
- Abuse of Marijuana, Alcohol, Pills (Opioids)
- Lack of Motivation/Drive
- Suicide Attempts





## Stressors / Trauma

### Being Trauma Informed

### Primary Audience Research (Point A)

### Moving Beyond Survival Mode:

*Promoting Mental Wellness and Resiliency as  
a Way to Cope with Urban Trauma*

## Major Findings (MEE's Point A)

- Stress and Trauma are Constants in Poor Communities
- Poverty, Unemployment, Violence, Interpersonal Relationships and Police Harassment are Top Stressors
- Youth are Using Both Negative & Positive Coping Behaviors to Deal with Trauma and Ongoing Stress
- Awareness of Local Mental Health Services is Very Low Among Young Adults
- Community Has Many Arguments Against Accessing Local Mental Health Services (including Negative Reputations/Word of-Mouth)
- Human Services and Mental Health System Faces Challenges in Meeting Community Needs (Funding; Approach; TRUST!)





# Stress & Trauma: Negative Coping Behaviors



- Self-Medicating with Alcohol, Tobacco and Drugs (Opioids, Marijuana)

- I Roll Up a “Fat One” and Smoke My Stress Away

- Acting Out with Anger and Violence without Provocation

- Taking the Stress and Frustration Out on Those Around You

- Denial / Shutting Down (Ignoring or Turning Off Emotions)

- Refusing to Admit that the Stress is Getting to Them
- Acting Like Things Don't Bother Them
- Being Tough or Hard at ALL Times

- Internalizing / Keeping It Inside

- Men Tend to Internalize More than Women
- Young People Explode in Anger or Violence Later (Retaliating)
- Fear of Being Perceived as Weak or Vulnerable a Major Driver



# Stress & Trauma: Positive Coping Behaviors

## ▪ Talking to Friends and Family (*A Non-Judgmental Ear*)

- They Trust Friends – Dealing with the Same Issues
- Trusted “Old Heads” Have “Been There, Done That”
- Mothers Said Children Will Often Come Talk to Them

## ▪ Creativity/Having a Positive or Creative Outlet

- Writing, Poetry, Rapping, Making Music, Drawing, Joking
- Do Something Positive/Do Something You Love to Do

## ▪ Having a Release

- Playing Basketball/Sports/Exercise-Walking/Video Games
- Playing With Their Kids/Going to the Club (Dancing/Partying)

## ▪ It Is What It Is (Acceptance; Not Catastrophizing)

- If You Can’t Do Anything About It, Let It Go!!
- Setbacks Are a Part of Life – Deal With It





# Thriving vs. Surviving: Different Choices

- Why Some Thrive, When Others Don't??

▪ Sense of Self (Esteem) / Resiliency

• Thinking Through the Issue vs. Just Reacting

• Belief that Difficulties Make You Stronger

• Hard Situations Make You a Better Person

• I Can Get Through This / I Can Do Anything I Put My Mind To

▪ A Purpose for Life / Focus / Goals / Their Children

• Having a Life Focus (& Having Children Counting on Them, for Some) Allows You to See Beyond the Current Situation


• Focus / A Path / Goals and a Plan (and a "Plan B," for Some)

• You've Got to Stay on the Path to Get to Where You Need to Go



# Why Some Thrive in the Same Neighborhood

## Same Social Determinants of Health

- 
- Social Fabric / Village / Relationships / Connectedness
    - Strong (Positive) Support System (Who They Can Ask for Help From)
    - Non-Judgmental Relationships (They Know You've Got Their Back)
  - Caring Adults / Role Models / Mentors Who Provide Exposure
    - Old Head Who Has Lived Through the Tough Times / See Beyond the Immediate / People Who Tell/Show Them ("You Can Do It")

## Clips from

# Moving Beyond Survival Mode:

*Promoting Mental Wellness and Resiliency as  
a Way to Cope with Urban Trauma*

## Stressors Versus Thriving Coping



# Coping with Stress and Trauma

Negative	Positive
(-)	( + )

# Thriving (vs. Surviving) Coping Behaviors

Negative (-)	Positive (+)	Thriving (+++)
Fast (-)	Positive (+)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sense of Self (Self Esteem)</li> <li>2. Connectedness to Others</li> <li>3. Higher Purpose (Soul Power)</li> <li>4. Having a Plan (Goals)</li> <li>5. Improvisation (Sense of Models)</li> <li>6. Navigating Systems (Consciousness)</li> </ol> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>6 Strengths</b></p>
Slow (-)	Thriving (+++)	

## Failure Is Built In:

### THE CHALLENGES FACING LOW-INCOME BLACK YOUTH

For effective communication, it is vital to understand the target audience's worldview. In the context of low-income Black youth in urban environments, this includes understanding:

#### **The Streets:**

##### **A Matter of Survival**

Personal survival and safety is the number one issue for many low-income urban youth.

#### **Education/Public Schools:**

##### **The Miseducation of Urban Youth**

Educator motives - good and bad - are apparent to low-income urban youth.

#### **Economics:**

##### **The Poverty Problem**

When youth live in poverty, poverty makes them angry.

#### **Healthcare and Public Health:**

##### **The "Injured" Body, Mind, and Soul**

Healthcare is not on the radar of many youth. Treatment is often unacceptable and it is unrealistic for practitioners to expect clients who have negative experiences to return for care.

#### **Government:**

##### **The System**

The Lenses Are Only Pointed at Us - Perceptions of the government meant to "serve and protect" are often symbolized by police injustice or brutality, and juvenile and/or family court.

#### **Mass Media:**

##### **The Messages to Impressionable Youth Consumers**

Low-income urban youth consume huge amounts of largely negative, exploitive entertainment media.

#### **Family/Community:**

##### **The Disappearing Village**

A loss of extended family and community necessitates the creation of support systems among youth peer groups, which often leads low-income urban youth to negative/risky behaviors.

#### **Mainstream Society:**

##### **The Dominant Culture**

Mainstream, dominant society does not appear to include them, so youth seek pleasure from instant consumption and immediate gratification.



[www.meeproductions.com](http://www.meeproductions.com)



# The Social Determinants of Health (Disparities)

## The 8 Variables (The Urban Context)

*(The Reality of Low-Income Urban Youth/Adults/Community)*

- The Streets
- Education/Public Schools
- Economics
- Health Care and Public Health
- Government (The System)
- Mass Media/Social Media
- Family/Community
- Mainstream, Dominant Society

*Who Best Captures The Urban Context?*

# The Social Determinants of Health (Disparities)

## Example 1: Mental Health & Wellness – POINT A *(The Urban Receiver's Negative Environmental Influences)*

- Community Violence (Streets)
- School Violence (Schools)
- Lack of Jobs (Poverty)
- Drugs/Access to Guns
- Police/Criminal Justice
- Media Glorifies Violence
- Violence/Abuse in the Home
- Mainstream Society/No Safety Net  
(If No Village or Safety Net, Then Courts/Criminal Justice Take Over)

# The Mental Health System is Broke

- Why Aren't Black People Using Existing Public and Mental Health Systems?
  - Why Isn't the Black Community Actively Talking About the "Benefits?"
  - What Are Black Residents' Perceptions and Experiences with Services?
- 
- Stigmas within the Black Community
  - Knowledge and Attitudes about Mental Health Programs/Services?
  - Mistrust of Mental Health Treatment Services?
- 
- How Mental Health Providers View Protective Factors

## Strategies for Improving Mental Health – Multiple Approaches NEEDED!

- Long-Term: Dealing with Environmental Factors that Cause Stress, i.e., poverty, lack of jobs, broken families. Example: Re-Build Torn Social Fabric/Village
- Long-Term: Changes to the Mental Health Service Delivery Model; Better Funding; More Strength-based Approaches & Counseling
- Long-Term: Making “*Prevention a Priority*” by Focusing “Upstream” on Primary Prevention – Instead of / In Addition to Intervention and Treatment
- Mid-Term: Increase Provider Training; Improve Community Outreach; Start Building Pipeline for Diversity
- Mid-Term: Offer More Consumer-Friendly Hours; Increase Use of Non-Traditional Counseling Strategies and Therapist-Client Interactions
- Short-Term: Home and Community-Level Education to Begin Promoting/Supporting Positive Coping Behaviors



## The Evolution of Resiliency Factors

<b>The Seven Resiliencies</b>	<b>The Seven Protective Factors (Dr. Carl Bell)</b>	<b>Seven Psychological Strengths (Dr. Joseph White)</b>	<b>MEE's Thriving Coping Strategies for Millennials</b>
Insight	Strong Village / Social Fabric	Resilience	Take Care of Self / Take Care of Others
Independence	Calming (Minimization of the Effects of Trauma)	Spirituality	Sense of Self (Self-Esteem)
Relationships	Adult Protective Shield	Connectedness to Others	Improvisation
Initiative	Connectedness to a Larger Group or Goal	Emotional Vitality	Connectedness to Positive People, Places and Things to Do
Creativity	Access to Ancient & Modern Technology	Improvisation	Having a Plan & a Plan B
Humor	Social and Emotional Skills	Sense of Humor	Higher Purpose
Morality	Self-Esteem	Healthy Suspicion of White Folks	Navigating Systems

# Why a Protective Factors Approach?

- Primary Prevention: Prevent/Inoculate from the Onslaught of Trauma
- Faster Recovery: Heal Faster When Trauma Occurs
- Addressing Other Health Disparities: Mental and Physical/Chronic Diseases
- Majority of Mental Health Treatment is BROKEN
- Trends in Funding: Can't "Treat-ment" Your Way Through This
- Other 1: What's Culturally Competent / Cost-Effective?
- Other 2: What Should We Do If Social Determinants Don't Change?
- Other 3: What's Worked: How Did African Americans Overcome Slavery?
- Question 1: What's the Tipping Point (15% → 35% → 50%)?
- Question 2: What Would This Mean for Future Generations (Modeling)?















# OPIOID CRISIS

VS

# WAR ON DRUGS



— FRAMING —

White/Rural/Suburban			Black/Brown/Inner-City
Opioids/Prescription Pills			Heroin/Crack/Dope
Doctor Prescribed/"Pharma" Distributed			Drug Dealer/Cartel
Substance Use Disorder (Disease)			Addict/Crackhead/Junkie
Medical Issue/Public Health Emergency			Crime/Criminal Justice Issue
Harm Reduction/Help/Save			Demonize/Lock Up/Incarcerate
Safe Injection Sites			Crack Houses/Drug Dens

**Framing of Issues Turns into Perceptions/Stereotypes/Beliefs.  
Those Perceptions/Stereotypes/Beliefs Feed into Practices/Policies/Laws.**

Source: "The Gentrification of Addiction" by Solomon Jones – [http://www.philly.com/philly/columnists/solomon\\_jones/addiction-opioids-war-on-drugs-safe-injection-sites-race-20180404.html](http://www.philly.com/philly/columnists/solomon_jones/addiction-opioids-war-on-drugs-safe-injection-sites-race-20180404.html)





# Trauma-Informed Messages/Education

# State-Wide Positive/Thriving Coping Campaign

Logo



YOUR  
PRESENCE  
IS A  
PRESENT

Slogan

Your Presence is a Present

Website Under Construction

[www.BePresentOhio.org](http://www.BePresentOhio.org)

Social Media

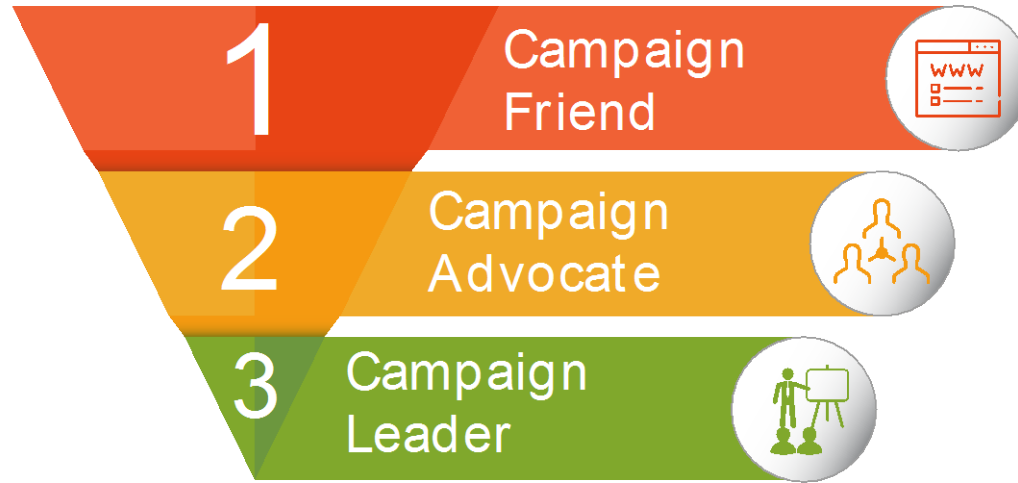


@BePresentOhio #BePresentOhio /BePresentOhio

Online Toolkit Under Construction



# Online Toolkit: Educate/Empower Young People



## Thriving (vs. Surviving) Coping Behaviors

Negative (-)	Positive (+)	Thriving (+++)
Fast (-)	Positive (+)	1. Sense of Self (Self Esteem) 2. Connectedness to Others 3. Higher Purpose (Soul Power) 4. Having a Plan (Goals) 5. Improvisation (Sense of Models) 6. Navigating Systems (Consciousness)
Slow (-)	Thriving (+++)	

# Community Conversations About Urban Trauma

## Moving Beyond Survival Mode

### Community Conversation on Coping with Trauma

- Loss of a Loved One
- Troubled Relationships
- Finances | Making Ends Meet
- Depression or Anxiety
- Police Harrassment
- Addicted to Substances & Tobacco
- Unemployment
- Incarceration





# Oral-Based/Trauma-Informed Outreach Materials

## Care for Yourself

1. Talk about your stress
2. It's OK to seek help
3. Lead, don't follow
4. Respect yourself
5. Keep mind and body strong  
(mental/emotional health are important)

## Promote Safety and Peaceful Environments

1. Resolve conflict peacefully
2. Stop relationship violence
3. Be safe using the Internet
4. Practice safety strategies



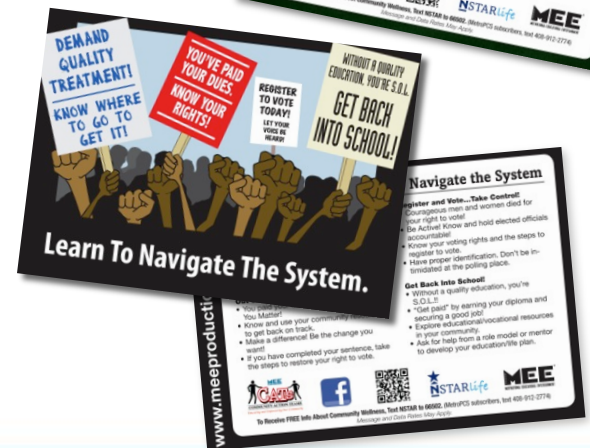
## Thriving vs. Surviving: Same Neighborhood/Different Choices

### Have a Life Plan (Education and Beyond)

1. Stay in school
2. Envision your future: set goals
3. It's never too late to get back on track
4. Seek positive role models/mentors

### Care for Others (Family, Friends, Community)

1. Think and act beyond yourself
2. Caring for others begins at home
3. Be a good friend
4. Contribute to your community



## Thriving vs. Surviving: Same Neighborhood/Different Choices

### Thriving (Coping) Messages

- Resiliency – I Can Get Through This
- What's Your Plan??
- Focus/a Path/Goals and a Plan (and a "Plan B," for Some)
- Belief in a Higher Purpose





# Advocacy: Educate/Empower Young People


## Know Your Rights / Demand Quality Treatment

- It's a Social Justice Issue
- Demand Culturally-Sensitive Service Delivery
- Learn How to Navigate (*Take Control of*) the Healthcare System




# [www.meeproductions.com/mentalwellness](http://www.meeproductions.com/mentalwellness)

**Moving Beyond Survival Mode:**  
**Promoting Mental Wellness and Resiliency**  
**as a Way to Cope with Urban Trauma**


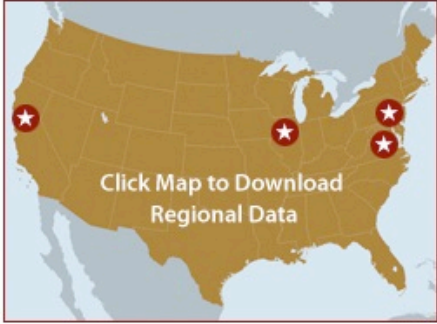


MEE Research on  
Black Mental Wellness



Overview | **Toolkit & Report** | Video | Regional & National Downloads | Related Resources & Workshops | Subscribers

**Click Here** to Get More Information and Purchase **MEE's Mental Wellness Products**

Click Map to Download Regional Data

**Moving Beyond Survival Mode Project Overview**

In the heart of America's inner cities, hopelessness and resilience co-exist. The day-to-day toll of violence, poverty, broken families and more leads to emotional "injury" and even mental health problems in poor African American communities. MEE is deeply concerned about how the stress and trauma of "living in survival mode" is negatively impacting these communities and is committed to working to develop solutions.

# Resources for Parents



- Ages and Stages
- Mental Wellness for Parents
- Effective Parent-Teen Communication
- Monitoring Is NOT Spying ... It's Love
- Building Resilience in Our Children
- Parent First Aid - Support and Strength in a Crisis
- Making the System Work for You

## MEE Parenting Resources

**Websites**

[www.meeplan.com/plan](http://www.meeplan.com/plan) | [www.meeplan.com/planTV](http://www.meeplan.com/planTV) | [www.meeplan.com/planB-MEE](http://www.meeplan.com/planB-MEE) | [www.meeplan.com/planB-MEE](http://www.meeplan.com/planB-MEE)

**Early Childhood Development**

- SIDS Campaign for Parents of Infants
- Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia: Early Reading Audio PSAs
- Secondhand Smoke Campaign: Maternal Smoking First Campaign - City of Philadelphia Dept. of Health ([www.smokefreephilly.org](http://www.smokefreephilly.org))

**Twins/Middle School**

- Be On The Safe Side TV PSAs, Print Materials, Workshops for Parents and Video & Guide A (Abstinence)
- The Signs, Truth Guides (for Parents in English and Spanish)
- Smoke Free Three (Teens) And Smoking TV PSA

**Teens/High School**

- Be On The Safe Side TV PSAs, Print Materials, Workshops for Parents and Video & Guide B (Sexually Active/Condom Use)
- SBIBMMH- Parent-Teen Communications Toolkit for Parents & Providers: Moving Beyond Survival Mode (Mental Wellness/Coping Skills)
- PLAN (Parent Leadership in Action Network)
- DC-DMH Parent Informal on Youth Suicide Prevention ([www.iaintheadherence.org](http://www.iaintheadherence.org))
- ISOL: Teen Dating Violence (Against Black Girls)
- Education Brochure (Tips for Parents & Teens)

**Girls**

- Children's Book: Look Into My Mirror
- Diaper Book (Puberty Milestones of Girls)
- ISOL: Teen Dating Violence (Against Black Girls)

**Boys**

- Parent DVD: Successfully Mastering the Journey (Dr. White)
- MEE's B-MEE Wellness Postcards (Positive Coping Skills)

**Reading/Literacy**

- Read & Rise (The Ad Council/Urban League)
- Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia: Early Reading Audio PSAs

**Sexual Health**

- Be On The Safe Side TV PSAs, Print Materials, Workshops for Parents, Videos and Guides
- The Price of Sex (Black Youth Sexuality)
- SBIBMMH- Parent-Teen Communications

**Violence Prevention/Mental Wellness**

- ISOL: Teen Dating Violence (Violence Against Black Girls)
- Script for Parents & Providers: Moving Beyond Survival Mode (Mental Wellness/Coping Skills)
- PLAN (Parent Leadership in Action Network)
- MEE's B-MEE Wellness Postcards

**Obesity Prevention**

- SILENCE Brochure (English & Spanish) for Adult Wholesome Parents
- Go, Slow, Whoa!! Food Choices Handout

**Education**

- [www.meeproductions.com/education/](http://www.meeproductions.com/education/) (School Success)
- Education Brochure (Tips for Parents & Teens)

**Substance Abuse**

- The Blind Truth Guides (for Parents in English and Spanish)
- Secondhand Smoke Campaign: Maternal Smoking First Campaign - City of Philadelphia Dept. of Health ([www.smokefreephilly.org](http://www.smokefreephilly.org))

To View/Download These and Other Materials, Please Go To: [www.MEEProductions.com/plan](http://www.MEEProductions.com/plan)

URBAN FRIENDS Parent Collection - 9 -

# [www.HeardNotJudged.com](http://www.HeardNotJudged.com)

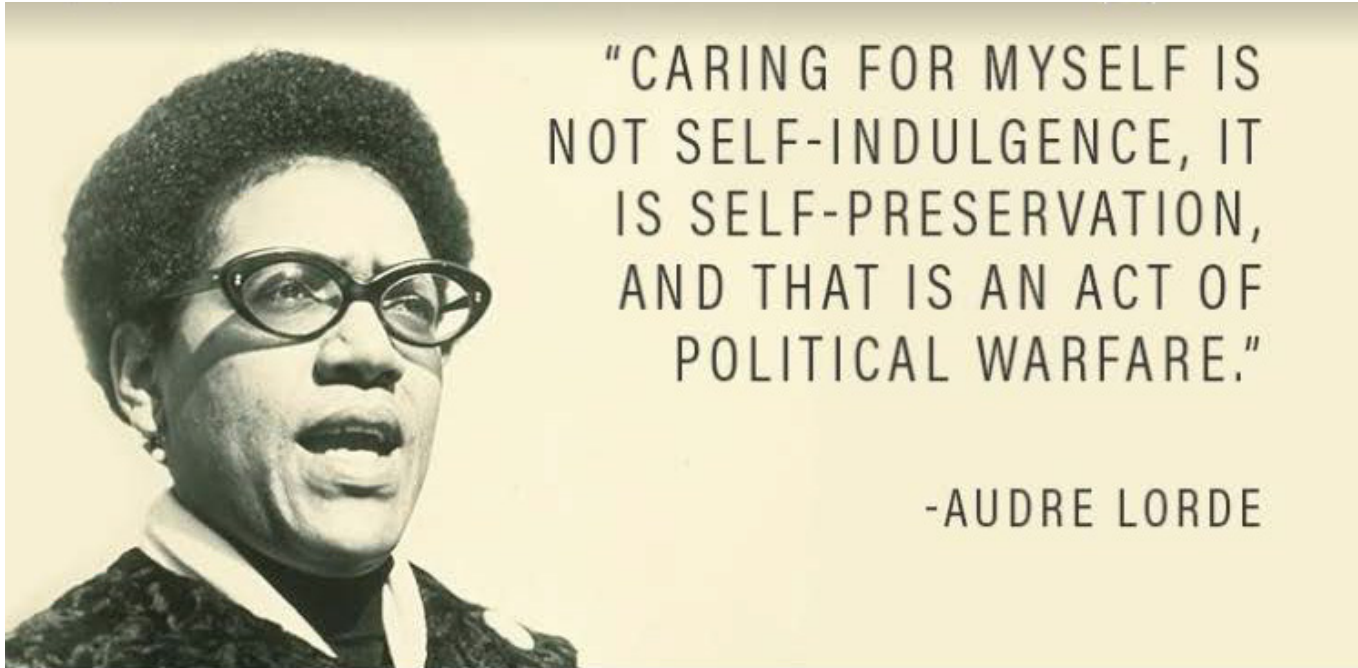
**Private Sector (Branded) Approach to Address Social Problems**

**Combines Online Content, Skills Development and Tools with Offline (Community-based) Services, Activities and “Protective Factors”**





# MEE Productions Inc.



Philadelphia, PA Atlanta, GA Los Angeles, CA Columbus, OH

[www.meeproductions.com](http://www.meeproductions.com)