

Three Cords Strong ROSC Alliance  
PRESENTS: CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION  
GUEST SPEAKER: DR. STANLEY HOWARD  
Meeting Notes- 2/29/2024

Meeting Begins at 9:30am Virtually and In-Person

Ms. Vawnshekia Oklah calls the meeting to order and presents opening statements on the importance of a ROSC. She mentions how support can look different for everyone because each person's journey is different.

Ms. Oklah shares her personal experience and perspective of having a sibling that struggled with addiction and encourages the council participants to be open minded as well as reminding them that the council is a "safe space" for everyone to share their ideas and experiences. Additionally she mentions the importance of being respectful to contributors.

Ms. Oklah asks the participants on ZOOM and in person to introduce themselves and to please provide their contact information in the chat or on clipboard.

Ms. Oklah provided an introduction and a brief biography for the guest speaker: Dr. Stanley Howard. Dr. Howard is a native of Chicago from the Englewood community. He has overcome several barriers in life and is now a Dr. of Political Science with a Civil Rights background. He is the founder and CEO of Law & Civics: Reading and Writing Institute is a community led research and activist organization dedicated to fighting injustices due to racial and social economics in Chicago.

Dr. Stanley Howard opens with a lighthearted joke, thanks the participants and informs them that he is honored to be their guest speaker.

Dr. Howard commends the participants for inspiring him with their resistance (recovery). He also thanks Ms. Howard for her hard work for being a pillar and safe haven for individuals in recovery and their families. He links their hard work

of advocacy to their family lineage. He praises his family for being advocates in social justice work.

Dr. Howard asks the participants if the council is a “safe place” to speak candidly about Black History Month/Black resilience. The participants chimed in, and it is noticeable that they are very interested in the topic that is presented by Dr. Howard.

Dr. Howard presents Race and the American Political System along with Economics and the American Political System. He speaks about how Race and Economics are connected to further “enslave” Black and Brown people.

Dr. Howard introduces the concept that RACE is lingering (underneath) in everything including Recovery, Community Safety, Environmental protection, etc...He proclaims that sometimes it is very hard to see how RACE affects life experiences/issues and in return we tend to blame each other for everything that’s going on due to lack of knowledge of what’s really going on (American Racial Caste System (ideology that Black People wrecked humanity)).

Dr. Howard continues the conversation and provides the history and still very present definitions of how Black People are viewed and their communities were plagued and manipulated by drugs.

Dr. Howard opines that in order to “fix” the system, the system has to be examined so we have to look at RACE issues and economics first. Secondly, Dr. Howard states we must look at the POWER OF CULTURE.

Dr. Howard explains:

### **Challenges**

- \* Hopelessness vs Helplessness
- \* Culture (Behavior)
- \* Psychosocial
- \* Something you can’t help
- \* Slavery
- \* Mental Health
- \* Negative

**\*\*The Pain of intergenerational trauma is real, but the system is not broken.**

Dr. Howard clarifies the ideology of intergenerational trauma being real even though he proudly states the system is not broken.

Interaction with the group (Evidence) to be researched by the participants:

- \* 1619- Entry of Slaves
- \* 3/5<sup>th</sup> Compromise-Constitution ratified that Black people are 3/5<sup>th</sup> of a human being
- \* 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment and it's connection to mass incarceration
- \* 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment- Equal Protection of the laws/Due Process
- \* 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment-right to vote
- \* Purifying yourself
- \* Clean Slate

Dr. Howard speaks about how disease, cancer and virus disproportionate Black People as well as mortality rates of Black Women and Children during childbirth.

Dr. Howard furthers the discussion of these issues and provides the connection of Power Plants, Toxic Land fields, drugs and other detriments in Black neighborhoods.

The judicial system is criminalizing black children and youth.

Overall, the Black Vs. White racial wealth gap per research:

Black	White
\$24,000	\$189,000

Dr. Howard introduces his mantra- “for every challenge exposed, there should be 5 solutions.”

Dr. Howard suggests “Cultural Tools” as a solution to RACIAL CASTE SYSTEM:

- Black Excellence
- Black Pride
- Black Resilience
- Black Empowerment

\*\*\*ALL Cultural Protection Tools

### **Q and A:**

**Question:** What do you think about the drug adversities in the (Black) communities? (More Liquor Stores than Churches, Drugs are easily accessible and sometimes provided by family)

**Answer:** Dr. Howard answers that this is generational due to systems of oppression and the teachings that Black people are soulless to begin with. Dr. Howard’s solution is that you must know who you are and who the “enemies” are in order to have a chance of beating/overcoming obstacles to stay with RECOVERY. Dr. Howard encourages the participants to learn themselves.

\*Ms. Howard chimes in that READING is mandatory in healing and that you should “pay it forward”.

\*Participant chimes in that when you ELEVATE you should help others around you elevate.

\*Participant (ROB) chimes in that Mexicans have a culture of comradery. Dr. Howard chimes in that a lot of cultures have benefited from Black people’s struggles and have learned from Black people but are not given credit. (Civil Rights Movement, etc.)

**Question:** Participant asks does the income gap affect other Nationalities/Ethnicities?

**Answer:** Dr. Howard informs the participants that all races are affected by the income gap, but that African Americans are at the very bottom. He further explains that Black people are being dehumanized and weaponized in the country and have provided so much free labor.

\*Dr. Howard explains that Asians have the highest gap, and we can base this success off their culture (what do you come with?).

Dr. Howard states we must address root causes to find solutions and encourages “system thinking”:

\* Think about the Structure

\* Criminal Justice System

Connected to the Education, Environmental, Economics, so on and so on...

\* Reading

To learn and read our history that is trying to be covered up

Participants chimed in their views on racism:

\*Participant provided an example of immigrants not understanding our (Black people’s) history yet they are quick to be judgmental and state that we should “get over that slavery stuff”. Participant further voiced that how can we “get over it” if it’s embedded in the laws (The United States Constitution) so we are still fighting injustices on a daily basis.

**Question:** How can we be more receptive as well as corrective when presented with people who have a lack of knowledge of Black people’s racial disproportionality?

**Answer:** Dr. Howard states, no one is going to tell our true story but us so we cannot wait around because the history of being mistreated has not been concluded. There are still remnants of our history affecting us in the present day (Breonna

Taylor, Laquan McDonald and so many more examples of our people being treated inadequately).

Participants enjoyed the topic and opined:

\*Black people were not often credited their inventions due to lack of funds for the patents or they were still slaves.

\*Attorney Carolyn opines that when seeking knowledge, one should consider where they are obtaining their resources due to hidden agendas of certain Universities that may have benefited from slavery and that when someone wants to taint the opinion of their audience, they will provide several examples that supports their agenda.

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Ms. Oklah thanks Dr. Howard for his presentation.

Ms. Oklah invites participants to be a part of the ROSC Council and explains the council is for everyone that can support RECOVERY.

Ms. Oklah encourages the participants to join the Three Cords Strong ROSC council and provides a QR Code on screen for the in-person and zoom participants to scan for more details.

Ms. Oklah invites participants to the next meeting: March 28, 2024, 9:30am (HYBRID).

Ms. Oklah informs the participants of the upcoming events in April/May:

- Walk 2 Recovery (April)
- Awards Ceremony to recognize People who have done well in our community (May)

Meeting Adjourned 10:48 am.