

Why Are Black Men Afraid Of Therapy

By MITCHELL E. GIBSON, M.D., P.C.

Carl is a 47-year-old Black attorney. He is married, has two beautiful children, and a net worth of well over \$3 million. Tonight, after work, Carl plans to go home, have dinner with his family, make love to his wife, then retire to his study where he will place a revolver to his head and end his life. No one will know why he did it.

In 1994, over 2,000 Black men killed themselves. The vast majority of them did not seek potentially life-saving psychotherapy or talk to anyone about the stresses which led to

such a desperate act. Traditionally, Black males have made up a very small percentage of the outpatient populations of most mental health practices. Yet, the stresses on the African-American male in the United States are enormous. They include high unemployment, high divorce rates, high rates of incarceration, a homicide rate 20 times the national average and shortened life-expectancy (64.6 years). With all these pressures, why then do Black men shy away from getting therapy?

As a Black male psychiatrist I have seen first hand both sides of the issues which plague the Black male.

In my practice, it is a rare occurrence to see a Black male voluntarily come into therapy for any reason. However, when they do, it is often with much fear and trepidation. The fact that I am a Black male helps to some degree, but the same issues continue to surface as reasons for their general resistance and fear.

The multitude of environmental and social stressors which are unique to the American Black male have served over the decades to effectively launch a massive assault on our collective conscious and unconscious mind energies. The system which is ostensibly designed to pro-

tect and defend Black men from this assault has at times been the instrument of many unspeakable legally sanctioned acts i.e.; public lynching, police brutality, racially discriminatory public policies (Jim Crow laws) and a spate of experiments (i.e. Miss Evers' Boys). This often fatal irony has left an indelible mark on the most basic survival instincts of every Black male in America. In effect, each and every time a Black male interfaces with the system, i.e. through the courts, the police, and the medical system, at some level he believes that his life and well being will be endangered. Unfortunately, this fear has all

too often been based on bitter past experience, either vicarious or direct.

Faced with these pressures and the perception that medical/psychiatric help could lead to further loss of control over one's life and well-being, the American Black male more often than not will choose to avoid the conflict all together and take matters into his own hands if necessary. Such an approach could be viewed as a form of fatal narcissism which could ultimately allow a problem to grow to unnecessarily large proportions.

However, when faced with historically ambiguous and often ambivalent support systems, narcissistic self-preservation and self-determined action is a logical alternative. In other words, "I can do bad by myself" seems to be a reasonable point of view when faced with unreasonable options.

In the hands of an experienced, competent, practitioner psychotherapy can have remarkably positive life-changing effects. I have witnessed this from the perspective of my own therapy and from the perspective of doing therapy with thousands of clients.

Christmas Seals Help Fight a Growing Killer

The American Lung Association of Oregon is launching its annual Christmas Seal Campaign with a special emphasis this year on asthma, a common lung disease that can result in a sudden inability to breathe.

Two Oregon teenage girls tragically made news when they died from asthma attacks in the last year.

In Oregon, more than 55,000 children and 100,000 adults suffer from asthma. Asthma deaths are rising nationwide. That's why this year's Christmas Seals Campaign is dedicated to preventing needless asthma deaths.

When you seal the envelopes of your holiday cards with Christmas Seals and make a contribution to the Lung Association, you show your support in the fight against asthma and other lung disease. The Christmas Seal Campaign is the Lung Association's largest source of fund

Snuff-Out Spit Tobacco

As the annual stop-smoking campaign rages, the Tobacco Intervention Network is rallying health professionals around a new message: "Snuff Out Spit Tobacco!"

Network director Ken Manske makes it clear, "Smokeless tobacco can kill."

Some 12 million people, many of them youngsters, are regular users of smokeless, or "spit" tobacco. Each year, 8,000 Americans die of oral cancer that is primarily tobacco-related.

More than 30,000 new oral cancer cases are reported yearly, with painful and horribly disfiguring consequences. Thousands more lives are lost to cancer of the throat, larynx or stomach, directly attributable to spit tobacco.

"It's not enough to tell smokers to quit," says Manske. "If we really want to prevent tobacco-related deaths, we've got to get spit tobacco users, as well as smokers, off the tobacco habit."

His recommendation? Get spit

tobacco users to switch to harmless Mint Snuff(TM), a safe, non-tobacco, food-grade alternative specifically designed to help people quit chewing tobacco. Mint Snuff comes in the same round tins and in the same form (finely ground mint chew or packaged in little teabag-like pouches) as the tobacco product, so it satisfies all the social needs and habits of the spit tobacco user. "The difference," he emphasizes, "is that mint is totally safe... while tobacco kills."

The Oregon Mint Snuff Company, a Network supporter, has contributed 100,000 cans of Mint Snuff to dental health professionals nationwide, to help in tobacco cessation intervention. Free samples are available at 1-800-EAT-MINT (1-800-328-6468) or www.mintsnuff.com.

The Tobacco Intervention Network is comprised of over 9,000 dentists, hygienists, dental assistants and other oral health professionals, both civilian and military.

Observing

Courts Consolidate Domestic Violence Cases

Beginning January 1, 1998, Clark County District Court Judges will begin handling domestic violence Protection Orders previously issued only by the Superior Court.

It's all part of a move to consolidate services, eliminate conflicting orders, and provide residents with one place to get help, according to District Court Judge Randy Fritzler. "This agreement represents a true collaborative effort between the Courts to address a perceived need for greater efficiency and better service to the public," he said.

Because judges will be more familiar with the participants in each case, they will be able to make better decisions about custody, visitation, sentencing and treatment.

Criminal-matters related to domestic violence and anti-harassment petitions are already heard in District Court, while civil proceedings and the protection orders are the responsibility of Superior Court. "This separation in jurisdiction has created hardships for victims, caused inefficient duplication of case processing, and hindered offender accountability," Fritzler commented.

Judge Robert L. Harris, Presiding Judge of the Superior Court, agrees. "This cooperative arrangement between the courts will provide better protection for the victims of domestic violence," he stated, adding "it will result in criminal and civil domestic violence matters being handled in a coordinated fashion.

We thank the District Court for their leadership and participation in this effort."

In order to deal with jurisdictional issues, the District Court Judges involved in this program will become Superior Court Commissioners and be provided with special training.

This is also a first step in creating a dedicated domestic violence court, a concept approved by District Court Judges earlier this year. They hope to provide around-the-clock service handled much like search warrants, says Judge Fritzler. "When an officer sees and incidence of domestic abuse, he or she will be sworn in by the judge and be able to deliver the protection order right on the spot. I think it's going to be a great public service," he added.

City Launches Redesigned Web Site

The City of Vancouver's award-winning Internet site has a new look. The recently launched, redesigned site features a new navigation bar and crisp new graphics.

The navigation bar, running down the left side of most pages, provides a site map with easy-to-follow connections among the site's primary pages.

These pages provide information on Vancouver history, city government and departments, the local community, neighborhood programs, current job openings, City Council agendas, recent news releases and links to other government and agency sites.

Council Meetings Changed

The regular meeting of the Vancouver City Council set for Monday, Dec. 1 has been canceled due to a lack of quorum. Future council meetings are scheduled as follows:

Consent meeting Monday, Dec. 8, at 6 p.m.
Regular meeting Monday, Dec. 15, at 7 p.m.
Consent meeting, Monday, Dec. 22, at 6 p.m.

Consent meetings cover routine items voted on by a single motion. Typical items include payment of bills, awarding contracts and first reading of ordinances. Regular meetings usually include a citizen comment period and public hearings. Council meetings are conducted in Vancouver City Hall, 210 E. 13th St. Agendas are available before the council meetings or on the city's home page at www.ci.vancouver.wa.us.

Vancouver's web site -- which totals more than 100 individual pages -- include: the City Charter, health and safety information, parks and recreation programs, city government phone directory, annexation, cable franchise agreement, citizen boards and commissions, the Gen. George C. Marshall Program, Jack Murdock Aviation Center and Vancouver Neighbors newsletter.

"What's New" and "Etcetera" sections on the home page provide links to pages on timely and other particularly interesting community topics.

Vancouver's home page has recently averaged over 1,300

visitors per week, a number that continues to climb. Most popular pages are Job Opportunities, About Vancouver, Neighborhoods and Vancouver History.

In August, the city's Internet site received an Award of Excellence in the ninth annual APEX completion for communication professionals.

APEX awards recognize excellence in graphic design, editorial content and overall communications achievement. In September, the site received a Silver Savvy Award, presented by the National City-County Communications and Marketing Association.

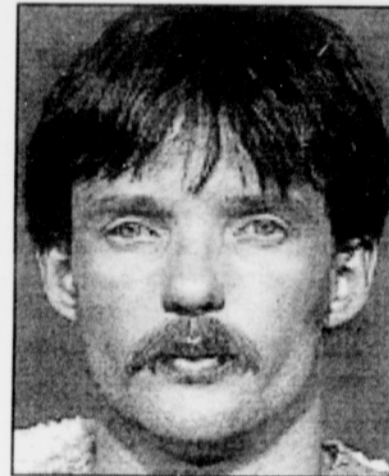
Visit Vancouver's web site at: www.ci.vancouver.wa.us/.

POLICE NEWS

Wanted

The Portland Police Bureau, in cooperation with Crime Stoppers, is asking for your help in locating and apprehending Gerald Lee Chittenden. A felony no bail arrest warrant, charging Chittenden with Robbery in the First Degree, is on file in Multnomah County.

Gerald Lee Chittenden is a 29-year-old white male (DOB January 4, 1968). He is approximately 5'04 to 5'06 tall and weighs 130 to 135 pounds, with brown hair and green or



hazel eyes. He is probably currently working somewhere in the Portland/Vancouver area at an auto repair-type facility.

If you have any information regarding this case, call the Crime Stoppers Program. Crime Stoppers is offering a cash reward of up to \$1,000 for information, reported to Crime Stoppers, which leads to an arrest in this case or any unsolved felony crime, and you can remain anonymous. Call Crime Stoppers at (503) 823-HELP.

Suspects Arrested After 43 Min. Pursuit

Portland Police Officers arrested four subjects involved in a series of motor vehicle thefts involving Jeep Grand Cherokees. The arrest involved a 43 minute police pursuit which ended in a vehicular crash on West Union Road in Washington County.

At approximately 10:50 a.m. on December 12, 1997, officers from the Auto Theft Task Force (ATTF) of the Portland Police Bureau observed a stolen silver 1997 Jeep Grand Cherokee traveling in the area of SE Foster and SE Powell. Officers attempted to stop the vehicle and its four passengers. A vehicle pursuit ensued which trav-

eled west bound through SE Portland, crossing the Ross Island Bridge, south into SW Portland, ending in a crash in rural Washington County. The stolen jeep struck a Plymouth van driven by a woman attempting to make a left and turn into a residential neighborhood. The woman suffered minor injuries and was transported to a nearby hospital. The driver of the jeep suffered more serious injuries and was transported to Emanuel Hospital. No one else was injured.

The four subjects are believed to be members of a group which has been involved in a series of motor vehicle theft scams. The suspects in the thefts represent themselves as

professionals who falsely rent the vehicles from local area car rental businesses. The vehicles rentals are then billed to other local area businesses. At least six Jeep Grand Cherokees have been falsely obtained in the past two months.

The pursuit involved members of the Portland Police Bureau, Washington County Sheriff's Office, Multnomah County Sheriff's Office and the Oregon State Police. Speed during the pursuit ranged between 25-70 miles per hour.

Arrested and charged: Jack Landrew Brown white male, DOB October 04, 1965.

Jefferson High School

Christmas Tree Recycling

January 3, 1998
8:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

Drop off at:

Lombard and Interstate
Kaiser Dental Bldg.
7201 N. Interstate
South Parking Lot

Drop off \$3.00
Curb Side Pick up \$5



Info Hot-line
262-8274



Proceeds to benefit Jefferson Basketball Program

PGE's Ed Bunn.
On call,
on the move
around the clock.

As part of PGE's Eagle repair and restoration crew, Ed brings his truck home and is always ready to roll—24 hours a day, seven days a week. Aided by the latest communication technology, he's usually first on the scene of a power outage or electrical emergency. Ed is there for you, helping bring power to North, Northwest and Northeast Portland—safely and reliably.

Portland General Electric