Workshop 3A
Practice and Implementation: Skill-Based Relationship Education Programs for African Americans

Moderator/Panelists: 
**Bridget Minor**, Healthy Marriage Specialist, ACF Region IV, Atlanta, GA

Presenters: 
**Tricia Bent-Goodley, Ph.D., MSW**, Howard University School of Social Work, Washington, D.C.
**Lorraine C. Blackman, Ph.D.**, Professor, Indiana University School of Social Work, Indianapolis, IN
**Obie Clayton, Ph.D.**, Professor, Morehouse College Sociology Department, Atlanta, GA

Dr. Lorraine Blackman said African Americans want the same quality of marriage and relationships as everyone else. She cited a report that Black men value marriage more than women, but only if the marriage can be successful. She developed the African American Parent Training Program to address some of these issues.

Dr. Obie Clayton wants to see more effort on making marital relationships more functional. There isn't enough research on African American families. Historically, public policy, like Aid to Families with Dependent Children (SFDC), has led to dissolution of the African American family.

Dr. Clayton discussed three types of programs targeting marriages and marriage-ability in the African American community: primary prevention, secondary prevention, and tertiary prevention. Primary prevention programs provide services for individuals to deal with marital conflict, dissatisfaction or separation, and domestic violence. Secondary prevention includes services to identify and intervene among people with no sign of distress but who show signs of risk. Tertiary programs provide services for those with identified marital distress to minimize conflict, dissatisfaction, friction, and discord.

Dr. Tricia Bent-Goodley’s presentation centered on *In Circle*, a program she helped develop with friends as a way to gain more education on healthy relationships. *In Circle* is based on the principles of Ma’at. They developed the curriculum in part by listening to messages in African American music, television and movies. The group does not spend time talking about how bad Black men. Their core curriculum components are: faith and spirituality (within the context of relationship development and maintenance), culturally-based strategies, problem-solving, and decision-making skills.