



The Association of Black
Psychologists

Culturally-Grounding and Supporting Our Communities During COVID-19 Worldwide Pandemic

Five Star Family Enhancement Plan *“Zola Up on Us”*

The Association of Black Psychologists, Inc. (ABPsi) is extremely concerned about this most recent threat and its psychological and emotional impact. ABPsi does not endorse or support any unsubstantiated beliefs and/or proposed strategies for responding to the COVID-19 Worldwide Pandemic. In the spirit of *Ujima* (collective work and responsibility), The ABPsi, along with its partners, will offer a variety of resources (e.g., podcasts, statements, webinars, etc.) in helping our communities cope with the pandemic from a culturally-affirming stance. We are appreciative to one of Founders and Past President, Dr. Wade Nobles, for authoring this statement paper that will serve as our framework: Five Star Family Enhancement Plan in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The Five Star Family Enhancement Plan

History teaches us that challenges to health and safety, fueled by a lack of information and outright ignorance and bigotry ignite people’s anxieties and fears of others (particularly us). COVID-19 is not exempt from this peculiar response.

It’s is better to be prepared than sorry.

First and foremost, we should not panic or be overly alarmed by this crisis. It too shall pass.

Understand that COVID-19 is a “respiratory disease” that is mainly spread person-to-person. The life of this virus varies. It is detectable in the air for three hours. It can live on plastics up to 72 hours, on stainless steel up to 48 hours, on cardboard up to 24 hours, and on copper up to 4 hours.

Currently, there is no available vaccine or curative treatment. The best preventative strategy is to avoid contact or exposure. For additional information about COVID-19, please read the latest report from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) at www.cdc.gov, or your local health department website.

Prepared by
Wade W. Nobles, Ph.D

Ifágbemì Sàngódáre, Nana Kwaku Berko I, Bejana, Onebunne
Co-founder and Past President, The National Association of Black Psychologists, Inc.
Professor Emeritus of Africana Studies and Black Psychology, Department of Africana Studies, San Francisco State University
Founding Executive Director, The Institute for the Advanced Study of Black family Life & Culture, Inc.
Nkousohene (Sub-Chief for Development) Nana Kwaku Berko I, of Akwasiho-Kwahu Traditional Area, Ghana West Africa

The 5 R's Plan **(Remember, Remind, Reframe, Revitalize and Reward)**

We began this plan with “love.” In our African (KiKongo) traditional beliefs, “love” is called “Zola” and “Zola” activates our “self-healing capacity.” We should “Zola Up On” our families, each other and everyone we cherish. As we engage in the five-star plan, we engage in activities that activate our capacity to heal and be well.

Remember: Remember who we are and whose we are. We should remember that we are a magnificent people birthed from the womb of Mother Africa. We are African people living in the diaspora (USA). From Kemet (Egypt) to Kansas City, from Sudan to Suriname, from Ouagadougou to West Oakland, from South Africa to South Carolina, from St. Croix to St. Louis, from Mali to Mississippi, from Brixton to Brooklyn, we have been and have borne visionaries and the valiant, peacemakers, powerbrokers, scholars and seers scientists, business magnates, and healers. We are awesome beyond measure and as ancient as the origins of humanity itself. We belong to a people deeply rooted in spirit that is expressed in our bodies, traditions of family-hood and kinship.

Remind: Even though many of us wish it weren't so, White supremacy/racism is still the underbelly of American society; and, when it comes to Black people, regardless of socio-economic status, we live in a toxic and hostile environment. We should remind ourselves that during the Ebola virus outbreak, the underbelly of white supremacy in this country facilitated the ease of outdoor more racial assaults, profiling and anti-Black sentiments based on skin color. We should not forget the history of government operated syphilis testing on our ancestors, or the forced sterilization of our poor or the massive government sanctioned police killings of our youths. Being suspicious about what is really going on is good to do. Just don't be unduly alarmed, fearful, and immobilized in your terror.

Think about ways to “Zola Up On” each other as a reminder of who we are and whose we are.

Reframe: In response to the various orders to shelter-in-place, selected areas being quarantine, etc., re-caste these directives according to our way. Shelter-in-place should not be a call for us to create and defend “family (man) caves” that are created for only the few to survive. Don't slip and slide into individualism, selfishness and fear. Our way honors the collective, the elevation, and enhancement of us all.

Think about ways to “Zola Up On” each other as ways to redefine the various survival strategies to bring safety and protection to us all.

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Co-founder and Past President, The National Association of Black Psychologists, Inc.
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Revitalize: It is very important that we take this time to hold up in high regard and deep respect the idea of family. We have an opportunity to examine our life and living as family centered. We can use this time to recall and/or recreate the ways we enjoy and learn from being together. This can be a time to restructure our living space so that we have areas for honoring our ancestors, being quiet, having a family repository of memorabilia, building a library of the twenty books Black children should read and the twenty books every Black parent should read. With the renovation of the living space, this would be a good time to also engage in family revitalizing activities. We could read to our children and have them read to us. We can co-create family games that inspire and elevate through imagination. We could co-author a family victorious play with everyone playing a role. Use this time to co-create that most delicious and nutritious meal using immune strengthening and antiviral ingredients such as cayenne, garlic, oregano, passionflower, turmeric, honey, Echinacea, chamomile, fruits and green vegetables. This could be a perfect time to interview and record the life stories of the oldest members of the family. We could have our children call (FaceTime) absent members and simply say, I love you.

Collectively think about family generated rituals that “Zola Up On” each other to revitalize our life and living.

Reward Giving thanks for doing good is key to enhancing the fabric of family. We should do good because it is good to do good. Rewarding our goodness in words, songs and deeds is a best practice that acknowledges our worth and value. Little girls dancing with their fathers or little boys dancing with their mothers is rewarding and restorative. Seeing our parents dancing and laughing together is healing. Saying I am better because of you or that my life goes better with you is rewarding.

Collectively think about ways in which we can acknowledge and reward the good that is a “Zola Up On” our families, each other and everyone we cherish.

In general, the ABPsi encourages you to have family discussions about how you see any of the five R’s expressing themselves in your home or the wider community where you live.

The following list of resources and hot lines are also available to you:

- ABPsi and CHN Family-Care, Community-Care and Self-Care Tool Kit:
<https://www.abpsi.org/pdf/FamilyCommunitySelfCareToolKit.pdf>
- Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990

- Helping Homebound Children During COVID-19 (CSTS): https://www.cstsonline.org/assets/media/documents/CSTS_FS_Helping_Homebound_Children_during_COVID19_Outbreak.pdf
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
- The Steve Fund Crisis Text Line Partnership Text STEVE to 741741 (*utilizes counselors of color*)
- Supporting Your Family During Quarantine and Isolation: Tips for Social Distancing, Quarantine, and Isolation during an Infectious Disease Outbreak (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, SAMHSA): <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/tips-social-distancing-quarantine-isolation-031620.pdf>
- Taking Care of Family Well-being (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, NCTSN): https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/outbreak_factsheet_1.pdf
- WHO Mental Health Considerations during COVID-19 Outbreak: <https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/mental-health-considerations.pdf>

If you have resources that you would like ABPsi to disseminate, please contact Dr. Tiesha Nelson, GA Chair: t.nelson@abpsi.org.

If you would like to consult with chapters or members in your region, please contact our Regional Representatives.

<p><u>Eastern Regional Rep.</u> Jennifer Durham jdurham@abpsi.org</p> <p><u>Midwestern Reg Rep</u> Marva Robinson m.robinson@abpsi.org</p> <p><u>Western Regional Rep</u> Patricia Nunley p.nunley@abpsi.org</p>	<p><u>Southern Regional Rep</u> Jannis Moody j.moody@abpsi.org</p> <p><u>International Regional Rep</u> Rameri Moukam r.moukam@abpsi.org</p> <p><u>Student Chair</u> Brittany Griffin scchair@abpsi.org</p>
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The Association of Black Psychologists, Inc. (ABPsi) sees its mission and destiny as the liberation of the African Mind, empowerment of the African Character, and enlivenment and illumination of the African Spirit.
www.abpsi.org

A family tie is like a tree; it can bend but it cannot break.
~African proverb