

How Research Fuels Equity Conversations:

Through journalism

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AP

In Detroit, grief runs deep as city grapples with COVID-19

In Detroit, grief runs deep as city grapples with COVID-19

By KAT STAFFORD April 26, 2020



TOP STORIES

From birth to death, legacy of racism lays foundation for Black Americans' health disparities

today

EXPLORE THE SERIES

- Why do so many Black women die in pregnancy? One reason: Doctors don't take them seriously
- Black children are more likely to have asthma. A lot comes down to where they live
- A lifetime of racism makes Alzheimer's more prevalent in Black Americans



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Why do so many Black women die in pregnancy? One reason: Doctors don't take them seriously

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14.8%

of Black infants were born prematurely in 2021. Black babies were born prematurely more than any other racial or ethnic group.

Black children are more likely to have asthma. A lot comes down to where they live

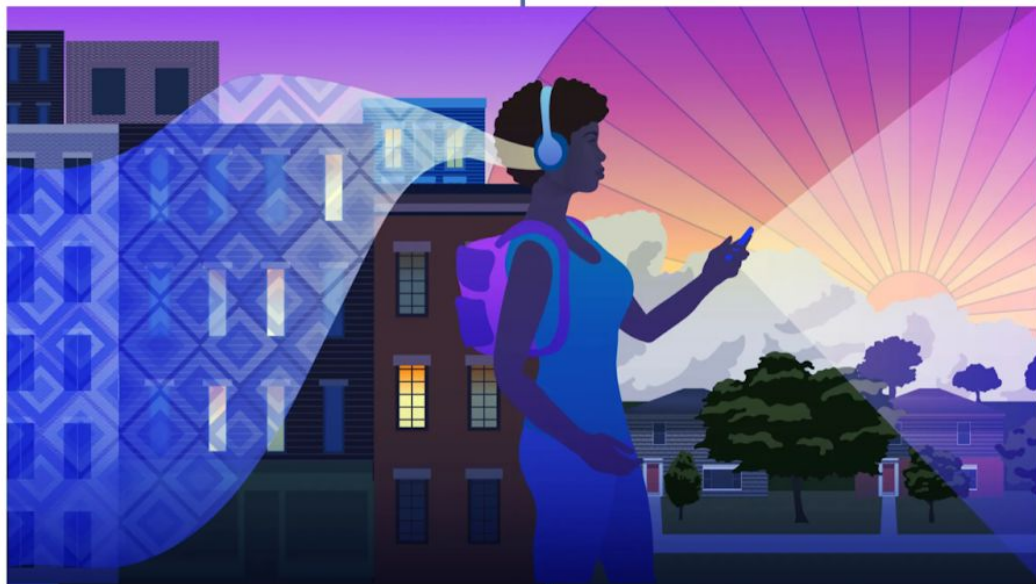
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12.3%

of Black children suffer from asthma. Black children are twice as likely to suffer from asthma compared to white children.





Black kids face racism before they even start school. It's driving a major mental health crisis

BY ANNIE MA

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18% of Black youth said they were exposed to racial trauma often or very often in their life. 50% experience moderate to severe symptoms of depression.

High blood pressure plagues many Black Americans. Combined with COVID, it's catastrophic

BY KAT STAFFORD

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75%

of African Americans are likely to develop high blood pressure by age 55. High blood pressure was listed as a contributing factor in over 20% of COVID deaths of Black people.





A lifetime of racism makes Alzheimer's more prevalent in Black Americans

BY KAT STAFFORD

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14%

of Black Americans over the age of 65 have Alzheimer's, compared to 10% of white people. By 2060, cases are expected to increase fourfold.

The art of a pitch

Start with a detailed pitch or memo. Why?

- It helps you conceptualize the project/story clearer.
- It outlines the voices you need with intentionality and gives you space to create a realistic outline for the project.
- This also helps establish you've done your homework – and push back against wary editors.

What's in a pitch?

- Be clear. Explain the why: Why does this matter and what are you illuminating.
 - Lay out the premise of the project.
 - How many stories?
 - Where will you tell them?
 - Who are the voices, experts, etc?
 - Explain the different potential elements of the project:
 - Photos, video, illustrations, graphics, audio
 - Data
 - Historical context
 - Who needs to be part of the project? Determine whether this project will require assistance from across the newsroom.
 - Give realistic time frame estimate. – estimated publication
 - Be clear that building sourcing could take time.

Research: Data is your friend

Data can help elevate the personal narratives and interviews. It bolsters your reporting in a fact-based way that's irrefutable.

- Determine what data you need.
- How will you get the data?
 - Is it publicly available?
 - Do you need to submit a FOIA?
 - Reimagine data: Are there groups that provide data outside of traditional data sources – IE community surveys, etc.?
- NOTE: Data, particularly for marginalized groups, isn't always readily available due to historic inequities of data gathering for our communities.

But sometimes the lack of data is the story or a central element.

History is a source and a
crucial aspect of reporting.

**Become a student of history. The ills of today are
built upon generations of structural inequities.**

“Interview” history:

Historically informed reporting

- Central question: What story – and whose story– does it tell?
- What’s missing?
- Particularly if you’re looking at old newspaper clippings or research, whose perspective is being told? What – or who – is left out?

How does it help inform your reporting?

- It provided our project with context and nuance that showed this was a structural issue.
- It allowed us to make bold, but factual statements: From birth to death, generations of Black Americans have faced health inequities caused in large part by structural racism, discrimination, redlining, segregation and more.
- It further illustrates the problem in a way that other story elements cannot.

A great illustration of how research can fuel equity conversations.

HOSTILITY TO BLACKS

Race Prejudice More Bitter
Than a Generation Ago.

BISHOPS DISCUSS THE PROBLEM

Missionary Work Among the Negroes of the South—Right Rev. W. A. Leonard, Right Rev. C. K. Nelson, Right Rev. C. Penick, and Right Rev. T. A. Dudley Address the St. Monica's League at Epiphany Church—Colonization Not Practicable.

Bishops of the Episcopal Church, who represent missionary work among the colored people, addressed a large congregation yesterday afternoon at the Epiphany Church and made earnest appeals for the support of this cause. The meeting was under the auspices of St. Monica's League, an association of women who are working under the direction of the church commission appointed by the general convention of the bishops for improving the condition of the negro population of the South.

Right Rev. W. A. Leonard, Bishop of

the South.

Right Rev. W. A. Leonard, Bishop of Ohio; Right Rev. C. K. Nelson, Bishop of Georgia; Right Rev. C. Penick, missionary Bishop to Africa, and Right Rev. T. A. Dudley, Bishop of Kentucky, were the speakers. They are thoroughly interested in the work and have devoted to it a great deal of their time and their thought. The service, which began at 4 o'clock, was conducted by Bishop Dudley.

The first speaker was Bishop Leonard. His remarks were in explanation of the missionary methods of the Episcopal Church and of the important aid to the work among the negroes rendered by St. Monica's League. He stated that there was a large building in New York which served as the treasure house for the mission contributions, and that from this center it was distributed through agents and agencies to fields where it could serve the greatest usefulness. The league was as useful to the commission which had the work of the colored people in charge as the women's organizations of the church were to the board of missions. He hoped that it would increase and that large contributions would be made to help the colored people.

Infant Mortality Among Negroes.

Bishop Penick spoke of the great mortality among colored infants, stating that it was two and one-half times as great as among the whites. This, he said, was because of the ignorance of colored mothers. The field for the work in the South was white with the harvest. Unless the opportunity was soon improved it would be lost. The whites of the present generation did not like the colored people as did the generation just preceding them. All that was vicious and bad in our civilization was pushing after the negro. He urged the necessity for those who would be true followers of Christ to assist the work.

Bishop Nelson's remarks were significant of much study of the negro problem. He said that the work needed to be done in the education of the colored people

Infant Deaths Among Colored 86 Per 1,000

Live Birth Mortality Rate
Compared to 52 for
White Babies.

The mortality rate of colored infants in the United States is 86 per 1,000 live births, as compared to 52 for white infants, according to a study by Elizabeth C. Tandy, of the Children's Bureau.

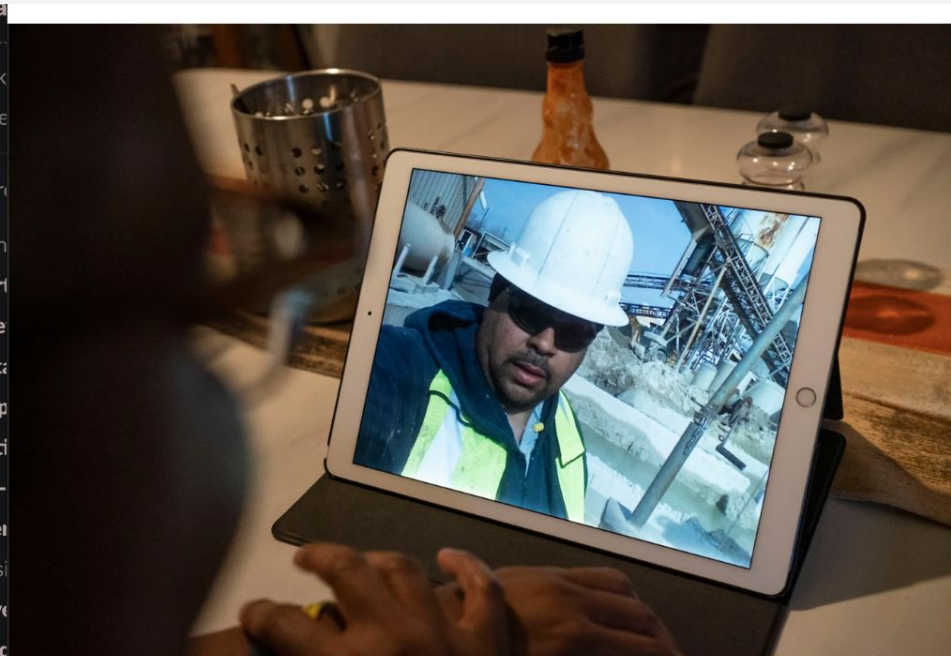
In Delaware, the District of Columbia, and Oklahoma, the colored rate more than doubled the white during the years 1933-35, inclusive.

Other facts brought out in the study, which for the first time separated colored infant deaths from those of other non-white races, included:

More than half of the colored births were attended by midwives. In Southern cities the proportion reached about three-fourths. In Northern cities practically all were attended by physicians, but New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Massachusetts, Illinois, and Indiana were among the States in which the mortality rate for colored babies was more than 50 per cent higher than that for white infants.

Connecting the dots





Top: Melanese Marr-Thomas reflects on memories of her late husband, Charles Thomas. Left: Melanese Marr-Thomas shows off photographs of Charles Thomas at work that she keeps in her tablet. Right: Melanese Marr-Thomas sniffs Charles Thomas' fleece jacket she still keeps in their coat rack.



CHAPTER FIVE

A lifetime of racism makes Alzheimer's more common in Black Americans

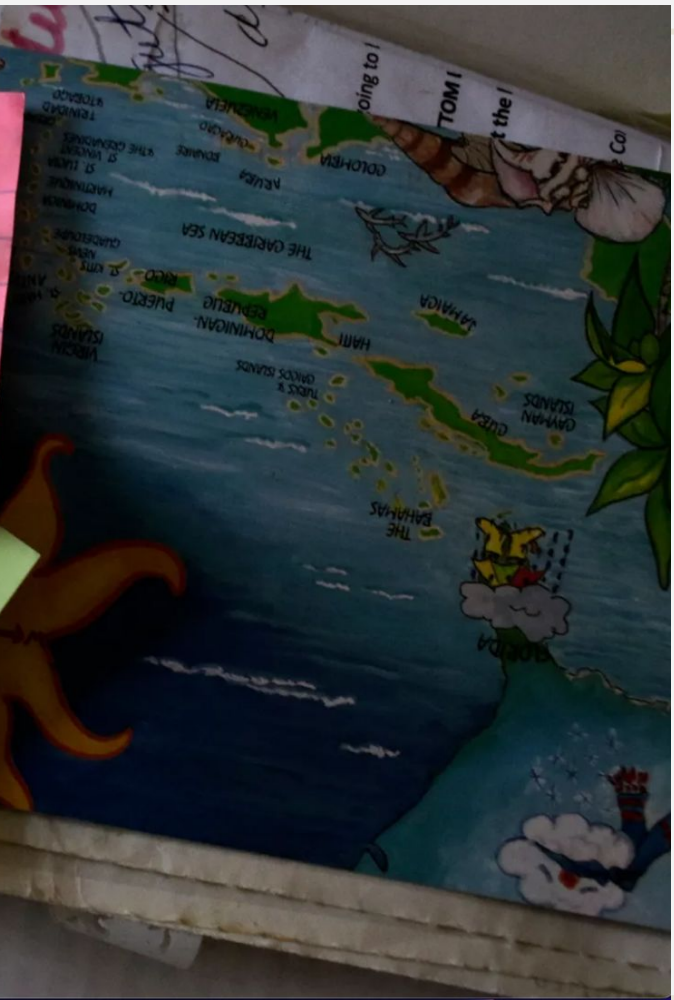




Driving is dangerous.
You will get lost.
You don't drive anymore.

ALANCE
do not start the
your key away.
do not drive anymore.

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What is equitable and representative coverage?

My definition: This is coverage and sourcing that wholly centers historically underserved communities in a way that is neither transactional or extractive.

- It amplifies their voices.
- Reflects a deep community understanding.
- They are not just impacted by the issues being written about -- they are also “experts” and sources.
- These are stories that are written **for** the community. Not simply **about** the community.
- It should be done on both a community and expert level.

Equitable sourcing: Reimagine sourcing

- Develop relationships.
- Be intentional. Set the time aside.
- Meet people where they are.
- Are there specific community locations?
- Be willing to meet without the sole objective of a story.
- Think outside the box in terms of who is actually rooted in the community.

Community members are experts of their own community.

Equitable sourcing: continued

- First impressions matter – be an active listener. Particularly for community members, give people the space to speak and ask questions. What are their concerns?
- Explain how journalism works – what can they expect?
 - What is your reporting process?
 - How will they be exposed?
 - What is the fact checking process?
- Be clear on what comes next.
- Ensure access throughout the process.
- End with: Who else should I talk to?

Thank you!

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