

“The men had decided to lean into the recovery philosophy at Turning Point, which stemmed from director Peter Hayden’s experiences as the only Black man in his Alcoholics Anonymous group in 1973 — the year Floyd was born. Hayden remembered shaking his head when a White man told the group he felt like drinking because he didn’t want to give his wife \$50. Hayden’s friends drank because they didn’t have \$50.

It wasn’t simply an addiction that was a problem for Hayden and his friends: It was access to jobs, it was resources, it was learning to cope in a prejudiced world.

Hayden theorized that Black people healed differently than White people because society treated them differently. So he found some foundation grants and started his program in 1976. In addition to partnering with clinics that provide chemical treatment, staffers taught Black history to instill a sense of self-worth and prepared soul food dinners on Sundays to foster community.

They mixed the traditional 12-step program with the principles of Kwanzaa, and a standard step such as “come to believe that a power greater than myself could return me to sanity” was turned into “come to believe that a power within myself could return me to a lifestyle that would not hurt me.” The edit was designed to avoid the word “sanity.”

“African Americans don’t like to talk about being crazy,” Hayden said, which he believed was a product of a long history of distrust and dismissal between Black patients and White doctors.”

Excerpted from:

Racism’s hidden toll
THE WASHINGTON POST
Robert Samuels
October 22, 2020

Full article:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/10/22/george-floyd-black-men-recovery-everything-just-piles-up/>