

Substance Abuse Among the African American Population

The slide features a solid orange background. The title is centered in white, bold, sans-serif font. Below the title, there are six decorative orange circles arranged in two rows of three. The top row has three circles, with the middle one partially overlapping the text. The bottom row has three circles, with the rightmost one being an outline.

Africentric Programming

- The Africentric perspective implicitly contends that differences in culture, world view, and historical experiences exist between African Americans and European Americans...[and] the Africentric perspective delineates and explicates some of these differences, many of which have implications for the construction of paradigms of human behavior (Turner, 1997).

Facts

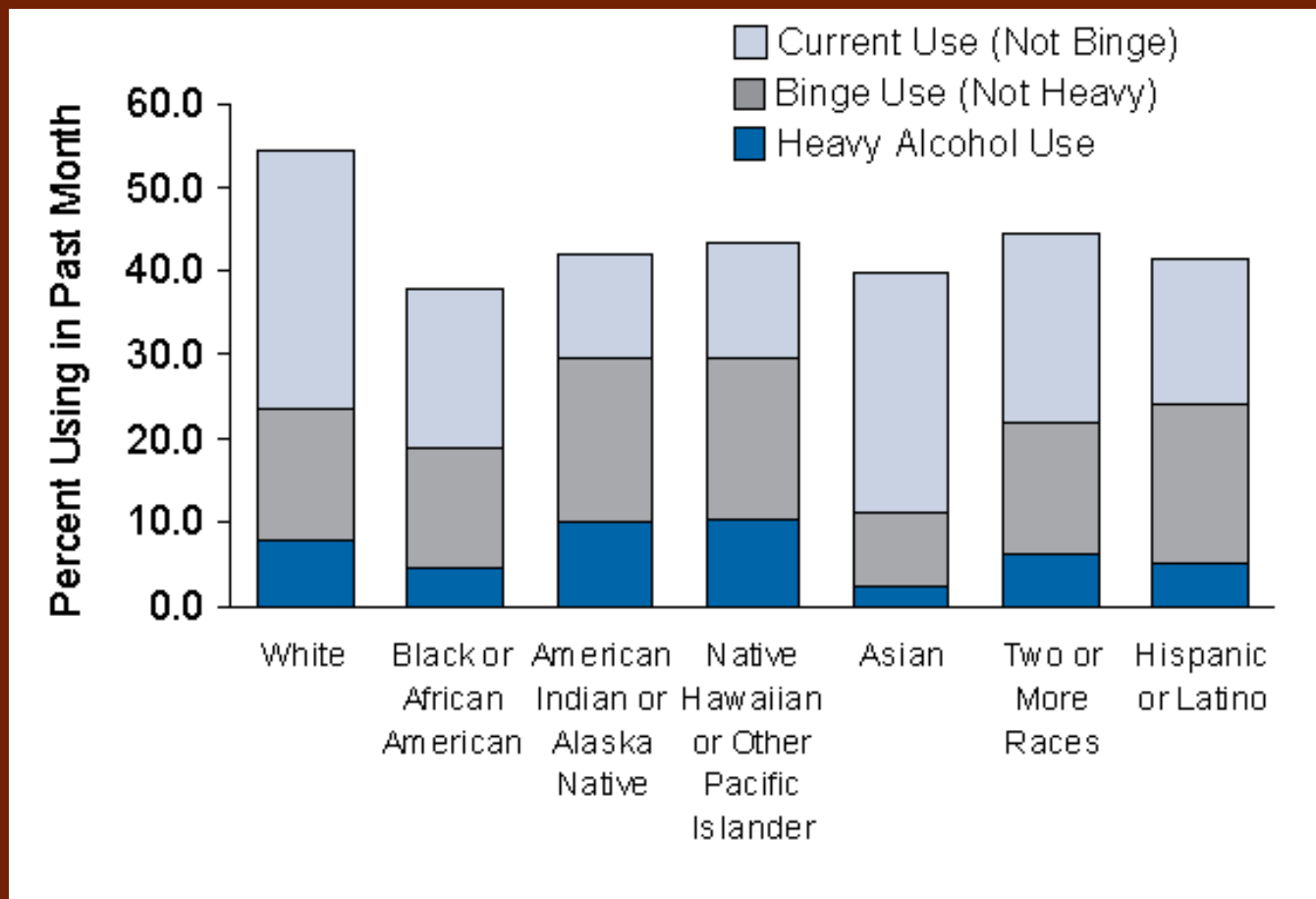
- Studies of African Americans have, for the most part, involved comparisons of drinking patterns and drinking problems among African American and White populations (Jones-Webb, 1998).
- The need for organized prevention programming that is culturally congruent with the context of African Americans has been argued from a theoretical perspective (Foster, et.al., 1993; Oliver, 1989; Randolph & Banks, 1993; Stevenson & Renard, 1993; Turner, 1997; Ward, 1995), and several studies have shown effects of specific programs designed to meet these needs (Belgrave, et.al., 1994; Cherry, et.al., 1998).

Alcohol Use

- Reported rates of past month alcohol use according to the 2003 NSDUH Report:
 - 54.4 percent for Whites
 - 44.4 percent for persons reporting two or more races,
 - 43.3 percent for Native Hawaiians or Other Pacific Islanders,
 - 42.0 percent for American Indians or Alaska Natives,
 - 41.5 percent for Hispanics,
 - 39.8 percent for Asians,
 - 37.9 percent for Blacks
- Reported rates of binge alcohol drinking were:
 - 19.0 percent for Blacks,
 - 23.6 percent for whites,
 - 24.2 percent for Hispanics,
 - 29.6 percent for American Indians/Alaska Natives, and
 - 29.8 percent for Native Hawaiians or Other Pacific Islanders.
 - 11.0 percent for Asian Americans
- Among youths aged 12 to 17 in 2003, Blacks and Asians were least likely to report past month alcohol use. Only 8.7 percent of Asian youths and 10.1 percent of Black youths were current drinkers, while rates were above 15 percent for other racial/ethnic groups (NSDUH Report, 2003).

Current, Binge, and Heavy Alcohol Use among Persons Aged 12 or Older, by Race/Ethnicity

- 2003 NSDUH Report Findings



Alcohol Use

- Alcohol is the drug most widely used by African American youth (Wallace, et.al., 1999).
- National surveys have found that while frequent heavy drinking among White 18-29 year-old males dropped between 1984 and 1995, rates of heavy drinking and alcohol problems remained high among African Americans in the same age group (Caetano & Clark, 1998).
- Although African Americans report higher rates of alcohol abstention than Whites, the two groups report similar levels of frequent heavy drinking (i.e. consuming five or more drinks at one sitting at least once per week.)

Alcohol Use (cont.)

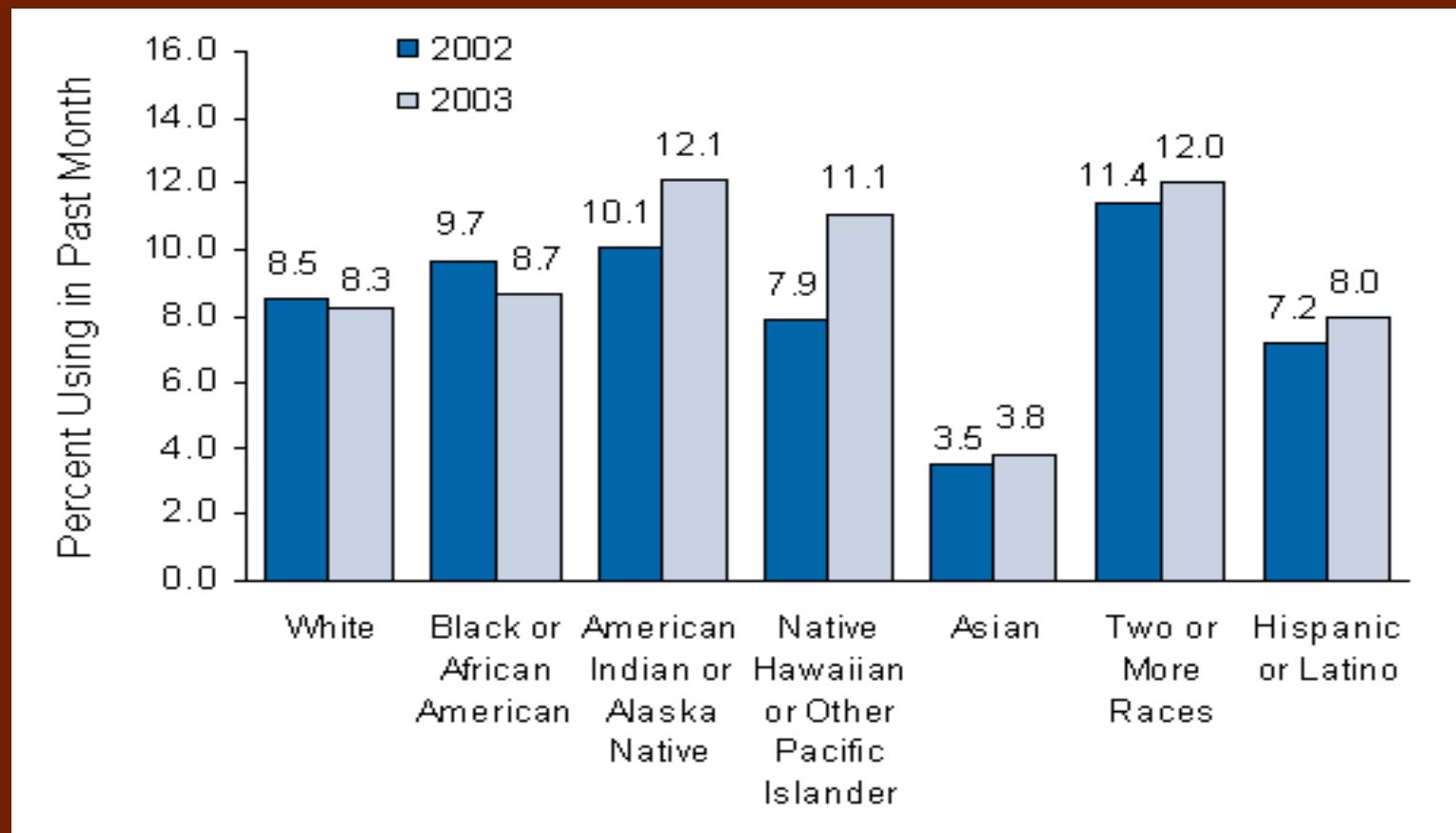
- However, African American youth drink less than other youth:
 - According to the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, 19.8% of African Americans **between ages 12 and 20** used alcohol in the past 30 days, compared to 31.6% of Whites.
 - Almost eleven percent of African American youth reported “binge” drinking in the past month, compared to 21.7% of Whites (NHSDA Report, 2003).

Illicit Drug Use

- Rates of current illicit drug use varied significantly among the major racial/ethnic groups in 2003.
- The rate was highest among:
 - American Indians or Alaska Natives (12.1 percent),
 - Persons reporting two or more races (12.0 percent),
 - Native Hawaiians or Other Pacific Islanders (11.1 percent) .
- Rates were:
 - 8.3 percent for whites
 - 8.0 percent for Hispanics
 - 8.7 percent for Blacks
 - 3.8 percent for Asian Americans
- There were no statistically significant changes between 2002 and 2003 in the rates of current illicit drug use for any racial/ethnic subgroup. This was the case both for all persons aged 12 or older and for youths aged 12 to 17 (NSDUH Report, 2003).

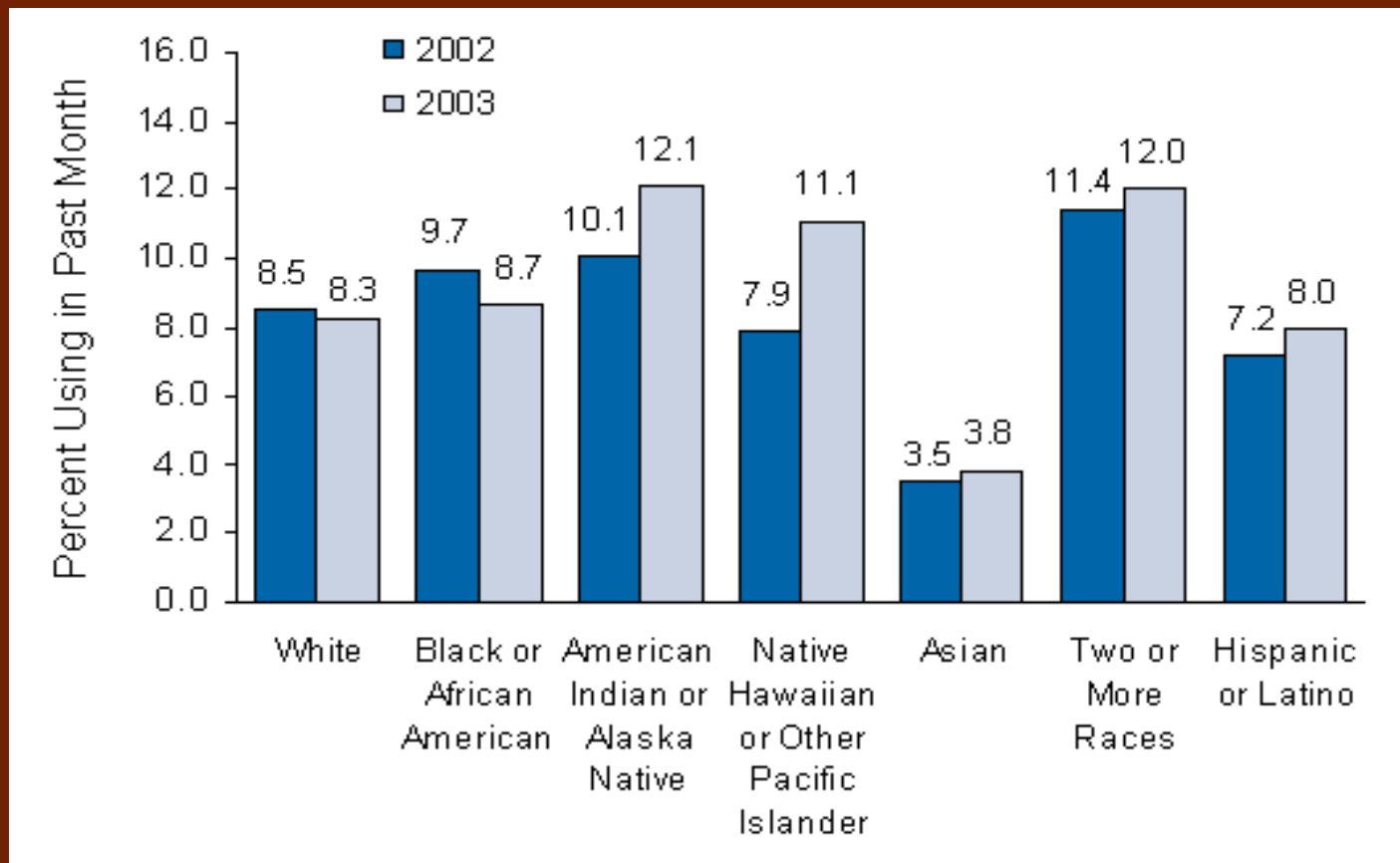
Past Month Illicit Drug Use among Youths Aged 12 to 17, by Race/Ethnicity

2002/2003 NSDUH Report Findings



Past Month Illicit Drug Use Among Persons Aged 12 or Older, by Race/Ethnicity

- 2002/2003 NSDUH Report Findings



Illicit Drug Use

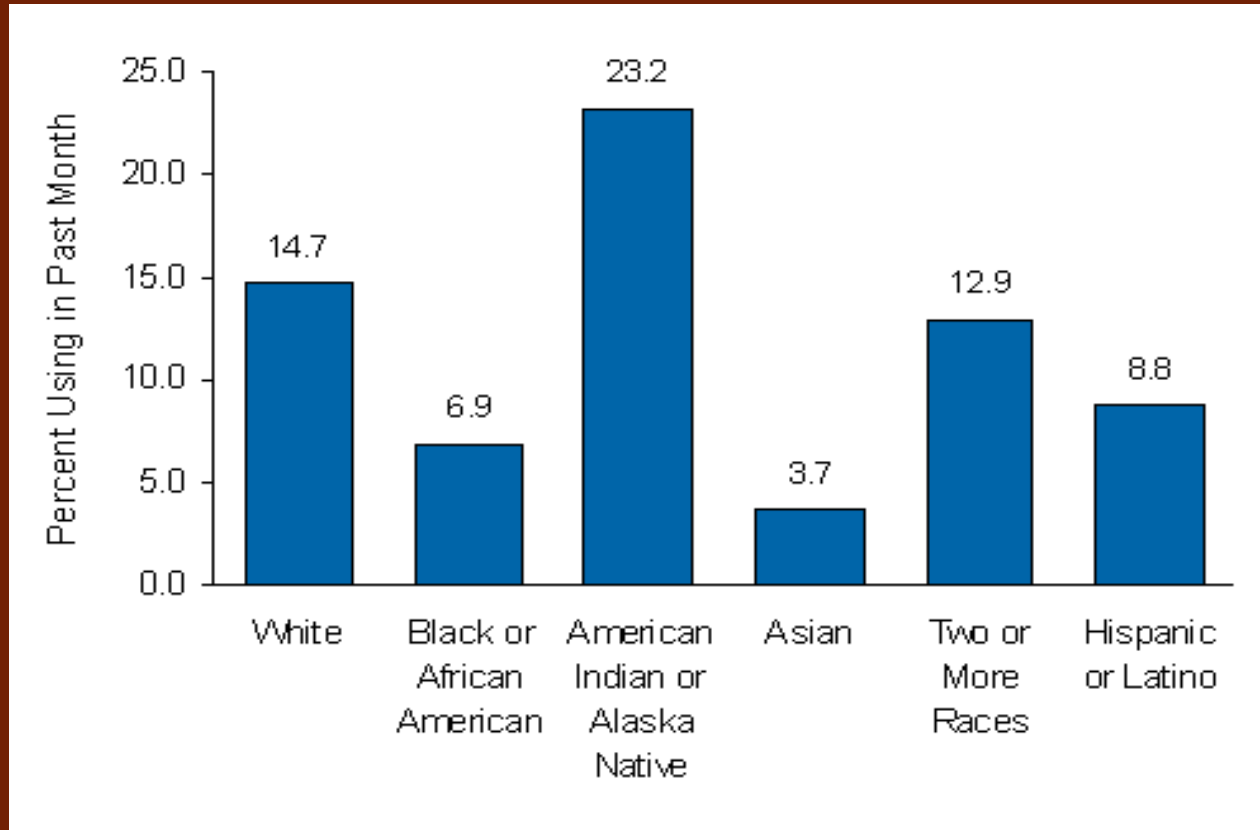
- The average age of initial, illicit drug use for African American youth is 12 (Vega, et.al., 1993).
- Although African American youth consume fewer drugs than White youth, they are more likely to experience social problems as a result of use (Scheier & Botvin, 1998). Further, although African Americans are less likely than Whites to experiment with most drugs, they are more likely than Whites to persist in using them (Kandel, et.al., 1992).

Illicit Drug Use (cont.)

- In 1999, alcohol or cocaine abuse accounted for almost two thirds of the 366,000 Black treatment admissions.
- Black female admissions were more likely to involve treatment for “hard” drugs (e.g., opiates and cocaine) than were Black male admissions (DASIS Report: Black Admissions to Substance Abuse Treatment: 1999).

Past Month Cigarette Use among Youths Aged 12 to 17, by Race/Ethnicity

- 2003 NSDUH Report Findings



Risk Factors

- Parental Drinking Attitudes

- Herd (1994) found that parental drinking attitudes indirectly influenced drinking patterns through their effects on drinking norms. If respondents' parents had liberal drinking attitudes, respondents also were more likely to have such attitudes. Among respondents, liberal attitudes were associated with more frequent drinking.

- Concentration of Stores Selling Alcohol in a Given Area

- Alcohol outlet density is a widely argued but little studied issue that has great consequences for the African American population and therefore necessitates further research.

- Stress

- Researchers found that stress more strongly influenced alcohol use and drinking problems among African American subjects who coped with stress primarily through avoidance than among high-avoidance coping Whites (Cooper, et.al, 1993).

Effects of the Media

- African American youth culture abounds with alcohol products and imagery, including:
 - Print advertisements
 - Radio advertisements
 - Television advertisements
 - Musical content
 - Music video content

Effects of Print Advertising

- In 2002, African American youth saw 77% more alcohol advertising in national magazines than did non-African American youth (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth study).
- Compared to non-African American youth, African American youth saw 66% more advertising for beer and ale, 81% more advertising for distilled spirits, 45% more advertising for “low-alcohol refreshers” such as Smirnoff Ice and Mike’s Hard Lemonade, and 65% more advertising for wine brands (Facts About Youth and Alcohol, AMA Report, 2003).

Print Advertising (cont.)

- For beer, distilled spirits and low-alcohol refreshers in 2002, alcohol advertising in magazines reached more of the African American *underage* audience than African Americans aged 21-34. [The alcohol industry routinely refers to 21-34-year-olds as its target audience] (Riell, 2002).
- While 83% of non-African American youth saw 111 alcohol ads in magazines, 96% of African American youth saw 171 alcohol ads in national magazines in 2002 (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth study).

Effects of Radio Advertising

- African American youth heard 12% more beer advertising and 56% more advertising for distilled spirits on the radio in 2002 than non-African American youth (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth study).
- Two formats—Urban Contemporary and Rhythmic Contemporary Hit—with music types including R&B, rap, hip-hop, house, and dance, accounted for almost 70% of the alcohol advertising reaching underage African American youth on radio (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth study).

Effects of Television Advertising

- Thirty percent of African American teens are among the most frequent TV viewers (the top TV-viewing quintile) versus 21.1% of non-African American teens (National Consumer Survey, 2002).
- Alcohol advertisers spent \$11.7 million in 2002 to place ads on all 15 of the programs most popular with African American youth, including *Bernie Mac*, *The Simpsons*, *King of the Hill*, *My Wife and Kids*, and *The Wonderful World of Disney* (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth study).

Television Advertising (cont.)

- Alcohol advertisers placed ads on 86 programs on BET (Black Entertainment Television) in 2002, but 65% of advertising spending and two-thirds of the ads were on just six programs. According to audience data obtained from BET, youth in general were more likely to see all six of these programs than adults, and four of the six drew disproportionate numbers of African American youth relative to African American adults (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth study).

Effects of Popular Musical Content

- A content analysis of 1,000 of the most popular songs from 1996 to 1997 found that references to alcohol were more frequent in rap (47% of songs had alcohol references) than other genres such as:
 - country-western (13%),
 - top 40 (12%),
 - alternative rock (10%),
 - and heavy metal (4%);
- 48% of these rap songs had product placements or mentions of specific alcohol brand names (Roberts, et.al., 1999).

Effects of Music Video Content

- A 1997 study showed that rap music videos contain the highest percentage of depictions of alcohol use of any music genre appearing on MTV, BET, CMT and VH-1 (DuRant, et.al., 1997).

Consequences of Heavy Drinking

- One study found that specific alcohol-related mortality rates (controlled for age) decreased among African Americans and Whites from 1979 to 1989; however, rates of alcohol-related mortality were consistently higher among African Americans than among Whites over the ten year period (Stinson, et.al., 1993).
- Some evidence suggests that compared with Whites, African Americans may have longer heavy drinking “careers,” which may account for the disparity in alcohol-related illnesses (Caetano and Kaskutas, 1995).
- There is evidence from public health research that, as they age, African Americans suffer more from alcohol-related diseases than other groups in the population.

Consequences (cont.)

- Alcohol use contributes to the three leading causes of death among African American 12-20 year olds: homicide, unintentional injuries (including car crashes), and suicide (Leading Causes of Death Reports, 1999-2000).
- Although African Americans and Whites report similar rates of frequent heavy drinking, African Americans are more likely to die of alcohol-related illnesses and injuries, such as cirrhosis of the liver and alcohol-related car crashes.

Protective Factors

- Higher social class appears to be a protective factor against the effects of race on drinking problems (Jones-Webb, 1998).
- Frequent heavy drinking is associated with youth and high income in Whites, but with older age and low income in African Americans (Herd, 1990).
- Church attendance has been found to be positively related to abstinence and negatively related to heavy drinking among African Americans but not among Whites (Darrow, et.al., 1992).
- The role of environmental risk suggests the importance of targeting the family, peer groups, schools, and communities to prevent African American youth from engaging in substance use (Chipungu, et.al., 2000).

Role of Personal and Racial Identity

- A youth's self-conceptualization or perception of self serves to guide behavior, and may play a significant role in his or her decision to engage in substance use (Harter, 1983).
- Many scholars postulate that African Americans derive their sense of self through an identification with African and African American culture. In fact, Azibo (1998) suggests that it is impossible to separate personal identity from collective or racial group identity in the healthy African American because people of African descent view the self as an extension of the collective.

Identity (cont.)

- In the African American self-system, racial group identity and personal identity are intimately related and a strong identification in both areas is necessary for a healthy sense of self (Townsend and Belgrave, 2000).
- Studies have shown that self-esteem, self-concept, and racial identity influence outcomes such as academic performance, delinquency, drug use, and drug attitudes among African American youth (Bruce & Emshoff, 1992; Gary & Berry, 1984; Whaley, 1993).

Identity (cont.)

- Racial identity may directly or indirectly impact drug behaviors. A 2000 study by Townsend and Belgrave found that personal identity and racial identity were both significant predictors of drug attitudes with more favorable attitudes about the self associated with attitudes intolerant of drug use. Together, personal identity and racial identity accounted for 25% of the variance in drug attitudes. Racial identity, which accounted for 20% of the variance, was a stronger predictor of drug attitudes than was personal identity for this sample.
- The findings of the study by Townsend and Belgrave suggest that enhancing racial pride and positive self-perception among African American youth may foster intolerant drug attitudes, which may help prevent subsequent drug use among this population (2000).