



**THUG CHILD**  
AGAINST ALL ODDS

Dr. Nathan NéJuan Howell

# What is a “Thug?”

- Dictionary
  - A brutal ruffian or assassin (Merriam-Webster)
  - A violent person, esp. a criminal (Dictionary.com)

# Factors Involved

- Loss/Grieving
- Code of the Street (Anderson, 1999)
- Personality Switch

# Code of the Street

“I remember one time, I seen this dude actually get put on. I’m just wondering like, ‘what’s going on?’ Not knowing, I tried to stop it, I got punched. And I realized you just got to mind your own. I mean for me, it’s just the norm.”

# Personality Change Occurs

“People probably see me as a, like an asshole. They got to understand that nobody’s born like this, it’s just situations that make people like this, you know, if they probably been through a lot. So I’m kind of standoffish. I don’t socialize as much as people would like, but there’s a reason behind everything I do.”

# Change/Transformation

“I think people use to view me a certain way, because I was more available to people, but I still had that guard up. And often times, especially working in the field I work in, and me having to conduct myself in a certain manner, I think a lot of people think that I do have it together, or that I have not really experienced as much as I have experienced in life. And, some people get this “bougie” persona about me, or they may think that I may be a little, I guess, mean, because I’m more so to myself at times, or reserved. I think they get a lot of things from me. And none of it is really true. Well, I see myself as very, very to myself. Very closed off. Um, and I can be guarded. It’s more so to protect myself. Um, not because I don’t want to open myself up. I can be very vulnerable. I can be the biggest cornball. I’m very uberly emotional [laughs], when it comes to weddings, and graduations and little small moments. I’d be the first one to cry. Um, but a lot of people don’t get to see that because I don’t open up to a lot of people, because I have experience opening up sometimes, and some cases can result in people taking that weakness and use it against you.”

# Tupac's Definition

- Hopelessness
- Pride



# Hopelessness

- Numb to violence
- Going along with rules set



# Factors of Thug Life

- Loss/Grieving
- Code of The Street
- Personality Change Occurs
- Hopelessness
- Pride

# Pride

- Overcome something others haven't
  - Education
  - Survival
- Resiliency



# Overcoming

“At the end of the day, I know where I came from, but I know where I am now. So, to come from that and make it, sort of say. I mean, I’m not rich, but I did it the right way. And I see a lot of people who aren’t from Compton, who don’t have that opportunity or can’t pull it off. So it means a lot to me [to be from Compton].”

# Resiliency

- Witnessing Earlier Generations
  - Witnessing struggles plus perseverance
  - Male Figure (Father's Impact)
- Faith

# What Now?

- HEAL

“Start from within to rebuild our original greatness”

# Stay Connected

Nathan NéJuan Howell, Psy.D.

[www.thugchild.com](http://www.thugchild.com)