


# Overcoming COVID Vaccine(s) Reluctance and Hesitancy in the African American Community

Institute for Public Policy and Social Research

Presented by Debra Furr-Holden

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A close-up portrait of a Black woman with short, curly hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing large hoop earrings. The background is softly blurred, showing hints of greenery.

Michigan Coronavirus Task Force  
on Racial Disparities

Greater Flint Coronavirus Task  
Force on Racial Inequity

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# Myths

Vaccine hesitancy/rejection is high in African American communities

- Adult vaccination rates for Blacks and Whites are only slightly lower for Hepatitis, Influenza, Pneumonia, and HPV
- Childhood vaccination rates are nearly identical for DTaP, Hib, Hepatitis B, MMR, Polio, and Chicken Pox





# Myths

Vaccine hesitancy in African Americans stems from 'old stuff' like the Tuskegee Experiments

- Modern day inequity in health care and systems are also driving people's is-trust and sense of fair play





# Myths

COVID vaccine(s) resistance in the African American community is due to mis-information and mistrust

Some people are a well-informed:

‘No’

‘No for now’

‘I will wait and see’

‘You go first’





# A Path Forward: The 3T's

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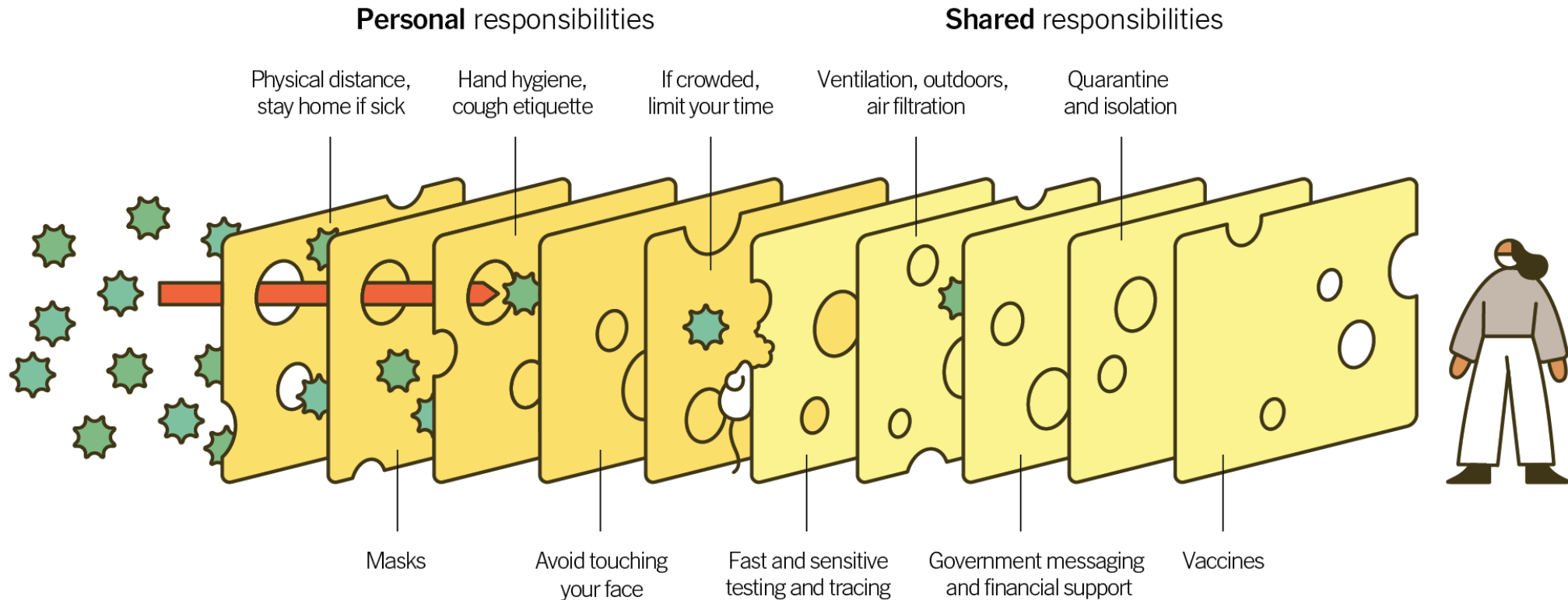
1. Transparency
2. Trust
3. Time




# Transparency: Multiple Layers Improve Success

## Multiple Layers Improve Success

The Swiss Cheese Respiratory Pandemic Defense recognizes that no single intervention is perfect at preventing the spread of the coronavirus. Each intervention (layer) has holes.





# A Path Forward: How do we build trust?

## Relationship

*Relationships are built on trust  
and trust takes time*

- Isaiah Oliver, CEO Community Foundation of Greater Flint & Founding Chair, Flint Task Force on COVID Inequity





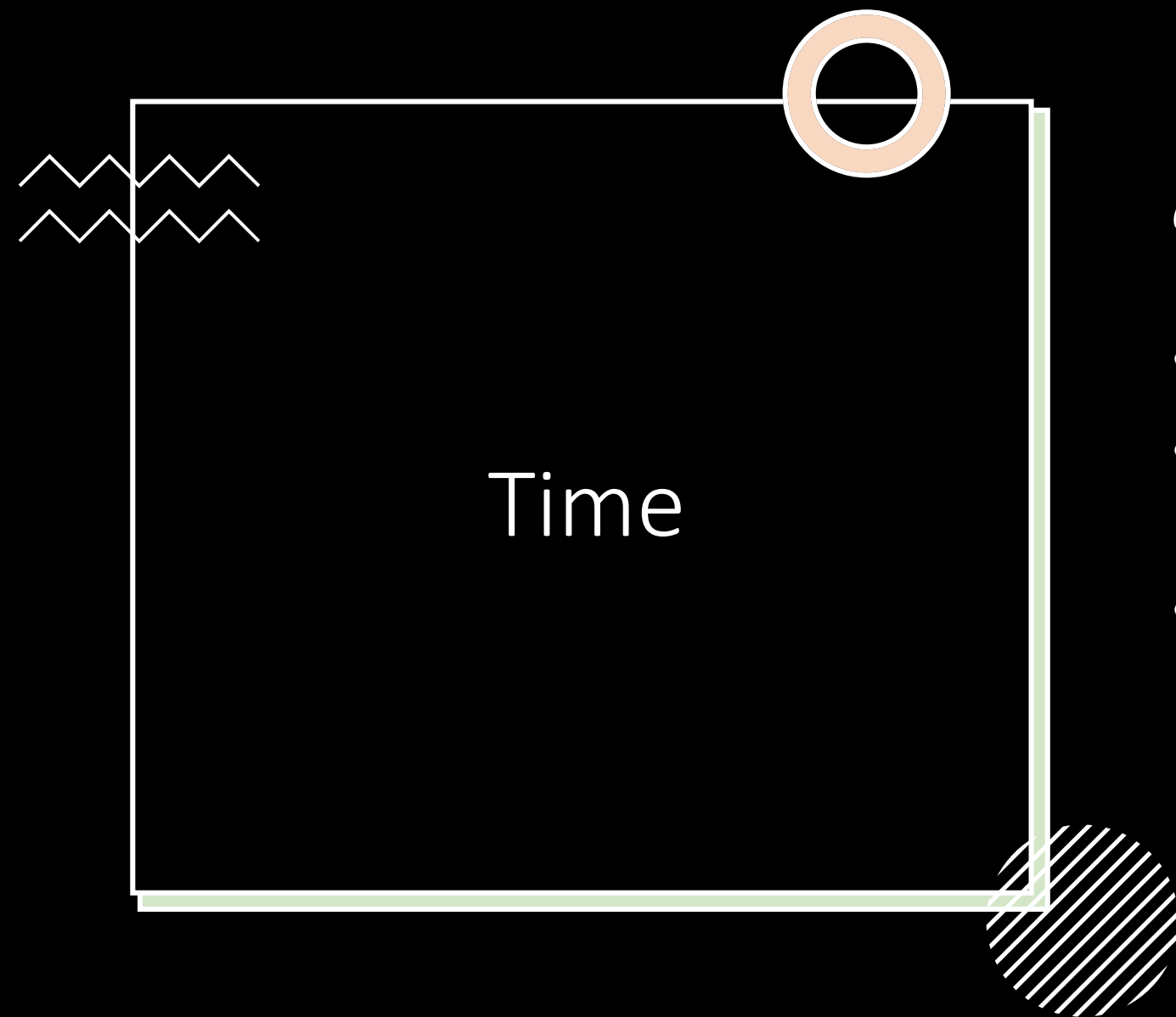
# A Path Forward: Trust

## 1. Trusted Messages

- Use the science of health communication
- Rely on the best, accurate, science, data & information (at the time)
- Validity and reliability checks are necessary → what's the lived experience?

## 2. Trusted Messengers

- Pass the mic
- Elevate the voice of community
- Strengthen the voice of local trusted sources
- Explore the role of influencers



*Time heals wounds, in the  
absence of further injury*

*-Debra Furr-Holden*

- Respect where people are
- Honor the 'No', it may be a 'no for now'
- Invest the time and resources



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# Contact Information and Questions