

Cincinnati resident stages hunger strike at Ohio Statehouse for PTSD awareness

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Author Ronald Hummons calls for a state of emergency on trauma in black community.

For Cincinnati author Ronald Hummons, PTSD symptoms show up in the form of nightmares, migraines and daily, chronic pain.

“There’s not a time that I just feel normal,” he said. “I’m trying to get to a place now where I’m not just surviving. So that’s why I went to go seek out help.”

Hummons not only wants others to seek help, but is calling for the Ohio government to declare a state of emergency on trauma in the African-American community. That’s why he is in the midst of a 48-hour hunger strike, which began on Wednesday, Dec. 12.

“PTSD is killing us,” said Hummons, who has been wearing signage and buttons, and going live on social media during the strike. “It’s killing us economically. It’s killing us socially. It’s just having a huge effect on us on so many levels.”

Hummons traced the root of his PTSD to his turbulent childhood, marked by abandonment and abuse. He said those repeated, traumatic experiences set him up for

failure. He eventually spent time in prison before turning his life around.

But he wasn't able to prevent his son, Trepierre Hummons, from succumbing to his own mental health challenges. The 21-year-old's death was ruled "suicide by cop." On June 19, 2015, he fatally shot Cincinnati Police Officer Sonny Kim, and was shot and killed by responding officers.

"I'm actually getting ready to release a video of the actual cell phone footage of when it happened," Hummons said. "I want people to see [it] because this is what PTSD looks like in our community."

Hummons is a motivational speaker, entrepreneur and author, who released his autobiography, *Diamond*, earlier this year. But his son's death has inspired him to change his platform to PTSD.

"I've had so much support," he said of the response he has received at the Statehouse. "I've had a lot of people come down and meet him. Stuff that I've put up on Facebook has gone viral."

Hummons said trauma wires the brain for survival. "That's all we know in the African-American community. Most of us don't know living. ... It's time for somebody to breathe life into our communities, so, I figure, let me be that person."