What about Me: Using Grounded Theory to Understand How African-American Counseling Professionals become Multiculturally Competent

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WHAT ABOUT ME: USING GROUNDED THEORY TO UNDERSTAND HOW AFRICAN-AMERICAN COUNSELING PROFESSIONALS BECOME MULTICULTURALLY COMPETENT

by

Binaca T. L. Fetherson

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
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Eurocentrism in multicultural education and training cannot provide a full and accurate understanding of Black/African-American reality. Therefore, the training of Black/African-Americans in psychology is, indeed, dismal (Nobles, 1986). Consequently, Black/African-American trainees in a predominately White training environment are not learning how to help Black/African people become healthy, for health is assumed and taught under Eurocentric guidelines. Thus, research that is deliberately intended to explore the process by which Black/African-American trainees who are receiving their training in a predominately White environment become multiculturally competent is greatly needed.

Given that multicultural competence functions as an interactive dynamic social sequel that is constantly changing, the unique challenges wrought by deeply entrenched racism and oppression consistently faced by Black/African-Americans warrants attention in multicultural education and training. Particularly, "how" they are able to become multiculturally competent with barriers such as racialization and limited training intended for their needs must be addressed.

In this study, purposeful sampling was used to select nine Black/African-
American counseling professionals throughout the United States. Selection of potential participants was based on criteria aimed at providing data that was rich and detailed the process by which Black/African-American counseling professionals develop multicultural competence. All nine participants consented to participate in an in-depth individual interview and based on the responses from these interviews open-ended questions were created for two on-line focus groups that were created and held via internet. Six out of the nine participants consented to participate in the on-line focus group discussions.

Through the systematic design of grounded theory, the essential dynamics involved in the process by which Black/African-American counseling professionals become multiculturally competent emerged and a resultant theoretical framework was established. The Moving toward a Multicultural Framework for the Development of Multicultural Competence of Black/African American Counseling Professionals (MMCBA) model, depicts that a multicultural framework is essential in optimizing the development of multicultural competence for Black/African-American trainees. This framework delineates Black/African-American trainees, race, multiculturalism, lived experiences as a minority, societal influences, attitudes, beliefs, and actions, interpersonal processes, multicultural education, and training as interactive, interconnected concepts fundamental to how Black/African-American trainees in predominately White training environments become multiculturally competent.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Existing research suggests, although progress has taken place, the counseling profession continues to be at a crossroads regarding diversity and multiculturalism. Much of the debate derives from “what is” multiculturalism and “how to” integrate it in theory, practice and research. The majority of published works address multiculturalism from a conceptual framework that explores how philosophical underpinnings of multiculturalism originating from definitions of constructs like race, ethnicity, and culture influences education, training, and clinical practice. Not having a consensus on what defines race, ethnicity, and culture has proven to be impalpable and creates confusion and ambiguity when defining multiculturalism and determining subsequent multicultural education and training approaches.

Multicultural education and training are primary methods used to prepare counseling professionals to work with racial and ethnic minorities and other diverse populations (Abreu, Chung, & Atkinson, 2000; Seward, 2007). Despite multicultural education and training approaches being described as falling on a continuum, most training programs rely on the one-course method to facilitate the development of multicultural competence of students and trainees (Toporek & Pope-Davis, 2005). The focus of race and ethnicity is reduced and becomes less important when training programs rely on the one-course method, persist with a Eurocentric approach, and have not noticeably integrate multicultural issues throughout training. Remarkably, “most programs are providing training that leads to, at best multicultural sensitivity, but very
few appear to be providing training that prepares practitioners to be multiculturally proficient” (Quintana & Bernal, 1995, p.102).

Eurocentrism in education and training cannot provide a full and accurate understanding of Black/African-American reality. Therefore, the training of Black/African-Americans in psychology is, indeed, dismal (Nobles, 1986). Consequently, Black/African-American trainees in a predominately White training environment are not learning how to help Black/African people become healthy, for health is assumed and taught under Eurocentric guidelines. Thus, research that is deliberately intended to explore the process by which Black/African-American trainees who are receiving their training in a predominately White environment become multiculturally competent is greatly needed.

Multiculturalism; multicultural education and training; multicultural counseling and therapy; multicultural competency; and Black/African-American racial identity development were the specific content areas within the existing literature that helped frame and define the overall research question; *What about me: Using grounded theory to understand how African-American counseling professionals become multiculturally competent.*

**Problem**

The relationship between multicultural competency and racial identity has been considered extensively in the multicultural literature pertaining to its influences on multicultural education and training and counseling related interventions. Most of the attention given has focused on White trainees (e.g. Parker, Moore, & Neimeyer, 1998; Neville, Heppner, Louie, Thomson, Brooks, & Baker, 1996; Ottavi, Pope-Davis,
Dings, 1994). This poses a problem, in particular for racial minorities such as Black/African-Americans who do not require the same exploratory process of race issues and racial identity as Whites. Black/African-American trainees need to explore being racially oppressed, while, White trainees explore their role in racial oppression (Rooney, Flores, & Mericier, 1998). For example, a prolific number of researchers contend that peoples of African descent have had the most difficulty with self-identification because of deep-seated racism and oppression throughout the American social system (DeGruy-Leary, 2005; Taylor, 2000). Furthermore, Negy (1999) argued that multicultural research falls short in attending to the idea that racial minorities like Black/African-Americans can hold biases towards Whites, members of their own racial group, and other minorities. The lack of exploring race issues, difficulties with self-identification, biases, and racist socialization (internalizing the deprecating attitudes and beliefs that are often rooted in racism) are likely to be barriers in Black/African-American trainees developing a positive racial identity, and in turn, becoming multiculturally competent.

**Purpose**

Given that multicultural competence functions as an interactive dynamic social sequel that is constantly changing, the unique challenges wrought by deeply entrenched racism and oppression consistently faced by Black/African-Americans warrants attention in multicultural education and training. Particularly, “how” they are able to become multiculturally competent with barriers such as racialization and limited training intended for their needs must be addressed. This study gained insight into how Black/African-American counseling professionals define multiculturalism, experience multicultural education and training, and employ these in their work with clients and supervisees to
become multiculturally competent. The ultimate goal of this study was to expand on existing multicultural literature by using the experiences and worldviews of Black/African-American counseling professionals to develop an explanatory framework or model that depicts the underlying dynamics involved in their development of multicultural competence. Because I, myself, am an African-American woman who aspires to be a multiculturally competent counseling psychologist, the purpose of this dissertation was more than simply answering a mere research question, it was a quest for a deeper understanding of the process by which Black/African-American counseling professionals develop multicultural competence.

**Significance**

Black/African-American counseling professionals were exclusively focused on for several reasons. First, the researcher is personally connected to the research topic as an African-American woman who is concerned with the education and training needs of Black/African-Americans and the essentials to facilitate their ability to provide culturally proficient mental health services. Second, since the manifestations of racial oppression in America has been profoundly detrimental to Black/African-Americans (e.g. slavery), Black/African-American counseling professionals are likely to have a unique perspective about multiculturalism and how they should be educated and trained to be able to provide multicultural counseling and therapy. Finally, because of the racial history of Black/African-Americans in the U.S., understanding the development of multicultural competency in Black/African-American counseling professionals has implications for research, training, and practice.

Emergent data from the collective experiences of Black/African-American
counseling professionals describing how they become multiculturally competent should perhaps inform the way multicultural therapy and supervision is discussed in the literature and could potentially improve current education and training practices regarding Black/African-American trainees.

**Definition of Terms**

One of the challenges in exploring this research topic is the pervasive confusion and lack of consensus regarding terminology used to describe social constructs pertaining to the distinct content areas that helped frame and define the overall research question. Providing clarity on how terms are used in this dissertation study is essential to understanding how the research topic is framed. Thereby, brief descriptions of terms and how they are used in this present study are listed below.

**Black/African-American**

Racial terms typically evolve out of sociopolitical forces situated in historical contexts. For example, Colored, Negro, Black, Black American, person/people of color, and African-American have all been used to describe people of African descent. Wellman’s (1971) study of racial identity conducted before the Black power movement of the 60’s, revealed that only 23% of Black participants identified themselves by race, with nearly all of them using the term Negro. Rotheram-Borus’s (1990) study further illustrated how racial terms evolve out of social and political forces. She reported in 1990, that 87% of adolescent participants chose the label Black, while 6% chose Afro-American, and 5% Negro. Since there are numerous descriptions used in the multicultural literature to describe people of African descent, the term Black and/or African-American was used in this study to describe the population. These terms were consistent with how
this population is discussed in the literature and respected how the participants chose to describe the construct.

**Counseling Field/Counseling Profession**

The counseling field/profession was created to address and treat mental disorders, by means of psychotherapy, diagnosis, treatment planning, testing, psychoeducation, etc. The counseling field/profession consists of individuals who are educated and trained to practice in a range of settings, including university counseling centers; outpatient; inpatient; community mental health agencies; individual and group private practice; and similar settings where counseling and mental health services are provided.

**Counseling Professional**

The American Psychological Association (APA) recognizes counseling psychology and clinical psychology as specialties within psychology and provides accreditation to qualifying educational programs in both. Each specialty prepares students/trainees for a wide range of teaching, research, clinical, and counseling positions in a variety of settings. A doctoral degree generally requires about 5 years of full-time graduate study. Therefore, based on the set curricula, a fourth year or beyond doctoral student has typically completed course work in multicultural education and has most likely completed clinical practicum trainings but has yet to fulfill requirements to earn their doctorate (i.e. intern; ABD {all requirements completed but dissertation}). The title counseling professional is used in this study to reflect the aforementioned individuals and psychologists of both specialties with or without their license.
Multicultural Competence (MC)

After careful review of the literature, Sue and colleagues (Sue et al., 1992; Sue et al., 1982) developed 31 multicultural counseling competencies (MCCs) that delineated the knowledge and skills counseling professionals need to be able to attend to cultural factors in clients' lives and in counseling. Sue et al. (1992), argued that counseling professionals should obtain self-awareness, assess their beliefs and attitudes regarding other cultures, understand how various forms of oppression influence counseling, appreciate and respect other cultural norms and value systems, and skillfully use culturally appropriate assessments and interventions. Thus, multiculturally competent counseling professionals are defined as those who have self-awareness of values and biases, understand client worldviews, and intervene in a culturally appropriate manner (Sue & Sue, 2003).

Multicultural Counseling and Therapy (MCT)

There is a lack of consensus regarding what multiculturalism is and how it should be taught and practiced. For the most part, there appear to be two primary definitions of multiculturalism in the literature. The broad perspective includes all cultural variables from race to disability and thereby, the construct of multiculturalism becomes generic and suitable for all counseling relationships. According to Speight, Myers, Cox and Highlen (1991), in essence all counseling relationships are multicultural. On the other hand, a narrow approach describes multiculturalism in terms of ‘visible racial ethnic minority groups’ (e.g. Black/African-Americans, Native Americans, etc.) and considers multicultural counseling and therapy as counseling issues involving these groups. Das (1995) declares that these definitions “do not tell much about the real world of
multicultural counseling...and that multicultural counseling and therapy should also include (a) an ethnic minority counselor counseling a White client, (b) an ethnic minority counselor working with a client belonging to a different ethnic minority group, or (c) any other dyadic combination in which the client and the counselor come from markedly different cultural backgrounds, on the basis of social class, sexual orientation, or disability” (p.45). This study modifies traditional notions of multicultural counseling and therapy to suit the concept that racial minorities, in this case Black/African-Americans, are the providers of mental health services to members of their own racial cultural group and a variety of diverse populations to frame how the topic will be discussed when interviewing participants.

**Multicultural Education and Training**

Multicultural education and training is defined as educating and training counseling professionals the skills, knowledge, and sensitivity to work with diverse populations (Abreu et al., 2000; Iglehart & Becerra, 2007; Sue & Sue, 1990; Sue et al., 1992).

**Multiculturalism**

In view of the counseling profession’s debate of “what is” multiculturalism and “how” to integrate it in theory, research, and practice, the researcher asked each participant to provide their definition and perspective of the phenomenon and the related distinct content areas.

**Summary of Methodology**

Because of their interactive dynamic nature rooted in social interactions that are constantly changing, constructs like race, ethnicity, and multiculturalism have proven to
be difficult to quantify. Qualitative research provides an in-depth interpretation of a phenomenon from the perspective of the research participant(s) (Marshall & Rossman, 2006) with the understanding that individuals assign meaning to the objective world, that their valued experiences are situated within a historical and social context, and that there can be multiple realities (Benoliel, 1984; Tesch, 1990). The intent of this study was to use grounded theory, a systematic qualitative research approach, to create a model that explains the multicultural competency process of Black/African-American counseling professionals, and, in turn give voice to a population that is often overlooked or misunderstood. Thus, qualitative research methods are more than suitable to explore how Black/African-American counseling professionals describe and experience distinct related content areas (e.g. multicultural education) associated with the development of multicultural competence.

**Grounded Theory**

Grounded theory is “one of the most established and respected qualitative methods” (Fassinger, 2005, p.133). It is a qualitative paradigm that is “grounded in data collected from participants on the basis of the complexities of their lived experiences in a social context” (Fassinger, 2005, p.157). There are three approaches to grounded theory, the systematic procedures of Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998); the emerging design of Glaser (1992); and the constructivist approach of Charmaz (2000).

This study used the systematic design of Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) for a number of reasons, including having a systematic approach for developing useful theories by means of analytic tools to organize raw data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998); having a
preexisting framework for emergent categories; and going beyond description to discover an abstract theory for a identified phenomenon (Creswell, 2007).

**Participants**

In this study, purposeful sampling was used to select nine Black/African-American counseling professionals throughout the United States. Selection of potential participants was based on criteria aimed at providing data that was rich and detailed the process by which Black/African-American counseling professionals develop multicultural competence. Thus, participants who identified with the Black/African-American racial group had been exposed to multicultural education and training and have had at least one multicultural counseling experience were selected to participate. Lastly, as a means to participate in the on-line focus group discussions, participants had access to a computer and were proficient enough to participate in the on-line focus group discussions. A table of participants’ demographic background information is provided in Chapter 3 of the dissertation. In short, three males and six females participated in the study.

**Participant Recruitment**

Gatekeepers as well as snowball sampling, a kind of chain referral sampling (Jeffri, 2004; Rowan & Huston, 1997) were used to recruit participants. Gatekeepers, individuals who were initial contacts for the researcher, remained critical in this study to gain access to participants on a national level. The gatekeepers were individuals with whom the researcher had established a trusting relationship either through professional or educational endeavors. The gatekeepers were either counseling professionals themselves or worked in a closely related field (e.g. social work). For all intents and purposes, the
gatekeeper’s role was to simply identify potential participants and distribute recruitment materials to them. Once participants received recruitment materials they were free to contact the researcher with any questions or concerns they may have before consenting to participate in the research study.

Snowball sampling involved participants who referred the researcher to other individuals who could potentially meet the criteria to participate in and contribute to the study. Snowball sampling is often used to find and recruit “hidden populations”, that is groups not easily accessible to researchers through other sampling strategies (Rowan & Huston, 1997).

**Synopsis of Data Collection: Individual Interviews and Focus Group Discussions**

All nine participants, whether in-person or over the phone, participated in a 45-90 minute semi-structured interview. All interviews were recorded using an audio-recording device. The researcher deliberately asked open-ended questions related to the research topic to allow the participants to answer in their own words. Also, specific questions and probes were posed in a conversational manner to further explore participants’ responses and descriptions of experiences related to the research question.

Following the individual interviews, two on-line focus groups were created. The Internet was used to conduct the on-line focus group discussions. The on-line discussions took place on a free message board program (whataboutme.myfreeforum.org) that participants with Internet access used to read, post, and transfer messages with each other. The open-ended questions that were used to moderate the on-line focus group discussions were based on the responses from the previous in-depth individual interviews. The on-line focus groups were extended to two weeks as opposed to the
proposed one-week due to low participation in the on-line focus group discussions. Participants were asked to engage in discussions at their convenience, at least three days out of a week, over the course of two weeks. There were two separate on-line focus groups where group II began after group I. Each focus group had three participants, totaling six participants altogether that participated in the on-line focus group discussions.

After data collection from individual interviews and the two on-line focus group discussions, Participant 1 was interviewed individually for the second time to provide clarification on what had been learned so far from the emergent data. It should also be noted that this participant chose not to participate in the on-line focus groups.

Data Analysis

The data analysis procedure for a grounded theory study is the constant comparative method. The constant comparative method involves four levels of coding and analysis: (1) open coding; (2) axial coding; (3) selective coding; and (4) construction of the explanatory framework or model. The basic idea is to move raw data through successive levels of abstraction to develop a core idea/phenomenon that best depicts the research topic. Utilizing this method, data were analyzed during the initial data collection period (individual interviews) and emerging understanding of the phenomena from analysis was used in gaining insight of the phenomena in later data collection (focus groups). Concepts, categories, and phenomena identified during open coding were linked together as part of the axial coding process to create the theoretical framework (MMCBA model) that describes the phenomenon (the process by which Black/African-American counseling professionals become multiculturally competent) being studied.
Results

The essential dynamics involved in the process by which Black/African-American counseling professionals become multiculturally competent emerged and a resultant theoretical framework was established. The MMCBA (moving towards a Multicultural framework for the development of Multicultural Competence for Black/African-American trainees) model depicts that a multicultural framework is essential in optimizing the development of multicultural competence for Black/African-American trainees. This framework delineates Black/African-American trainees, race, multiculturalism, their lived experiences as a minority, environment, societal influences, their attitudes, beliefs, and actions, interpersonal processes, multicultural education, and training as interactive, interconnected concepts fundamental to how Black/African-American trainees in predominately White training environments become multiculturally competent.

With Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems theory as a foundation, The MMCBA model explains and conceptualizes the above mentioned concepts as multiple active subsystems (i.e., microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem) that influence the development of multicultural competence for Black/African-American trainees. Additionally, the MMCBA model provides a global perspective that involves taking a broader, more critical view of trainees’ experience, knowledge and learning, while seeking to understand the context and interrelationships of the environment that effects their development.
Limitations

Every participant in this study possessed a strong identification with the Black/African-American racial cultural group. Therefore, participants were likely to endorse a perspective that centralizes race. This may have an influence on how participants defined multiculturalism; experienced multicultural education and training; and characterized what multicultural competence involves. A sample consisting of 4th year and beyond doctoral students and counseling professionals increases the potential of participants being socialized to favor multiculturalism and multicultural issues. For example, every participant advocated for the early onset and full integration of multiculturalism and multicultural issues in education and training.

Each participant was asked to engage in the on-line focus group discussions, however, due to low participation, on-line focus group discussions were extended for two weeks as a means to increase participation. Ultimately, only six out of nine participants participated in the focus groups, and the amount of conversation between participants was quite limited.

Implications

Training programs must make a paradigm shift from cultural sensitivity to cultural intentionality, being purposeful in transforming attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors about multicultural issues and multiculturalism. Cultural proficiency empowers a professional identity that does not conflict with racially or culturally defined identities; goes beyond intellectualizing multicultural issues to unconditional positive regard; transforms generic, basic skills and knowledge to proficient skills that are appropriate and effective. At the organizational level, cultural proficiency enables training programs to
create an inclusive and instructionally powerful learning environment that values
diversity and preserves the cultural dignity of trainees.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided the statement of the problem and a brief overview of the
present study. The most important consideration in this chapter was the research question
that guided this dissertation, *What about me: Using grounded theory to understand how
African-American counseling professionals become multiculturally competent?* Chapter 2
provides a review of the literature associated with the specific content areas
(multiculturalism; multicultural education and training; multicultural counseling and
therapy; multicultural competency; and Black/African-American racial identity
development) that helped frame and define the overall research question. Chapter 3
presents the methodology for the study, including an overview of the grounded theory
approach, sampling, data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 reports the results of the
study. Finally, Chapter 5 describes the findings, limitations, and implications of the
study.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Gilbert Wrenn’s (1962) historic article, “The Culturally Encapsulated Counselor”, set the stage for a revolutionary counseling movement that fundamentally changed the counseling field and the way counseling professionals thought about human development, mental health, and counseling approaches concerning culturally diverse populations. Since that time, much attention has been given to multicultural issues to the point that multiculturalism is said to be the fourth force in psychology (Pedersen, 1991).

Indeed, the civil rights movement of the 60’s and 70’s primed counseling professions to take notice of multiculturalism and set specific identifiable competencies regarding multicultural counseling and therapy (Helms 1994; Robinson & Morris, 2000). The governing bodies of these professions primarily created multicultural competencies in hopes that counseling professionals would gain an “understanding of the manner in which race, culture, and ethnicity, and so forth may affect personality formation, vocational choices, manifestation of psychological disorders, help-seeking behaviors, and the appropriateness or inappropriateness of counseling approaches” (Robinson & Morris, 2000, p.243).

Multicultural literature that focuses on multicultural counseling and therapy explores the impact sociocultural forces have on psychological processes (Axelson, 1994; Marsella, 1985). There is plenty of multicultural research (e.g. Hills & Strozier, 1992; Hood & Arceneaux, 1987; Locke, 1990; Parker & McDavis, 1979) that cites
multicultural education and training as strategies to improve trainees’ effectiveness with culturally diverse populations. Compared to the conceptual pieces, there have been only a few studies that explored multicultural competency from an empirical standpoint. These studies examined the relationship between multicultural competency and the level of trainees’ racial identity; for White trainees in particular (Burkard, Ponterotto, Reynolds, & Alfonso, 1999; Ottavi, et. al, 1994; Parker, Moore, & Neimeyer, 1998 Utsey & Gernat, 2002; Neville et al., 1996). Racial minorities, Black/African-American trainees specifically, have rarely been the focus of such research. This study expands on existing multicultural literature by focusing solely on the development of multicultural competence of Black/African-American counseling professionals.

Multiculturalism; multicultural education and training; multicultural counseling and therapy; multicultural competency; and Black/African-American racial identity development were the specific content areas within the existing literature that helped frame and define the overall research question; *What about me: Using grounded theory to understand how African-American counseling professionals become multiculturally competent.*

**Multiculturalism**

Multiculturalism as a “fourth force” originated within the civil rights and other social movements of the 1960’s (Pedersen, 1991). In fact, some researchers have referred to multiculturalism as a possible solution to a long history of racial and ethnic oppression in the United States (Díaz, 2005). With growing acknowledgement of these issues, the counseling profession has started to consider the integration of race, culture and other
aspects of human socialization into education and training; and mental health assessment and delivery (Pederson, 1991).

The growing demands by minority groups for recognition and equality, often linked to the concept of multiculturalism, prompted an expansion of diversity from traditional racial and ethnic divisions to include gender, social class, religion, sexual orientation, age, and physical and mental ability (Díaz, 2005). Broadly conceived, multiculturalism takes into account issues of race, ethnicity, culture, social class, sexual orientation, gender, physical ability, age, and religious preference (Pedersen, 1991). This definition of multiculturalism leads to the inclusion of a large number of variables, which in turn, causes multiculturalism to be generic and nonspecific.

Locke (1992) along with other multicultural scholars, advocate for a more narrow approach, and maintain that including other oppressed groups like women, or gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals in the definition is the counseling fields’ way to lessen or ignore the central issue: racism. He further asserts that a broad perspective permits individuals from the dominant group to keep away from the spotlight and avoid understanding the racism in the situation, which often leads to ‘blaming the victim’. Sedlacek and Brooks (1976) are convinced that a broad viewpoint of multiculturalism allows individuals from the dominant group to insist on discussions that follow their rules which is most likely to avert attention from themselves and their worldviews.

Social constructs such as race are often used to conceptualize multiculturalism, whether from a broad or narrow perspective. This continues to be a problem since these constructs cannot be quantified and an agreement on what defines race, ethnicity, and culture has proven to be impalpable. Not having a consensus on what defines social
constructs like race, ethnicity, and culture creates confusion and ambiguity when defining multiculturalism and determining subsequent multicultural education and training approaches.

**Multicultural Education and Training**

Since the 1970s, many scholars have explored and put forth ideas concerning multicultural education and training; most of these have been conceptual pieces. Hulnick (1977) proclaimed that counseling professionals in training should know themselves, their inhibitions, and what makes them personally uncomfortable when providing services to others. Hulnick believed that if counseling professionals are able to identify and work through their own problems then they are more effective with their clients. Parker and McDavis (1979) recommended that counseling professionals become aware of their attitudes, feelings, perceptions, and behaviors toward racial/ethnic minorities and designed the awareness group experience (AGE) to aid in this process.

Henderson (1979) believed that counseling professionals in training should learn about minorities in a way that provides knowledge about geographic location, socioeconomic status, educational information, vocational information, and family relationships. Harper (1973) proposed that if counseling professionals are to expand their perceptual fields, understand the world of their Black clients, and have the ability to interpersonalize across racial lines, they are to first acquire knowledge and awareness of the history, sociology, economics, and psychology of Black Americans.

Copeland (1982) advanced the notion of consciousness raising and advocated for training activities that help counseling professionals become more familiar with a particular ethnic culture. Along with consciousness raising, Weiner (1983) supported the
idea of using the actual client as a vehicle for obtaining knowledge about their particular
culture. Whereas, Pedersen (1977) stressed skill development and used role plays to
increase counseling professionals in training effectiveness with culturally diverse clients.

Lloyd (1987) had a much different opinion. He challenged counseling professions
to think seriously about the consequences of infusing multicultural matters in education
and training of counseling professionals. In his article, *Multicultural counseling: Does it
belong in a counselor education*, he declared that faulty assumptions, exaggerated
generalizations, and stereotypes would obscure counselors’ attention to the uniqueness of
the individual. Because of this, Lloyd expressed when providing mental health services to
culturally diverse individuals it is better to be uninformed about these cultural groups
than it is to be knowledgeable about them, even if this knowledge is important and
accurate. Hood and Arceneaux’s (1987) conceptualization of multicultural education and
training puts forth an opposing view and conveys that “multicultural counseling courses
are based on the supposition that studying about cultures and particular groups yields
much useful information that is often critical in the counseling process” (p.173).
Likewise, Parker (1987) indicated that Lloyd “is evidently not aware, however, of the
steps the profession as well as individuals has taken to prevent such attitudes or
behaviors” (p.176). Hood and Arceneaux, and Parker agree that the knowledge acquired
from multicultural education and training provides counseling professionals with theories
and conceptual frameworks that are advantageous to the counseling process and that
counseling professionals must synthesize pertinent information, make proper
generalizations, and recognize that created stereotypes are not fitting for all (Hood &
Arceneaux, 1987; Parker, 1987).
Empirical studies addressing multicultural education and training (e.g., Arredondo-Dowd & Gonsalves, 1980; Bernal & Padilla, 1982) revealed that even though a number of respondents “agreed in principle with the need for expanded training and clinical experience in multicultural issues, their actual course and practica offerings did not mirror this attitude” (Hills & Strozier, p.43). However, Hills and Strozier’s (1992) survey of APA-approved counseling psychology doctoral programs demonstrated the counseling professions’ efforts to provide education and training pertaining to culturally diverse clients. Of the 80% of APA-approved counseling doctoral programs surveyed, 87% offered at least one multicultural course and 59% of the programs indicated that this was a required course. Yet, there is increasing evidence that trained counseling professionals are ill-prepared to effectively provide services to individuals from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural groups whose values, attitudes, and lifestyles are different from the majority racial group (Padilla, Boxley, & Wagner, 1973; Patterson, 1995; Pedersen, 1976). Effective multicultural skills are critical because, as Ponterotto and Casas (1991) pointed out, counseling professionals who try to provide services to individuals who are culturally different without the proper multicultural training may be acting unethically (Johannes, & Erwin, 2004).

While multiculturalism has been deemed as the fourth force in psychology (Pederson, 1990), there are challenges in translating this rhetoric into action (Speight, Thomas, Kennel, & Anderson, 1995). The predicament is no longer whether to incorporate multicultural concepts in graduate training but what kind of multicultural training is suitable and how this incorporation should take place (Ridley et al., 1994). As specified by Locke (1990), “the purpose of multicultural counselor education is to train
practitioners who are capable of demonstrating counseling effectiveness with a variety of culturally different clients...the focus of training should be on learning to work with different cultures rather than merely learning about cultures” (p.18).

**Multicultural Education and Training Approaches**

A close look at the multicultural literature indicates that the philosophical underpinnings of multicultural training approaches can be categorized into five different types: (1) Universal (e.g., Fukuyama, 1990, Ivey, 1987; Lloyd, 1987; Parker, 1987); (2) Ubiquitous (e.g., Pedersen, 1977; Ponterotto, 1988, Sue et al., 1982); (3) Traditional (e.g., Arredondo, 1985; Christiansen, 1989; Copeland, 1982; Leong & Kim, 1991; Nwachuku & Ivey, 1991; Parker, Valley, & Geary, 1986; Ponterotto & Casas, 1987); (4) Race-base (e.g., Carney & Kahn, 1984; Corvin & Wiggins, 1989; McRae & Johnson, 1991; Ponterotto, 1988; Sabnani, Ponterotto, & Borodovsky, 1991; Sue, Akutsu, & Higashi, 1985); and (5) Pan-National (e.g., Bulhan, 1985; Myers, 1988). The classification system and each of these categories are positioned in the sociopolitical events in U.S. history. In addition, it is presumed that although educators and trainers may use various approaches and techniques, they operate from basic and fundamental assumptions about multiculturalism.

**Universal**

“The Universal or Etic approach to culture holds that all people are basically the same as human beings; intragroup (within-group) differences are greater than intergroup (between-group) differences. This approach is espoused implicitly by traditional psychology theory and practice” (Carter & Qureshi, 1995, p.243). The principal assumption of the universal approach is that the human bond surpasses all lived
experiences. Therefore, we are, above all else, human beings and our identity and lived experiences originating in our cultural reference groups comes second. The universal approach emphasizes the uniqueness of the individual and understands the person in the context of their various cultural reference groups. The goal is to affirm human similarities through universal constructs by focusing on shared human experiences (Carter et al., 1995).

Parker (1987) mentioned that counseling professionals “should transcend the race, ethnicity, religion, and culture of their client’s presenting problems and needs” and advocated a multifaceted approach to acquiring knowledge about clients’ culture (p. 179). Underlying this notion is the basic assumption that race, ethnicity, and culture can be transcended rather than avoided, resisted, repressed or denied (Carter & Qureshi, 1995). Parker insisted that effective therapy entails the counseling professional going beyond the client’s cultural variables and that a focus on such variables would take away from the counseling process. The implication here is that cultural variables are not significant facets of psychosocial development.

Multicultural education and training stemming from the Universal approach of multiculturalism would teach and train counseling professionals about ‘special populations’ from a unifying perspective with the aim to do away with salient cultural variables using the melting pot concept. The advantage of using this approach in education and training is that it lends to the idea that human beings have many characteristics that contribute to their uniqueness and individuality. However, this approach tends to ‘downplay sociopolitical history and intergroup power dynamics by
assuming that one group membership has no more meaning than any other” (Carter & Qureshi, 1995, p. 246).

**Ubiquitous**

The fundamental assumption of the Ubiquitous approach is that virtually all socially constructed identities (e.g., race, sexual orientation, class, etc.) and/or common experiences are constitutive of culture. “People can belong, then, to multiple groups and cultures, which are situationally determined according to the specific group within which the individual is participating” (Carter & Qureshi, 1995, p.246). For example, the Ubiquitous approach would suggest that a lesbian White woman and a heterosexual White woman are fundamentally culturally different and that the counseling relationship must consider this culture difference and its affects (Carter & Qureshi, 1995). From the Ubiquitous standpoint, an individual’s shared lived experiences or social identities are more important than mainstream American cultural frameworks. The point that this approach is attempting to make is that it is the individual’s choice to associate with an identity that is guided/informed/determined by the socially constructed reference group.

The intent of the Ubiquitous approach in multicultural education and training, is to increase the counseling professional’s awareness of and comfort level with cultural differences between them-self and the client. Pedersen’s (1977) triad training model is based on the Ubiquitous approach and utilizes cultural sensitivity as a means to enhance counseling professionals’ ability to empathize with and understand the client from the client’s perspective, given the client’s cultural background. The ultimate goal of this approach is to teach counseling professionals in training how to acknowledge, honor, and accept each person’s social identity. This approach is beneficial in multicultural
education and training because it does not view socially constructed identities that differ from the dominant culture as a deficit. “At the same time, the Ubiquitous approach can lead to avoidance and denial of particular groups’ sociopolitical histories, intergroup power dynamics, and the relative salience of various reference group memberships” (Carter & Qureshi, 1995, p.247).

**Traditional**

According to the traditional approach, culture is the context in which different social constructs are expressed and membership in a cultural group is established by birth, upbringing, and environment. Therefore, “cultural membership is not a function of social affiliations or a within-culture reference group... (it) circumscribes the types of social and personality dynamics possible; thus culture is an adaptive phenomenon” (Carter & Qureshi, 1995, p.249). Moreover, these cultural norms, values, and manifestations are created in response to environmental occurrences; in this regards, culture is viewed in a broader sense.

Supporters of the traditional approach uphold the idea that counseling students and trainees are to experience and be exposed to a new culture for cultural knowledge to be obtained. Nwachuku and Ivey (1991) talked of using ‘cultural informants’, individuals or families that serve as liaisons or representatives of the entire group, to acquire cultural knowledge. McDavis and Parker (1977) used videotapes and role-plays in their ethnic minority counseling course to expose trainees to a new culture with the expectation that they will learn how to assess and counsel these individuals. Parker et al. (1986) advocated that students and trainees should immerse themselves in some kind of direct contact with minorities to increase their effectiveness with ethnic minority clients. In essence, the
assumption is that the more direct contact trainees have with culturally diverse individuals the more at ease they will become in their work with them.

The downside to the Traditional approach is that there is little consideration given to racial and cultural differences that are attributes of racism (Carter & Qureshi, 1995). There is almost no thought given to social hierarchy in terms of culture dynamics and how this affects cultural development. Cultural anthropology, the backbone of the Traditional approach, typically forgoes the discussion of race on the basis that race is a false construct. Furthermore, the Traditional anthropological framework suggests, “one is a member of a particular culture by accident of birth, not by any psychological choice process” (Carter & Qureshi, 1995, p.250).

Race-Base

The premise behind the Race-base approach is that race is dominant in American society and that cultural groups are established based on racial categories. “The Race-base perspective situates culture according to race and racist practices in the American context” (Carter & Qureshi, 1995, p.251). Since race is the most visible of the entire social constructs and given the history of racism and racial segregation in the U.S., it has been and still is the primary measure of social exclusiveness and inclusiveness. As a result, this approach presumes that the practicality of being a member of a racial group surpasses all other experiences in the U.S. Nearly all Race-base theorists agree that sociopolitical experiences and race relations between Whites and visible racial /ethnic minorities are essential determinants of each individual’s psychosocial development (Carter, 1995; Copeland, 1982; Corvin & Wiggins, 1989; Helms, 1990; McRae & Johnson, 1991). Here racism is a function of cultural differences.
The Race-base approach theorizes that those who identify as White appear to have no interest in cultivating a consciousness about the injustices inherent in White privilege or taking any action to promote social change. For this reason, protagonists of the Race-base approach emphasize consciousness rising about racism and racial identity development in multicultural education and training (Carter, 1990, 1995; Helms, 1990; Katz, 1985; McRae & Johnson, 1991). Education and training should assist students and trainees in exploring their racial identity, along with social, cultural, and institutional racism as it pertains to the delivery of mental health services. While attention is given to the specifics of cultural knowledge, this is secondary and even responsive to the counseling professional trainee’s racial identity levels (Helms, 1990).

Unlike the other approaches mentioned thus far, the Race-base approach considers the significance of sociopolitical events on the development of racial identity. Even more, it introduces psychological variability of racial groups in a way that membership alone does not determine cultural affiliation (Carter & Qureshi, 1995). However, this approach requires a deeply personal and potentially painful journey of soul searching for any person, regardless of their race, to become aware of their racial socialization (Carter & Qureshi, 1995). “This pain and discomfort, coupled with social sanctions against confronting race and racism at both personal and social levels, often operates as an obstacle to racial identity development” (Carter & Qureshi, 1995, p.254).

As racism continues to play a part in inadequate service delivery of mental health services for racial/ethnic minorities, race and racism can no longer be avoided, denied, or ignored in multicultural education and training.
Pan-National

The Pan-National approach posits that race and racial group membership determines culture from a global perspective; a view that differs from the Race-base approach that deems culture to originate from a racially circumscribed sociopolitical history embedded in American culture (Carter & Qureshi, 1995). Afrocentrism, an approach that is rooted in the Pan-National presumption of difference, believes that all Blacks have the same basic biogenetic make-up. That being so, Afrocentric psychology aims to restore the original or African self-consciousness of Blacks (Azibo, 1990; Baldwin, 1991; Phillips, 1990). On account of the biogenetic determinacy of African self-consciousness, every one of Black-African descent is viewed as possessing the same basic psychosocial essence (Baldwin, 1980; Carter & Qureshi, 1995).

Given that the White-European worldview permeates psychology, Afrocentric psychologists believe that it obstructs the development and expression of African self-consciousness (Azibo, 1989; Baldwin, 1991). The goal of African psychology is to facilitate the client’s return to and expression of African self-consciousness. To accomplish this task, Baldwin (1991) argues that “we Black psychologists must first remove the alien Euro-centric self-consciousness from our own psyche that has so distorted our perception of our true role in the Black survival and liberation struggle of today” (p.75).

The psychology of oppression/liberation, a different Pan-National approach, emphasizes the encumbrance of European social theory on all non-European Whites (Bulhan, 1985). Proponents of this approach, in essence, support the idea that the European worldview has warped African self-consciousness. The objective is to raise
consciousness about the role of oppression and violence in individual’s lives that originated from colonialism and slavery. Both the psychology of oppression and Afrocentrism aim to empower clients, but by different processes: Afrocentrism seeks to return the client to their biogenetic basis, but the psychology of oppression seeks the attainment of collective liberty, such that the expression and the development of authentic biography is manifested (Carter & Qureshi, 1995).

Education and training programs using the Pan-National approach would teach counseling professionals to pay attention to and reject the power dynamics inherent in European psychology; this process begins with becoming aware of and emancipating themselves from Eurocentric psychology. The psychology of oppression focuses on the dynamics between oppression and psychosocial functioning and development, thus, counseling professionals learn to “unravel the relation of the psyche to the social structure, to rehabilitate the alienated, and to help transform social structures that thwart human needs (Bulhan, 1985, p. 195).

One of the benefits of using the Pan-National approach in multicultural education and training is that trainees begin to think about race and race relations from a global standpoint. The risk of denoting racial oppression, as the fundamental construct for cultural difference is that other social constructs such as gender, religion, and social class get overlooked.

**Application of Multicultural Education and Training**

A variety of instructional models created to enhance trainees’ multicultural competency level (e.g., Copeland, 1982; Sue, 1991; LaFromboise & Foster, 1992; Ridley, Mendoza, & Kanitz, 1992, 1994) were the counseling professions’ response to take
action concerning the development of multicultural competence through appropriate education, and training. LaFromboise and Foster (1992) advocated that counseling professionals who are trained as scientists-practitioners “would be more likely to demonstrate competence in research and clinical domains with the skills for testing assumptions in both areas” (p.484). Considering this premise, they designed a scientist-practitioner multicultural training model that infuses research, and practice, with the intent that culture is integrated into all learning experiences. Sue’s (1991) model of cultural diversity training appears to be a solution focused model in that it provides a framework for trainers to assess the specific training needs of a program by concentrating on the area of concern, the barriers to cultural diversity, and identifying the desired competencies.

Locke’s (1986) Multicultural Awareness Continuum is a lifelong, linear, developmental process that depicts the areas that the counseling professional must navigate through to be able to counsel a culturally different client. They must first navigate through self-awareness. According to Locke, self-awareness entails the counseling professional examining their own thoughts and feelings to gain insight into the cultural baggage they bring into the counseling process. The next phase, awareness of their own culture is about the counseling professional coming to terms with the notion that their culture and cultural baggage could potentially affect the counseling relationship and process. The next level consists of the counseling professional exploring and being aware of racism, sexism, and poverty from an individual basis to organizational behaviors to grasp the idea that organizational and societal prejudices effect the individual. The awareness of individual differences level requires the counseling professional to treat
clients as both individuals and members of their particular racial, ethnic, and or cultural group. The counseling professional becomes aware that although commonality exists, they must not overgeneralize. The previous levels provide the foundation necessary for counseling professionals to explore and appreciate the many different facets of other cultural groups. Counseling professionals at the awareness of diversity level understand and respect that the American society is a diverse society where aspects of different cultures are encouraged and appreciated while maintaining a unique cultural identity. The final level of Lock’s continuum addresses skills and techniques in working with clients. At this level, counseling professionals apply what they have learned about working with racially, ethnically, and/or culturally different groups and add specific strategies to their repertoire of counseling skills.

Even though there is little consensus concerning the most effective approach for multicultural education and training, the single multicultural counseling course remains the most common method used. Yet, most scholars agree that the single course method is not enough to foster the development of multicultural competence in counseling professionals. Midgett and Meggert (1991) declared that “offering a separate course in multicultural counseling does not meet minimum requirements to fulfill most multicultural competency standards” (p.136). The single course method has been primarily criticized for its lack in depth, its tendency to teach stereotypes, and the fact that it does not promote the integration of multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skill (Reynolds, 1995). Thus, Margolis and Rungta (1986) deemed the separate course design as contributing to trainees’ failure to recognize the whole person.
Concerns about what is needed to facilitate multicultural competency prompted scholars like Copeland (1982) and Ridley et al., (1994) to consider alternatives to the single course method that range from area of concentration to integrating multiculturalism into every aspect of education and training. With the area of concentration approach, trainees spend the majority of their time in different service provider roles with the designated minority group to increase specialization in that culture. Training programs typically experience difficulties with implementing this approach due to limited funds, lack of appropriate supervision, and limited access to populations. Programs using the interdisciplinary approach encourage trainees to infuse coursework from a closely related discipline into their program of study or training. A concern about implementing this approach is the risk of opposing views regarding multiculturalism, social interaction, and service delivery and impact these oppositions could have on training. Lastly, the integration approach, which is highly favored by many multicultural experts, incorporates multicultural issues into every course and aspect of training. “Research training within this model emphasizes the understanding of individual, cultural, and contextual differences and becomes an important mechanism for social action” (LaFromboise & Foster, 1992, p.475).

There has been a clear call for increased attention to multicultural education and training practices. Hence, an array of approaches and models of multicultural education and training have been created. Some stress skill development, some stress actual experiences with racial/ethnic minority clients, and others stress a host of other aspects (Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999). Regardless of the specific approach and model, the prime method for fostering multicultural competency in students and trainees is and has
been the classroom. In the past few years, multicultural counseling courses have been the most regularly added new courses among counselor preparation programs, with 87% of APA accredited counseling psychology programs offering at least one course on multicultural issues (Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999). Yet the one course method has been proven to be insufficient in fostering multicultural competence. Thus, other means such as training programs influencing students’ sense of self-efficacy as multiculturally competent counseling professionals is critical, if change is to occur (Bowman, 1996).

**Student/Trainee Development in Multicultural Education and Training**

Supervision has long been regarded as the main source for student and trainee’s development (Holloway, 1987; Pierce & Schauble, 1970). Yet, most supervisors may be unprepared to discuss multicultural issues and are untrained to work with racial/ethnic minority students and trainees (Ashby & Cheatham, 1996; Bernard & Goodyear, 1992). Supervision models with a multicultural perspective have been created to address the lack of cultural issues not being addressed in supervision. For example, Bernard and Goodyear (1992) created a five-stage supervision model in which the supervisee moves from a place of never recognizing or considering racial, ethnic, and/or cultural issues to multicultural awareness as a way of life. The supervisor has to be able to operate from pluralistic philosophical underpinnings and disseminate information about multiculturalism with the supervisee in order to foster the supervisee’s development. The development of cultural awareness can also be fostered through direct contact with racial/ethnic minorities either by way of practica, internship, other training experiences, or personal experiences.
Ancis and Ladany (2001) put forward a stage model that categorized supervisors and supervisees based on their level of the multicultural awareness process. Apathy and complacency pertaining to social oppression and diversity describes the stage of adaptation. When supervisors and supervisees begin to question their worldview they are in the incongruence stage. As they begin to explore their personal identity concerning cultural diversity they are in the exploration phase of the model. Lastly, the integration stage involves supervisors and supervisees recognizing and becoming aware of oppression and its’ effect on diverse and oppressed groups.

Much of the research related to multicultural supervision has focused on the supervision of racial/ethnic minority trainees by White supervisors and denoted the potential problems in this supervision dyad (e.g. Hunt, 1987). Vander Kolk (1974), indicated that African-American supervisees expected less respect, empathy, and congruence than did their White counterparts. Cook and Helms, (1988) found that a sample of White supervisors discerned their Asian, Black, and Hispanic supervisees as less able to accept constructive criticism and as being less open to self-examination than their White counterparts. Findings like these are a prelude to racial, ethnic, and culturally diverse supervisees’ expectations of being evaluated by White supervisors based on criteria embedded in cultural norms reflective of the dominant culture. This can be problematic since most multicultural experts appear to put much of the responsibility of bringing forth multicultural issues in supervision on the supervisor (Chen, 2001; Leong & Wagner, 1994, Toporek et al., 2004). Because of the power differential inherent in supervision, supervisors must serve as the catalyst for discussions pertaining to multicultural issues, ensuring an environment that feels safe and open to promote difficult
discussions of racial and diversity issues (Constantine, 1997). Constantine (1997) proposed a framework that consists of a set of questions for both the supervisor and supervisee (e.g. what are the main demographic variables-race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age socioeconomic status-that make up my cultural identities?) as a guide to facilitate the discussion of culture early in the supervision experience. Even so, supervisors may ignore, dance around, or undermine racial or cultural issues out of fear of being looked upon as incompetent or as a bigot, especially majority group supervisors with minority group supervisees (Tummala-Narra, 2004); presumably these supervisors do not know that these behaviors are reenactments of racial/discriminatory experiences in the larger society.

In terms of multiculturalism, the literature has consistently revealed that cultural issues like race and racism are not being discussed in supervision, even if, there is a racial and/or cultural difference between the supervisor and supervisee (Burkard, Johnson, Madson, Pruitt, Contreras-Tadych, Kozlowski, Hess, & Knox 2006). Multicultural incidents in supervision like the dismissal of race and supervisors’ evaluations embedded in prejudices are thought to influence the supervision process as well as the development of multicultural competency in supervisees. Educational and training experiences that are mindful of the trainee’s level of development (regarding both basic counseling skills and multicultural awareness) and have realistic expectations are more than likely to foster the trainee’s growth in multicultural competencies.

**Multicultural Counseling and Therapy (MCT)**

Multicultural counseling and therapy today, is most frequently used interchangeably with the closely related concept cross-cultural counseling. The term
cross-cultural counseling has been used in reference to counseling relationships consisting of American racial minority clients who were seen as culturally different from the counselor who was White. Sue, Bernier, Durran, Feinberg, Pedersen, Smith, and Vasquez-Nuttal (1982) declared that multicultural counseling consists of “any relationship in which two or more of the participants differ in cultural background, values, and lifestyle” (p. 47). Pedersen (1991), Ponterotto and Casas (1987), and Speight, Myers, Cox and Highlen (1991) in essence agree with Sue’s definition and assert that all counseling relationships are multicultural.

Though there are many counseling professionals (e.g., Cheatham et al., 1993; Fukuyama, 1990; Lee, 1991) who accept the broad definition of multicultural counseling and therapy, there are those who limit the definition to “visible racial ethnic minorities” (e.g., Cook & Helms, 1998; Locke, 1992). According to these individuals, a broadly based definition of multicultural counseling and therapy is too broad and lends itself to being so inclusive that it becomes pointless (Locke, 1992). However, for Vontress (1988), the decision as to whether the counseling relationship is multicultural is up to the client and the counselor. He asserts that, “if the counselor and client perceive mutual cultural similarity, even though in reality they are culturally different, the interaction should not be labeled cross-cultural counseling” (p. 75). Axelson (1994) put forward a somewhat different perspective on multicultural counseling and therapy. He described it as the "interface between counselor and client that takes personal dynamics of the counselor and client into consideration alongside the emerging, changing, and/or static configurations that might be identified in the cultures of the counselor and client" (p. 13). Das (1995) contends that these definitions “do not tell much about the real world of...
multicultural counseling, which, given the demographics of the profession in the United States, primarily means White middle-class counselors working with minority group clients or with international students from developing and non-developed countries” (p. 45).

**Multicultural Counseling and Therapy (MCT) Theories**

“The failure of American and Western psychology to see the individual in cultural context suggests that considerable effort and thought needs to be given to revising traditional models of helping” (Ivey, 1995, p. 70). In addition, virtually all clients have cultural issues underlying their presenting concerns. As a result, the counseling relationship is not immune to the life experiences that shaped and continue to shape the persons, the client and the counseling professional, have become. That is why almost all, multicultural counseling and therapy theories attempt to explain the role sociocultural forces have on individual’s psychological processes (Axelson, 1994; Marsella, 1985) with the understanding that traditional counseling theories are products of White-middle class values. Thus, the basic premise behind MCT theories is to assist counseling professionals in helping clients to see themselves as cultural beings susceptible to contextual influences. Sue, Ivey and Pederson (1996) proclaimed that it is necessary for the counseling professional to understand and empathize with both the client as well as their cultural context. They further argued that a view of shared and different cultural grounds should be purposefully included in the counseling relationship.

Sue and Sue (1999) insisted that racism and other forms of oppression strongly influence the worldviews of minorities in America, and introduced this idea as the worldviews theory. This multicultural counseling and therapy theory suggests that a
"person perceives his/her relationships to the world...as being highly correlated with a person’s cultural upbringing and life experiences” (Sue & Sue, 1999, p.166). For the most part, multicultural counseling and therapy theories advance the notion that individuals’ worldviews influence the way they think, define events, make decisions and behave; in turn events and the individuals’ interpretations of them influence their worldviews. Thereby, worldviews and cultural variables can no longer be pushed to the side; they must be included in the assessment, case conceptualization, treatment approaches, and ultimately the counseling relationship as a way to address the clients’ needs.

Levine and Padilla (1980) assert that multicultural counseling or ‘pluralistic counseling’ must include the client’s culturally based beliefs, values, and behaviors and explore the client’s adaptation to their cultural milieu. Whereas, a social constructionist paradigm of multicultural counseling and therapy presumes that all client’s perceptions of the world around them are culturally learned and mediated, that clients from different cultural backgrounds perceive the world around them differently, and that counseling requires an accurate and profound understanding of the social and cultural world of the client (Gonzalez, Biever, & Gardner, 1994; Ibrahim, 1991; Pedersen, 1990; 1991). Ramirez (1999) further posits that the effect of White Euro-American ethnocentrism and domination on racial/ethnic minorities’ development should be explored in the therapeutic process. He advocates for counseling professionals, as part of the therapeutic process, to encourage clients to engage in various forms of social justice as a means to increase their self-esteem and self-worth.
Unlike the above theorists, Das (1995) believes that multicultural counseling and therapy should also include “(a) an ethnic minority counselor counseling a White client, (b) an ethnic minority counselor working with a client belonging to a different ethnic minority group, or (c) any other dyadic combination in which the client and the counselor come from markedly different cultural backgrounds, on the basis of social class, sexual orientation, or disability” (p.45).

Das’s idea about multicultural counseling and therapy is central to this dissertation study in that it moves away from the conventional notion that multicultural counseling and therapy only involves a White middle-class counselor providing mental health services to racial minorities. This study modifies traditional notions of multicultural counseling and therapy to suit the concept that racial minorities, in this case Black/African-Americans, are the providers of mental health services to members of their own racial cultural group and a variety of diverse populations to frame how the topic will be discussed when interviewing participants.

A plethora of literature has been written about MCT as well as the call for the counseling professions to acquire standards regarding appropriate counseling goals and techniques in working with culturally different clients. Murphy’s article (1955), *The Culture Context of Guidance*, was one of the first to discuss the significance of culture in counseling. He proposed that understanding the culture of clients was more important than the skills and techniques counselors in training learned. The counseling professional’s ability to provide culturally responsive MCT reduces the chances of minorities underutilizing and/or prematurely quitting therapy. Atkinson and Lowe (1995) indicated that cultural responsiveness “refers to counselor responses that acknowledge the
existence of, show interest in, demonstrate knowledge of, and express appreciation for
the client’s ethnicity and culture and that place the client’s problem in a cultural context”
(p.402). There are some experts, such as Rogers (1957), who would argue that there are
qualities a counseling professional must possess no matter the race, ethnicity, and/ or
culture of the client in order to be effective. Rogers asserts that: (1) respect for the client,
(2) genuineness, (3) empathic understanding, (4) communication of empathy, respect, and
genuineness to the client, and (5) structuring are the five basic qualities that are necessary
for all effective counseling. However, some MCT experts would counter argue that many
basic counseling professional characteristics are necessary, but not sufficient, for those
who employ multicultural counseling and therapy techniques. Atkinson and Lowe’s
(1995) review of the literature offers an explicit “case for cultural responsiveness as a
counseling strategy for building credibility” with minority clients (p.403).

The counselor’s role in MCT is critical, especially since many experts in MCT
have attributed the underutilization of mental health services and the premature
termination from therapy by minorities to cultural insensitivity and multicultural
incompetency of the counseling professional. For example, a therapist’s inability to
empathize with diversity matters often leads to misdiagnosis, unbefitting case
conceptualizations, treatment plans, and interventions (Gim, Atkinson, & Kim, 1991;
Terrell & Cheatham, 1996). Racial ethnic minorities are more likely to utilize counseling
services if they believe that the counseling professional is a credible source of help
(Atkinson & Lowe, 1995). One of the ways the counseling professional can be a credible
source of help is by employing culturally responsive therapy.
Culturally Responsive Behavior in MCT

The utmost reason for the problem in mental health service delivery entails the inability of counseling professionals to provide culturally responsive forms of treatment. According to Ridley, Mendoza, Kanitz, Angermeier, and Zenk, (1994), a culturally sensitive counseling professional is aware of “cultural variables in the context of counseling, organizes cultural stimuli in meaningful ways, and appropriately channels this information to initiate some type of culturally responsive action” (p.131). The counseling professional’s culturally responsive behavior increases the likelihood of being effective with diverse populations. Langer (1989) strongly suggests that mindfulness and openness to new information as well as being sensitive to client’s cultural context helps counseling professionals be effective in their response to clients’ needs. More specifically, Langer (1989) denotes that counseling professionals who operate without mindfulness are limited in their cultural schemata, typically operate from a single perspective, and severely compromise their subsequent assessment and counseling techniques. Mindfulness or awareness of one's thoughts, behaviors, or intentions is particularly beneficial for MCT because so many counseling professionals are not aware of how their perceptions of cultural variables enter the counseling relationship, even when they do not intend for it to happen.

Bolton-Brownlee (1987) believes that the counseling professional’s own culture, attitudes, and theoretical perspective, along with the client’s culture and the multiplicity of variables encompassing an individual’s identity pose problems for multicultural counseling and therapy. She (1987) asserts that “part of self-awareness is the acknowledgement that the counselor’s culture has at its core a set of White cultural
values and norms by which clients are judged. These underlying assumptions about a
cultural group, personal stereotypes or racism, and traditional counseling approaches may
all signal acquiescence to White culture” (p.1). This may be particularly hard for racial,
ethnic, and/or cultural minority counseling professionals to acknowledge, explore, and
accept, which in turn, restricts their self-awareness and their ability to be culturally
responsive.

Bolton-Brownlee (1987) also proposes that the client’s culture can be a problem
for multicultural counseling and therapy if there is an adherence to White cultural values.
So how does a counseling professional rectify a cultural conflict like this? One possible
solution is the counseling professional being able to accept this cultural conflict as an
authentic reality for the client and explore the life experiences that helped shape this
worldview. The exploration of this ‘authentic worldview’ can create an opportunity for
the counseling professional to help the client see that they are cultural beings and that
cultural contextual factors that occurred in their life formed their worldviews and shaped
how they interact in the world. The counseling professional has a difficult task of
balancing this ‘authentic worldview’, keeping their cultural biases in check, while at the
same time upholding the value of the culture and incorporating it in the therapeutic
process.

Bolton-Brownlee (1987) insists on counseling professionals having an outlook
that views the identity and development of culturally diverse populations from multiple,
interactive factors, rather than a strict cultural framework. She further cautions
counseling professionals to be cognizant of the fact that general awareness of culture can
sometimes become endangered to oversimplification and generalizations by counseling
professors in the therapeutic relationship. Patterson (1995) concurs, and indicates that “overemphasis on cultural diversity and culture specific counseling leads to a focus on specific techniques with the counselor becoming a chameleon who changes styles, techniques, and methods to meet the presumed characteristics of clients from varying cultures and groups” (p. 230). A culturally responsive counseling professional is one who respects the client as both an individual and as a member of a particular racial, ethnic, and/or cultural group. Hence, a culturally responsive counseling professional would consider all aspects of the client’s personal history, background, sociocultural orientation, identity, and worldview before ascribing certain cultural characteristics.

Ivey (1977) is thought to be the first to call the counseling professions’ attention to “cultural expertise” as the primary element in multicultural counseling (Locke, 1990). The presumption behind cultural expertise is effectiveness in more than one culture, but with the understanding that no counseling professional can be equally effective in all cultures. Locke (1990) and many others have come to believe that counseling is frequently presented as if it is nomothetic, or that it seeks to answer questions about human behavior from a universal standpoint. The concern is that individual or group behavior within the context of society either gets bypassed or downplayed. This is why Johnson (1987) supports an idiographic viewpoint (accentuating individual or group behavior within the context of society) that focuses on the particular cultural group or locale instead of broadly focusing on examples of cultural impact.

The idiographic approach is what Ivey (1977) labeled as “cultural intentionality”, in that cultural awareness is infused with the uniqueness of each person. Cultural intentionality or an idiographic approach to multiculturalism acknowledges individual
differences within culturally diversified groups while at the same time seeing the person within the context of their own cultural group.

**Multicultural Counseling Competency**

Multicultural counseling competencies are centered on (a) understanding the different experiences of members of various cultural groups, (b) understanding the barriers to communication across cultures that exist as a result of these differences, and (c) trainees being receptive to education and training methods that promote the development of multicultural competence (Pope-Davis & Dings, 1995). "Some combination of awareness, knowledge, and skills attributed to successful counselors, such as positive regard for others (Rogers, 1951), an ability to communicate effectively, and an understanding of various counseling techniques and strategies, is a necessary but insufficient basis for success in multicultural counseling and therapy (Pope-Davis & Dings, 1995, p.289). Therefore, Pope-Davis and Dings (1995) declared that multicultural counseling competencies must be differentiated from those of general counseling competencies.

Pope-Davis and Dings’ suggestion is echoed throughout the multicultural literature to the extent that countless multicultural experts believe that it takes more than cultural sensitivity to be multiculturally competent. Hillard (1985) agreed and declared that cultural sensitivity is necessary but not sufficient for competence. Ponterotto and Casas (1987) described multicultural competence as “knowledge of clients’ culture and status, actual experience with these clients, and the ability to devise innovative strategies vis-a-vis the unique client’s needs” (p.433). Sue et al., (1982) characterized multiculturally competent counseling professionals as those who have progressed from
being culturally unaware to being aware and sensitive to their own cultural issues and to the various ways that their own values and biases influence culturally diverse clients. Moreover, multiculturally competent counseling professionals have insight into the impact of the sociopolitical infrastructure on minorities in the U.S., have knowledge and information about certain cultural groups, and are able to employ a variety of culturally responsive behaviors in and out of therapy.

**Multicultural Competency Standards**

Sue and colleagues (1982) proposed the original standards of what constitutes a multiculturally competent counseling professional. These competencies concentrated on self-awareness and awareness of others, sensitivity, basic counseling knowledge, knowledge of specific cultural groups distinct from one’s own, and skills at verbal and nonverbal communication (Pope-Davis & Dings, 1995). As concern for multicultural competency issues increased, a modified and more detail description outlining these standards was published. In this updated version, thirty-one attitudes/beliefs, skills, and knowledge competencies are presented within a framework of three “proposed cross-cultural competencies and objectives”: “counselor awareness of own cultural values and biases”, “counselor awareness of clients’ worldview”, and “culturally appropriate intervention strategies” (Sue et al., 1992, p.484-486; Pope-Davis & Dings, 1995).

The various statements pertaining to values, awareness, and sensitivities within each competency essentially illustrate a counselor who is open to learning about themselves and others in the broader context of culture, as a person and as a helping professional. Knowledge is explained as more than just intellectualizing race, culture, and other multicultural matters, it is “understanding how race, culture, ethnicity, and so forth
may affect personality formation, vocational choices, manifestations of psychological disorders, help-seeking behavior, and the appropriateness of counseling approaches” (Sue et al., 1992, p.485). Skills are described mainly as verbal and nonverbal ways of communicating effectively, techniques obtained through education and training, and other sources of pertinent information on multicultural counseling and therapy (e.g. direct contact with racial/ethnic minorities and other groups of oppressed individuals). Of course there is conceptual overlap between the three proposed multicultural competencies and objectives.

Sodowasky, Taffe, Gutkin, and Wise (1994) proposed a fourth dimension of multicultural counseling competency, the multicultural counseling relationship. This framework of multicultural counseling competencies details “the counselor’s interactional process with the minority client, such as the counselor’s trustworthiness, comfort levels, stereotypes of the minority client, and worldview” (p. 142).

Both, Sue and colleagues. (1992) and Sodowasky and colleagues., (1994) models’ of multicultural competence focus attention on the need for and benefits of understanding one’s own cultural worldview. However, most multicultural education and training methods tend to emphasize the cultural experience of the culturally diverse client (Carter, 2003). The Racial-Cultural Counseling Competence (RCCC) model emphasizes the concept of the person as counselor instead of as client (Carter, 2003). The RCCC model views the helping professional as a racial-cultural person who brings to the counseling relationship a complex system of meaningful social identities and reference-group affiliations. According to this model, the various social identities and reference-group affiliations can be both resources and barriers to the development of effective counseling
relationships and interventions. The RCCC model incorporates an integrative approach to education and training for racial-cultural competence. It supports and advocates integrating the person as counselor through self-examination and the integration of the trainee’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviors around racial-cultural concerns as essential for the development of cultural counseling competence (Carter, 2001; Sue, 2001). In the RCCC model race is central and the critical characteristic of cultural difference, therefore, the model does not emphasize other reference group differences like sexual orientation in the same way that other assumptive approaches do (Carter, 2003). The RCCC model deems that cultural competence is superordinate to counseling competence, for it is impossible to be a competent counselor without being culturally competent (Carter, 2003).

The goal of multicultural competencies is to delineate skills, knowledge, and ways the helping professional may obtain a deep sense of and insight into the dynamics of culture in an individual’s life and how it affects their way of being. However, none of the constructs of multicultural competence include supervision or the supervisory relationship. Perhaps there is an underlying assumption that if one is a multiculturally competent counselor then they are more than likely to be a multiculturally competent supervisor. Still, it would be advantageous for these standards to incorporate what constitutes a multiculturally competent supervisor as well.

Assessing Multicultural Counseling Competencies

Since multicultural competency instruments originated in the late 1980s and early 1990s (LaFromboise, Coleman, & Hernandez, 1991; Ponterotto, Rieger, Barrett, & Sparks, 1994), researchers have assessed multicultural competence from the perspective
of the therapist, client, supervisor, and third-party observer. These measurements create an evaluative aspect of research investigating multicultural competency development, multicultural education and training effectiveness, and the impact of cultural variables on counseling process and outcome (e.g. Constantine, 2000, 2002; Fuertes & Brobst, 2002).

The multicultural counseling literature has focused for the most part on four particular measures of multicultural competence (CCCI-R, MAKSS, MCI, and MCKAS) and these four measurements are briefly recounted here. The Cross-Cultural Counseling Inventory (CCCI-R; LaFromboise, et al., 1991) was revised in 1991 and provides clients with the opportunity to rate counselors across 20 unidimensional items. Examples of some of the items are: “Counselor is at ease talking to me” and “Counselor demonstrates knowledge about my culture”. The Multicultural Awareness-Knowledge-Skills Survey (MAKSS; D’Andrea, Daniels, & Heck, 1991) is a 60-item instrument consisting of three scales of 20 items each: (1) Knowledge (e.g., “At the present time, how would you rate your understanding of the following term? ‘Ethnicity’”); (2) Skills (e.g., How would you rate your ability to effectively secure information and resources to better serve culturally different clients?”); and (3) Awareness (e.g., “In general, how would you rate your level of awareness regarding different cultural institutions and systems?”). An updated version of this measurement, containing 33 items (10 items each for the Awareness and Skills subscales and 13 items for the Knowledge subscale) has recently been published (MAKSS-Counselor Edition-Revised [MAKSS-CE-R]; Kim, Cartwright, Asay, & D’Andrea, 2003).

The Multicultural Counseling Inventory (MCI; Sodowsky et al., 1994) permits individuals to rate themselves on 40 statements devised from four subscales:
*Multicultural Knowledge, Multicultural Skills, Multicultural Awareness,* and *Multicultural Relationship.* Lastly, the 32-item Multicultural Counseling Knowledge and Awareness Scale (MCKAS, a revision of the MCAS: B; see Ponterotto, Gretchen, Utsey, Rieger, & Austin, 2002) assesses therapist self-reported competence in *Multicultural Knowledge* (e.g., "I am aware of institutional barriers which may inhibit minorities from using mental health services") and *Multicultural Awareness* (e.g., “I believe all clients should maintain direct eye contact during counseling”).

Because the four multicultural competency instruments are all self-report measures, current empirical research implementing these has raised various concerns in need of further investigation. First, because these measurements are self-report measures, the results are possibly associated with participants’ tendency to respond in socially desirable ways (Constantine & Ladany, 2000). Second, the self-report measures that have more than one scale to assess the competency areas outlined in Sue and colleagues (1982) original multicultural competency standards tend to lack sound construct validity. For example, Constantine, Gloria, and Ladany (2002) assessed the various scales of the MCI, MAKSS, and MCKAS through confirmatory and exploratory factor analysis and concluded that only to some extent the two-factor structure of the MCKAS was substantiated, while the structures of the three-factor MAKSS and four-factor MCI were questionable. (Constantine et al., 2002). Finally, multicultural researchers have also raised concern that responses to these instruments may more appropriately be interpreted as evidence of multicultural counseling self-efficacy rather than as evidence of ability to provide multicultural counseling and therapy.
Intrinsic in the standards of multicultural competencies is the awareness that, in counseling, education, and training, culture can no longer be ignored as it has been in the past. Instead, culture must be recognized, appreciated, explored, and accepted in every aspect; research to instruction, to teaching, to clinical practice. As a result, there is a professional commitment and responsibility to identify, develop, and implement multicultural competencies, no matter how hard it may be.

**Racial Identity and Multicultural Competency**

Since the beginning of the multicultural counseling movement, multicultural counseling competency and racial identity development have been considered to be connected to one another. Yet, the research pertaining to the relationship between racial identity development and multicultural counseling competence is still in its infancy. Most of the work done thus far has explored the relationship between these variables (Brown, Parham, Yonker, 1996) and examined the affect of multicultural training on racial identity (Parker, Moore, & Neimeyer, 1998; Vinson & Neimeyer, 2003) and on numerous counseling related interventions (Bagley & Copeland, 1994; Ottavi, Pope-Davis & Dings, 1994; Vinson & Neimeyer, 2003).

Carney and Kahn (1984) detailed the benefits of training environments that are consistent with trainees’ levels of racial awareness. For instance, trainees with low levels of racial identity development tend to feel intimidated by, or ill prepared to deal with, positive information about various cultural groups or experiences that require cross-cultural contact (Helms, 1993). Parker and colleagues (1998) investigated the affect of multicultural training on trainees’ racial identity development and concluded that White American trainees who had engaged in multicultural training had increased levels of
White racial consciousness and interracial comfort. Similarly, Neville and colleagues (1996) found that White students who partook in multicultural courses had increased multicultural counseling competency and higher levels of racial identity development. Ottavi and colleagues (1994) also concluded that advanced levels of White racial identity development had a positive relationship with advanced levels of multicultural counseling competency. These studies indicate that there is a possible connection between multicultural counseling competency and racial identity development since manipulation of one tends to strengthen the other.

The major limitations of these previous works were that most of them addressed only White racial identity development in relation to multicultural competency and were restricted to samples of White-American participants. Vinson and Neimeyer (2000; 2003) sought to expand on these previous works by including students of color and using a sample of incoming doctoral students to reduce the potentiality of students being socialized to favor multiculturalism in general; an aspect that can be characteristic of advanced students. Vinson and Neimeyer first looked at the relationship between racial identity development and multicultural counseling competency in 2000 and then in 2003. They concluded that significant increases were found in multicultural counseling competency but not in participants’ levels of racial identity development across time. In addition, for White students, higher levels of multicultural counseling competency generally corresponded with racial identity development; whereas for non-White students, the pattern was different. For these students, even though multicultural awareness was positively correlated with the highest level of racial identity, the results
overall did not reflect any consistent relationship between levels of racial identity
development and multicultural counseling knowledge and skills. The researchers
indicated that this finding merits further investigation.

A common proposition in the racial identity literature is that counseling
professionals may be more able to understand, appreciate, and accept their own and other
racial, ethnic, cultural groups when they have insight into their racial attitudes and
perspectives (Cook, 1994; Parker, Moore, & Neimeyer, 1998). “We experience a degree
of discomfort when a client questions our intentions. We experience even more
discomfort when our racial beliefs, motives, or intentions are the one ones being
questioned” (Locke, 1990, p. 21). “Racial identity attitudes or statuses are composed of
parallel attitudes, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors toward both oneself as a member of a
racial group and members of the dominant racial group—in this case, White” (Cater &

Within the broad context of racial group membership, there are countless
elements that shape individual’s attitudes toward race and cultural diversity issues,
specifically, their attitudes about their own racial and ethnic group memberships relevant
to other racial and ethnic groups (Gushe & Carter, 2000). Individual’s manifestations of
different attitudes about race and culture affect their multicultural education, training,
counseling, and supervision process and outcome. Moreover, these manifestations
influence the development of their racial/ethnic/cultural identity (Sue and Sue 1999). It is
important to recognize that counseling professionals bring with them their own level of
effectiveness with basic counseling skills along with their personal cultural
manifestations and interpretations. Thereby, multicultural education and training
programs must consider both the racial identity and developmental level of students/trainees when designing curricula and training activities (Bowman, 1996).

A Summary of Racial Identity Development Theories and Models

Cross (1991) described racial identity development as a dynamic process that is influenced by the entire landscape of one’s life, including other identities, such as gender, sexual, and professional. Paradis (1981) proposed that the development of distinctive identities comes about as a result of the individual’s careful thought concerning and choice of, those aspects of their culture and heritage that they integrate into their self. The traditional anthropological approach views cultural identity development as a result of how the individual understands their world in relation to the possibilities and limitations set forth by their own culture (Carter & Qureshi, 1995).

Some, like Carter (1995) and Helms (1990), would argue that sociopolitical circumstances, experiences, and race relations between Whites and visible racial/ethnic minorities influences one’s racial identity development (Carter, 1995; Helms, 1990). How one infuses their racial identity into their personal and professional identity depends upon if this facet of their identity is validated, denied, or ignored, their worldview on race and culture, as well as various dynamic interactions within environments. While several racial identity theories and models have been proposed to explain the racial identification process, for the purposes of this dissertation, only the models that delineate Black/African-American racial identity development are explored.

By their very nature, racial identity models explore one's sense of belonging to a particular racial group and the impact that sense of belonging has on one's thinking, perceptions, feelings, and behavior (Rotheram & Phinney, 1987). Interestingly enough,
all racial identity models like the theories they stem from focus on the psychosocial process of defining the self (Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999). The traditional models (e.g. Cross 1971, 1995; Jackson, 1975; Helms 1984, 1990) are stage models in which racial identity development occurs linearly in a stepwise progression. For example, in the original racial identity models (e.g. Cross, 1971; Helms, 1990) certain racial ideologies like pro-White and anti-Black attitudes were predicted to take place developmentally earlier than the Internalization attitudes that represent Black self-acceptance.

Although Helms (1995) and Worrell, Cross, and Vandiver (2001) recently confirmed that their models do not comply with some attributes of stage theory (qualitative differences between stages), they hold on to the concept that there are more advanced or intricate levels of development of racial identity. Within this framework it is postulated that movement across racial identity stages or as Helms (1995) referred to them as statuses, requires movement across racial ideologies as well as progression from unexamined to examined forms of identity (Quintana, 2007).

Unlike traditional stepwise models, contemporary models like Sellers et. al’s (1998) multidimensional model of racial identity put forward an idea that individuals have more than one identity (e.g. racial, gender, sex orientation) and that these identities are hierarchically ordered according to the individual’s perception. Furthermore, Sellers et al’s (1998) explicitly conceptualizing racial identity as one of several identities within the self-concept allows race to be examined with other identities (gender, sex orientation) one may hold. Another aspect of contemporary models that distinguishes them from former racial identity models is the belief that racial identity is a process that unfolds over one’s lifetime. Although contemporary models of racial identity have made some
advances in furthering the understanding of identity development, it has to be noted that
traditional models like Cross’s (1971) laid the foundation that they stand upon.

After the civil rights movement, researchers (Cross, 1978, 1980, 1991; Helms,
1984, 1990, 1994; Thomas, 1971) began presenting theories of the psychological
development of racial identity for visible racial/ethnic and non-White immigrant
populations (Carter, 1995). Currently, the majority of racial identity research and
scholarly work discusses racial identity not in biological terms (for it can imply a racist
undertone and because the data does not support it) but as a social construction grounded
on one’s perception of a shared common heritage with a particular racial group, which is
generally denoted as a collective identity (Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999).

Black/African-American Racial Identity Development

The exploration of racial identity of Black/African-Americans has become a
cornerstone of the multicultural counseling literature (Carter, 1995; Parham, 1989). The
extensive amount of Black racial identity theories and models created over the years does
not permit the researcher to discuss each one in great detail, for this is beyond the scope
of this dissertation. Hence, only the well-known theories and models in the literature that
have been used to conceptualize the racial identification process for Black/African-
Americans are summarized.

The beginnings of Black racial identity development can be traced back to
Thomas (1971) who suggested that individual’s progress through five stages to declare
their Blackness (Pope-Davis et. al., 2000). Cross’s (1971) model of Nigrescence, the
psychology of becoming Black, delineated the developmental stages Blacks traversed in
progressing from a self-hating to a self-healing and culturally affirming self-concept in
the midst of a racist society (Cross, 1995). Both of these stage-based developmental models assumed that the person progressed from a somewhat psychologically unhealthy Black identity to a more healthy self-defined racial transcendence identity (Helms, 1990).

At first, Cross (1971) presented a five-stage model where each stage portrayed self-concept issues that described the person’s feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. The first stage, Pre-Encounter, consists of an individual who idealizes Whites and White culture to the point of deprecation of Blacks and Black culture. “A prototypical Pre-Encounter person is said to be at risk, in terms of his or her mental health or general personality {low self-esteem, high anxiety, lower levels of ego integration, etc.}, and show evidence, at the group identity level, of embracing a pro-American cultural stance that is assimilationist if not overtly anti-Black and anti-African” (Cross, 1995 p. 96).

The second stage, Encounter, illustrates how an external racial event (e.g. racism or a favorable interaction with one of the same race) brings awareness of and challenges the pro-White, Eurocentric viewpoint held by the Pre-Encounter Black Individual. “The encounter must work around, slip through, or shatter the relevance of the person’s current identity and worldview and, at the same time, provide some hint of the path the person must follow in order to be resocialized and transformed” (Cross, 1995, p.105).

Immersion/Emersion, the third stage, takes place when Black Individuals immerse themselves in the ‘world of Blackness’ and take on an ethnocentric attitude. “This immersion is a strong, powerful, dominating sensation that is constantly being energized by rage {at White people and culture}, guilt, and a developing sense of pride {in one’s Black self, Black people, and Black culture}” (Cross, 1995, p. 107). The Emersion aspect
of this stage signifies the development of a more balanced and less ethnocentric worldview (Pope-Davis et al., 2000).

The internalization stage depicts Black individuals who have achieved self-healing by internalizing a healthy and personally relevant Black identity (Cross, 1995). The last stage of Cross’s 1971 version of the Nigrescence model, Internalization/Commitment, entailed a Black individual who is committed to social justice and makes efforts to eliminate systems of oppression (Kohatsu & Richardson, 1996).

Cross (1991 and 1995) reconsidered the Nigrescence model and revised it approximately twenty years after its initial conception. In the updated version, the Pre-Encounter stage was further explored and the concept of salience was introduced to understand some of the differences in Blacks in the Pre-Encounter stage (Pope-Davis, et al. 2000). In the Pre-Encounter stage, salience depicted the significance of race to a person during certain times in their life (Pope-Davis et al. 2000; Cross, 1995). The Pre-Encounter Black person was more than just anti-Black, they possibly had a low salience for race (Pope-Davis et al., 2000; Cross 1995). A person with low salience for race is one for whom “being Black and knowledge about the Black experience [has] little to do with their perceived sense of happiness and well-being and contribute[s] little to their purpose in life” (Cross, 1995, p.98).

Helms (1990), on the other hand, proclaimed that the stages of Black identity were distinct worldviews as opposed to being reflections of self-concept issues. She expanded Cross’s model and proposed that each developmental stage is closely related to a cognitive framework that people use to categorize information about themselves, others, the environment, and institutions (Helms, 1984). Helms (1989, 1990) argued that
each of the racial identity stages is bimodal in that there are two possible detectable forms of expression. For instance, Helms (1990) asserted that there are two distinct ways of expressing Pre-encounter attitudes, the first is the Pre-encounter individual that “deliberately idealizes Whiteness and White culture and denigrates Blacks and Black culture and the second way is very passive” (p. 21). The passive expression by Pre-Encounter individuals represents someone who is so desperately seeking approval by Whites that they will use any means to pass into and be accepted by Whites and White culture.

The notion that the stages of Black Identity development are bimodal lead Helms to believe that the levels are cylindrical in nature instead of static and linear. Therefore, according to Helms, racial identity attitudes could coexist at different levels and any one set of attitudes could be the presiding set at any given time (Helms, 1992). This innovative conceptualization considered the possibility that individuals could simultaneously have more than one racial identity attitude.

Baldwin's (1991) African self-consciousness model suggested that African self-consciousness (conscious expression of the Black personality system) has a vital role in normal psychological functioning of the Black personality. According to Baldwin, there are four essential features of the African self-consciousness: (1) the recognition of and appreciation for one’s African identity with the intent to obtain self-knowledge; (2) African survival and proactivity is first priority; (3) an individual has respect for and actively commemorates all things African; and finally (4) an individual acknowledges the oppositional and detrimental nature of racial oppression to Black survival and actively resists it. When these essential features are fully functioning in the Black personality,
they yield self-affirming behaviors among people of African descent (Baldwin et al., 1990). In essence, the African self-consciousness model highlights the significance for Blacks to learn about and embrace their African heritage as a means to eradicate the effects of deracination (Baldwin, 1984; Constantine, Richardson, Benjamin, & Wilson, 1998).

Sellars and colleagues (1998) multidimensional model of racial identity (MMRI) provided a conceptual framework to increase understanding for both the significance of race in the self-concepts of African-Americans and the qualitative meanings they attribute to being members of that racial category. The model proposes four dimensions of African-American racial identity: salience, centrality, regard, and ideology. Salience describes the extent to which one’s race is a significant aspect of their self-concept at a particular moment or in a particular situation. Centrality refers to the degree to which one normatively defines themselves in relation to their race. The regard dimension has two sub-dimensions, private regard and public regard. Private regard pertains to how an individual feels toward African Americans and being African American and public regard pertains to how an individual feels others view African Americans. The final dimension, ideology, alludes to an individual’s beliefs, opinions, and attitudes as they connect to how the person feels other African Americans should act. This model with this conceptual framework, proposes a mechanism by which racial identity influences individuals' situational appraisals and behaviors (Sellars et al., 1998).

Landrine and Klonoff (1994) theorized that identification with African-American culture is linked to one’s identification with their race. As a person becomes more devoted to African-American culture, there is an equal devotion to and acceptance of
their race. “Although racism is not directly and explicitly dealt with in the acculturation paradigm, it is implied. The problem seems to be that the way one views the acceptability of minority culture (in this case African-American) should be related to how one is able to cope with the dominant society's construction of it” (Pope-Davis, et al., 1998, p.) Thus, racism, discrimination, and oppression affect how one sees themselves racially and culturally. For example, advanced levels of acculturation toward African-American culture most likely reflect an individual in the Immersion and Internalization stages of racial identity development.

Chapter Summary

It seems as if the intent of racial identity theories and models is to delineate one’s psychological adaptation to their racial group. Before the origination of racial identity theories and models, individuals were only thought of as being a member of a racial group. This description was limited and provided little information about that person’s psychological adaptation to the assigned group. Racial identity theories and models elaborated on the intricacy of racial group membership by explaining many racial identity resolutions for persons from the same race.

The manifestations of oppression and racial bigotry that African-Americans have faced are quite unique (Sears & Henry, 2003; Sellars et al., 1998). Understanding the racial identity development of African-Americans appears to be cardinal in learning how the racial identification process unfolds in such adverse conditions. Thus, it is critical that models of Black racial identity unravel how African-Americans who feel "disconnected" begin the journey of reconnecting to their African roots even if the model does not necessary signify the importance of establishing or maintaining a core African identity.
(Constantine et al., 1998). This very notion seems to be vital to the multicultural competency process given that it could potentially help Black/African-American trainees gain insight into how race and culture shapes and affects their worldviews.

One’s attitude about and behavior towards members of their own racial cultural group and culturally different individuals can reveal where they are in the racial identification and acculturation process. Students and trainees do not come to multicultural education and training as blank slates. With all the many factors (e.g. racism) that affects how Black/African-Americans view race, and culture in general, and their racial and cultural heritage, there is concern about how multicultural education and training in predominately White institutions is designed primarily for White trainees.

The overall research question, What about me: Using grounded theory to understand how African-American counseling professionals become multiculturally competent could possibly give insight into how the participants view race, multiculturalism, education and training, and how this influences their work with members of their racial cultural group as well as culturally diverse individuals. The intended focus for this study using grounded theory methods is to go beyond the individual experiences of participants (e.g. individual interviews) to discovery of a collective explanatory framework (on-line focus groups) depicting the multicultural competency process for Black/African-American trainees in predominately White environments.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Eurocentrism in multicultural education and training cannot provide a full and accurate understanding of Black/African-American reality. Therefore, the training of Black/African-Americans in psychology is, indeed, dismal (Nobles, 1986). Consequently, Black/African-American trainees in a predominately White training environment are not learning how to help Black/African people become healthy, for health is assumed and taught under Eurocentric guidelines. Thus, research that is deliberately intended to explore the process by which Black/African-American trainees who are receiving their training in a predominately White environment become multiculturally competent is greatly needed. Qualitative research methods are the soundest approach to explore how Black/African-American counseling professionals describe and experience distinct related content areas (e.g. multicultural education) associated with the development of multicultural competence primarily because this approach gives a voice to the population and avoids some of the pitfalls of traditional quantitative ways of measuring their experiences. Therefore, the intent of this study was to use grounded theory, a systematic qualitative research approach, to create a model that explains the multicultural competency process of Black/African-American counseling professionals, and in turn, give voice to a population that is often overlooked or misunderstood.

Qualitative Paradigm

Qualitative research posits that human behavior and interaction is dynamic and is best understood as it takes places naturally in real-life situations. Qualitative research
allows the researcher to describe the “inner experience of participants” and discover how meanings are formulated through culture (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 12). In doing so, researchers are able to identify a wide range of understandings, meanings, and values by which individuals attribute to their everyday experiences (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). At the center of qualitative research are interpretative procedures that allows for the interplay between the researcher and the data while remaining aware of subjectivity that influences interpretations (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

**Qualitative Methods**

Research using qualitative methods is circumscribed in context and is based on inductive forms of logic where data emerges from participants, rather than being determined a priori by the researcher (Johnson & Christensen, 2000; Fassinger, 2005; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Creswell, 2007). The qualitative researcher typically focuses on relatively small, purposely selected samples for collecting information-rich insights (Patton, 2002). Qualitative researchers must immerse themselves “in the details and specifics of the data to discover important categories, dimensions, and interrelationships...in nonmanipulative, unobtrusive or uncontrolling ways” (Johnson & Christensen, 2000, p. 313). When qualitative researchers immerse themselves, they must take a holistic approach in that they appreciate and see the phenomenon under examination as a complex system that is more than the sum of its parts (Johnson & Christensen, 2000). This allows the researcher to accept the fact that there is no ultimate truth and instead depict the phenomenon under investigation in its multifaceted nature.
**Grounded Theory**

Grounded theory is a qualitative method employed to analyze and yield explanations of important social processes or structures within human interactions that are grounded in the data (Cutcliffe, 2000; Fassinger, 2005). Boychuk-Duchscher and Morgan, (2004) described grounded theory as “the discovery of enduring theory that is faithful to the reality of the research area; makes sense to the persons studied; fits the template of the social situation, regardless of varying contexts related to the studied phenomenon; adequately provides for relationships amongst concepts; and may be used to guide action” (p. 606). Therefore, the ultimate goal of grounded theory is to explore, discover, and create detailed explanations about the phenomenon under investigation. The techniques and analytical procedures of grounded theory make it possible for researchers to develop a theory that is significant, theory-observation compatible, generalizable, reproducible and rigorous (Gasson, 2004). Such characteristics make grounded theory, “the most influential paradigm of qualitative research in social sciences today” (Fassinger, 2005, p.156).

**Application of Grounded Theory to the Overall Research Question**

Grounded theory is the chosen method for research pertaining specifically to marginalized populations like racial minorities, when there isn’t any theory or the existing ones are not fitting for the population of focus (Hendricks, Smith, Caplow, & Donaldson, 1996; Noonan, Gallor, Hensler-McGinnis, Fassinger, Wang, & Goodman, 2004; Ward, 2005). Currently, there are no published studies that portray the development of multicultural competence of Black/African-American counseling professionals from their standpoint.
The following open-ended interview questions were constructed to answer the overall research question, *What about me: Using grounded theory to understand how African-American counseling professionals become multiculturally competent*: (1) How do you define multiculturalism and what is your view on how it should be defined (e.g. broad perspective vs. narrow)?; (2) In your opinion, how should multiculturalism be infused into education and training?; (3) What would be helpful, particularly for African-American trainees in multicultural education and training, What helped you?; (4) According to you, what is multicultural competence?; (5) What skills, knowledge, and personal characteristics do you believe African-American counseling professionals need to become multiculturally competent? How did multicultural competence develop for you?; (6) How do you incorporate cultural variables like race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, and so forth into your work with clients and supervisees?; (7) What are your thoughts and feelings about being African-American and belonging to that racial group?; (8) How did these thoughts and feelings manifest in any multicultural education and training you received?; (9) How do your thoughts and feelings toward being African-American and belonging to that racial group influence your work with clients and supervisees?; (10) Are there any aspects about the development of multicultural competence in African-American counseling professionals that haven’t been explored by the researcher you would like to add? Specific procedures consistent with the philosophy of grounded theory were chosen for this study to give richness, depth, and insight into the phenomenon under investigation. In essence, grounded theory best fits the research aim of exploring and understanding the process by which Black/African-American counseling professionals become multiculturally competent.
Corbin and Strauss (2008) defined grounded theory as “a specific methodology developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) for the purpose of building theory from data” (p. 1). Creswell (2008) further stated a grounded theory paradigm generates a theory that explains a process at a broad conceptual level. It uses a systematic set of procedures and goes beyond description to discover an abstract theory for a specific phenomenon (Creswell, 2007).

There are three approaches to grounded theory, the systematic procedures of Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998); the emerging design of Glaser (1992); and the constructivist approach of Charmaz (2000). These three approaches were influenced by a difference in opinion for the degree of structure needed for applying procedures among qualitative researchers. For instance, Glaser and Strauss created the systematic approach together in 1967, but in 1992, Glaser criticized Strauss for placing an overemphasis on rules and a preconceived framework for theoretical categories. Accordingly, Glaser developed a more flexible emerging design while Charmaz (2006) posits a constructivist design that presumes theory is created from the subjective realities of the participants and that researchers as well as the participants are the ‘writers’ of the ‘story’.

**Systematic**

The systematic approach assumes there are actions and interactions between personal conceptions and knowledge of the world and includes a conceptual model or diagram (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The data analysis steps include open, axial, and selective coding to develop a theory (Miller & Salkind, 2002).
Emerging

The emerging design involves a more flexible design with abstract levels instead of specific categories (Creswell, 2008). Glaser asserts that a grounded theory cannot be forced into categories (Miller & Salkind, 2002). Furthermore, to be considered as a “good grounded theory” it must meet four criteria: fit, work, relevance, and modifiability (Creswell, 2008).

Constructivist

Charmaz (2005) asserts that a constructivist approach “does not assume that data simply await discovery in an external world or that methodological procedures will correct limited views of the studied world. Nor does it assume that impartial observers enter the research scene without an interpretive frame of reference” (p. 509). A constructivist approach to grounded theory perceives the researcher as an active research instrument that “makes decisions about the categories throughout the process, brings questions to the data, and advances personal values, experiences, and priorities” (Miller & Salkind, 2002).

The current study used the systematic design of Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) for a number of reasons, including having a systematic approach for developing useful theories by means of analytic tools to organize raw data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998); having a preexisting framework for emergent categories; and going beyond description to discover an abstract theory for a identified phenomenon (Creswell, 2007).

The inductive process of grounded theory used the participants’ experiences and their lens to provide insight into how Black/African-American counseling professionals define constructs related to multiculturalism, experience multicultural education and
training, and employ these in their work with clients and supervisees to become multiculturally competent. Unlike other research paradigms, grounded theory generated data from participants who actually experience the phenomenon. The core phenomenon emerged as dynamic and changing over time. In addition, grounded theory techniques assisted the researcher in identifying social psychological processes based on context-dependent observations using constant comparative methods (Crabtree & Miller, 1999).

The goal of analyzing data from the perspectives of the participants was to create a depiction that provides an understanding of the phenomenon and to use this newly found understanding to generate ideas that advance current theories about related topics to the overall research question.

**Participants**

Purposeful sampling was used to select nine Black/African-American counseling professionals throughout the U.S. Selection of potential participants was based on criteria aimed at providing data that was rich and detailed the process by which Black/African-American counseling professionals develop multicultural competence. Thus, participants who identified with the Black/African-American racial group; had been exposed to multicultural education and training; and had at least one multicultural counseling experience were selected to participate. Lastly, as a means to participate in the on-line focus group discussions, participants had access to a computer and were proficient enough to participate in the on-line focus group discussions. A table of participants’ demographics is provided below.
Table 1

Demographics of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Professional Level</th>
<th>Setting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Early 30's</td>
<td>Ph.D Clinical Psy</td>
<td>VA Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Late 20's</td>
<td>4th year Student</td>
<td>Counseling Psy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Early 30's</td>
<td>Ph.D Counsel Psy</td>
<td>Group Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Mid 30's</td>
<td>Intern Counsel Psy</td>
<td>Counsel Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Late 20's</td>
<td>Ph.D Counsel Psy</td>
<td>Counsel Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Late 30's</td>
<td>Ph.D Counsel Psy</td>
<td>Academia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Mid 20's</td>
<td>Psy.D Clinical Psy</td>
<td>VA Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Late 30's</td>
<td>Ph.D Clinical Psy</td>
<td>Private Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nine</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Mid 20's</td>
<td>Ph.D Clinical Psy</td>
<td>VA Hospital</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participant Recruitment

Gatekeepers as well as snowball sampling, a kind of chain referral sampling (Jeffri, 2004; Rowan & Huston, 1997) were used to recruit participants. Gatekeepers, individuals who were initial contacts for the researcher, remained critical in this study to gain access to participants on a national level. The gatekeepers were individuals with whom the researcher had established a trusting relationship either through professional or educational endeavors. The gatekeepers were either counseling professionals themselves or worked in a closely related field (e.g. social work). For all intents and purposes, the gatekeeper’s role was to simply identify potential participants and distribute recruitment materials to them. Once participants received recruitment materials they were free to
contact the researcher with any questions or concerns they may have before consenting to participate in the research study.

Snowball sampling involved participants who referred the researcher to other individuals who could potentially meet the criteria to participate in and contribute to the study. Snowball sampling is often used to find and recruit “hidden populations”, that is groups not easily accessible to researchers through other sampling strategies (Rowan & Huston, 1997).

Gatekeepers as well as participants who referred the researcher to other individuals received a packet detailing information about the study, the consent form, the background questionnaire, and the directions on how to access and participate in the on-line focus group discussions to give to prospective participants. Once potential participants received recruitment materials they were free to contact the researcher with any questions or concerns before consenting to participate in the research study.

After consenting to participate, potential participants were contacted by e-mail or telephone, according to their preference, to answer any additional questions or concerns and to arrange a time to conduct the in-depth individual interview. The researcher selected the first three individuals who met criteria to interview. After those participants had been selected and interviewed, the researcher continued with the selection process by using theoretical sampling to select participants with a variety in employment settings and multicultural counseling experiences. Using theoretical sampling to single-out participants who have experienced the phenomenon in a variety of ways contributed to the quality of the data that emerged.
Corbin and Strauss (2008) conveyed that the researcher continues to gather data until reaching saturation and caution that arriving at the point of saturation is complex. They indicate that a saturated theory occurs when no more new categories emerge and well-developed relationships exist among major categories with depth and variation. As a general guideline, sufficient sampling includes 20 to 30 individuals to form an in depth theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2007). A sample size of 20 to 30 individuals was unrealistic for this study due to the availability of participants. However, saturation was achieved through data collection methods; no additional information about categories, their properties, and their relationship to the core category materialized from the gathering of latter data collection (i.e. focus groups and 2nd individual interview with Participant 1).

**Data Collection: Individual Interviews and On-Line Focus Group Discussions**

Conducting the in-depth interviews using open-ended interview questions as opposed to other interview techniques, summoned participants to think about the topic and consider the attitudes, behaviors, feelings, and experiences that are related to and contribute to the phenomenon of becoming multiculturally competent as Black/African-American counseling professionals. Because the on-line focus group discussions operated to a large extent like second interviews, developing themes that emerged from participants’ individual stories were used to moderate the on-line focus group discussions. Essentially, the focus groups were a means to determine if emerging findings from the individual interviews remain constant as further data were collected in the on-line discussions.
Initial Data Collection: Background and In-Depth Individual Interviews

Once participants gave informed consent, they were instructed to complete the provided background questionnaire. The background questionnaire served as a means to gather descriptive data about each participant and to ensure that the participant was best suited to aid the researcher in explaining the phenomenon. After the informed consent had been obtained and the background questionnaire was completed, all nine participants were invited to participate in either face-to-face or over the phone semi-structured in-depth interview. Using a nationally based sample made it impossible to conduct all interviews face-to-face, thus, phone interviews were conducted for participants who lived more than a two-hour driving distance from where the researcher was located. Participants were notified on the consent form if they were located more than a two-hour driving distance from researcher, they will be asked to participate in a phone interview.

All nine participants, whether in-person or over the phone, participated in a 45-90 minute semi-structured interview. All interviews were recorded using an audio-recording device. The researcher deliberately asked open-ended questions related to the research topic to allow the participants to answer in their own words. Also, specific questions and probes were posed in a conversational manner to further explore participants’ responses and descriptions of experiences related to the research question.

Later Data Collection: Focus Group Discussions

Following the individual interviews, two on-line focus groups were created. The researcher selected the first three individuals who had already participated in an individual interview and consented to participate in the on-line focus group discussions to be grouped together in the first focus group. The remaining individuals who had
participated in an individual interview and consented to participate in the on-line focus group discussions were grouped together in the second focus group. The intent for having two focus groups was to facilitate more detailed discussion of ideas related to the phenomenon being studied.

The Internet was used to conduct the on-line focus group discussions. The on-line discussions took place on a free message board program (whataboutme.myfreeforum.org) that participants with Internet access used to read, post, and transfer messages with each other. The open-ended questions that were used to moderate the on-line focus group discussions were based on the responses from the previous in-depth individual interviews. The on-line focus groups were extended to two weeks as opposed to the proposed one-week due to low participation in the on-line focus group discussions. Participants were asked to engage in discussions at their convenience, at least three days out of a week, over the course of two weeks. There were two separate on-line focus groups; group II began after the ending of group I. Each focus group had three participants, totaling six participants altogether that participated in the on-line focus group discussions. See Table 2 and 3 below.
In focus group one, participants three and six responded to eight out of the nine proposed questions. On the other hand, participant seven responded only to one of the proposed questions. In focus group two, participant five participated the most and responded to eight out of the ten proposed questions. Participants two and four had approximately the same level of participation. Participant two responded to four out of the ten proposed questions whereas participant four responded to three out of the ten proposed questions.
Data Analysis

The data analysis procedure for a grounded theory study is the constant comparative method. The constant comparative method involves four levels of coding and analysis: (1) open coding; (2) axial coding; (3) selective coding; and (4) construction of the explanatory framework or model. The basic idea is to move raw data through successive levels of abstraction to develop a core idea/phenomenon that best depicts the research topic. Utilizing this method, data were analyzed during the initial data collection period (individual interviews) and emerging understanding of the phenomena from analysis was used in gaining insight of the phenomena in later data collection (focus groups). Concepts, categories, and phenomena identified during open coding were linked together as part of the axial coding process to create the theoretical framework (MMCBA model) that describes the phenomenon (the process by which Black/African-American counseling professionals become multiculturally competent) being studied.

Open Coding

Open coding is the part of the data analysis concerned with identifying, naming, categorizing and describing the phenomena (Leedy & Ormod, 2001). The goal is to thoroughly examine the categories and select those that are most saturated with information to create the core category (Creswell, 2007). Essentially, the researcher read each line, sentence, paragraph etc., of participants’ transcript to construct abstract and concrete categories that build toward a central phenomenon that best explains the development of multicultural competence in Black/African-American counseling professionals (Creswell, 2007; Leedy & Ormod, 2001).
Axial Coding

Axial coding was conducted to learn more about the core category. The researcher examined the data to look at events or variables that led to the occurrence of the core category, *moving towards a multicultural framework*. Contextual elements that influenced its development, the purposeful, goal oriented strategies/actions that were a response to the phenomenon and the intervening conditions, as well as the intended and unintended consequences of these actions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2000) were also explored. The goal is to relate categories and their properties to one another to deepen the understanding of the central phenomenon. Thus, the researcher was situated between open coding and axial coding to redefine categories to create generic relationships among them that best describes the central phenomenon.

Selective Coding

Selective coding entails systematically relating the core category to other categories and their interrelationships to create an explanatory framework of the phenomenon under investigation. The researcher “moved back and forth” among the transcripts, open coding, and axial coding to refine categories and interrelationships that depict central variables related to the phenomenon. The basic idea is to develop a framework or model around which everything else is arranged.

The researcher using a Microsoft Word program completed all transcription of individual interviews and coding. The researcher used coding techniques, wrote memos, and highlighted text to aid in moving raw data through successive levels of abstraction.
Establishing Credibility of Qualitative Data

Concerning qualitative research, validating data refers to “a checking out of interpretations with participants and against data as the research moves along” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 48). Validation is part of the research process since the researcher must determine if the theory is accurate and makes sense to the participants (Creswell, 2008). Throughout open coding the researcher triangulates data between the information and categories; during axial coding data continues to be checked with categories (Creswell, 2008).

Qualitative studies cannot be generalized, but they can give explanatory power or predictive ability to explain what may happen in given situations (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Techniques to confirm transferability of results to similar settings included defining the sample with specific criteria, thoroughly describing their characteristics, and providing rich descriptions. Credibility is the qualitative version of internal validity; it determines how likely the study has accurately produced plausible findings from the data.

The rigor of grounded theory approaches offers qualitative researchers “a set of clear guidelines from which to build explanatory frameworks that specify relationships among concepts” (Charmaz, 2000, p. 510). Grounded theory is built on a systematic and formal process of data collection, analysis and theory generation. Therefore there were strategies unique to grounded theory that the researcher employed to ascertain the rigor of the study. More specifically, the comparative method, research auditor, triangulation, theoretical sampling, and member checks were used to aid in the trustworthiness of this grounded theory study.
Comparative Method

“Constant comparison lies at the heart of the grounded theory approach and differentiates a rigorous grounded theory analysis from inductive guesswork” (Gasson, 2004, p.84). The researcher used the constant comparative method in which any newly collected data (e.g. emergent data from on-line focus group discussions) was compared with previous data collected (in-depth interviews). This was a continuous ongoing procedure throughout as new data emerged from the study.

Research Auditor

Research auditors assist in clarifying aspects of data analysis that may have been missed by the researcher to ensure that the emergent explanatory framework is fully developed (Brown, Steven, Troiano, & Schneider, 2002). The research auditor for this study reviewed individual transcripts, focus group responses, and coded data to explore emerging designs and hypotheses to "keep the inquirer honest" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 77). Furthermore, the auditor provided important feedback that lead to stronger and better articulations of the findings. For example, the research auditor noted that the “topics of training being cultural imperialism is an intriguing concept. I was wondering how this factor into the {MMCBA} model” aided the researcher in explicitly discussing cultural imperialism in multicultural education and training, exosystems in the MMCBA model.

Dependability

The researcher of this study used an auditor to ensure that the study is dependable. This person used the raw data and the researcher's findings throughout the study to check that all grounded theory research procedures were followed thoroughly. The auditor
ensured that emerging codes, concepts, and the explanatory framework were dependable and consistent across various social contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

**Transferability**

Transferability refers to the theoretical parameters of the research (Marshall & Rossman, 1995) and to the applicability of the findings to other sets of data. Transferability is strengthened in the present study by selecting different participants with varied perspectives and experiences concerning the development of multicultural competence in Black/African-American counseling professionals. The descriptions of how the study is situated in the literature, the participants involved, the methodology chosen, and the analysis of results are adequately described so that future researchers are able to make determinations about the practical application of this inquiry in other settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman).

**Triangulation**

The intent of triangulation is to use multiple sources to confirm the central phenomenon and its contents. It is a validity method that compares the results from either two or more different methods of data collection (Corbin & Strauss, 1998). For this study, triangulation was first sought by selecting Black/African-American counseling professionals from various regions with different backgrounds to develop the central phenomenon. The integration of the data from the in-depth interviews and on-line focus group discussions was also another form of triangulation that assisted in formulating an explanatory framework or model that has depth and density concerning the central phenomenon. Finally, comparing the emerged explanatory framework or model with the
existing literature and examining what is similar, what is different, and why, is another form of triangulation.

**Theoretical Sampling**

Straus and Corbin, (1998) refer to theoretical sampling as the process of sampling participants that can contribute to the creation and selection of pertinent information related to the central phenomenon. Therefore, theoretical sampling procedures dictate the selection of participants based on the evolving patterns, categories and dimensions emerging from the data. In the present study, the researcher used participants’ background questionnaires to select participants that were able to confirm, extend, and sharpen the emerging patterns, categories and dimensions detailing the underlying dynamics involved in the development of multicultural competence in Black/African-American counseling professionals. By doing so, the researcher has chosen ‘experts’ who are able to provide the best data available concerning the phenomenon (Corbin & Strauss, 1998). Theoretical sampling also guided the questions used to collect data from the on-line focus groups. The data that emerged from these discussions were used to further develop the explanatory framework detailing the central phenomenon.

**Member Checks**

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), member checks are “the most critical techniques for establishing credibility” (p. 314) in qualitative research designs. Member checking is the technique by which data, as well as analysis and interpretation of the data are taken back to the participants of the study so that they can check the accuracy of the findings (Creswell & Miller, 1997). Member checks were employed in this study through the on-line focus group discussions. The bulletin board discussion created an immediate
transcript of the on-line focus group discussions that were reviewed by both the participants and the researcher. This allowed the participants to comment on or correct any information immediately or at a later time. The focus group discussions provided opportunities for participants to confirm, modify, and/or extend the researcher’s understandings that were drawn from the individual in-depth interviews.

**Immersion**

In grounded theory research studies, immersion takes place from the beginning to the end. Immersion first occurs when researchers use their experiences and/or worldviews to formulate opinions about the phenomenon under investigation and seek the literature to explore, discover, and better understand it. For example, the researcher’s experiences of multicultural education and training, prompted her to explore the literature in which she discovered how counseling professions view and come to understand multiculturalism and the distinct content areas explored in this study. Discovering that the counseling field/profession struggled with defining multiculturalism and its related areas produced awareness to the possibility of some research participants experiencing this same struggle. Therefore, the researcher asked each participant to provide their own definitions and perspectives of the phenomenon and related areas. Exploring how counseling professions discuss multiculturalism and related areas helped the researcher create interview questions that are situated in the context of the literature. Mainly so, to ensure participants’ voices are not lost and their presence is maintained throughout and shows up in the outcome; the explanatory framework or model.
The Subjective Worldview of the Researcher

Characteristic of the inductive approach of grounded theory is the possibility that while the researcher claims that theoretical constructs "emerge" from below; in fact the researcher may be forcing them from above (Glaser, 1967). Thus the subjectivity of the research must be known and acknowledged by the researcher.

The researcher of this study is an African-American heterosexual woman who has a personal relationship with God and puts a strong emphasis on spirituality in her life. Race is the framework for how she understands the other aspects of her identity. This perspective shapes how she view and come to understand multiculturalism and multicultural issues. Because of the nature of race in society, she believes multicultural education and training should explore all aspects of identity from a racial lens. Also it is her belief that multicultural competency and one’s perception of multiculturalism develops within a complex system of relationships affected by multiple levels of the surrounding environment. The researcher has found Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological systems theory on human development to be a useful framework for deepening her understanding of the development of multicultural competence. According to the ecological systems theory, the interactions of individuals within and between environments are significant and changes in one can cause changes in another (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). As a result, there are environmental/contextual factors that influences one’s interpretations and understandings of multiculturalism, how one experiences multicultural education and training, how one practices multicultural counseling and therapy, and ultimately one’s development of multicultural competence.
For example, the experience of being educated and trained as a master’s level counseling professional at a Historically Black University (HBU) aided in my understanding that there were gaps in my education and training regarding multiculturalism as a doctoral counseling psychology student at a predominately White institution. At a HBU, autonomy was encouraged, independent thinking was advocated, and an environment that facilitated trainees’ self-concept and self-efficacy existed. My racial cultural history and identity was understood, accepted, and deemed as a necessary component to my development of multicultural competence.

Despite navigating in a predominately White environment where racial minority and other diversity concerns were integrated into coursework, practica, and supervision, cultural imperialism continued to plagued the education and training process. Thus, acquiring knowledge concerning my racial cultural history (e.g. African philosophical basis of African-American psychological functioning), the self-identification process of Black/African-Americans, and research specifically geared towards Black/African-American clients necessitated going beyond the program to immersion into Black/African-American culture through readings, formal and informal conversations, and community involvement.

The aforementioned profoundly influenced my commitment to multicultural competence for myself as well as for future counseling professionals. Advocating for education and training practices that prepare all counseling professionals to be culturally proficient and provide quality services to all clients is one of the many purposes God has intended me to do. Hence, the motivation to conduct research on Black/African-American counseling professionals’ experiences of the underlying dynamics affecting
their development of multicultural competence is important to me both personally and professionally.

**Chapter Summary**

In summary, chapter 3 provided an overview of qualitative research with a focus on the grounded theory approach. This chapter also included the sampling methods used to recruit study participants. In addition, procedures for data collection and data analysis, ways of establishing credibility, rigor, and the role of the researcher were all included.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Rich and descriptive data emerged illustrating the process by which Black/African-American counseling professionals become multiculturally competent. The goal of this grounded theory study was to use participants’ experiences and worldviews to generate an explanatory framework or model depicting the underlying dynamics involved in the process. Subsequently, the MMCBA (moving towards a Multicultural framework for the development of Multicultural Competence for Black/African-American trainees) model was created to explain the dynamic interconnected concepts that influence Black/African-American counseling professionals’ development of multicultural competence. Using Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory as a base, this proposed contextual model describes the repeated influences of individual and systemic factors on multiple subsystems (i.e., microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem) that effect the development of multicultural competence for Black/African-American trainees.

This chapter begins by presenting concepts, categories, and phenomena identified during open coding and linked together as part of the axial coding process to create the theoretical framework that describes the phenomenon being studied. Categories were expanded or adjusted based upon analyzed emergent data from the individual interviews and focus groups to ascertain patterns, illustrate concepts, and essentially, abstracted until the central or core category was conceptualized. All categories were examined and pulled together, each involved complex processes, interaction with one another, and both
theoretical and practical implications regarding the development of multicultural competence for Black/African-American trainees.

Findings

Open and Axial Coding

At the outset, data is analyzed and placed into categories that exhibit shared experiences among research participants. A total of 12 categories, including the core category, emerged from the data during the open coding phase. Corbin and Strauss (2008) insisted that the core category must be sufficiently abstract, applicable in other related areas, appear frequently in the data, and possess explanatory power relative to other categories. Therefore the core category, moving towards a multicultural framework, emerged as the focal theme central to understanding the development of multicultural competence for Black/African-American counseling professionals.

The researcher automatically integrates open and axial coding procedures when working with the data and the distinction between open coding and axial coding is for explanatory purposes only (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). For this reason, the open coding categories were organized together into six preset axial categories described by Strauss and Corbin (1998), and included: (a) the core category, (b) causal conditions, (c) contextual conditions, (d) intervening conditions, (e) strategies, and (f) consequences.

Since analyses of the data revealed moving towards a multicultural framework as the core category, it is at the center of the model. All other categories are presented in an axial model in their relation to the central phenomenon. Open categories and their properties are shown in Table 4 below followed by the Axial Coding diagram.
### Table 4

*Open Coding Categories with Properties/Dimensions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broad Categories</th>
<th>Category or Subcategory</th>
<th>Properties/Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Category: Moving Towards a Multicultural Framework</td>
<td>Black/African-American Trainee</td>
<td>Racial Cultural History Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Properties of Race Learned Perceptions of Race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causal Conditions</td>
<td>Multiculturalism</td>
<td>Backdrop Definition Approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lived Experiences as a Minority</td>
<td>Lived Experiences as a minority and its relation to multicultural competence Racial minority status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Environment and its relation to development of multicultural competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Societal Influences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies</td>
<td>Multicultural Education</td>
<td>When &amp; How</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multicultural Training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervening Conditions</td>
<td>Attitudes, Beliefs, &amp; Actions</td>
<td>Essential personal characteristics to aid in the development of multicultural competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpersonal Processes</td>
<td>Mentorship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequences</td>
<td>Multicultural Competence</td>
<td>Critical Consciousness, Skills Needed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1.
Axial Coding Diagram

- Contextual Conditions
  - Environment
  - Societal Influences

- Causal Conditions
  - Multiculturalism
  - Racial Experiences

- Strategies
  - Multicultural Education
  - Multicultural Training

- Consequences
  - Multicultural Competence

Subcategories
- Black/African American Trainees
- Race
Categories

The identification of categories involved the production of a hierarchical structure, which showed tentative relationships between factors identified from the systematic procedures of grounded theory described in chapter three. A hierarchical structure was derived during the open and axial stages of analysis. Categories and subcategories were used to assist in coding data obtained in the research around the core category identified as, 'moving towards a multicultural framework'. As depicted in Table 1, categories and subcategories were identified and positioned based on their relationship and conceptual linkage to the core category (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Core Category

The core category for the current study was identified as moving towards a multicultural framework. In this study, a multicultural framework consisted of dynamic, interactive, interconnected concepts (i.e. Black/African-American trainees understanding who they are and their racial cultural history, the existence of a dominant culture, and its influences on multiculturalism, education and training, etc.) that influence the development of multicultural competence for Black/African-American trainees.

There were two subcategories that emerged from the core category and were labeled as Black/African-American Trainees and Race.

Black/African-American trainees. A prolific number of researchers contend that peoples of African descent have had the most difficulty with self-identification because of the deep-seated racism and oppression embedded throughout the American social system. Implementing a multicultural framework that permits Black/African-
American trainees’ exploration of self and racial cultural history is critical in their development of multicultural competence.

The Black/African-American Trainees subcategory had two dimensions (*racial cultural history*, and *identity*), each dimensions’ function in the significance of moving towards a multicultural framework is delineated.

**Racial cultural history.** Participants discussed the importance of learning and understanding their racial cultural history in their development of multicultural competence. For example, one participant recommended starting “off with their history and background and giving different topics even prior to slavery to learn about their history. Looking at their rich heritage and history is a good starting place to help African-American students become multiculturally competent.” One participant suggested “going back … to slavery, [to see how] things that happened in slavery and the antebellum south influenced how we behave now and some of the markers there are helpful in multicultural awareness and competency.” Another participant insisted that “African-Americans first need self awareness and exploration of [their] own racial background and heritage, doing the work regarding [their] own self and professional growth is important.”

Participants reported that exploring their racial cultural history deepened their understanding of who they are racially (i.e. identity and racial cultural history) and increased their awareness of how others may interact with them because of their race. One participant’s awareness of her racial cultural background helped her to understand she “must be aware of who I am and how people relate and deal with me as an African-American.” A different participant stated, “I think I just have the personality that when people meet me they would think he’s very black. I speak a certain way and you know I
walk a certain way. I think they understand I have a certain amount of pride in myself and identify with my particular race culture group of people very strongly. You can see how different people react to it. Some people are uncomfortable or just curious.”

Identity. Participants reported that Black/African-Americans are often taught early on “what it means to be Black.” One participant denoted that

. . .it’s always a battle, when you are born with this skin, it’s like oh he’s brown that means he’s going to have a battle, oh she’s brown, she is going to have a battle. In knowing that, having a consciousness of your culture and color.... understanding where you come from and knowing that history for me gives me that light and confidence to the point I can face those who challenge me. 

One additional participant contended, “I believe that African peoples have multiple cultural realities that require full attention of African-American trainees to focus on.” This participant further stated, “to understand their [African people] cultural realities, African men need to get in touch with the better sense of what African manhood looks like and get in touch with what African womanhood looks like.” However, it was also important to participants that it is understood Black/African-Americans are not a homogenous group. “Whites will often take one or a few Black Americans’ experiences and make generalizations to the whole group.” As one participant stated, “being an African-American female does not make me the same as ALL African-American females because I have had different experiences than many people.” Therefore, “I believe in order for others to understand who I am, they must understand and appreciate all aspects of my identity.” Another participant explained, “my racial identity development is an ongoing process for me. I might go through a phase in which I am like internalizing and
then I might be sitting in another space where I have a whole another encounter situation.”

Participants embracing their racial cultural history and Black/African-American identity bolster their development of multicultural competence, which in turn, is beneficial in connecting to and with the Black/African-American community. As one participant explained, “Black/African-Americans’ multicultural competence is a way to give back to the community.”

Race

The second core subcategory was identified as race. In this study participants focused on two dimensions of race: (a) the properties of race (e.g. salient, consistent, and apparent) and (b) the learned perceptions of race.

Properties of race. In this dimension, participants implied that because of the properties of race, Race-base discussions are integral components in multicultural education and training. One participant explained, “race is important because it is the one thing that is consistent and you would notice it and it is salient. Race doesn’t disappear and it cannot be hidden; race is apparent. It’s a factor a lot of people, particularly White Americans, don’t want to talk about it.” Another participant concluded, “people avoid race discussions by talking about other cultural variables. The discussion of race is a more threatening conversation to have especially for Whites.” Participants expressed that people are more comfortable discussing oppression and discrimination of other cultural variables. “The discussion of race seems to be at a standstill due to the idea of being considered a racist. In order for progress to be made race must be discussed in a truthful manner.”
While participants recognized the importance of having racial discussions, they discussed how Black/African-American trainees are labeled if they are the initiators of the race-base discussions. According to one participant, “some Black/African-American trainees may be concerned with being labeled as preoccupied with race/minority issues. “Hence, the voice and knowledge of these trainees may be "shut down" and thus not heard.”

**Learned perceptions of race.** Despite attempts at multicultural competence, participants denoted that learned perceptions of race continue to infiltrate the training process. As stated by one participant, “I think that goes to how people view race. So I think it’s so much bigger than a training program. I think even people who are, quote, unquote, culturally competent in the program at the end of the day they see me as just some Black chick in their program.” Another participant explained, “there are some challenges that African-Americans have. There are stigmas that exist. Having to prove yourself as a professional to your clients and at the same time you may fall into some of the stereotypes even though you may have a degree.” One participant further discussed this issue by stating,

It’s harder being Black in this profession and people have perceptions of how you should or should not be. I struggle with what I am putting out there. I try to fit in but not fit in so much that I lose who I am. I am assimilated. I make sure I am credit to my race and walking that fine line of being mainstream and not being a sell-out.
Furthermore, due to the racial history of America and the resultant perceptions of race, “sometimes African-Americans may automatically assume they are in a one down position.” This participant went on to say, “African-Americans sometimes being in a one down position can sort of foster a victim mentality that impacts their journey of becoming multiculturally competent.” Additionally, another participant acknowledged that learned perceptions of race contributes to cross-racial tensions. “Cross-racially, there are tensions across different cultures, there are tensions among racial minorities, like a Latino might be less willing to talk to you as oppose to a White American or a Latin American because they may have negative perceptions about African-Americans.” A different participant also acknowledged “minorities have the potential to perpetuate stereotypes to gain power.”

Causal Conditions

The broad category known as causal conditions refers to events or a set of circumstances that influence the core category (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). These are the events or variables that lead to the occurrence or development of the phenomenon. They are a set of causes and their properties (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The causal conditions for moving towards a multicultural framework are multiculturalism and lived experiences as a minority.

Multiculturalism. In this study, participants described factors (e.g., the definition of multiculturalism) within the multiculturalism causal category that are influential in moving towards a multicultural framework.

Backdrop of multiculturalism. Some participants reported that with the sociopolitical changes of society, the definition of multiculturalism has changed as well.
“Multiculturalism earlier on in the 60’s might have been more about the Brown folks in the mix versus just White folks. I think with the civil rights movement, there were other groups that came into effect in regard to women, GLBT, and other folks jumping on the bandwagon.” One participant stated, “I think over time I found we truly missed a step as well as lost sight of the original context of multiculturalism. Which basically had a lot to do with, especially psychology, with race and ethnicities.” “It [multiculturalism] became less Race-base and more about everything under the sun. It feels like there is this watering down of things that seemed to be more precedent” like race and ethnicity.

One participant believed that, “multiculturalism, where our own group is concerned, focuses primarily on poor disenfranchised Black people. In multiculturalism, for every group, one subgroup is taken and it becomes almost the archetype for that group. For us, it’s the poor, poorly educated, disenfranchised, rage-full Black man.” The participant also stated, “I think a lot of the issue I see with multiculturalism is attempting to educate White men and women. It’s [multiculturalism] being forced upon them with too much guilt and things are introduced as your people have done this and that’s why we’re this way psychologically.” Forcing multiculturalism and multicultural issues on trainees has the potential to make them overly sensitive to it, specifically White trainees. Multiculturalism and wanting to understand multicultural issues should be natural and innate. However, as one participant stated, “psychology, like every other science, has sought to box it [multiculturalism] and it is a difficult thing to put bounds around.”

**Definition of multiculturalism.** Some participants defined multiculturalism broadly. For example, one participant shared that “multiculturalism in my opinion goes beyond race and gender. It’s ethnicities, it’s religion, and it’s disabilities. Really it’s
anything that a person can use to define who they are or what they believe.” Similarly, another participant maintained “multiculturalism encompasses a lot of different things and a lot of different areas of culture, even within a race. So multiculturalism is defined as many different areas of looking at a culture from many different perspectives.” Another participant defined “multiculturalism as being able to acknowledge and accept differences in others, whether it is racial differences, cultural differences, gender differences, and/or sexual orientation differences.”

According to other participants, multiculturalism should be specific and be explored within and between differences of racial subgroups. As stated by one participant, “understanding the within and between differences in racial subgroups is useful in comprehending how folk interact with each other, organize themselves, and make sense of their respective experiences.” Likewise, another participant specified he believes “multiculturalism should be defined as a response to ethnic specific models of work. Multiculturalism should be specific and explore within differences and between differences of groups. That would allow, for example, African people to be recognized as having multiple cultural sets. Generic terms are inadequate when discussing multiculturalism.”

Most participants, including those who described current definitions of multiculturalism broadly, relayed that a generic or universal definition of multiculturalism limits the understanding of multiculturalism and multicultural issues. Essentially, how multiculturalism is defined, who it is defined by, and the underlying purpose behind the definition influence multicultural competency, as well as how it is conveyed in multicultural education and training.
Participants reported that there is a dissonance in how multiculturalism is defined and carried out. For example, one participant declared

...the way [multiculturalism] is defined in psychology, academically, is how White men and women are supposed to look at the ways in which family develops the psychology of Black people. In psychology I think the definition of multiculturalism should resemble the general definition, one's thinking and behaving and how they feel about themselves and how they look at themselves relative to other people.

Approach. Participants conveyed that multiculturalism and multicultural issues/topics must be taught early on and infused throughout multicultural education and training. One participant stated, “[multiculturalism] should be filtered and fully integrated into all classes; instead of treating it as separate classes. Multiculturalism is something that is infused in our society; so it should be infused in all coursework. It affects everything we do as clinicians so there is no reason it shouldn’t be talked about in all of our coursework.” A different participant stated,

... multiculturalism should be infused in education and training carefully because you could do a disservice when you make it be a situation where you are trying to cover the whole gamut. I think it is important to decide the important areas of multiculturalism that are basically germane to the culture and people. It would be based above and beyond ... the academic walls and I think that has a lot to do with race and ethnicity.

Another participant indicated that the current multicultural curriculum “cannot teach African-Americans how to be people, treat people, and improve the well-being of people
as therapists if it doesn’t address the original European incursion. Participants implied that eurocentrism in the training environment stifles all trainees’ learning processes and their development of multicultural competence. “All trainees miss out on the knowledge, skills, and lived experience of those who have been ‘shut down’ by the Eurocentric approach.” Moreover, eurocentrism in the training environment may hinder the self-awareness and exploration process for Black/African-American trainees.” A Eurocentric approach implies, “now that we have some techniques and skills, we can apply that to any group and that would be culture specific competence.”

Lived Experiences as a Minority. Black/African-American trainees’ lived experiences as a minority engenders additional awareness and sensitivity to multicultural issues and problems, particularly, the issues Black/African-Americans face. Participants reported that their lived experiences as a minority aids in their understanding of multicultural issues but it does not necessarily guarantee multicultural competence. As one participant stated, “in my experience it was assumed that because I am a double minority, Black and a woman, that I was multiculturally competent, and it just so happened I was. But I have met other people of color or things that make them a minority who were not.” It seemed as if Black/African-American trainees have no choice in being aware and understanding of multicultural issues in order to be successful. One participant stated, “[multicultural competence] came out of a necessity and if I want to be a successful therapist than I better get to learning.”

It is vital that multicultural education and training take into consideration Black/African-American trainees’ experiences of discrimination and their impact on them as professionals in the field. It is important to discuss the manner in which “clients’
biases impact the clinical relationship, particularly for Black/African-American counseling professionals.” Another participant shared,

African-Americans are also forced to learn how the majority think and behave in order to safely navigate graduate school, internship and career. We are forced to have a sort of duality psychologically. You want to be a psychologist, go and work with White folks. So I think you are made to learn their ways. You are made to learn their or what they (white folks) assume to be normal is going to be made normal for all of us. So you have a bit of a multicultural perspective, it’s not a full one there but you have to have it.

Examining Black/African-American trainees’ duality in multicultural education and training that impacts their development of multicultural competence is necessary.

**Contextual Conditions**

The broad category of contextual conditions refers to sets of conditions that provide the background setting and may include problems or circumstances that influence actions and behaviors (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). Essentially, these conditions are the backdrop surrounding the processes connected to the core category; they are considered situational factors that affect the outcomes that result from the core category (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). The contextual conditions for moving towards a multicultural framework are *environment* and *societal influences*.

**Environment.** According to the ecological systems theory, the interactions of individuals within and between environments are significant and changes in one can cause changes in another (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Multiculturalism is an interactional process that affects the training environment, the trainee, and eventually the clinical
relationship. In becoming multiculturally competent, it is critical to "have supervisors
who understand the importance of multiculturalism, and who understand how that effects
who I am in and outside of the clinical room." Therefore "it is crucial to have a training
environment that is suited for and facilitates multicultural discussions and awareness. "A
training environment where supervisors are aware of and make a conscious effort to
initiate multicultural discussions" deepens trainees’ awareness and understanding of
multicultural issues.

Societal Influences. The idea that being the only Black/African-American
trainee in a White environment mirrors society also emerged. Participants discussed
loneliness, feeling accustomed to being the only one or only a few, being a spokesperson
and being responsible for educating others. One participant elaborated and stated “you
usually feel alone and it made education and multiculturalism more needed because most
of the people who will be providing services are going to be the dominate group.”
Another participant reported “the education and training process can be lonely for
Black/African-American trainees; especially since they are often isolated from their
family. Black/African-American trainees being isolated from their family is “very
unnatural” to African culture. Black/African-American trainees who are isolated are
disconnected from themselves and who they are as a person.” Another participant talked
about the need for a cultural revolution that includes Black focused environments. “We
need a cultural revolution in training programs that are more Black focused
environments. This allows students to study from the cultural revolutionary architects that
have spawned major global shifts in the sovereignty of African people.”
Strategies

The broad category of strategies or actions refers to purposeful acts that provide a solution to the problem embodied in the core category, shaping the processes, which lead to the consequences. In the context of this study, the strategies of *multicultural education* and *multicultural training* are purposeful and goal oriented approaches for addressing the core phenomenon of *moving toward a multicultural framework*.

**Multicultural Education.** The notion that Western institutions by necessity must promote the value system of imperialism and that this is replicated in the modality of training emerged. According to one participant, “we are not engaging in training African-American trainees, we are training cultural imperialists who happened to be African-American that engage in the work of psychology.” This participant further noted “supervisors cannot ethically train Black/African-American trainees to liberate African people.” “Thus, the interaction [way we are training people to provide counseling] ensures the pacification of the client and acquiescence to the dominating systems of Europeans.”

To prevent this, participants expressed that multicultural education should include multicultural issues/topics, be taught early on, infused throughout, and foster the ability to implement what has been learned. One participant recommended introducing...

...multiculturalism in the lower levels as psychologists advance in training then should be exposed to different cultures and environments outside of the classroom would be beneficial for students learning about multiculturalism. I made a mistake earlier on as I was getting trained in multiculturalism ... I tended to ignore other cultural differences and I looked at the world in a Black and White kind of world.
So students going to different communities such as being in urban communities and learning about their mental health, as well as hands on and having experience in the environment” are essential in their development of multicultural competence.

**Multicultural Training.** As a result of the historical oppression that has affected the Black/African-American racial cultural group, participants maintained that Black/African-American trainees may need to explore any internalization of racism, what being racially oppressed entails, and how both of these aspects impact the clinical relationship. Therefore, training for Black/African-American trainees requires a different focal point than current models of training. One participant specified that a focus on “regaining sovereignty would allow African-Americans to see ourselves as a people with international nationhood and define our systems and institutions of health according to our needs.”

Another participant declared “a clear problem is that programs will not train you to work well with Black people but most of your clients will be black, so the relationship between training and therapy is one of focused on the needs of the doctoral trainees” and the trainees are the ones really catered to. Thus, in the beginning of training the needs of the students are focused on whereas advanced practicum and externships are focused on the client and the ability of the trainee to work with clients. Either way, “the training of clinical work is European and Eurocentric and is inadequate with working with Black clients.”

Trainees and supervisors must be willing to address the flaws of looking at things from a Eurocentric perspective. Thus, according to one participant “critical consciousness
must be a key component in teaching and didactical learning experiences.” She further stated, “critical consciousness also involves action against the oppressive elements in one's life that are illuminated by that understanding." Embracing teachable moments that “inform all students about ancestry and help them get a sense of why they are becoming psychologist...would give African-American trainees a better sense of the history of psychology, understanding oppression, and understanding of oppression in the field they are actually undertaking.”

**Intervening Conditions**

The broad category of intervening conditions refers to factors that shape, facilitate, or strain strategies that take place within the context. In this study, *attitudes, beliefs, & actions* as well as *interpersonal processes* emerged as intervening conditions.

**Attitudes, beliefs, & actions.** Attitudes, beliefs, and actions are influential in the process of Black/African-American trainees developing multicultural competence. One participant reported “open-mindedness, unconditional positive regard, nonjudgmental, acceptance, awareness, and willingness to work on biases” as influential components in developing multicultural competence. Participants discussed exposure, challenging themselves, and going beyond their comfort zone as critical components in embracing their racial cultural group. Furthermore, Black/African-American trainees having an understanding of oppression and its effects lends to having a cultural response to oppression. Possessing a cultural response cultivates the ability to hear, convey, and conceptualize clients and their stories.

**Interpersonal processes.** In this study interpersonal processes appeared to be central in Black/African-American trainees navigating the training process. Participants
reported that mentorship for African-Americans is key to understanding and normalizing cross-racial experiences, as well as successfully navigating in a predominately White environment. For example, one participant expressed “experiences with Black females as mentors in the field would have been central in preparing me for the next few steps in this journey.” Another participant reported, “Black professors tend to take Black/African-American trainees under their wings and invest their time and effort as a means to increase their knowledge and ability to give back to our communities in a meaningful way through our competence and understanding.” She further explained, “African-American trainees are also being held to a different level of accountability/standard by African-Americans in positions of power because they [African-American trainees] are perceived and expected to do more than their White counterparts.” This could possibly cause confusion, frustration, and internal turmoil in African-American trainees. “They may be held to a different level of accountability because of how one is perceived or should act as a Black psychologist. I think when minority clinicians messes up it seems as if there is a blemish on all minority therapists. We have to be more vigilant because we can’t afford to make the mistakes they [White colleagues] are allowed to make.”

**Consequences**

Multicultural competence emerged as an overall consequence of strategies used to address the core phenomenon of *moving towards a multicultural framework*. Participants discussed multicultural competence as an active ongoing process that starts with the clinician. It involves participants having knowledge about the history of psychology, their racial cultural history, and the ability to implement cultural specific skills and techniques in counseling and in supervision. Participants discussed *critical consciousness* and the
skills needed for Black/African-American counseling professionals to be multiculturally competent.

Critical Consciousness. “Critical consciousness involves action against the oppressive elements in one's life that are illuminated by that understanding.” It “involves meeting people at their cultural needs in the context of who they are culturally and essential who they are as a human being.” Critical consciousness involves “establishing a way of being, understanding a way about yourself and the way in which you intervene in the world, understanding beyond your biases, being motivated to move, being and remaining culturally curious and is imperative in developing multicultural competency.”

Skills. “I think people have the misconception that brown skin equals competency when it comes to multiculturalism. So I think African-Americans need to be able to sit with the person and hear their story, and be able to hear it in the client's own context and not in the context of their own personal life.” A different participant denoted, “considering what is unique to the individual and their identity is key to conceptualizing their world view and incorporating their cultural variables. So for me the best thing is to do the work constantly to be put in a situation where you have to engage in work with diverse populations and have to educate yourself.” Another participant stated, “multicultural competence basically is establishing, and it's an active process so I am using the ing word, establishing an understanding of a way of being and doing the work we are talking about as far as counseling is concerned.” Participants explained that a majority of their multicultural competency skills developed through exposure and experiential experience as opposed to textbook knowledge.
Summary of the Open and Axial Coding Process

Open coding is the part of the data analysis concerned with identifying, naming, categorizing and describing the phenomena (Leedy & Ormod, 2001). The goal is to thoroughly examine the categories and select those that are most saturated with information to create the core category (Creswell, 2007). Categories and subcategories were used to assist in coding data obtained in the research around the core category identified as, 'moving towards a multicultural framework'. As depicted in Table 1, categories and subcategories were identified and positioned based on their relationship and conceptual linkage to the core category (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Axial coding was conducted to learn more about the core category. The researcher examined the data to look at events or variables that led to the occurrence of the core category, moving towards a multicultural framework. Contextual elements that influenced its development, the purposeful, goal oriented strategies/actions that were a response to the phenomenon and the intervening conditions, as well as the intended and unintended consequences of these actions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2000) were also explored. The goal was to relate categories and their properties to one another to deepen the understanding of the core category.

Selective Coding

Since categories identified in the open and axial coding process are descriptions of data and not the theoretical framework, the previously identified categories need to be integrated to develop the theoretical framework (Pandit, 1996; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Creswell, 1998; Goulding, 2002; Goede & Villers, 2003). Therefore, the intent of selective coding is to highlight and explain the generated theoretical framework using
descriptive narrative. The explanation of the theoretical framework leads to a description of the core category. The phenomenon in this study is the dynamic, interactive, interconnected concepts that influence the development of multicultural competence for Black/African-American counseling professionals.

It is common practice for grounded theory studies to include related literature during the selective coding phrase of analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This allows the literature to support the descriptive narrative that develops. This study uses Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theoretical framework (1992) of human development (macrosystem, exosystem, mesosystem, and microsystem) to create cohesive descriptions of categories applicable to all participants.

Bronfenbrenner’s model has four interrelated main components: (a) process, (b) person, (c) context, and (d) time. Process refers to the interactions between the person and their environment. How processes influence development is thought to be dependent on characteristics of the person, environmental context, and time periods in which the processes are occurring (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Bronfenbrenner (1977) conceptualized four levels of ecological influences: (a) microsystems, (b) mesosystems, (c) exosystems, and (d) macrosystems.

Microsystems

Of the four levels, microsystems are located most proximally to the individual. Microsystems include activities, relationships, and roles that are experienced directly by the developing individual, as well as physical and social environmental influences on development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). In this study, there are four microsystems (Black/African-American trainees, themselves; Lived experiences as a minority; moving
towards a *Multicultural Framework; and Attitudes, Beliefs, and Actions* that directly influence the development of multicultural competence for Black/African-American trainees. The interactional patterns within each microsystem and the interactional patterns between each microsystem are key to understanding the underlying dynamics involved in the development of multicultural competence for Black/African-American trainees.

There are numerous factors that influence individuals’ attitudes toward race and multicultural issues, particularly, their attitudes about their own racial and ethnic group memberships (Gushue & Carter, 2000). These manifestations could directly influence the development of their racial/cultural identity (Sue and Sue 1999). Thus, Black/African-American trainees themselves, specifically their racial cultural history and identity are conceptualized as a microsystem in the conceptual framework. It is important to recognize that counseling professionals bring with them their lived experiences, personal cultural manifestations and interpretations of multicultural issues. For that reason, Black/African-American trainees need to understand “the role our past plays in our present attitudes, outlooks, mindsets and circumstances is important if we are to free ourselves from the spiritual, mental and emotional shackles that bind us today” (DeGury-Leary, 2005). Additionally, Black/African-American trainees having an understanding of oppression and its effects on the human psyche fosters culturally responsive behavior suitable for clients and their issues. Understanding who clients are culturally and the ability to hear, convey, and conceptualize their story is the essence of being multiculturally competent.
**Mesosystems**

Mesosystems are defined as systems comprised of the relations between two or more microsystems. For example, in this study the connections between a multicultural framework, Black/African-American trainees’ racial cultural history, their experiences as a minority, and their attitudes affect their development of multicultural competence. The more powerful and varied the links between microsystems are, the more powerful the influence they have on the phenomenon. For instance, the numerous and multifaceted experiences Black/African-American trainees have as a minority shape their attitudes and beliefs about race, and in turn, how they view multicultural issues and develop multicultural competence.

**Exosystems**

The third level, exosystems, involves links between social settings in which the individual does not have an active role but these connections occur in the individual’s immediate context. Exosystems impact Black/African-American trainees’ development of multicultural competence by interacting and influencing the microsystems. In this study, multiculturalism (definition and approaches); multicultural education (environment and contextual conditions) and training; and interpersonal processes) are exosystems that are external influences on how Black/African-American trainees become multiculturally competent.

Black/African-Americans are significantly underrepresented in multicultural education and training programs. Moreover, Black/African-American trainees are mostly being trained in a White environment as if they are White psychologists. Training for Black/African-American trainees requires a different focal point due to the racial history
of the American society. Supervisors and trainees must be willing to address the flaws of looking at things from a Eurocentric perspective. Additionally, support systems such as mentors are essential to Black/African-American trainees understanding negative cross-racial experiences and successfully navigating in a predominately White environment, all while maintaining who they are racially and professionally.

Macrosystems

The macrosystem is the larger cultural context. It is the overarching institutional patterns of the culture or subculture that permeates all systems in the ecological model. In this study, because race is salient, consistent, apparent, and influences all systems, it is conceptualized as a macrosystem. For example, the properties of race, perceptions of it in society, and societal influences are examples of macrosystems that influence the micro, meso, and exosystems concerning the development of multicultural competence for Black/African-American trainees.

The ecological systems theory is a framework for recommendations and solutions. When each environmental system from the model works together in effort toward a common goal, the solution becomes effective. If the interactions between systems are to be successful in Black/African-American trainees becoming multiculturally competent, they must occur regularly and over an extended period. Hence, multicultural training must start early on and continued throughout the training process. The development of multicultural competence is dependent upon the individual characteristics of each trainee, the immediate and distant environments in which these interactions occur, and trainees’ ability to implement what had been learned.
The MMCBA Model

Emergent data from the open and axial coding procedures were conceptualized and situated in Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory. The MMCBA (moving towards a Multicultural framework for the development of Multicultural Competence for Black/African-American trainees) model is a visual representation of the dynamic, interactive, and interconnected concepts that influence the development of multicultural competence for Black/African-American trainees. As introduced above, Bronfenbrenner’s ecological system theory of development provides a systematic means to examine all the factors that are significant in the growth and development of multicultural competence for Black/African-American trainees. The MMCBA model reflects the culmination of these interactive dynamic systems that results in multicultural competence. The MMCBA model is depicted below and explored in more detail in the discussion chapter.
Figure 2.

MMCBA Model
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

The findings of this study contribute to theory generation for understanding the development of multicultural competency for Black/African-American counseling professionals. This chapter summarizes and expands on the results that were delineated in chapter four, discusses the findings in comparison to existing training approaches mentioned in the literature review, examines the strengths and limitations of the study, and lastly, offers directions for further research based on the emergent data.

Summary of Findings

The essential dynamics involved in the process by which Black/African-American counseling professionals become multiculturally competent emerged and a resultant theoretical framework was established. The MMCBA model depicts that a multicultural framework is essential in optimizing the development of multicultural competence for Black/African-American trainees. This framework delineates Black/African-American trainees, race, multiculturalism, their lived experiences as a minority, environment, societal influences, attitudes, beliefs, and actions, interpersonal processes, multicultural education, and training as interactive, interconnected concepts fundamental to how Black/African-American trainees become multiculturally competent. With Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory as a foundation, The MMCBA model explains and conceptualizes these concepts as multiple active subsystems (i.e., microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem) that influence the development of multicultural competence for Black/African-American trainees.
Microsystems

Consisting of the individual’s most immediate environment, microsystems are the individual’s initial way of understanding the world in which they live. Black/African-American trainees, their racial cultural history and identity, their lived experiences as a minority, moving towards a multicultural framework; and their attitudes, beliefs, and actions are conceptualized as microsystems in the MMCBA model. These microsystems are reference points for how Black/African-American trainees come to understand multiculturalism and multicultural issues. The interactional patterns within each microsystem and the interactional patterns between each microsystem are central to understanding the underlying dynamics involved in their development of multicultural competence.

Black/African-American trainees. The educational and training process is entrenched in individualism, which causes alienation from self, family, culture, and spirit. This is dissenting to African culture. Moreover, racial injustices and feelings of isolation have damaging effects on the psyche of Black/African-American trainees (Williams, 1981). Participants advocated for an African philosophy of collectiveness as a means to enhance their cultural selves. They discussed the necessity of them being connected to and with the Black/African-American community as a means to hold on to who they are culturally.

Conceding and integrating Black/African-Americans’ racial cultural history throughout the educational and training process is essential in their development of multicultural competence. Participants discussed that getting back to their roots and exploring their racial cultural history provides them with a sense of self and identity.
Black/African-American trainees who exist in an environment facilitating a healing process that involves the discovery of who their ancestors are and a connection to their racial history promotes a positive racial identity. A positive racial identity as well as an establish professional identity aids in Black/African-American trainees having an in depth understanding of their clients’ worldview and the ability to convey it in a manner that the client is engaged and feels understood. Therefore, Black/African-American counseling professionals possessing critical consciousness is crucial in having the ability to work with their Black/African-American clients and clients in general.

Positive racial identity has been deemed as a necessary component (e.g., Carney and Kahn, 1984) in the development of multicultural competence. Acknowledgement, appreciation for, and acceptance of their own racial cultural group is likely to increase Black/African-American trainees’ effectiveness with their clients, particularly their Black clients. However, participants of this study discussed the negative impact of Black/African-American trainees’ possessing a positive racial identity while navigating in predominately White education and training programs. Participants implied that there is a struggle with establishing and maintaining their identity due to perceptions of how one should act as a Black psychologist. Participants further indicated that a strong identification with their racial cultural group makes it harder to be in the profession due to the saturation of eurocentrism. For that reason, participants advocated for cultural awareness and institutional changes to aid in their development and preservation of a positive racial identity.

**Lived experiences as a minority.** Social inequalities and racialization fabricates and authorizes differences and similarities between the dominant and the subordinate.
Racial cultural minorities experiences of differential treatment and living in a racist society creates shared lived experiences among and between them. However, racial cultural minorities like “black people are indeed people with complex emotions...in a racist context that would assume all black people to be the same because of their status OUTSIDE of the human race” (Fanon, 1952). It must be understood that Black/African-Americans have multiple cultural realities with some shared lived experiences as a racial minority in American society.

For example, participants of this study reported that their lived experiences as minorities engendered more awareness and sensitivity to issues and problems people encounter, and particularly the issues Black people face. However, because their lived experiences are very different from one another, their level of multicultural competency including their ability to understand their clients’ worldview varies. Participants discussed being a racial minority learning the dominant cultural ways of being and what is considered psychological healthy for that culture. It seemed as if Black/African-American trainees have no choice in being aware of and understanding issues faced by Whites in order to be successful in navigating the educational and training process. Therefore, Black/African-American trainees are forced to have a psychological duality. They must be able to assimilate all the while holding on to who they are as racial cultural beings.

**Attitudes, beliefs, and actions.** “A multicultural personality is characterized by a cluster of affective, attitudinal, and behavioral components. These components include emotional stability and wide-reaching empathic ability; secure racial, ethnic, and all other identities; and a spiritual essence and sense of connectedness to all persons” (Jackson,
A multicultural personality is likely to increase Black/African-American counseling professionals’ effectiveness with their clients and supervisees.

Participants of this study discussed personal characteristics and actions that are instrumental in their development of multicultural competence. According to participants, open-mindedness, willingness to learn, acceptance, awareness, knowledge, exposure, immersion, and implementation are all integral in their development of multicultural competence. Participants also mentioned that role reversal, acknowledgement, and celebration of other cultures are essential in moving from intellectualizing multicultural issues to unconditional positive regard for their clients and supervisees. Additionally, Black/African-American trainees having an understanding of oppression and its effects on the human psyche fosters culturally responsive behavior suitable for clients and their issues. Understanding who clients are culturally and the ability to hear, convey, and conceptualize their story is the essence of being multiculturally competent.

**Multicultural framework.** A multicultural framework as described in this study explores the role of sociocultural contexts in the development of multicultural competence for Black/African-American trainees. Black/African-American trainees; their racial cultural history; their lived experiences as a minority; attitudes, beliefs, and actions were identified as underlying dynamics involved in the process by which Black/African-American trainees become multiculturally competent. These dynamic interconnected and interactive concepts warrant attention and integration in multicultural education and training with an expectant outcome of multicultural competence.

Participants described multicultural competence as an active ongoing process that starts with the clinician. Multicultural competence entails implementing a multicultural
framework that assists trainees in self-determination and awareness; solidifying a racial
cultural and professional identity, acquiring the skills to conceptualize their clients as
cultural beings who are influenced by contextual factors, and the ability to uphold their
values all the while having unconditional positive regard for their clients.

**Mesosystems**

Mesosystems in this study refer to the connections between the aforementioned
microsystems that foster development of multicultural competence for Black/African-
American counseling professionals. The more powerful and varied the links between the
microsystems, the more powerful the influence they have on the phenomenon.

There are countless elements that shape attitudes toward race and cultural
diversity issues, specifically people’s attitudes about their own racial and ethnic group
memberships as they relate to other racial and ethnic groups (Gushue & Carter, 2000).
Individuals’ manifestations of different attitudes about race and culture affect their
multicultural education, training, counseling, and supervision process and outcome.
Moreover, these manifestations influence the development of their racial/ethnic/cultural
identity (Sue & Sue 1999). It is important to recognize that counseling professionals
bring with them their own level of effectiveness with basic counseling skills along with
their personal cultural manifestations and interpretations. Thereby, multicultural
education and training programs must consider both the racial identity and developmental
level of students/trainees when designing curricula and training activities (Bowman,
1996).

Participants discussed how their demographic background and lived experiences
as a racial minority contributed to their attitudes, beliefs, and actions toward multicultural
issues. For example, one participant’s southern background contributed to her belief that multicultural issues only pertained to Black and White matters. For this participant, moving towards a multicultural framework required her to expand her perspective on race, within and between group differences, and the impact of Eurocentrism on psychology. Additionally, Black/African-American trainees’ knowledge and/or interest of their racial cultural history impacts their racial identity development and ability to understand and relate to their Black/African-American clients. Therefore, the interrelationships between microsystems (i.e., Black/African-American trainees, themselves and their lived experiences influence their attitudes and beliefs about multicultural issues, and thus the development of a multicultural framework) play a significant role in their development of multicultural competence.

Exosystems

The exosystem impacts Black/African-American trainees’ development of multicultural competence by interacting and influencing the microsystems. In this study, multiculturalism (definition and approaches), multicultural education (environment and contextual conditions) and training (components and interpersonal processes) are exosystems that are external influences on how Black/African-American trainees become multiculturally competent.

Multiculturalism

Participants’ lack of consistency in interpreting and discussing multiculturalism reflects the current state of multicultural education and training. Some participants defined multiculturalism broadly while others defined it as Race-base. Yet, all participants situated multiculturalism in a racial context since race is salient and apparent.
Participants expressed that multiculturalism is broadly defined to please all groups and populations. Participants shared, however, that a generic or universal definition limits the understanding of multiculturalism and multicultural issues. According to participants, multiculturalism should be specific and be explored both within and between differences of racial subgroups. This is crucial because “understanding the within and between differences in racial subgroups is useful in comprehending how folk interact with each other, organize themselves, and make sense of their respective experiences.”

Participants insisted that multiculturalism be taught early on and throughout the education and training process. They agreed that a one-course method is insufficient in teaching and training counseling professionals to become multiculturally competent.

**Multicultural Education**

“The failure of American and Western psychology to see the individual in cultural context suggests that considerable effort and thought needs to be given to revising traditional models of helping” (Ivey, 1995, p. 70). In multicultural education, Black/African-American trainees may not be given the opportunity to engage in self-knowledge and exploration concerning their own racial cultural identity. The exploration of these issues may allow trainees to investigate how they make meaning and it may even allow these trainees to look at their own resistance, defenses, and cultural biases. Multicultural education and training must help Black/African-American counseling trainees, and all trainees for that matter, in discovery how to help clients situate themselves in a cultural context.
Multicultural Training

Because of the racial history of the American society, training for Black/African-American trainees requires a different focal point. Trainees and supervisors must be willing to address the flaws of looking at things from a Eurocentric perspective. Thus, according to one participant, “critical consciousness must be a key component to teaching dyadic learning experiences.”

Currently, Black/African-American trainees are mostly being trained in a White environment as if they were becoming White psychologists. Therefore, a cultural revolution is needed in training to help Blacks/African-Americans regain sovereignty. One participant specified “regaining sovereignty would allow African Americans to see ourselves as a people with international nationhood and define our systems and institutions of health according to our needs.” Multicultural training has to recognize and invest in both within and between group differences in racial subcultural groups. This would be beneficial in teaching Black/African-American trainees to be culturally responsive to their clients’ needs. The utmost reason for the problem in mental health service delivery entails the inability of counseling professionals to provide culturally responsive forms of treatment. According to Ridley, Mendoza, Kanitz, Angermeier, and Zenk, (1994), a culturally sensitive counseling professional is aware of “cultural variables in the context of counseling, organizes cultural stimuli in meaningful ways, and appropriately channels this information to initiate some type of culturally responsive action” (p.131). The counseling professional’s culturally responsive behavior increases the likelihood of being effective with diverse populations.
Macrosystem

The macrosystem is the larger cultural context that refers to overarching institutional patterns of the culture or subculture that permeate all systems in the ecological model. In this study, because race is salient, consistent, apparent, and influences all systems, it is conceptualized as a macrosystem.

“There is a tradition in American history that rightly connects race and racism with slavery and thus focuses upon the relationship between the two peoples who were most entangled in that institution, Africans and Europeans” (Smedley, 1999, p.94). The field of counseling psychology has been afflicted with the same sociopolitical forces that shape attitudes, policies, and practices regarding racial and ethnic minorities. Training programs are not ethically preparing Black/African-American trainees to liberate African people if a Eurocentric approach continues to be used.

Comparison with Existing Theories

The MMCBA model overlaps with several different existing multicultural education and training approaches. Yet, it offers new ways of conceptualizing the needs of Black/African-American trainees and implementing strategies to meet these needs. The multicultural literature suggests that the philosophical underpinnings of multicultural training approaches can be categorized into five different types: (a) Universal, (b) Ubiquitous, (c) Traditional, (d) Race-base, and (d) Pan-National. Discussion of the MMCBA in comparison to each of these approaches will highlight the distinctive contributions of this new model to training.
Universal Approach

“The Universal or Etic approach to culture holds that all people are basically the same as human beings; intragroup (within-group) differences are greater than intergroup (between-group) differences. This approach is espoused implicitly by traditional psychology theory and practice (Carter & Qureshi, 1995, p.243). The principal assumption of the universal approach is that the human bond surpasses all lived experiences. Therefore, we are, above all else, human beings and our identity and lived experiences originating in our cultural reference groups comes second. The universal approach emphasizes the uniqueness of the individual and understands the person in the context of their various cultural reference groups. The goal is to affirm human similarities through universal constructs by focusing on shared human experiences (Carter et al., 1995).

According to the universal approach, multicultural education and training, using the melting pot concept, would educate and train counseling professionals about ‘special populations’ from a unifying perspective with the intent to do away with salient cultural variables. This contrasts with the MMCBA model, which posits that race is salient and apparent, and that racism has a lasting effect on the human psyche. Eurocentrism, like racism, is interwoven in the fabric of the American society, thus penetrating the multicultural education and training process. Eurocentrism and racism must be addressed and salient cultural variables need to be explored.

Ubiquitous Approach

The fundamental assumption of the Ubiquitous approach is that virtually all socially constructed identities (e.g., race, sexual orientation, class, etc.) and/or common
experiences are constitutive of culture. “People can belong, then, to multiple groups and cultures, which are situationally determined according to the specific group within which the individual is participating (Carter & Qureshi, 1995, p.246). The ultimate goal of this approach is to teach counseling professionals in training how to acknowledge, honor, and accept each person’s social identity. Although the MMCBA model supports the notion of increasing trainees’ awareness and comfort level, multicultural competence is conceived of as going beyond awareness and comfort to trainees’ possessing unconditional positive regard for their client; unconditional positive regard is essential in trainees being more than culturally sensitive, and becoming culturally proficient in their work with clients.

**Traditional Approach**

The traditional approach to multicultural training suggests that cultural norms, values, and manifestations are created in response to environmental circumstances. Consequently, trainees are to experience and be exposed to a new culture for cultural knowledge to be obtained. Similarly, the MMCBA model advocates that trainees be exposed to and immersed in their own culture as well as other cultures with the expectation that they will learn how to assess and counsel members of their own racial cultural group and well as other cultural individuals. The MMCBA model also considers the power dynamics inherent in the counseling and supervisory dyad and how this is compounded with the power differential inherent in racial cultural relations.

**Race-Base**

The premise behind the Race-base approach is that race is dominant in American society and that cultural groups are determined based on racial categories. Race-base
theorists contend that sociopolitical experiences and race relations between Whites and visible racial/ethnic minorities (e.g. Black/African-Americans;Native Americans; Asian Americans) are key determinants of each individual’s psychosocial development (Carter, 1995; Copeland, 1982; Corvin & Wiggins, 1989; Helms, 1990; McRae & Johnson, 1991). Hence, multicultural education and training should be centered and implemented based on this notion. According to the MMCBA model, multicultural education and training ought to facilitate trainees’ exploration of their racial identity and consider their lived experiences as a minority. Like the Race-base approach, the MMCBA model encourages consciousness rising about racism and racial identity development in multicultural education and training.

Pan-National Approach

Afrocentrism, a philosophy that is rooted in the Pan-National approach, aims to restore the original or African self-consciousness of Blacks (Azibo, 1990; Baldwin, 1980; Phillips, 1990). Baldwin (1980) maintains that “we Black psychologists must first remove the alien Euro-centric self-consciousness from our own psyche that has so distorted our perception of our true role in the Black survival and liberation struggle of today” (p.75). The MMCBA model recognizes that the education and training process can be lonely for Black/African-American trainees; typically Black/African American trainees are removed from their home communities, and isolated within their training environments, which is very unnatural to African culture. Thus, a cultural revolution in training is suggested to help Blacks/African-American trainees regain sovereignty and restore their African-self-consciousness. A cultural revolution entails liberating
multicultural education and training from Eurocentrism and establishing a way of being that fully integrates Black/African-American racial cultural history and Black/African-American racial identity in a holistic manner that promotes spiritual, psychological, and emotional healing, while simultaneously developing multicultural competence.

**Strengths and Limitations of the Study**

There has been a clear call for increased attention to multicultural education and training practices. Hence, an array of approaches and models of multicultural education and training have been created. Some stress skill development, some stress actual experiences with racial/ethnic minority clients, and others stress a multitude of other aspects (Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999). The MMCBA model exclusively focuses on the process by which Black/African-American counseling professionals become multiculturally competent, particularly, how this is achieved in a predominately White environment. To date, this is the only model that has conceptualized the development of multicultural competence for Black/African-American as a series of dynamic interactions between social systems. Using grounded theory methods provided a means to go beyond individual experiences (e.g. individual interviews) to a collective explanatory framework (on-line focus groups) depicting the process by which Black/African-American trainees in a predominately White training environment become multiculturally competent.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Assumption</th>
<th>Goals for Multicultural Education &amp; Training</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Universal</td>
<td>Human bond surpasses all lived experiences; Our identity and lived experiences originating in our cultural reference groups comes second; Focus on shared human experiences</td>
<td>Multicultural education and training, using the melting pot concept, would educate and train counseling professionals about 'special populations' from a unifying perspective with the intent to do away with salient cultural variables.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ubiquitous Approach</td>
<td>All socially constructed identities (e.g., race, sexual orientation, class, etc.) and/or common experiences are constitutive of culture</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race-base</td>
<td>Sociopolitical experiences and race relations between Whites and visible racial/ethnic minorities are key determinants of each individual's psychosocial development</td>
<td>The Race-base perspective situates culture according to race and racist practices in America Multicultural education and training should be centered and implemented based on this notion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pan-National</td>
<td>Aims to restore the original or African self-consciousness of Blacks</td>
<td>To remove the alien Euro-centric self-consciousness from our own psyche in order to teach Black/African-American trainees about Black survival and Liberation</td>
</tr>
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This study highlights the importance of Black/African-American trainees establishing and maintaining a racial cultural identity in their development of multicultural competence. Factors such as mentorship and exploration of racial cultural history were conceived as critical to ascertaining and preserving their identity. While every student entering a training program has a set of prescribed cultural values reflective of their multiple identities (e.g., race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, etc.), this study primarily focused on Black/African-Americans’ racial identity and their experiences of becoming multiculturally competent in a predominately White environment. There is no doubt that racial struggles have plagued America and its institutions from its very beginnings and that many racial and ethnic minorities have experienced oppression and discrimination. Yet, the manifestations of oppression and racial bigotry that Black/African-Americans have faced are quite unique (Sears & Henry, 2003; Sellars et al, 1998). Understanding the process by which Black/African-American counseling professionals become multiculturally competent appears to be cardinal in the educational and training process.

Every participant in this study possessed a strong identification with the Black/African-American racial cultural group. Therefore, participants were likely to endorse a
perspective that centralizes race. This may have an influence on how participants defined multicultural competence and experienced multicultural education and training. A sample consisting of 4th year and beyond doctoral students and counseling professionals found the potential of these students being socialized to favor multiculturalism and multicultural issues. For example, every participant advocated for the early onset and full integration of multiculturalism and multicultural issues in education and training.

Each participant was asked to engage in the on-line focus group discussions; however, due to low participation, the on-line focus group discussions were extended for two weeks, with the hope of increasing participation. Ultimately, only six out of nine participants engaged in the focus groups, and the amount of conversation between participants was quite limited. Concepts that participants had difficulty discussing, such as defining multiculturalism, may have been discovered as a shared experience and could have been explored more with increased levels of participation. Moreover, participants may have been more comfortable with the idea of second individual interviews or in-person process focus groups as opposed to on-line focus group discussions.

Implications for Education and Training

Lopez and Bansal (2001) conveyed the significance of acknowledging that the structure of many training programs represents a middle-to-upper-class European American male value system and that, as a socialization agent, these programs tend to acculturate students to the status quo. Hence, the culture of a program (the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon the capacity for symbolic thought and social learning) must be considered, particularly the ways in which the program’s set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices influence how
multiculturalism and multicultural issues are viewed and implemented to facilitate students’ development of multicultural competence.

Several researchers (e.g., Sue et al., 1999; Rooney et al., 1998) have emphasized that a lack of attention to multicultural competence in curricula and educational guidelines is likely to perpetuate structural inequality and cultural hegemony in the concepts and traditions that persist within the institutions of psychology (Miller et al., 2009). Moreover, multiculturalism and multicultural issues haphazardly implemented into education and training programs are ineffective in facilitating students’ development of multicultural competence. For instance, programs embedded in eurocentrism tend to use a prototype of a Black/African-American that is ill-educated, impoverished, and locked in the perils of the ghetto to educate and train trainees to counsel Black/African-American clients. Additionally, educators with their own personal agendas are likely to become distracted with whether multiculturalism should have a more narrow focus or be broadly conceptualized in determining how multiculturalism should be implemented to promote students/trainees’ development of multicultural competence.

Hidden messages such as the ones mentioned above, are conscious and unconscious values and behaviors that contribute to the unique social and psychological processes that occurs in the environment of education and training programs. Hidden messages can have a profound impact on student/trainees’ self-efficacy and self-concept. For example, the assumption that racial minorities are multiculturally competent because of racialized experiences ignore Black/African-American trainees’ needs and hinders their process by which they become multiculturally competent. As stated by one participant, “do not assume that because you are a minority that you are not ignorant or
that you cannot be a bigot. I also get pissed that we [minorities] have to educate them [Whites] about multicultural issues. Sort of a burden that minority students have to teach others.”

Overall, most researchers agree that for multicultural education to be implemented successfully, institutional changes are necessary, including changes in the curriculum; approach, attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of educators; and the goals, norms, and philosophy of the training program (Banks, 1993; Banks, 1992; Bennett, 1990). However, several training programs have a limited conception of multicultural education, viewing it mainly as a curriculum reform that involves changing the curriculum to include content about racial ethnic minorities (Banks, 1993). If multicultural education is to become better understood and effectively integrated, curriculum restructuring is not enough.

Training programs must make a paradigm shift from cultural sensitivity to cultural intentionality, being purposeful in transforming attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors about multicultural issues and multiculturalism. Cultural proficiency empowers a professional identity that does not conflict with racially or culturally defined identities; goes beyond intellectualizing multicultural issues to unconditional positive regard; transforms generic, basic skills and knowledge to proficient skills that are appropriate and effective. At the organizational level, cultural proficiency enables training programs to create an inclusive and instructionally powerful learning environment that values diversity and preserves the cultural dignity of trainees.

Racial and/or ethnic minority faculty and students are underrepresented in many of the training programs; this lack of representation raises concerns that students are not
receiving adequate training to develop multicultural competence (Holcomb-McCoy, 1999). At the same time, the mere presence of racial and/or ethnic minority faculty is not enough. Quintana and Bernal (1995) suggested that the presence of racial and/or ethnic minority faculty who are professionally dedicated to minority issues are key in helping trainees become multiculturally competent. Culturally proficient supervisors play a significant role in training and mentoring Black/African-American trainees. Educational and training experiences that are mindful of the trainee’s level of development; centralize multicultural issues throughout the process; support trainees’ autonomy and skill building; promote personal and professional growth are integral in the process by which Black/African-American trainees’ develop multicultural competence.

A prolific number of researchers contend that peoples of African descent have had the most difficulty with self-identification because of the deep-seated racism and oppression embedded throughout the American social system. “In the case of Black Americans, however, establishing name identity has been an evolutionary process, all too often complicated by externally-applied labels” (Taylor, 2000, in the University of Arkansas press). For example, Colored, Negro, Black, Black American, person/people of color and African-American have all been used to describe people of African ancestry. Therefore, it is essential for Black/African-American trainees to go through a process of growth and self-discovery as a means to reclaim a positive racial identity. Black/African-American trainees coming to understand their cultural selves through historical cultural values and wisdom of African ancestry provide a means to redefine who they are racially and leads eventually to self-determination. Training programs are challenged to fully understand Black/African-American trainees’ racial identity, as well as its function in the
development of their multicultural competence; moreover, this understanding should be incorporated in their training modules as a means to advance a positive environment for Black/African-American trainees.

Training programs at prominent Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) continually generate opportunities for students to engage in extensive exploration of every facet of the Black/African-American experience with the understanding that Black/African-Americans have multiple cultural realities. Specifically, students/trainees gain an understanding of the effects of racism, oppression, and discrimination on the human psyche and use culturally relevant interventions to promote change and prevent maladaptive behaviors from developing. Students/trainees matriculating in training programs at HBCUs, learn how to modify traditional counseling approaches, and if need be, create modules that integrate theory and skills in real life situations. Training programs at HBCUs tend to have a number of psychologists/educators with the commitment, knowledge, and the ability to serve diverse and underserved populations, particularly Black/African-Americans. Mentors of this nature are likely to increase students/trainees’ understanding of racial disparity and diversity issues in mental health.

Training programs at HBCUs may possibly function as exemplars for predominately White institutions in how to incorporate multicultural training with comprehensive applications of prominent Afrocentric theories throughout the education and training process. It would likely serve predominately White institutions well to consult with these programs about ideas for improving multicultural education and
training at predominately White institutions, especially improving training for
Black/African American Students and other students of color.

**Directions for Future Research**

The MMCBA model considers the influence of a variety of sociocultural contexts
on the development of multicultural competence for Black/African-American trainees.
There are countless ways in which interactions between systems can facilitate
development; several studies could be designed to explore many of these. For instance, if
we intervene in the lived experiences of trainees by exposing them to more variations
within their own racial group, how would we expect that to impact other microsystems,
mesosystems, etc? At the macro and microsystem levels, concepts such as racism and
lived experiences as a minority are critical in the process by which Black/African-
American trainees develop multicultural competence. These concepts are usually
experienced before trainees enter training programs; thus, their influence on trainees’
multicultural competence outcome and expectations should be further explored. In
addition, multicultural education should consider and discuss possible effects of
increasing the number of Black/African-American trainees and faculty in training
programs.

Multicultural counseling self-efficacy reveals culturally based cognitive schema
processes in which trainees construct beliefs about their ability to perform culturally
appropriate tasks and behaviors at a given level during interactions with clients (Neville
& Mobley, 2001). The relationship between Black/African-American trainees’ attitudes,
beliefs, and actions, as well as self-efficacy concerning their work with Black/African-
American clients warrants exploration. Additionally, including trainees at different points
in their racial identity development in further exploration of the proposed MMCBA model may provide a different outlook on multiculturalism and multicultural issues. Exploring the effectiveness of different strategies used in helping Black/African-American trainees explore their racial cultural history and its relation to their development of multicultural competence could be useful in understanding Black/African-American’s racial identity development.

The impact of mentorship on the retention, academic success, and completion of higher education of Black/African-American students has been researched extensively (e.g. Lee, 1999; Blackwell, 1989). However, the notion of Black/African-American trainees being held to a different level of accountability/standard by Black/African-Americans in positions of power because they [Black/African-American trainees] are perceived and expected to do more than their White counterparts and its relation to their development of multicultural competence has scarcely been researched.

Another direction for research is exploring the different training approaches and their effectiveness of aiding trainees in becoming multiculturally competent. Different studies could be designed to explore trainers’ responses to the emergent data and how they would actually implement the MMCBA model.

**Conclusion**

From the time when Bronfenbrenner advanced ecological models in developmental psychology almost 25 years ago, a growing interest in ecological or contextual frameworks has surfaced in psychology (Neville & Mobley, 2001). Manifestations of ecological models vary in their emphases and definitions of key components. Yet, most models function from the assumption that human behavior
increases and is determined by a series of dynamic interactions between social systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Persons' psychological adjustment is thus dependent upon who or what they interact with on a daily basis as well as those systems that structure their day-to-day realities (Neville & Mobley, 2001).

The MMCBA model provides a global perspective that involves taking a broader, more critical view of trainees’ experience, knowledge and learning, while seeking to understand the context and interrelationships of the environment that effects their development. The MMCBA model functions from the assumption that the development of multicultural competence for Black/African-American trainees is a result of a series of dynamic interactions between social systems. Using Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory as a base, this proposed contextual model describes the repeated influences of individual and systemic factors on multiple subsystems (i.e., microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem) that effect the development of multicultural competence for Black/African-American trainees. Each system depends on the contextual nature of Black/African-American trainees’ experiences and offers an ever-growing assortment of options and sources of growth.
REFERENCES


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Appendix A

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board Letter of Approval
Date: April 30, 2009

To: Mary Anderson, Principal Investigator
    Bianca Fetherson, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number: 09-03-28

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled “What About Me: Using Grounded Theory to Understand How African-American Counseling Professionals Become Multiculturally Competent” has been approved under the expedited category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may only conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals

Approval Termination: April 30, 2010
Appendix B

Informed Consent Document
What about me: Using Grounded Theory to Understand How African-American Counseling Professionals Become Multiculturally Competent

The following information is being provided for you to determine if you wish to participate in this dissertation study. In addition, you are free to decide not to participate in this research or to withdraw at anytime without affecting your relationship with the researchers, or Western Michigan University.

Purpose:
The relationship between multicultural competency and racial identity has been considered extensively in the multicultural literature pertaining to its affects on multicultural education and training and counseling related interventions. However since most of the attention given has focused on White trainees (e.g. Parker et al., 1998; Neville et al., 1996; Ottavi et al., 1994), you are invited to participate in a dissertation study that seeks to gain insight into how African-American counseling professionals define constructs related to multiculturalism, experiences with multicultural education and training, and employing these in your work with clients and supervisees to become multiculturally competent. The ultimate goal of this study is to expand on existing multicultural literature by using the experiences and worldviews of 15-20 African-American counseling professionals to develop an explanatory framework or model that depicts the underlying dynamics involved in the development of multicultural competence.

Participation:
Participation in this study involves completion of a background questionnaire, participation in an in-depth individual interview, followed by participation in on-line focus group discussions. After you have given consent by signing this form, completed the background questionnaire, and the researcher has received both materials, those participants selected to participate will be contacted by e-mail or telephone, according to
their preference, to answer any additional questions or concerns they may have and to arrange a time to conduct the in-depth interview. Individuals who either do not meet criteria for participation or who are not selected to participate will be informed of their exclusion through a letter delivered either electronically or through postal mail. It is anticipated that participants will be recruited for approximately three months, and individual interviews will take place over a period of five months. Using a nationally based sample makes it impossible to conduct all interviews face-to-face. Thus, participants who live more than a 2 hour driving distance from Kalamazoo/Battle Creek, Michigan will be asked to participate in a phone interview.

All participants will be invited to participate in the on-line focus groups. Developing themes that emerged from participants’ individual stories will be used to determine which participants should be placed in a group together. Essentially, the focus group is a means to determine if emerging findings from the individual interviews remain constant as further data is collected in the on-line discussions. Each on-line focus group will consist of no less than 3 participants and no more than 10. Participants will choose their own pseudo-username to increase the probability of anonymity and decrease the level of social desirability in responses. Each participant will be asked to engage in on-line discussion at least once a day for five days over the course of one week. Participation in the discussion is expected to require approximately 20-30 minutes each day, and may take place at your convenience. Therefore, the total time commitment for the dissertation study is 4 1/2 hours over the course of several months.

Confidentiality:

The principal investigator, the student investigator, the auditor, and the transcriptionist are the only people who will have access to the raw data from this study. The transcriptionist will be trained to keep all data confidential. No identifying information about universities, training environments, work places, names of faculty, trainers, supervisors, colleagues, or any other identifying information will be used in publications resulting from this dissertation study. Participants are explicitly asked to refrain from using such information during the on-line discussions. Furthermore, the website where the on-line discussions will take place is a password controlled site where only the participants, the student investigator, and the principal investigator will have access.

The participants in the study will be given pseudonyms [for example Participant #1] to prevent identification in reports of results. Participants will choose their own usernames for the on-line focus group discussions. The key to the match of pseudonyms, participants’ on-line user names, and their real names will be kept at the student investigators’ home in a locked file cabinet. Participants’ real names will only be kept while data is being collected throughout the study and will be separated from any of the data collected. Likewise, recorded data and transcripts will also be kept separate in a locked file cabinet. University regulations also require that the principal investigator keep
copies of the participant list separate from transcribed data at her office in a locked file cabinet. The audio recordings of the interviews will be erased from the voice recorder after the transcripts are completed and checked for accuracy. Federal regulations require that data be maintained in a locked file in the principal investigator's office or in the University Archive for at least three years after the study closes.

**Risk & Costs of Participating:**

As in all research, there may be some unforeseen risks to the participant. One potential risk is that you may feel awkward and uneasy sharing your experiences and opinions about the research topic. Recognizing that the information participants share could possibly be sensitive, extra care to safeguard the information as confidential will be taken. The time commitment and inconvenience of the in-depth individual interview and on-line focus group discussions are also potential risks associated with participating in this dissertation study. Should your participation in the in-depth individual interviews and on-line focus group discussions raise any concerns you would like to address, the student investigator would encourage you to contact the principal investigator.

You are encouraged to keep a copy of this consent document, for it indicates your consent to participate in this dissertation study. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the student investigator Bianca T.L. Fetherson at bianca.t.fetherson@wmich.edu, or Mary Z. Anderson, the principal investigator at (269) 387-5113 or at mary.anderson@wmich.edu. You may also contact the Chair of the Western Michigan University Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) at (269) 387-8293 or the Vice President of Research at (269) 387-8298 if questions or concerns come about during the course of the study. This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is older than one year or if the date has been omitted.

Thank you for your time, your input is valuable. Your signature below indicates that you have read and/or had explained to you the purpose and requirements of the study and that you agree to participate.

---

**Signature of Participant** [signature]  
**Date** [date]

**Printed Name:** [name]
• Home
  Phone:______________________________________________

• Home
  Address:____________________________________________

• Email:______________________________________________
Appendix C

Hard Copy and Email Version
Invitation to Participate
Invitation to Participate in a Qualitative Research Study

Let Your Voice Be Heard

You are being invited to participate in a dissertation research study entitled, "What about me: Using Grounded Theory To Understand How African-American Counseling Professionals Become Multiculturally Competent"

Because I, myself, am an African-American woman who aspires to be a multiculturally competent counseling psychologist, the purpose of this dissertation is more than simply answering a mere research question, it is a quest for true understanding of the development of multicultural competence in African-American counseling professionals.

Who is Needed: 15-20 African-Americans who are either:

1) A Fourth-year or beyond (pre-intern, current intern, or post-intern) doctoral student in Counseling or Clinical Psychology.
2) An individual with a doctorate in Counseling or Clinical Psychology.
3) An individual with a doctorate in Counseling or Clinical Psychology who is Licensed as a Psychologist to provide psychological services.

Participation involves completing a 5-15 minute background questionnaire, one individual in-depth interview that will last 60 to 90 minutes and may take place over the phone (for those who live more than a 2 hour driving distance from where the student investigator is located) or face-to-face, as well as participation in on-line focus group discussions.

Individuals who express interest in learning more about the study will receive a packet that contains the consent form, the background questionnaire, and the directions on how to access and participate in the on-line focus group discussions through regular postal mail. If you are interested in considering participation, please respond via e-mail providing your e-mail and mailing address where you would like to receive the packet of information. Once you receive the research packet in the mail, please review the consent form for more information. If after reading the consent form, you decide you would like to participate, please sign it before completing the background questionnaire, and please be sure to read the instructions regarding the on-line focus group discussions. The consent form is requesting your consent to complete the background questionnaire, to participate in the in-depth individual interview, and for participation in the on-line focus group discussions. For those who elect to participate, please return the consent form and
background questionnaire to the researcher of the study. A stamped self-addressed envelope will be provided to return materials through the postal mail.

If you have any questions/concerns, please do not hesitate to contact: Bianca T.L. Fetherson at bianca.t.fetherson@wmich.edu (Student Investigator) Western Michigan University

Thank-you for your time and consideration, it is greatly appreciated.
Email Invitation to Participate

Dear Potential Participant,

I am an African-American counseling psychology doctoral student at Western Michigan University who is very much interested in understanding how African-American Counseling Professionals become multiculturally competent. Under the supervision of Mary Z. Anderson, Ph.D., I am seeking counseling professionals in counseling or clinical psychology as potential participants in my IRB approved dissertation study. The following invitation below is provided to give you more information about the research. I have also attached an electronic version of the consent document in case you would like to review it at this time. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Bianca Fetherson @ bianca.t.fetherson@wmich.edu. Your time and consideration is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Bianca T.L. Fetherson, MS, NCC
Doctoral Candidate Counseling Psychology
Western Michigan University
Invitation to Participate in a Qualitative Research Study

Let Your Voice Be Heard

You are being invited to participate in a dissertation research study entitled,

“What about me: Using Grounded Theory To Understand How African-American Counseling Professionals Become Multiculturally Competent”

Because I, myself, am an African-American woman who aspires to be a multiculturally competent counseling psychologist, the purpose of this dissertation is more than simply answering a mere research question, it is a quest for true understanding of the development of multicultural competence in African-American counseling professionals.

Who is Needed: 15-20 African-Americans who are either:

1) A Fourth-year or beyond (pre-intern, current intern, or post-intern) doctoral student in Counseling or Clinical Psychology.
2) An individual with a doctorate in Counseling or Clinical Psychology.
3) An individual with a doctorate in Counseling or Clinical Psychology who is Licensed as a Psychologist to provide psychological services.

Participation involves completing a 5-15 minute background questionnaire, one individual in-depth interview that will last 60 to 90 minutes and may take place over the phone (for those who live more than a 2 hour driving distance from where the student investigator is located) or face-to-face, as well as participation in on-line focus group discussions.

Individuals who express interest in learning more about the study will receive a packet that contains the consent form, the background questionnaire, and the directions on how to access and participate in the on-line focus group discussions through regular postal mail. If you are interested in considering participation, please respond to this e-mail providing your e-mail and mailing address where you would like to receive the packet of information. Once you receive the research packet in the mail, please review the consent form for more information. If after reading the consent form, you decide you would like to participate, please sign it before completing the background questionnaire, and please be sure to read the instructions regarding the on-line focus group discussions. The consent form is requesting your consent to complete the background questionnaire, to participate in the in-depth individual interview, and for participation in the on-line focus group discussions. For those who elect to participate, please return the consent form and background questionnaire to the researcher of the study. A stamped self-addressed envelope will be provided to return materials through the postal mail.
If you have any questions/concerns, please do not hesitate to contact:
Bianca T.L. Fetherson at bianca.t.fetherson@wmich.edu (Student Investigator)
Western Michigan University

Thank-you for your time and consideration, it is greatly appreciated.
Appendix D

Background Questionnaire
Background Questionnaire

Personal Information

• Age: _________  • Gender: _________  • Race: _________

• Home Phone:___________________________________________

• Home Address:_________________________________________

• Email:_________________________________________________

PLEASE CHECK WHICH YOU PREFER TO BE CONTACTED BY

Home Phone:___________  E-mail Address___________

Education: Please Indicate With an X Which Best Describes Your Current Status:

Doctorate Degree in Psychology AND Licensed As A Psychologist _________

Doctorate Degree in Psychology But NOT Fully Licensed As A Psychologist _________

A Fourth-Year Or Beyond Doctoral Student In Counseling Or Clinical Psychology Who Has Completed All Multicultural Education & Training Required By Your Program As Well As All Clinical Practicum Training _________

Please Indicate Your Degree (e.g. Ph.D., Psy.D), Program Specialty & The Year You Obtained Your Degree Or Will Obtain It; If Still A Student Please Indicate What Year You Are In Your Program.

• Program/Specialty:_____________________________________

• Degree:___________  Year:___________

• Current Employment Setting (e.g. community mental health center, university counseling center):  

_________________________________________
• Position/Title:

___________________________________________________________

Have you had coursework on multiculturalism or multicultural issues in mental health while earning your degree?

Yes ____________

No___________

Currently enrolled in multicultural courses _______________________

Have you attended workshops and/or had experiential training experiences on multicultural issues in mental health?

Yes____ No____

Have you, yourself, taught/given lectures on multiculturalism

Yes____ No____

How would you describe multiculturalism?

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

My opinion of multiculturalism is primarily formed by

Multicultural education and training ____________

Providing mental health services ____________

Research__________________________

Personal experiences__________________
All the Above

Please check the following individuals you provided counseling services to

White-Americans

African-Americans

Asian-Americans

Native Americans

Hispanic Americans

Women

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Individuals

Persons with disabilities

Elderly

Which groups do you have the skills and knowledge to assess accurately their mental health needs and provide the services

White-Americans

African-Americans

Asian-Americans

Native Americans

Hispanic Americans

Women

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Individuals

Persons with disabilities

Elderly
Have you ever discussed multicultural issues in mental health during clinical supervision, either as the supervisor or supervisee, if so were they discussed with the following individuals who may have been the supervisor or supervisee:

- White-Americans
- African-Americans
- Asian-Americans
- Native Americans
- Hispanic Americans
- Women
- Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Individuals
- Persons with disabilities

**Once Again thank-you for completing the background question. Please return with the consent form using the self-addressed envelope provided in the packet.**
Appendix E

Script for Recruitment to Participate in In-Depth Interview
Script for Recruitment to Participate in In-Depth Interview

(This script is primarily based on the consent form. To be used over the phone or sent via e-mail, once researcher receives the signed consent form and completed background questionnaire).

Hello my name is Bianca Fetherson. Thank you for your interest in participating in my dissertation study entitled “What about me: Using Grounded Theory to Understand How African-American Counseling Professionals Become Multiculturally Competent”.

“I am calling to remind you about the individual interview, the on-line focus group process that comes after the individual interviews, and to schedule a time to meet for the initial interview”.

As you may recall, the purpose of this study is to gain insight into how African-American counseling professionals define constructs related to multiculturalism, experience multicultural education and training, and employ these in their work with clients and supervisees to become multiculturally competent. The ultimate goal is to expand on existing multicultural literature by using yours and other participants’ experiences and worldviews to develop an explanatory framework or model that depicts the underlying dynamics involved in the development of multicultural competence.

The format of the individual interview is a conversational manner where you would respond to open-ended questions, describe your experiences, and include your thoughts and opinions concerning the multicultural competency of African-American Counseling professionals. As stated on the consent form, potential participants who live more than 2-hour driving distance from where I am located are asked to participate in a phone individual interview. Once initial individual interviews have been conducted and
analyzed, you and other participants will be asked to participate in on-line focus group discussions. The open-ended questions that will guide the on-line focus group will be developed based on yours and other participants’ responses from the in-depth interviews. Did you receive the information detailing the instructions on how to access the on-line focus group discussions? If not, I am more than willing to go over it with you and send another copy.

All the information collected from you is confidential. I also need your help in protecting the confidentiality of other participants who will join you in the on-line focus group discussions. Please do not use identifying information in the on-line discussions or share what others have posted to those who are not participating in this study. Your name or any other identifying information will not be used in any analysis or in any reporting of the data.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may decide to not participate, to withdraw at any time during the interview, or to not answer certain questions without prejudice or penalty.

May I answer any questions you have?

Arrange a time and date to conduct the initial interview. Thank the participant.
Appendix F

Interview Protocol
Interview Protocol

Date of Interview:
In-person or Over the phone:
Place:
Interviewer:
Interviewee (pseudonym):

(Briefly describe the research study) The format of this individual interview is a conversational manner where you would respond to open-ended questions, describe your experiences, and include your thoughts and opinions concerning the multicultural competency of African-American Counseling professionals. The interview will last approximately 60-90 minutes.

Questions:

(1) How do you define multiculturalism and what is your view on how it should be defined (e.g. broad perspective vs. narrow)?

(2) In your opinion, how should multiculturalism be infused into education and training?

(3) What would be helpful, particularly for African-American trainees in multicultural education and training? What helped you?

(4) According to you, what is multicultural competence?

(5) What skills, knowledge, and personal characteristics do you believe African-American counseling professionals need to become multiculturally competent? How did multicultural competence develop for you?

(6) How do you incorporate cultural variables like race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, and so forth into your work with clients and supervisees?
(7) What are your thoughts and feelings about being African-American and belonging to that racial group?

(8) How did these thoughts and feelings manifest in any multicultural education and training you received?

(9) How do your thoughts and feelings toward being African-American and belonging to that racial group influence your work with clients and supervisees?

(10) Are there any aspects about the development of multicultural competence in African-American counseling professionals that haven’t been explored by the researcher you would like to add?

(Thank the individual for participating in the interview. Assure participate of confidentiality of responses)
Appendix G

Instructions to Participants on How to Access the On-Line Focus Group Discussion
Instructions to Participants on How to Access the On-line Focus Group Discussion

On-line focus group discussions will take place for one week. You and other participants are asked to engage in discussion at least once a day, for five days, at your convenience anytime during the week. Please read the questions and comments posted and write your impressions about the statements made by the other participants. Since you are allowed to engage in discussions at your convenience, it is my hope that you do not feel pressed for time and are able to respond at greater lengths to discussions and therefore provide more detailed responses. Members who have not engaged in discussion will receive a friendly reminder via e-mail to participate in discussions. The researcher will serve as the group moderator using the username Investigator 2. Participants will be explicitly asked to refrain from using identifying information in the on-line discussions or share what others have posted to those outside of this study at the start of each discussion. To engage in these discussions, you and other participants of the study will first need to register. Registration is free and the whole set up takes approximately 5-10 minutes.

Complete registration by:

(1) Accessing the whataboutme.myfreeforum.org website. This website is on a free public web application. The specific web address, however, will allow only you and other participants to access the topic and discussions pertaining to the study.

(2) Once you access the website, please click on Join! (free) on the upper right-hand corner. Awhataboutme.myfreeforum.org registration agreement will pop up.

(3) You will be asked to read the registration agreement and verify that you are over 13 years old. Please click at the bottom that you agree to these terms and that you are over 13 years old.

(4) After you click, you will be taken to the registration page that requests registration and profile information along with preferences.

(5) Please provide a username, an active e-mail address that you already have, and a password.

(6) Please create a username that can be anonymous. For confidentiality, please DO NOT add any profile information, this is not needed to register for the group. The information in the preference will already be completed to assure confidentiality.

(7) Once you have provided the information, click submit, and a confirmation message will popup.
(8) Please log back into the message board with your created username and password. Once logged in, click on the membership list in the right-hand corner. A drop down list with the username Investigator 2 will be in there.

(9) From the drop down list, click on the private message (pm) icon to send the researcher a private message with Join D-group in subject line stating your First & Last Name in the message content. Once the researcher receives the private e-mail you will be added to the on-line focus group. This step allows the researcher to control access to the discussion group and assure that only those people who are participants in the research can join the group.

***If you have any questions/concerns there is a FAQ located at the upper right-hand corner. Also please feel free to contact me, the student investigator at bianca.t.fetherson@wmich.edu with questions/concerns.

Your willingness to participate is greatly appreciated!
Appendix H

Email to Schedule a Time to Begin On-Line Focus Group Discussions
Email to Schedule a Time to Begin On-Line Focus Group Discussions

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your interest in participating in my dissertation study entitled “What about me: Using Grounded Theory to Understand How African-American Counseling Professionals Become Multiculturally Competent”. As you may recall, the purpose of this study is to gain insight into how African-American counseling professionals define constructs related to multiculturalism, experience multicultural education and training, and employ these in their work with clients and supervisees to become multiculturally competent. The ultimate goal is to expand on existing multicultural literature by using yours and other participants’ experiences and worldviews to develop an explanatory framework or model that depicts the underlying dynamics involved in the development of multicultural competence.

I am contacting you to remind you about the second phase of that interview process that involves the on-line focus group. On-line focus group discussions will take place for one week. You and other participants are asked to engage in discussion at least once a day, for five days, at your convenience anytime during the week. The open-ended questions that will guide the on-line focus group will be developed based on yours and other participants’ responses from the in-depth interviews. It is my plan to begin the on-line focus group next month. Please provide a DATE THAT BESTS FIT YOUR SCHEDULE TO BEGIN THE ON-LINE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE BY RESPONDING TO THIS EMAIL. I HAVE ALSO ATTACHED THE INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO REGISTER AND PARTICIPATE IN THE GROUP DISCUSSIONS.

Again your willingness to participate in my dissertation study is greatly appreciated.

BIANCA FETHERSON, MS, NCC
Appendix I

Email Notifying Participants When Focus Groups Will Begin
Email Notifying Participants When Focus Groups Will Begin

Dear Participant,

Thank you very much for responding concerning the on-line focus groups. As you may recall, the purpose of this study is to gain insight into how African-American counseling professionals define constructs related to multiculturalism, experience multicultural education and training, and employ these in their work with clients and supervisees to become multiculturally competent. The ultimate goal is to expand on existing multicultural literature by using yours and other participants’ experiences and worldviews to develop an explanatory framework or model that depicts the underlying dynamics involved in the development of multicultural competence.

The on-line focus group discussions will take place for one from DATE to DATE. You and other participants are asked to engage in discussion at least once, a day, for five days, at your convenience anytime during the week. Please read the questions and comments posted and write your impressions about the statements made by other participants. The goal is to foster conversations between group members as you are responding to the topics of discussion. Since you are allowed to engage in discussion at your convenience, it is my hope that you do not feel pressed for time and are able to respond at greater lengths to discussions and therefore provide more detailed response. Members who have not engaged in discussion will receive a friendly reminder via e-mail to participate in discussions. The researcher will serve as the group moderator using the username Investigator 2. Participants will be explicitly asked to refrain from using identifying information in the on-line discussions or share what others have posted to those outside of this study at the start of each discussion. Attached to this email are the instructions on how to register for the on-line focus groups.

Again your willingness to participate in my dissertation study is greatly appreciated.

BIANCA FETHERSON, MS, NCC
Appendix J

Email Informing Participants about the Adjustments to Focus Groups
Email Informing Participants about the Adjustments to Focus Groups

Dear Participant,

There are some adjustments that came after you consented to participate in the second phase of the What About Me: Using Grounded Theory to Understand How African-American Counseling Professionals Become Multiculturally Competent dissertation study. **On-line focus group discussions will take place over the course of two weeks. You and other participants are asked to engage in discussion at your convenience, at least three days out of a week, over the course of two weeks.** The group discussions will take place from **Date through Date**

Please read the questions and comments posted and write your impressions about the statements made by the other participants. The goal is to foster conversation between group members as you are responding to the topics of discussion. Since you are allowed to engage in discussions at your convenience, it is my hope that you do not feel pressed for time and are able to respond at greater lengths to discussions and therefore provide more detailed responses. **Members who have not engaged in discussion will receive a friendly reminder via telephone and/or e-mail to participate in discussions.** The researcher will serve as the group moderator using the username Investigator 2. Participants will be explicitly asked to refrain from using identifying information in the on-line discussions or share what others have posted to those outside of this study at the start of each discussion. The instructions on how to register for the on-line focus group are attached to this email.

If you have any questions/concerns please feel free to email or private message me on the on-line discussions board. Your willingness to participate is greatly appreciated.

BIANCA FETHERSON, MS, NCC
Appendix K

Friendly Reminder to Participate in Focus Group Discussions
Friendly Reminder to Participate in Focus Group Discussions

Dear Participant:

Welcome to the whataboutme forum for the dissertation study of Bianca Fetherson. There are new questions/topics that have been posted on the on-line discussion board. It is important to remember that you and other participants are asked to engage in discussion at your convenience, at least three days out of a week, over the course of two weeks. The group discussions will take place from Date through Date.

Please read the questions and comments posted and write your impressions about the statements made by the other participants. The goal is to foster conversation between group members as you are responding to the topics of discussion. Since you are allowed to engage in discussions at your convenience, it is my hope that you do not feel pressed for time and are able to respond at greater lengths to discussions and therefore provide more detailed responses. Members who have not engaged in discussion will receive a friendly reminder via telephone and/or e-mail to participate in discussions. The researcher will serve as the group moderator using the username Investigator 2. Participants will be explicitly asked to refrain from using identifying information in the on-line discussions or share what others have posted to those outside of this study at the start of each discussion.

If you have problems with accessing or reading posts please feel free to e-mail or private message me.

Bianca (student investigator)
Appendix L

Script to be Used by Gatekeepers in Recruitment of Participants
Script to be Used By Gatekeepers in Recruitment of Participants

Dear Colleague/Friend,

You are being invited to participate in a research dissertation study entitled “What about Me: Using Grounded Theory to Understand How African-American Counseling Professionals Become Multiculturally Competent.” Seeing that the researcher of this study is an African-American woman who aspires to be a multiculturally competent counseling psychologist this is more than a mere research question to fulfill the requirements for a Ph.D. in counseling psychology, it is a genuine quest for understanding of the development of multicultural competence in African-American Counseling Professionals.

Participation involves completing a 5-15 minute background questionnaire, one individual in-depth interview that will last 60 to 90 minutes and may take place over the phone (for those who live more than a 2 hour driving distance from where the student investigator is located) or face-to-face, as well as participation in on-line focus group discussions.

If you are interested in learning more about the study, I can give you a packet that contains the consent form, the background questionnaire, and the directions on how to access and participate in the on-line focus group discussions. If after reading the consent form, you decide you would like to participate, please sign it before completing the background questionnaire, and please be sure to read the instructions regarding the on-line focus group discussions. The consent form is requesting your consent to complete the background questionnaire, to participate in the in-depth individual interview, and for participation in the on-line focus group discussions. For those who elect to participate, please return the consent form and background questionnaire to the researcher of the study. A stamped self-addressed envelope is provided to return materials through postal mail.

If you have questions, concerns, or would like to know more about the study than what is provided please contact Bianca Fetherson, the student investigator, via e-mail at bianca.t.fetherson@wmich.edu