The Impact of Structured Group Counseling on Resiliency, Self-Efficacy, and Racial Identity among African American Female Teenagers

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The Impact of Structured Group Counseling on Resiliency, Self-Efficacy, and Racial Identity among African American Female Teenagers

by

LaShonda B. Fuller

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
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Advisor: Joseph R. Morris, Ph.D.

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The Impact of Structured Group Counseling on Resiliency, Self-Efficacy, and Racial Identity among African American Female Teenagers

LaShonda B. Fuller, Ph.D.

Western Michigan University, 2011

African American female teenagers are at-risk for low academic achievement as well as personal and social problems. These concerns have the potential to impact their psychological development including resiliency, self-efficacy, and racial identity. This is an issue that needs focused attention. Therefore, the purpose of this dissertation was to determine if a structured group counseling model effectively impacts African American female teenagers’ resiliency, self-efficacy, and racial identity. The researcher conducted four structured counseling groups over a period of 20 weeks; however, the teenagers participated in consecutive 10 week sessions. The treatment was applied to two groups simultaneously, and the groups consisted of eight to 14 members. The results of this study should contribute to counseling professionals’ knowledge about experiences, backgrounds and belief systems of African American female teenagers as it specifically explored African American female teenagers’ current experiences of a group counseling intervention. Discussions targeted perceived racism, sexism, classism, coping mechanisms against experiences of oppression, and African American female teenagers’ identity as an African American and female. Counselor educators, counselors, teachers, and others in helping roles should benefit from this information as this research will
provide a culturally intentional, competent and ethical intervention to employ when working with this population.
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LaShonda B. Fuller
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem

Molidar (1996) noted a sharp rise in the number of African American teenage girls experiencing symptoms of depression, attempted suicide, pregnancy, and self-destruction. The rise in self-destructive behaviors among African American female teenagers makes this population an important concern for the African American and American culture. Although literature cites African American males as more involved in self-destructive behaviors such as criminal activities (Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Powell, 2008; Rozie-Battle, 2002), African American teenage girls are also engaging in more self-destructive and opportunity constraining behaviors such as adolescent pregnancy (Giordano, Cernkovich, & Demaris, 1993; Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Moore & Chase-Lansdale, 2001; Mullen-Harris, 1991; Powell, 2008; Rozie-Battle, 2002; Smith, Johnson, & Findlay, 1994). Research has shown many African American female adolescents in high school may become pregnant, carriers of a sexually transmitted disease, fall behind peers academically, and either drop out of high school or never obtain post high school education (Butler, 2003; Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Howard, 2003). Although African American females’ college completion rates increased since 1990 from 34% to 48% in
2007, African American females, between the ages of 16 and 24, high school dropout rate in 2008 was 11.1% compared to the 4.2% dropout rate for European American females and 8.7% for African American males (Chapman, Laird, & KewalRamani, 2010; Journal of Blacks in Higher Education (JBHE), 2007/2008). “Half of the nation’s Black youth never earn a high school diploma” (JBHE, 2004, pg. 52). More than 42% of African American students drop out of college because they have children or other dependents as oppose to 37.2% European American students; and almost 29% are single parents, which is three times the rate for single parent European American students (JBHE, 2002).

While transitioning into a college environment, many African American female teenagers may also respond to stress from other areas in their lives. Such areas include peer pressure, low academic achievement, limited or little family financial support, and career development issues as those concerns relate to deciding on a major and or a career track. According to Holcomb-McCoy (2004), completing high school without the burdens of personal, social, and academic adversity in an urban environment is unlikely for African American female adolescents who are also more likely to be raised in poverty than non-black female adolescents (Day-Vines, Patton, & Baytops, 2003). A life of stress related to personal, familial, and community difficulties has more immediate and concrete meaning to these adolescents than does preparing for their future (Boveja, 1998; Butler, 2003).

As negative events continue to take place in the lives of African American female teenagers, one may assume these young girls may become confused and resistant to making healthy decisions or they may become more resilient as a result of these disenchanted experiences taking place. A range of factors continue to influence the
thoughts and behaviors of African American females including peer pressure, personal identity, academic achievement, racism, sexism, and classism (Day-Vines et al., 2003; Howard, 2003; Shorter-Gooden & Washington, 1996). As teenage girls struggle with personal, social, and academic hardships impacted by racism, sexism, and classism, these issues may damage their self-identity, self-esteem, ability to make healthy choices, motivation to succeed, and overall growth (Butler, 2003; Constantine, Erickson, Banks, & Timherlake, 1998; Day-Vines et al., 2003; Harris, 1992; Holcomb-McCoy, 2001; Howard, 2003). The problem addressed in this study is the negative impact of multiple stressors on African American female teenagers’ personal, social, academic, and career development.

African American female teenagers’ personal, social, academic, and career development is negatively impacted by the multiple stressors they face. Circumstances involving these multiple stressors are apparently influencing the self-destructive behaviors impacting the likelihood of African American female teens’ success, which may not be effectively addressed in counseling due to fact that the unfavorable numbers in the self-destructive behaviors are increasing (Day-Vines et al., 2003; Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005; Howard, 2003). Acknowledging the voices of African American female teenagers’ is critical for accurate representation in the counseling literature. Counseling professionals need to better understand this population’s circumstances so they can develop more effective service interventions.
Purpose of Study

African American females have experienced the triple quandary of oppression: racism, sexism, and classism throughout history (Day-Vine et al., 2003; Pack-Brown, Whittington-Clark, & Parker, 1998; Shorter-Goode & Washington, 1996). Lived experiences of ongoing challenges surrounding issues of oppression among African American female teenagers’ were explored in group counseling. Group counseling focused on the impact of racism, sexism, and classism on African American female teenagers’ personal, social, academic, and career development. This study also examined African American female teenagers’ experience with an applied group counseling model.

The purpose of this investigation is to provide recommendations to counseling professionals regarding more culturally intentional, competent, and ethical interventions to employ when working with African American female teenagers facing adversity. Racism, sexism, and classism are embedded within the African American family system; therefore, knowing how African American female teenagers view the impact of these concepts on their current development is valuable. While it is understood that recent literature on African American female teenagers’ reactions to counseling interventions is scarce in the counseling field (Constantine & Sue, 2006; Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005; McIntosh, 1988), the purpose of this study is to broaden the counseling professions’ limited knowledge of African American teenagers’ experience in group counseling. This information can expand the profession’s understanding of African American teenagers in general and lead to more effective group counseling interventions for this population.
Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses guiding this study are as follows:

(1) The structured group model of counseling will have a positive effect on African American female teenagers’ resiliency.
(2) The structured group model of counseling will have a positive effect on African American female teenagers’ self-efficacy.
(3) The structured group model of counseling will have a positive effect on African American female teenagers’ racial identity.
(4) A positive relationship will exist among resiliency, self-efficacy, and racial identity among African American female teenagers.

Definition of Terms

This section gives meaning to specific terms used in this paper. Terms highlighted throughout the proposed study include bi-racial, racism, sexism and classism, personal development, social development, worldview, Afrocentric worldview, resiliency, self-efficacy, racial identity/orientation, and culturally intentional ethical and competent counselors.

- For the purpose of this study, African American female teenagers are defined as girls ranging between the ages 14 and 19.
- Bi-racial in this study means an individual having one Black American parent and one White American parent.
- **Racism** is “…any attitude, action, or institutional structure or any social policy subordinating persons or groups because of their color” (Metzler, 2008; Sue, 2003, p. 31).

- **Sexism** and **classism** consist of discrimination against persons or groups, based on gender and class status (Shorter-Gooden & Washington, 1996).

- **Personal development** in the context of this review is defined as becoming aware of one’s self-image, self-esteem, and self-identity.

- **Social development** in the context of this review refers to African American female teenagers’ ability to establish healthy relationships, develop practical communication skills, and learn healthy coping strategies for dealing with environmental constraints.

- **Worldview** is defined by African Americans description of being Black in the world based on their experiences through cultural traditions, beliefs, and practices (Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Stevenson, Cameron, Herrero-Taylor & Davis, 2002).

- An **Afrocentric worldview** embraces the values of harmony, affect, spirituality, and communalism or collectivism. Communalism/collectivism refers to responsibility to the group rather than self, placing group (family) interest above self interest (Harris, 1992; Holcomb-McCoy, 2004).

- **Resiliency** is personal qualities enabling one to cope when facing adversity (Connor & Davidson, 2003).

- **Self-efficacy** is a perceived optimistic self-belief (Jerusalem & Schwarzer, 1993).

- **Racial identity** refers to one’s sense of “Blackness” and the adoption of beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors characterized as Black (Day-Vines et al., 2003; Parham &
Helms, 1985; Shorter-Gooden & Washington, 1996) or one’s pride in their racial and cultural identity (Moss & Davis, 2008; Poston, 1990). The appreciation and internalization of how one experiences being Black or disapproval of being Black in this world define one’s racial identity orientation (Stevenson et al., 2002).

- A culturally intentional ethical and competent counselor has the attitude and understanding of services culturally different clients need, are able to apply culturally sensitive skills relevant to their clients, and adhere to ethical and professional standards (Moore-Thomas & Day-Vines, 2008). Day-Vines et al. (2003) assert that culturally intentional counseling services embrace an “ethic of caring and understanding in an effort to build bridges between children whose cultures and backgrounds do not necessarily mirror the cultural dictates of mainstream America” (p. 41).

Cultural Ethics

Culturally intentional ethical and competent counselors, according to the 2005 American Counseling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics, are to promote diversity through nondiscriminatory behaviors toward their clients (ACA, 2005, C.5.). Section C, code 5 states that counselors should not condone or engage in discrimination based on a variety of diversity characteristics that include but are not limited to culture, ethnicity, race, religion/spirituality, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, etc; therefore, culturally intentional ethical and competent group counselors do not have to necessarily share the same racial and cultural identification as their group members. However,
research has found when African American group facilitators work with African American adolescents, a better outcome for group success is more likely to be encouraged, assuming group members culturally identify similar to group facilitators (Holcomb-McCoy, 2004). In the case where facilitators are culturally different, code 5 specifies that counselors are not to discriminate against individuals in a manner that will cause a negative impact. Nonetheless, some scholars attest all counseling is cross-cultural or multicultural when counseling individuals who belong to multiple groups (Ibrahim, 1991; McFadden, 1996; Patterson, 1996; Pederson, 1991; Pope, 1995; Speight, Myers, Cox, & Highlen, 1991; Vontress, 1996; Whitfield, 1994). The Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW), a division of American Counseling Association, Best Practices, however, provides an outline and explanation of the organization's stance on working with multicultural and diverse populations.

Association for Specialist in Group Work Best Practices

ASGW Best Practices Guidelines acknowledge client's demographics and needs are constantly shifting. Counselors’ awareness, sensitivity, and skill working with diverse populations are necessary (ASGW, 2007, B.2.). Understanding issues of diversity affect group dynamics; therefore, group counselors are instructed to increase their awareness of their own biases, values, and belief systems as well as to become aware of group members’ biases, values, and belief systems to determine how both sets of worldviews impact the group dynamics (ASGW, 1998; 2000). ASGW's Principles for Diversity-Competent Group Work living document affirms the world is changing. In order to work
effectively with diverse group members with competence, compassion, respect, and integrity, group counselors must maintain awareness, knowledge, and skills in facilitating groups as culturally competent intentional and ethical counselors (ASGW, 1998; 2000).
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

African American Teens and European American Teens

This section will present a review of related literature to Black teenagers’ developmental experiences in comparison to White teenagers. The literature reflects issues of the results and successes of African American females and will include psychological developmental experiences as well as the development of African American females’ racial identity. A brief summary will conclude this review.

All adolescents face a number of challenges throughout their teenage years. These challenges include, but are not limited to gaining a greater sense of independence, strengthening relationships with peer groups, planning future career goals, and deciding whether to use drugs to name the least (Burrow-Sanchez, 2006; Day-Vines et al., 2003; Giordano et al., 1993; Howard, 2003; Moore & Chase-Lansdale, 2001; Robbins, Briones, Schwartz, Dillion, & Mitrani, 2006; Zinck & Littrell, 2000). A specific concern, which several researchers have noted, pertains to adolescents’ exposure to drugs at a young age. Moreover, researchers have also noted that adolescents are frequently influenced by peers or relatives to use alcohol, cigarettes, and marijuana (Burrow-Sanchez, 2006; Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Powell, 2008; Robbins et al., 2006; Zinck & Littrell, 2000).
Burrow-Sanchez (2006) reviewed the *Monitoring the Future National Results on Adolescents Drug Use: Overview of Findings* (2002) and discovered from the longitudinal study that 43,000 adolescents in the 8th, 10th, and 12th grade use drugs. Based on the *National Survey on Drug Use and Health* (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration [SAMHA], 2003) data, 68,126 adolescents in the United States between ages 12 and 17 were illicit drug users. Of the reported respondents, nine percent were stated to possibly have a substance abuse disorder and 11% were classified as adolescents who use drugs on a regular basis. Within this sample of adolescents, 21% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, 12.6% were European American, African Americans made up 10% as well as Latinas/Latinos Americans, 4.8% were Asian Americans, and two or more races represented 12.5% of the sample (SAMHA, 2003). In 2005, 8th, 10th, and 12th graders’ abuse of cocaine, crack, and heroin remained constant since 2004 (Johnston, O’Malley, Bachman, & Schulenberg, 2006). The report noted among powder cocaine usage, 1.75% was 8th graders, 3% were 10th graders, and 12th graders represented the highest rate at 4.5%. However, crack cocaine usage amongst 8th, 10th, and 12th graders was between 1.4% and 1.9% across all three levels. The prescription drug, Vicodin, was another drug regularly used that remained steady in abuse across the three grade levels. In contrast with statistics of constant drug abuse, marijuana, cigarettes, and alcohol were reported as drugs displaying a decrease in abuse (Johnston, et al., 2006). Among the three, adolescent cigarette usage was reported as the substance that significantly decreased between 1996 and 2005 from 56% to 51%. The *Monitoring the Future National Results on Adolescents Drug Use: Overview of Findings* of 2005 reported the decline in cigarette smoking could be attributed to the high rise in prices, an increase in
perceived health risks, and the increase in anti-smoking campaigns and effective laws; yet, alcohol remains “widespread among today’s teenagers” (Johnston, et al., 2006, pg. 9). The report also indicated that binge drinking has modestly increased and alcohol abuse has become parallel with illicit drug use among teens. Across gender, males use illicit drugs more than females. Across race and ethnicity, African American youth were reported to use cigarettes, alcohol, and illicit drugs at substantially lower rates than European Americans and Latina/Latino Americans (Johnston, et al., 2006). However, recently rising as a heightened concern for society concerning teens’ drug abuse are prescription drugs, such as psychotherapeutic medications (Johnston, et al., 2006).

Hawkins, Catalano, and Miller (1992) explained two influences behind adolescents drug use: contextual risk factors and individual risk factors. Contextual risk factors consist of the lowering of drug laws and the taxation on alcohol, which avails adolescents to make legal purchases. Additionally, the availability of drugs for example, within neighborhoods or in the possession of a relative who uses drugs is also a contextual risk factor. Hawkins et al. (1992) described individual risk factors as problem behaviors, conduct disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), depression, aggression, negative moods, learning disorders, low academic achievement, problems with parents, and having friends who use drugs. When adolescents associate with peers who use drugs or drug using relatives their risk of substance abuse increases and the concept of street life sustains the perception that “getting in the game is easy, it’s getting out that’s hard” (Burrow-Sanchez, 2006; Powell, 2008, pg. 275).

Powell (2008) argued Black students are the population most frequently targeted and highlighted in the media for drug use, criminal activities, inferior education, and
experiences with racism, discrimination, gangs, unsafe sex, and poverty (Hall, Cassidy, & Stevenson, 2008; Nicolas, Helms, Jernigan, Sass, Skrzypak, & DeSilva, 2008).

Successful Black students receive much less positive attention in the media as compared to White students, who are successful in academics or sports (Lee, 2005; Powell, 2008). Unfortunately, education is depicted differently for Black students than for White students. Many researchers have publicized the conditions behind the realities of Black students underachieving academically when compared to White students (Awad, 2007; Butler, 2003; Howard, 2003; Somers, Owens, Piliawsky, 2008; Weiss, 2003; Zand & Thomson, 2005). Researchers assert that African American students living in poverty are ‘at-risk’ for using drugs and are likely to achieve at a low academic level (Bankston III & Caldas, 1998; Butler, 2003; Constantine et al., 1998; Hunter & Ensminger, 1992; Krohn & Bogan, 2001; Lee, 2005; Moore & Chase-Lansdale, 2001; SUN & LI, 2007). In relation to school, many African American teens are taught to look at education as a way to make it out of their impoverished lifestyle (Powell, 2008; Somers et al., 2008) or according to Robinson (2003), “The Abandoned Black America” (pg. 109).

Somers et al. (2008) explained that many urban children from low income families are economically poor and socially underserved and as a result, may be hindered academically and emotionally, which causes individual risk factors to exist (Day-Vines & Terriquez, 2008). According to Somers and colleagues (2008), dropping out of high school is an indication of larger issues affecting Black youth, correlating poverty and Black teen dropouts. An additional concern influencing African American students to dropout are schools operating in dysfunction with a lack of resources, which does not support the success of any student (Guo, Brooks-Gunn, & Harris, 1996; Lee, 2005;
Somers et al., 2008). In many urban school districts, students suffer from a deliberate implemented plan to segregate education through a strategic method, such as unequal housing opportunities, White Flight, and the “lack of political and social capital” which underfunds, marginalizes, and criticizes urban schools in impoverished communities predominated by students of color (Blanchard, Mumford, & Beachum, 2005, pg. 75; Lee, 2005; Nicolas et al., 2008; Robinson, 2010). Because poverty overtakes a community, the concept that poverty and school dropouts are linked for Black teens is supported (Guo et al., 1996; Somers et al., 2008). Apparently, Black students are experiencing difficulties with connecting academic success and career success as an adult while living within impoverished environments and therefore, drop out of school as a result of not being able to connect their future with a successful career (Blanchard et al., 2005; Howard, 2003; Lee, 2005; Somers et al., 2008). Within the urban school system, school counselors are declaring they as counselors are challenged by students’ low academic performance in reading and math, high student mobility rates or high transitional living arrangements, chronic absenteeism, and unmet psychological needs while also not having the time to perform their job duties (Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005; Holcomb-McCoy & Moore-Thomas, 2001; Lee, 2005; Young, 1994; Zinck & Littrell, 2000).

Holcomb-McCoy and Mitchell (2005) surveyed 102 school counselors, guidance supervisors, and counselor educators from the east coast of the nation and discovered the most prevalent issues facing African American teenagers are low family support, academic achievement, and poverty (Bell, 2001; Guo et al., 1996; Powell, 2008; Somers et al., 2008). Of the participants, 83 believed their counseling work was effective with
students, five respondents believed their work was not effective, while 14 respondents did not respond. Holcomb-McCoy and Mitchell’s (2005) study indicated on average, school counselors work with a caseload of 362 students per counselor and spend only 36% [or less] of their time counseling while much of their time is distributed in fractions among coordinating programs, systems management, individual student planning, administering tests, and non-guidance duties (ASCA, 2005; Johnson & Johnson, 2005; Sznitman, Reisel, & Romer, 2011).

In many cases, African American students experience feelings of anger related to impoverished living conditions, guilt related to middle class status or having to ‘act white’, oppositional identity issues, isolation and alienation from other African American students depending on one's class rank and academic success, and racism as a result of one's class status (Awad, 2007; Butler, 2003; Day-Vines et al., 2003; Hall et al., 2008; Howard, 2003; Somers et al., 2008). Social classes in the African American community range from those who are destitute to the extremely wealthy. For some African American students who have to integrate within different settings, code switching (a behavior of conformity to one's current environment that is known to induce psychological distress) becomes a practice (Day-Vines et al., 2003; Howard, 2003). According to Day-Vines et al. (2003), upward social mobility and fewer restrictions on property ownership allowed larger numbers of African American families to migrate to "suburban White communities" in the 1960’s causing many African American adolescents to lack "a Black peer group” (pg. 49). While often being the only African American in a class or organization, Day-Vines et al. and other scholars affirmed African American adolescents experience racial oppression and strife from other African Americans aside from the
advantages they have based on their social class (Blanchard et al., 2005; Constantine et al., 1998; Ulbrich, Warheit, & Zimmerman, 1989). Many African American adolescents are challenged by the desire for acceptance by their cultural group while maintaining status with peers from similar socioeconomic circumstances. If students confronted with this dilemma resolve their concerns by identifying with their social class peers with the desire to be accepted by their culture and social class circles, many African American teens become “raceless” and ill prepared to confront challenges of racism when encountered (Awad, 2007; Constantine et al., 1998; Day-Vines et al., 2003; Ulbrich et al., 1989).

Investigators say peers are the greatest influence on adolescent behaviors and attitudes, assuming the adolescent perception of the level of intimacy or relationship with their parents are low (Baker, 2001; Bankston III & Caldas, 1998; Giordano et al., 1993; Moore & Chase-Lansdale, 2001). Though peer groups become more important during the adolescent years, parents still may have much influence on adolescent behaviors (Burrow-Sanchez, 2006). In Giordano et al. study (1993), Black adolescents who experienced high levels of intimacy with their parents viewed their family as a ‘safe haven’, protection from hostile and discriminatory environments. Powell (2008) stated, “It is the family that sticks together and battles all outside elements that will remain a unit and establish an everlasting legacy” (pg. 2). Based on this perspective, peer relationships that are positive or harmful can be viewed as less influential, pertaining to using drugs or one’s racial identity, when there is a high level of family intimacy and “…an unconditional expression of love” (Giordano et al., 1993, pg. 285). The importance of the family unit however, does not necessarily mean every family is unified, which is contrary
to the cliché that blood is thicker than water (Powell, 2008). In the case where some family’s closeness may not appear as strong as one may think or would like, most adolescents may seek family like relationships outside the family unit, such as gangs or street life.

When parents are not active in their child’s life, there is a great potential of African American children becoming victims of the streets “where street life surrounds inner city youth every day, clinging on to their very last breath, choking them, leaving them gasping for air, …as if [they] are drowning in a pool of hopelessness, racism, hardship, violence, sex, and drugs” (Powell, 2008, pg. 1). Amongst the salient family predictor of adolescent drug use is the lack of parental monitoring and supervision of peer activities and relationships, which takes place mostly in single female-headed and cohabitating households (Burrow-Sanchez, 2006; Howard, 2003; Lee, 2005; Robbins et al., 2006; Zinck & Littrell, 2000). On the contrary to children in single-parent and cohabitating households, children in married households receive more monitoring, time, and attention (Moore & Chase-Lansdale, 2001; Thompson, McLanahan, & Curtin, 1992). Specific aspects of family relationships such as, low parental monitoring of adolescent activities, inconsistent discipline, unclear family rules, high levels of family conflict, lack of supportive involvement, and parent-adolescent bonding is associated with disruptive behavioral problems and substance abuse in adolescents (Bell, 2001; Robbins et al., 2006).

Adolescents’ identity, self-esteem, and motivation are in general impacted by pressure from peers, family, and society; therefore, it seems befitting to conclude high school is one of the most difficult stages of one’s life (Brown & Gilligan, 1993; Heard,
The idea that most African American teenagers experience stress from developing their personal identity, peer pressure, and maintaining good grades is an assumption (Day-Vines et al., 2003; Hall et al., 2008; Howard, 2003). All African American adolescents confront nuances of race, culture, and class, which furthermore supports the concept that the adversities African American teenagers face are far more difficult than what most teenager’s experience (Boveja, 1998; Butler, 2003; Day-Vines et al., 2003; Howard, 2003; SUN & LI, 2007). “Rather than affirming the identity and diversity of students within schools, students frequently find their academic and cultural identities under constant attack” (Howard, 2003, pg. 5). These additional stressors result in far more challenging developmental experiences for African American adolescents than taxing experiences for other adolescent groups (Somers et al., 2008). A substantial amount of published literature addresses “the concerns of African American students who experience social distress, academic difficulties, poverty, despair, and violence” (Awad, 2007; Bankston III & Caldas, 1998; Boveja, 1998; Butler, 2003; Constantine et al., 1998; Day-Vines et al., 2003, pg. 40; Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005; Hunter & Ensminger, 1992; Krohn & Bogan, 2001; Molidar, 1996; Moore & Chase-Lansdale, 2001; Powell, 2008; Somers et al., 2008; SUN & LI, 2007). It is clear that African American teenagers have many more obstacles to overcome to be successful as oppose to many European American teenagers. Research reviewed confirms that adverse experiences African Americans endure as a small child, adolescent, and teenager are much more troublesome than the experiences of their European American counterparts (Fisher, Matthews, Stafford, Nakagawa, & Durante,
Psychological Development/Racial Identity Theories

African American Female Teens and European American Female Teens

Families are one major source assisting teens with developing their identity, especially for females because the desire for relationships is innate (Brown & Gilligan, 1993; Crothers, Field, & Kolbert, 2005; Gilligan, 1996; 2003; 2008). Many theorists believe adolescents must experience some form of parental detachment, self-questioning, and moral dilemma when forming an identity outside of their preconceived ideas learned from parents or society (Brown & Gilligan, 1993; Gilligan, 1995; 1996; Guerra & Bradshaw, 2008; Phinney, 1993; Sharma & Fischer, 1998). Throughout history, these concepts were expounded on by early theorists such as Erik Erikson, Lawrence Kolberg, and Sigmund Freud, who studied adolescent development (Muss, 1988). According to discussions on early and recent literature pertaining to girls’ development, early literature on adolescent development failed to address the adolescent female experience (Adelson & Doehrman, 1980; Bettelheim, 1965; Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, 2008; Iglesias & Cormier, 2002; Lipford-Sanders & Bradley, 2005). Once research on girls’ development took flight, researchers failed to acknowledge that the African American girl has developmental experiences as well. More recently, scholars have begun advocating for the inclusion of developmental concerns for children of color in addition
to race and ethnicity as a necessary consideration in analyses (Holcomb-McCoy & Moore-Thomas, 2001; Lipford-Sanders & Bradley, 2005).

Between boys and girls, researchers have claimed the psychological development stage boys and girls endure is an experience of distinct differences. Boys psychological development pattern is said to take place throughout childhood and is displayed through episodes of depression, attempted suicide, developed learning disorders and various forms of out-of-control and out-of-touch behavior (Gilligan, 1996; Peterson, 1988). Girls’ psychological development on the other hand, is said to begin at the onset of or after puberty, which is a very important stage for girls concerning how girls view themselves within relationships. During puberty, girls experience similar patterns of negative moods while also dissociating themselves from the outer world (Barber, Johnson, Miller, & Petersen, 1998; Crothers et al., 2005; Gilligan, 1996, pg. 238; Gilligan, 2008; Iglesias & Cormier, 2002).

Gilligan (2008) concurred that females in their adolescent years experience problems with attachment and detachment, while noting “puberty signals the decline of the childhood world of relations and exit and voice enter as modes of response and recuperation” (pg. 142); therefore, the problem sustaining girls’ psychological impasse during adolescent development is the loss of their voices. Gilligan (2008) further argued, which is an extension of her earlier works (1977, 1982, 1991, 1993, 1996), “silence contributes to the problems observed in adolescent girls, particularly if these problems are seen to reflect a failure of engagement rather than a failure of separation” (pg. 145). When important relationships to adolescent girls lack engagement, adolescent girls begin to relate, respond, and mentally live within a fictitious world. This fictional world as
females know all too well derives from their desire for relationships with other females, “genuine or authentic connections with others” (Crothers et al., 2005; Brown & Gilligan, 1993, pg. 29). When the family unit’s stress level escalates, children suffer psychologically (Burrow-Sanchez, 2006; Gilligan, 1996; Howard, 2003; Moore & Chase-Lansdale, 2001; Robbins et al., 2006; Thompson, McLanahan, & Curtin, 1992; Zinck & Littrell, 2000). When girls are emotionally and/or physically distant from family members who ordinarily provide intimacy, love and a place to develop a voice, they close down psychologically and refuse to share important aspects of their experience. The experience of disconnection from the primary source, family, who is expected to foster intimacy, love, and one’s voice, cause girls to shift into a resilient or survival mode, dissociate, and repress painful past experiences. Being ignored, interpreted as a sign of not caring, may provoke young girls to disconnect from relationships, repress their emotions, and silence themselves (Brown & Gilligan, 1993; Gilligan, 1996; Gilligan, 2008).

Brown and Gilligan (1993) shared how after conducting a cross-cultural five year longitudinal study on the psychological development of 100 girls between the ages of seven and 18, they realized the relational problem for females is a ‘relational lie’ (a myth) central to patriarchal cultures that support the focal point of the male needs above the female needs. Their study revealed that “subtle untruths and various forms of violation and violence” has led females and continue to lead females to disappear from “the public world of history and culture” and live within their “private world of intimacy and love” for safety and security (all quotes from pg. 30). This private fictitious world forces some females to compromise between their voice and relationships. In most cases, as research
has shown, females sacrifice their voice and relationships for relationships to fulfill their longing for basic human needs: “emotional communication and responsive relationships” (Brown & Gilligan, 1993; Gilligan, 1996, pg. 254; Gilligan, 2008). As Brown and Gilligan (1993) listened to how the girls in their study spoke of themselves, their relationships, their responses to conflicts, their construction of conflicts, and their hopes and fears, the researchers discovered these girls were living in a fictional world they knew was not real (Gilligan, 1996). According to William James (1909), one of the pioneering psychologists who studied the pragmatic theory of truth, if the beliefs are useful to the believer, then the beliefs are true. However, Brown and Gilligan (1993) discovered the girls’ in their study were experiencing psychological discord for the sake of not losing relationships or connections with other people. The researchers began to understand that although the girls were aware they were living within their imagination as it concerned their silence and how they maintained emotional connections, the girls were unaware of the psychological damage they were experiencing. In other words, the participants were oblivious to the idea that sacrificing their voices was ultimately damaging their self-efficacy.

According to Gilligan (1984; 1987; 1996) the break in a relationship becomes even more confusing when one believes the break is not happening or the absence of the connection is actually love. When female adolescents experience loyalty and attachment issues, adolescence becomes especially troublesome. The psychological struggle and survival strategies they create becomes a part of their adulthood, which then causes psychological resilience or resistance (Gilligan, 1995; 1996; 2008). Additionally, females begin to follow a socially and culturally encouraged pattern, which involves taking on
others’ stress while looking within one’s self for the answer to the problem to either
protect or fix broken relationships or ‘relational connections.’ Consequently, females
struggle to make relationships and maintain important relationships to them within a
world where disconnection is built in at a structural level (Gilligan, 1982; 1995; 1996;
during a relational break is a psychological safe house (a trusting relationship), where
females are safely able to speak freely, explore their inner voice, and be heard.

In a study of 52 diverse racial and ethnic female adolescents, Crothers and
colleagues (2005) pointed out that females are expected to maintain harmony within their
relationships if they are concerned with hurting someone else by expressing their anger
(Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, Tarule, 1997; Hatch & Forgay, 2001). These authors
conducted a study on the relationship between gender role identity and relational
aggression among friendships. Crothers and her assisting authors (2005) learned many of
their participants believed being assertive is more acceptable within the current
generation. However, most girls in their study admitted resorting to indirect strategies of
conflict resolution including deception or conflict avoidance altogether. The girls feared
if they expressed aggression or assertiveness the other person would perceive their
emotions as negative and discontinue the relationship. One respondent from Crothers et
al. study stated, “You want to make as many people happy as you can but sometimes it
hurts you…you wanna say something but you keep your mouth shut.”

Crothers et al. study’s sample represented majority European American females
(70%). African American females represented 11.5% of the sample, 3.8% were Latina
Americans, 1.9% were Native Americans, and 13.5% were Multi-racial. All participants
lived in a middle class city with 84% of the population having graduated with a Masters degree. A high representation of European American middle-and upper class females compared to females of color from middle-and upper class backgrounds in this study illustrated a difference between socialization practices. With this in mind, Crothers and her colleagues (2005) supported the concept that African American females “…encounter familial socialization practices that proactively prepare them for dealing with oppression, prejudice, and overt and covert discrimination”, (pg. 349). Racial Socialization for African Americans is a process by which individuals learn how their language, customs, and cultural practices impact their experiences in America (Lipford-Sanders & Bradley, 2005). In Taylor, Gilligan, and Sullivan’s (1995) study on girls, they discovered African American females did not avoid relational aggression for the sake of maintaining relationships, yet they avoided expressions of sadness and pain, while asserting their anger. Taylor et al. (1995) reported the females in their study, who expressed anger was encouraged to do so by their African American grandmother or mother. The researchers learned African American females’ expressiveness was symbolic of being strong and independent as compared to European American females who were conflict avoidant. The concept that socialization practices for European American females and African American females are different is obviously true and can be tracked throughout history concerning socialization and identity formation for African Americans in America (Blanchard et al., 2005; Dodson, 2009; Giddings, 1988).
African American Females’ Racial Identity Development

The psychological development of African Americans has an additional layer that the psychological development of European Americans does not include. This additional layer not only concerns the experiences of racism but also the inclusion of the Black person in a White America (Day-Vines et al., 2003; Dodson, 2009; Giddings, 1988; Metzler, 2008; Sue, 2003; Pack-Brown et al., 1998; Parham & Helms, 1985; Shorter-Gooden & Washington, 1996; Stevenson et al., 2002). Many models have been created to describe the ‘Black experience’ of a Black person becoming true to one’s ‘Blackness’.

Within this paper, three models will be discussed concerning African American females’ psychological development, The Thomas Model, William E. Cross racial identity model, and Jean Phinney three stage model of ethnic identity.

The Thomas Model (1970) elucidates Thomas’ idea of “Negromachy”, which he defines as a mental illness African Americans experienced before the Negro-to-Black movement (Cross, 1978, pg. 13). This experience symbolized African Americans’ confusion about their self-worth and identification with the values of European Americans. The first stage of the Thomas Model is the confused period when individuals “rap on whitey” (Cross, 1978, pg. 15). The second stage of the model involves confessing and sharing one’s testimony about one’s struggle to obtain their Black identity. The third stage engages processing information about one’s cultural heritage; while the fourth stage entails a person actually integrating into the Black culture or the “larger Black experience” (Cross, 1978, pg. 15). Finally, the last stage is much similar to Cross’ (1978) fifth stage of racial identity, the period when one transcends or internalizes their ‘Black identity’ and releases their militant perspective of White Americans.
While Thomas’ Model describes how Black Americans transform from being confused about their racial identity and embracing the values of White Americans, Cross’ Model (1978) depicts five stages Black Americans’ travel through to assert their racial identity. The Pre-encounter stage is the period when a person’s worldview is dominated by the White American worldview. The Encounter stage is much like Thomas’ first stage; here, the individual becomes comfortable with being a Black American and upset with the idea that they once adopted the White American worldview. Immersion-Emersion is the stage where the individual’s sense of ‘Blackness’ is high. During this stage, the individual invest much effort in proving their ‘Blackness’ as they struggle to eradicate their once preferred White American worldview. Throughout the Internalization stage, one appears whole and confident with their ‘Blackness’. This is evident through “interpersonal transactions”, although, the conflict between the two worldviews is now resolved (Cross, 1978). Finally, when a Black American reaches the Internalization-Commitment stage, he/she is the “ideal person” concerning acceptance of their racial identity, yet, still struggles “to translate personal identity into activities that are meaningful to the group” (all quotes from pg. 18).

Parham (1989) interprets the Cross Model by outlining attitudinal life stages and themes Black Americans experience throughout their lives. While particularly paying attention to the first stage discussing adolescence, Parham infers Cross’ (1978) pre-encounter stage as a ‘pro-White’ and ‘anti-Black’ experience takes place in the late adolescence/early adulthood phase. During this phase, adolescents and young adults may become activist and “begin seeking values that match those of the dominant culture” (pg. 198). Based on certain readings, a conclusion has not been found regarding whether or
not Thomas indicated that a particular phase of life, such as adolescence, parallels with his stages. However, when affirming one’s ‘Blackness’, if the assumption upheld is that the beginning of affirmation starts at adolescence, then according to Thomas’ Model, the first stage African American adolescents would experience involves degrading White Americans.

Phinney (1993) also compared Cross’ Model to her three stage model of ethnic identity for adolescence, which is paralleled to Cross’ first three stages. During Stage 1, adolescents of color have an “unexamined ethnic identity” lacking exploration of an identity and as a result, accept the identity projected by mainstream society. In Stage 2, Phinney discusses how adolescents of color experience an “ethnic identity search” due to an encounter involving social or political awareness causing an identity crisis. Finally, in Stage 3, adolescents participate in an “ethnic identity achievement” where a clear, confident, and acceptance of self through exploration of their ethnicity is obtained (pg.71). Furthermore, as Black adolescents search for their individual identity apart from their family, they are bombarded with the challenge of identifying their own moral pathway and racial identity within a dominating mainstreamed society that identifies boundaries between races (Iglesias & Cormier, 2002; Lipford-Sanders & Bradley, 2005; Nicolas et al., 2008; Parham, 1989).

As African American females strive to identify themselves within society culturally and economically, their racial identity in particularly is impacted by the triple quandary of oppression they experience. Until African American females attain equality where race and gender roles do not impact their career development, African American females will continue to be dismissed from certain levels of success they aim to achieve.
(Hackett & Byars, 1996; Pack-Brown et al., 1998; Zinn, 2003). Because African American women are dismissed from levels of career success, the importance of African American female teenagers becoming aware of circumstances they may potentially confront as young women entering into the workforce is great. A great part of the hardships African American female teenagers face originates from the opinions of others (Crothers et al., 2005; Harris, 1992; Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005; Iglesias & Cormier, 2002), which may be dictating African American female experiences by influencing their behaviors. Thus, some African American female teenagers are not controlling their behaviors to influence their own experiences. Harris (1992) stated, “When African American females believe their behaviors control their experiences and these beliefs are reinforced by their families and communities, [African American female teenagers] are more likely to experience a sense of control” (1992, pg. 3).

Harris (1992) also stated, "racial and gender barriers negatively affect [African American females'] sense of control" (pg. 160). Pack-Brown et al. (1998) affirmed racism and sexism are inherent oppressions of American culture and have complicated African American females' perceptions of themselves, often leading to questions regarding racial and feminine identity. Historically, "...gender and racial discrimination... [has and still is] woven throughout the lives of African American females," (Pack-Brown et al., 1998, pg. 2) causing African American females to develop coping mechanisms to assist in their individual and collective survival based on racial and sexual stigmatizations (hooks, 1991; Shorter-Gooden & Washington, 1996). African American females are the “only group who were enslaved to work, produce, and reproduce” (Almquist, 1995, pg. 577; Holcomb-McCoy & Moore-Thomas, 2001; Hunn & Craig, 2009; Shorter-Gooden &
Washington, 1996); therefore, the history of slavery can justly be attributed to why African American female’s identity is a byproduct of racism and sexism. Given that identity is important to an individual’s healthy development and teenage girls view their identity in relation to others, the necessity of African American teenage girls being able to sort their identity issues and assess their view of themselves as African Americans and as females is critical to the evolution of society (Day-Vines et al., 2003; Harris, 1992; Pack-Brown et al., 1998).


In 2001, Walker-Barnes and Mason studied 31 African American and Latina American female students attending an alternative school in a city with high crime rate and discovered females of color turn to gangs to protect themselves from other gangs or violence and abusive families. Their study also revealed when females of color lack parental warmth or a close bonding experience with parents, and they experience family conflict, the probability of females of color participating in gangs increase. An article in Ebony magazine (2011) highlighted African American female gang involvement in Los Angeles, California. The Ebony editorial noted that within Los Angeles, there are 400 active gangs totaling between 54,000 and 100,000 members. Sergeant Ron Lopez of Los Angeles (LA) Police Department 77th Division Gang Crime Unit studied habits of LA’s
notorious gang members for over three years and some of those notorious gang members included women. A program manager for gang reduction and youth development from LA’s Mayor’s Office, Marquita Dorsey, shared girls join gangs because of generational ties, a lack of parental supervision and support, a weak family unit, abusive relationships in or outside of the home, and or because they have friends involved in gangs (Henderson, 2011). Gang involvement, feelings of depression, insecurity, and low family support are leading influences for female teens involved in teenage pregnancy, suicide, and criminal behaviors (Everall, Altrows, & Paulson, 2006; Henderson, 2011; Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Walker-Barnes & Mason, 2001). Literature denoting developmental issues and the need for interventions with these young girls has increased. According to Holcomb-McCoy (2004) this is…

“…due, in part, to the growing numbers of African American females experiencing depression (White, 1990), eating disorders (Lester & Petrie, 1998), poor nutrition (Halpern, Udry, Campbell, & Suchindran, 1999), teenage pregnancy (Dixon, Schoonmaker, & Philliber, 2000), suicide (Gibbs, 1988), and AIDS (Archie-Booker, Cervero, & Langone, 1999)” (pg. 161).

Other factors creating experiences of stress and dissonance for African American adolescents are socio-economic status, institutional racism, lack of stability, security, and belonging, and gender/cultural identity issues (Butler, 2003; Day-Vines, et al., 2003; Griffin, 1998; Harris, 1992; Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Howard, 2003; Krohn & Bogan, 2001). The aforementioned issues for African American females are illustrated as a result of African American females having low levels of resiliency, self-efficacy, and racial identity. These constructs at low levels have created, for some African American females,
lifestyles that reflect dysfunctional relationships, a continual cycle of living in poverty and abuse, criminal activities, poor personal and social development, and low academic achievement.

African American Females’ Developmental Issues

Often, African American teenage girls living in impoverished and abusive or neglectful environments have negative self-images, low self-esteem and a distorted self-identity. Young (1994) found that negative thoughts African American teenage girls have about themselves typically influence inappropriate behaviors, which are oftentimes manifested in their attire, attitudes, demeanor, and grooming. Harris (1992) defined three referents in conceptualizing self-identity: a) physiological referent, the knowledge of self as a woman, b) African American referent, self conceptualized from a sociopolitical context, and c) personal referent, knowledge of self as a unique individual. A healthy self-identity is important for African American teenage girls. A positive identity helps them to identify as a physically, mentally, and spiritually healthy African American woman. The African American referent is rooted in the rich history African American females have as contributors to American society, while the personal referent allows the African American teenage girl to see herself interdependently of others. That is, she is her own reference for how she identifies herself, based upon a sense of self-pride, dignity, and integrity (Harris, 1992). If African American teenage females view their self-image through a negative lens or are unsure about their place in society, their self-identity is left vulnerable to be heavily influenced by others.
Establishing healthy relationships, developing practical communication skills, and learning healthy coping strategies for dealing with environmental constraints are essential for the overall growth and development of African American female teenagers. For example, one obstacle that is assumed to hinder African American females in establishing healthy relationships is the result of being reared in a mother-only household. Several researchers have examined the effects of African American females being reared in households in which fathers or male figures are absent from the home (Coley, 2003; Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Krohn & Bogan, 2001; Moore & Chase-Lansdale, 2001). Results have indicated females, who lack a father figure in the home, also lack a sense of protection and seek attention from men, have more physical contact with boys their age, and become discouraged more often than girls who live within two-parent households. Coley (2003) surmised African American teenage females engage in problem behaviors because of non-supporting and disengaged fathers. Caution should be exhibited when interpreting the results of these conceptual studies because of the assumed causal effects suggested by the authors. For instance, many variables may contribute to African American female teenagers engaging in problematic behaviors, none of which can be totally attributed to the lack of a father figure in the home. Although, the presence of a father figure in the home reduces the risk of pregnancy for African American females (Coley, 2003; Moore & Chase-Lansdale, 2001). In addition, from an Afrocentric worldview, biological fathers residing in the home develops a sense of belonging and balance for African American females (Harris, 2003; Somers et al., 2008).

Afrocentrism is a worldview of experiences from an African American perspective. Attitudes and behaviors of African American female teenagers as well as
how African American females view learning and academic achievement may be influenced by the Afrocentric worldview. The lack of a cultural perspective and referent points may prohibit many African American females from engaging in a cooperative and collaborative learning process (Day-Vines et al., 2003; Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005; Howard, 2003). Hale-Benson (1986) noted the different learning styles of African American children, and suggested the lack of attention given to this learning style contributes to the ever-widening achievement gap between African American children and children of other groups. The Eurocentric style of learning imposed upon African American children may be contributing to their low academic achievement by not allowing African American children to fully engage in the learning process in ways that are conducive to their success (Day-Vines & Terriquez, 2008; Hale-Benson, 1986).

The ability to achieve academic success among African American female teenagers is further complicated by the increased challenges and adversities they face. African American female teenagers must constantly adjust to multiple stressful situations while attempting to achieve and maintain academically (Day-Vines, et al., 2003; Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005; Howard, 2003). The “abandoned Black Americans” have been the targeted population throughout this review; therefore, many African American female teenagers who live within estranged living and social conditions place a higher priority on non-academic responsibilities such as work and family rather than preparing for a future through academic achievement (Butler, 2003; Holcomb-McCoy & Moore-Thomas, 2001; Robinson, 2003; Smith et al., 1994). African American female teenagers living amongst these conditions have been noted to
become pregnant or a carrier of a sexually transmitted disease (Butler, 2003). In many cases, African American females become caretakers of younger siblings at a young age and have been since slavery (Zinn, 2003). Through their caretaking experiences, young girls begin to see their childhood roles differently and possibly fall behind academically, dropout of high school, and or never attend college. Somers et al. (2008) noted within their study, African American females were able to relate their baby-sitting experiences to certain lessons learned in class; supporting the concept that apparently completing high school without the burdens of personal, social, and academic adversities in an urban environment is unlikely for African American female teens raised in poverty (Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Powell, 2006; Somers et al., 2008).

The lack of academic achievement also affects the psychological well-being of African American female adolescents. In addition to the myriad of other stressors, African American female teenagers who strive to achieve academic success are often accused of ‘acting white’ (acting high and mighty due to an oppositional peer culture) (Tyson, Darity, & Castellino, 2005) and run the risk of being ostracized from their peer group, being bullied, and being ridiculed (Awad, 2007; Butler, 2003; Day-Vines et al., 2003; Hall et al., 2008; Howard, 2003; Somers et al., 2008; Tyson et al., 2005). Butler (2003) noticed that some researchers have made the assumption that high grades, school attendance, and an absence of conduct issues, represent psychological well-being in urban African American high school students; although the African American female teenager accused of ‘acting white’ faces a conundrum. On one hand she understands the importance of doing well academically, and on the other hand the costs of doing so in the
Children seek to establish an identity first from within the care of family or worst case scenario, society (Phinney, 1993; Powell, 2008). According to researchers, parents who are supportive, involved, and encouraging create a greater sense of autonomy, emotional balance, and belonging in adolescence, which creates and supports the relationship between youth and their family (Bell, 2001; Giordano et al., 1993; Harris, 2003; Karavasilis, Doyle, Margolese, 1999; Moore & Chase-Lansdale, 2001; Somers et al., 2008). A description of family for African Americans may very well depict a household of extended kin including aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents all residing under the same roof. Although, often times immediate family support is provided in three-generation households consisting of parents, children, and grandparents (Davis, 2006; Moore & Chase-Lansdale, 2001; Robbins et al., 2006; Zinn, 2003). Households of European American families on the other hand, may typically represent father, mother, children, and possibly a pet (Connor & White, 2006). Although literature pertaining to African American families has highlighted the unfortunate experiences of the ‘Black family’, the impact of family adversity on African American youth, and the sudden domination of African American single-female headed households, ‘Black families’ were once a strong united front even during slavery (Bankston & Caldas, 1998; Connor &
White, 2006; Fisher et al., 2002; Giordano et al., 1993; Marks et al., 2006; Powell, 2008; Robinson, 2010; Zinn, 2003).

Connor & White (2006) share how before the ‘Black family’ was obliterated; during slavery African fathers made sacrifices to keep their families together even if it meant risking their lives for punishment. Genovese (1978) noted how slave owners acknowledged ‘family togetherness’ was important to the African family and when together, the slaves worked better. Only some slave owners supported keeping families together for the sake of productivity (Connor, 2006; Zinn, 2003). In the edited version of Black Fathers: An Invisible Presence in America, Connor and White (2006) briefly lay a foundation acknowledging the historical process of the African American family becoming damaged, specifically the ‘Black’ man. This foundation creates the conceptualization of how “The Abandoned Black America” came into existence (Robinson, 2003, pg.109).

Historical Overview of Black Families in America

Beginning in 1910 with The Great Migration, two million African Americans moved from the Southern states of the United States to the Northeast, Midwest, and Western areas of the nation because of the urbanization and industrialization of land and believed the move would provide a free and greater lifestyle (Blanchett et al., 2005; Connor & White, 2006; Dodson, 2009; Robinson, 2010) However, employment was mostly available to women of color in domestic labor due to the heavy influence of “The Job Ceiling”. Robinson (2003) defined “The Job Ceiling” as the semiskilled and servant jobs with low pay and little opportunity for advancement. Connor (2006) outlines how in
1929, The Great Depression exposed 24.9% of European American males and their families to poverty due to unemployment, despair, and family separation. Connor further details how during this period, the percentage of unemployment rates naturally doubled for African American males and forced many African American males to leave home to find work. However, in the fifty’s 91% of African American families were headed by two parents. Faced with racism, discrimination, and segregation, the Black community was strong and at that time, reached a population of 15,042,286 (Connor, 2006; Dodson, 2009; Zinn, 2003). There were African American functioning businesses, “the ‘Black’ church was vibrant” (Connor, 2006, pg. 76; Robinson, 2010), African American students were attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities in large numbers, and the ‘Black’ intellect was the power in the fist that led the Civil Rights and Social Movements during the 60’s and 70’s (Zinn, 2003). The era of the Civil Rights Movement, however, was a moment in time where the African American male was intentionally systemically ostracized. The Black leadership was destroyed through assassinations, government’s void to aid, and “the cumulative effects of White privilege” resulting in poverty, racism, and segregation (Connor, 2006, pg. 77; Zinn, 2003) overwhelmed the African American family (Dodson, 2009). Glick’s reported in 1981 that by 1970 the percentage of African American single-parent households rose to 33.3% and 45.8% by 1980. The Condition of Education (2010) recently reported data collected in February, March, and April of 2008 from current population survey’s annual social and economic supplement stating that a high percentage of African American children across all ages lived with one parent in contrast to European and Latina/Latino American children in other living arrangements.
The Impact of Poverty on Black Families in America

A review of the related literature indicates poverty seems to be the common
denominator of African American families with low-income, single mothers, and low
academic performing adolescents (Davis, 2006; Hunter & Ensminger, 1992; Lee, 2005;
Robinson, 2003; SUN & LI, 2007). According to Zabin and colleagues (1992), the ‘spell
of poverty’ begins often with a change in the household structure. These authors also
stated “disruption is generally explored in terms of marital/partnership status of the heads
of households [and] complex household structure are common among poor, urban
African Americans with transient living patterns that frequently occur” (pg. 505). As
mentioned during the brief historical overview, oftentimes, transient living patterns are
associated with periods of stress caused by work and family conflict, overload, financial
strain, and family overcrowding causing children to endure many changes (Marks,
Nesteruk, Swanson, Garrison, & Davis, 2005; Robinson, 2010). In an investigation on the
proposition that race and socioeconomic status (SES) jointly influence mental health, and
contributes to undesirable life events and economic problems to psychological distress
across SES groups, low-income African American families experienced more acute
stressors such as illnesses and deaths of family members, drug addictions, crime
victimization, and chronic economic problems comparable to middle and upper income
African Americans living in relatively secure neighborhoods (Marks et al., 2006; Ulbrich
et al., 1989). Ulbrich et al. (1989) found African Americans with lower-SES are more
vulnerable to the impact of undesirable events than lower-SES European Americans.
However, African Americans are less vulnerable than European Americans to the impact
of economic issues. Based on a study conducted by Hunter and Ensminger (1992), living
arrangements for African American children from childhood to adolescence vary between single parent mothers and grandmother headed households. According to other investigators, these varied living arrangements occur in predominantly poor urban communities (Fisher et al., 2002; Robbins et al., 2006; Somers et al., 2008; Zabin et al., 1992).

Hunter and Ensminger (1992) conducted a study that predicted transitions in African American children’s living arrangements surround issues associated with marital dyads and living arrangements with extended kin. Moore & Chase-Lansdale’s (2001) findings corroborated the results of Hunter and Ensminger’s (1992) investigation of African American families. Moore and Chase-Lansdale’s study indicated that African American children are more likely to be born into and reared in a one-parent household. Additionally, their study predicted if African American children are born into a two-parent household, they may endure a transition to a single-parent household at an early age.

In most low-income urban communities predominately consisting of African American families, single-parent female-headed households have become the norm (Bankston & Caldas, 1998; Davis, 2006; Giordano et al., 1993; Hunter & Ensminger, 1992; Moore & Chase-Lansdale, 2001; Robinson, 2010; SUN & LI, 2007). According to Robinson (2010), 54% of all African American children today are being raised in single-parent households. Moreover, according to Bankston and Caldas (1998), low academic achievement and behavioral problems among African American children are associated with being reared in single-female headed households. Empirical research has found students from one-parent headed households have significantly lower grades and test
scores than students from two-parent headed households (Bankston & Caldas, 1998; Lee, 2005; Mulkey, Crain & Harrington, 1992). In addition, Bankston and Caldas’ (1998) findings are consistent with previous statistics from the U.S. Department of Education (1995), which reported African American children were disadvantaged in pre-school attendance, grade retention, academic achievement, dropout rates, parental involvement, course-taking patterns, and educational inspirations. As of 2008, 9.9% of African American youth between the age 16 and 24 were classified as drop-outs because they were not enrolled in high school and did not have a diploma. European Americans represented 4.8% and Latina/Latino Americans represented 18.3% of this sample (The Conditions of Education, 2010). Disparities in the educational achievements and social and psychological problems experienced by African American children and other children are not solely attributed to household status. Nonetheless, evidence suggests a considerable factor in whether or not African American children succeed strongly depends on these children being reared in a single-female headed household within impoverished living conditions (Bankston III & Caldas, 1998). Given that single-female headed households are frequently found in social environments of extreme disadvantages and disruptions, one source argued these adolescents are carrying their problems from their neighborhoods to school (Bankston III & Caldas, 1998).

As stated by Hunter and Ensminger (1992) change is a common experience for African American children. During these periods of stress, adolescents experience transitions within their living arrangements and developmental changes both intensified by structural deficits and challenges of poverty in low-income urban communities (Coley,
Within the construct of poverty and transient living conditions, children from single-parent households are also suffering developmentally. The absence of a father may possibly lead to many of the previously mentioned conditions and problems African American teens face. Coley (2003) noted the structural, economic, and relational issues existing within African American families “are centrally important contexts for fathers’ roles in families contributing to the decline in marriage and in fathers’ engagement in childrearing” (pg. 867). In many African American households, “the father is not physically present [for the reason that] many fathers are no longer living or are incarcerated” (Powell, 2008, pg. 2; Robinson, 2010), or are alienating themselves from their fatherly role (Coley, 2003; Connor & White, 2006; Krohn & Bogan, 2001; Powell, 2008). As a result, many African American adolescents grow up without ever knowing their father, lacking a significant male role model for their entire life, and idolizing drug dealers, pimps, gangsters, and athletes (Powell, 2008). When parents are not actively involved in their child’s life, fathers alienate themselves from the picture while single mothers head the family, adolescents are left vulnerable to the influence of the world and their peers, (Day-Vines et al., 2003; Giordano et al., 1993; Moore & Chase-Lansdale, 2001; Powell, 2008; Robbins et al., 2006; SUN & LI, 2007) and children grow up governing themselves according to street values.

Extended Family Systems

Extended family networks including biological and non-biological relationships have historically been known to serve as necessary sources of support for African American children. Some researchers have noted in seeking some form of a family unit,
many African American youth seek surrogate parental figures in hope of being adequately guided and nurtured by someone (Morris, 1987; Nicolas et al., 2008). Often times, grandparent’s step-up to raise their second and third generation grandchildren, which supports the growing literature acknowledging grandparents raising grandchildren (Burton, 1992; Kelch-Oliver, 2008; Robbins et al., 2006; Ruiz & Carlton-LaNey, 1999; United States Census Bureau, 1999).

Robbins et al. (2006) investigated the differences in family functioning in grandparent and parent-headed households in a clinical sample with 190 drug-using African American and Latina/Latino American adolescents between the ages of 13 and 17, with majority male participants. Their findings were consistent with earlier and later investigations indicating grandparents play a major role in African American families (Franklin & Moss, 1994; Kelch-Oliver, 2008; Robbins et al., 2006). However, Robbins et al. (2006) study revealed among their 12 grandmother-headed households, adolescents reported more abuse of marijuana while grandparents reported less behavioral problems than did parent-headed households. In most cases, grandparents provide leadership, support, and assistance in raising children who lack necessary parental involvement and care, which may explain the low rates of behavioral problems reported by grandparents, while parents provided less disciplinarian actions. But according to Robbins et al. (2006), grandparents provide less monitoring, which may explain the high rates of marijuana use reported by the study’s adolescent sample (Franklin & Moss, 1994; Robins et al., 2006; United States Census Bureau, 1999). Grandparents’ roles in African American families are pivotal in situations where parents are deceased or declared unfit, which may explain the growing number of grandparents raising their grandchildren. According to Watson,
Randolph, and Lyons (2005), more than 9,000,000 African American grandparents housed at least one grandchild under the age of 18. Kelch-Oliver (2008), stated factors leading to grandparent-headed households consist of parental employment, substance abuse, parental incompetence, immature teenage pregnancy, absence of the child’s parent, child abuse and neglect, parental death, homicide, incarceration or psychiatric illness (Lopez & Bhat, 2007). Further research is needed on family relationships in grandparent-headed households of African American families for accurate analyses considering that African American children are more likely to live in one-parent or extended family households than two-parent households as compared to non-African American children, linking the household dynamics and poverty together (Hunter & Ensminger, 1992; Kelch-Oliver, 2008; Robbins et al., 2006; Watson et al., 2005; Zabin et al., 1992).

Although some writers might argue to the contrary, much of the literature suggests the argument that “single-parent households… headed by women characterize the background of students in schools where African Americans predominate…” performs academically low, and are less likely to be monitored by parents (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; McLanahan & Bumpass, 1988; Somers et al., 2008; Bankston III & Caldas, 1998, pg. 715). As suggested by two previous studies, one-parent families are unable to provide large amounts of time and parental involvement to their children (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; McLanahan & Bumpass, 1988). Somers et al. (2008) argue parents with low SES most often are reluctant to participate in their child’s education because of their perspective of how they fit within their child’s educational process; therefore, parents may feel inadequate to contribute to their child’s school success.
Somers and colleagues (2008) also state how parents perceive schools as unwelcoming, which adds to their perceived negative experiences (Tucker, 2009). Powell (2008) stated “many hard-working parents spend half their lives employed by employees that suck the life out of families, by offering only endless hours, low pay, and no opportunities for promotions” (pg. 2), leaving parents with no energy to engage in their child’s life. Though this may stand true for some African American families, parents’ support in their child’s academic success and involvement in their personal lives’ is essentially vital for students healthy development (Somers et al., 2008; Powell, 2008; Burrow-Sanchez, 2006; Robbins et al., 2006; Day-Vines et al., 2003; Howard, 2003; Moore & Chase-Lansdale, 2001; Zinck & Littrell, 2000; Bankston III & Caldas, 1998; Giordano et al., 1993; McLanahan, 1991; McLanahan & Bumpass, 1988).

Resiliency and Self-Efficacy

While knowing the support of parents is pivotal to children’s success academically, socially, and emotionally, the successes of African American females have often times depended upon protective factors (Reis, Colbert, Hébert, 2005). For example, immediate family, extended family, and non-familial relationships have provided encouragement for African American females (Hall et al., 2008; Davis, 2006; Robbins et al., 2006; Moore & Chase-Lansdale, 2001; Connor & White, 2006; Taylor & Roberts, 1995). Additionally, the African American female’s internal strength, spirituality, and desires have also supported her endurance and self-concept. This review has attempted to outline a foundation to understanding the cultural and developmental challenges African American female teens’ experience. Central areas of this study maintain the resiliency
and self-efficacy skills African American female teens either possess or establish when faced with problematic situations over a period of time. Adverse experiences reported by scholars within this review for African American females include but are not limited to difficulties due to general developmental issues such as forming an identity, effectively dealing with peer pressure, and detaching from parental dependency while constructing one’s own values and opinions independently (Burrow-Sanchez, 2006; Day-Vines et al., 2003; Giordano et al., 1993; Howard, 2003; Moore & Chase-Lansdale, 2001; Robbins et al., 2006; Zinck & Littrell, 2000). An additional layer of complication for African American female’s developmental process discussed in this review involves racial identity and stigmatization due to institutional racial and gender opposition for African American females (Almquist, 1995; Day-Vines et al., 2003; Holcomb-McCoy & Moore-Thomas, 2001; Hunn & Craig, 2009; Pack-Brown et al., 1998; Shorter-Goeden & Washington, 1996; Stevenson et al., 2002).

Racial and gender opposition may deliberately intend for the African American female to feel powerless and therefore operate from a mindset of frustration, rebellion, or endurance. While exploring historical occurrences that have affected the African American family as a unit, African American females have had to endure parent’s stress due to unsatisfying employment, class, or marital status preceding neglectful parenting, an unstable home life, and an overall lifestyle of pain, disappointment, and constant re-adjusting (Davis, 2006; Fisher et al., 2002; Hunter & Ensminger, 1992; Lee, 2005; Robbins et al., 2006; Somers et al., 2008; SUN & LI, 2007; Zabin et al., 1992). A lifestyle of constant re-adjusting and adversity seems to be an indicator that success is impossible to achieve for individuals with such experiences. However, researchers assert
that when the level of adversity is high, resiliency begins from within and encourages hope (Bell, 2001; Connor & Davidson, 2003; Everall et al., 2006; Hall et al., 2008; Kia-Keating, Dowdy, Morgan, & Noam, 2011; Nicolas et al., 2008). Bell (2001) listed 18 characteristics of resiliency necessary for youth coping with traumatic stress (found on pg. 375):

(1) having curiosity and intellectual mastery; (2) having compassion – with detachment; (3) having the ability to conceptualize; (4) obtaining the conviction of one’s right to survive; (5) possessing the ability to remember and invoke images of good and sustaining figures; (6) having the ability to be in touch with affects, not denying or suppressing major affects as they arise; (7) having a goal to live for; (8) having the ability to attract and use support; (9) possessing a vision of the possibility and desirability of restoration civilized moral order; (10) having the need and ability to help others; (11) having an affective repertory; (12) being resourceful; (13) being altruistic toward others; (14) having the capacity to turn traumatic helplessness into learned helpfulness; (15) having a sense of ‘true self’; (16) developing heart or an indomitable ‘fighting spirit’ [as stated by Bell and Suggs (1998)]; (17) having an animal spirit that lives inside; and (18) being able to cultivate energy or “chi” [according to Bell (2000)].

Several researchers define resiliency as a personal quality enabling an individual to thrive functionally in the midst of uncontrollable situations as he or she make meaning of events taking place over a period of time (Bell, 2001; Connor & Davidson, 2003; Everall et al., 2006; Hall et al., 2008; Kia-Keating et al., 2011; Nicolas et al., 2008), while other researchers have denoted that a single definition of resiliency does not exist
(Reis et al., 2005). Bell (2001), however, compared emotional resilience to building muscular strength. In order to strengthen one’s resiliency skills, one’s resilient capabilities must be exercised or he or she risk the loss of the ability. Considering the extensive intense traumatic circumstances African Americans have had to endure throughout history, Bell’s (2001) theory apparently serves true (Nicolas et al., 2008). If comparing emotional endurance to physical endurance, repetition of any form of events inevitably builds fortitude. Everall and co-authors (2006) referenced several scholars declaring that resilience is a developmental process evolving over time that becomes a part of one’s healthy development. Just as physical endurance has a long lasting effect on one’s health and physical body, Nicolas and other researchers (2008) believe there is a long-lasting consequence of resilience affecting one’s mental and physical health, but appears later in life. This claim speaks to the disruption, the silence, and the withdrawal African Americans psychologically experience when forced to endure multiple aspects of oppression, rejection, and neglect that inescapably resurfaces during adulthood (Szmitman et al., 2011) leading to lifelong stress.

When dealing with racial stressors, Nicolas et al. (2008) proposed a conceptual framework for understanding African American teens called a “Strengths and Coping Model for Black Youths” that was designed to describe how helping professionals may assist African American youth in approaching issues they encounter concerning racial socialization, systemic barriers, and coping strategies from a strength-based perspective. Although, most research on resilience concerning African American teenagers discuss African American teenagers ability to survive and recover in the midst of negative environmental influences (Nicolas et al., 2008), Nicolas et al. considers African
American teenagers “active participation in determining who they [choose to] become” (pg.262). These authors defined their model from three components: resilience, resistance, and withdrawal.

Withdrawal, according to Nicolas et al. (2008) is the physical removal or psychological disengagement of an individual from a stressful situation concerning race. Withdrawing from a situation is accounted as the least effective method in changing situations and environments for growth. The model however, describes resilience as a “passive externally driven coping strategy…” (pg. 274), which is not the most effective long-term method for African American youth to use when coping with daily racial life stressors; although, much research implies resiliency is the greater tool African American youth utilize to become successful despite hardship. Interestingly, Nicolas and supporting scholars underscore resistance as the better method for African American youth to employ when facing adversity because resistance concentrates on changing one’s environment. Likewise, Hackett and Byars (1996) statement on self-efficacy resembles much of the resistance framework Nicolas and his assisting authors discuss in their Strengths and Coping Model for Black Youths; “when strong efficacy is combined with negative outcome expectations; protest, social activism, and other behaviors aimed at challenging and changing the system are more likely to result” (pg. 330).

Self-efficacy much in the same way as resiliency operates from an internal drive and draw from like principles such as self-esteem, motivation, parent support, independence, pursuit of goals, self-concept, etc. (Hackett & Byars, 1996; Kia-Keating et al., 2010; Merrill-Palmer, 2001; Nasim, Roberts, Harrell, & Young, 2005; Wheeler, 2010). Individuals with a high level of self-efficacy demonstrate a commitment and due
diligence in developing effective problem solving and coping strategies. Bandura (1993) stated “efficacy beliefs influence how people feel, think, motivate themselves, and behave” (pg. 2); whereas, self-efficacy produce the effect of one’s beliefs about self through one’s cognition, motivation, affect, and selection process relative to the circumstance and event the individual feels confident and encouraged to confront.

Many scholars have defined such internal strengths as “protective factors” (Everall et al., 2006; Kia-Keating et al., 2010; Merrill-Palmer, 2001; Wheeler, 2010). Reis, Colbert and Hébert (2005) defined “protective factors” in their study on “Understanding Resilience in Diverse, Talented Students in an Urban High School” as supportive adults, friendships with other achieving students, opportunities to take honors and advanced classes, participation in multiple extracurricular activities after school and during the summer, the development of a strong belief in self, and ways to cope with negative aspects of their school, urban environment, and family lives. Kia-Keating and her assisting authors conceptualized a framework, which defines “protective factors” as a safeguard enabling a person to confront stressful situations while simultaneously, a healthy development is influenced. The authors discuss how only in the presence of adversity or risks are these safeguards in operation, supporting Nicolas and his assisting authors (2008) assertion that resiliency skills develop over a period of time, much like self-efficacy. Merrill-Palmer (2001) referred to Bandura’s (1997) argument stating that the beliefs of efficacy do not necessarily protect the adolescent from harm but yet, offers opportunities to allow the adolescent to employ coping strategies when confronting stress. When opportunities to apply coping strategies or resiliency skills are persistent,
one’s belief in one’s capability to sustain becomes stronger. Similarly, resiliency and self-efficacy operate as safeguards for African American females.

Two studies supported much of the same conclusions but targeted specific findings. When African American adolescents feel good about self and have high levels of self worth, African American students connect and bond with their school, produce higher grades, and a variety of positive outcomes exist (Zand & Thomson, 2005). Equally, when adolescents have higher levels of self-efficacy, self-concept, and self-esteem, adolescents are less likely to be involved in early sexual behaviors, drug abuse, and are more connected to school (Wheeler, 2010). Reis et al. (2005) stated “resilient students have a stronger sense of self-efficacy and believe they are successful because they choose to be” (pg. 111); therefore, as McMillan and Reed (1994) declared understanding how resilience promotes success in students is needed to “…reduce potential risk factors of maladjustment” and strengthen protective factors for more positive outcomes (Reis et al., 2005).

As previously mentioned, African American females have withstood a long history of injustices. Studies have highlighted the social, economic and political factors that foster the social unrest faced by African Americans, which seems to eventually fall on the hands of African American females. Because of joblessness, underemployment rates, low wages and limited resources available to African Americans, particularly African American females who predominate the heads of households, Hackett and Byars (2001) suggest that “efficacy for coping with racism and sexism, may result in lessening the damaging impact of racism and sexism” (pg. 330). Although their suggestion was relative to African American females career aspirations and career development, racism
and sexism impacts all areas of African American females’ lives. Therefore, when counseling African American females, building efficacy for racism and sexism should be a primary consideration because both oppressing experiences interconnect every aspect of the African American female’s life. The counsel of African American female teenagers and their healthy development concerning racism and sexism is critical for further research (Awad, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005; Iglesias & Cormier, 2002).

Intervention Strategies

Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell (2005) noted the necessity and importance of relevant counseling interventions when working with African American adolescents by stating how critical it is for school counselors in urban school districts to have the necessary tools to assist African American students in achieving their goals. As an added complication for school counselors in urban districts, African American students goals exceed academics and includes the need for structure, stability, physical and emotional care, to be heard and not judged, to feel safe and supported, and for their families to have adequate access to community resources (Ott, Rosenberger, McBride, & Woodcox, 2011; Tucker, 2009). Additionally, Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell (2005) contended that school counselors need to utilize interventions that actually work and are proven to make a difference for students; because “research on the process as well as outcome of counseling interventions used in urban schools [that represent the voices of African American female adolescents] is greatly needed” (pg. 207).
Individual Counseling

African Americans have long utilized the intervention of counseling. As Smith (1974) stated, “Blacks counseled Blacks” to overcome the pain caused by injustices African Americans experienced as direct result of oppression. Such people Smith emphasized as ideal counselors for Blacks were Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, W.E.B. Dubois, David Walker, Harriet Tubman, etc. because during those times, “no one has helped Black people more than Blacks” (Smith, 1974, pg. 490).

To expose injustices experienced by African American students, individual counseling can serve as an effective initial approach for school counselors (Bemak & Chung, 2005). In Day-Vines & Terriquez (2008) explication of a strengths-based group approach to counseling African American and Latino students, a school counselor participant stated they worked individually “with students to validate, expand upon, and constructively challenge student’s perspectives” (pg. 173). However, as earlier stated, school counselors in urban school districts rarely have sufficient time to sit with one student for 30 uninterrupted minutes for the reasons that majority of a school counselor’s time consist of adhering to responsive services, student individual planning, systems management, non-guidance duties, or agendas given by administration (Akos, Schuldt, & Walendin, 2009; ASCA, 2005; Bemak & Chung, 2005; Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005; Butler & Constantine, 2005); as well, teachers complain about students missing long periods of instruction time. Therefore, one-on-one counseling can be used as an initial aid for help but individual counseling may not be the most effective strategy for assisting African American females with certain issues. When comparing individual,
family, and group counseling, some writers report that group counseling is more effective.

Family Counseling

Family counseling, yet, can be compared to resiliency; the passive external strategy of Nicolas et al. (2008) “Strengths and Coping Model for Black Youth.” Part of a school counselor’s responsibility is to create change for the student by attempting to connect family and school (ASCA, 2005; Tucker, 2009). Although family counseling is a systems-based approach to solving problems, involving all necessary stakeholders with an invested interest in the student’s change, all interested parties should be on one accord. Unless all stakeholders are equally in agreement with a developed behavioral plan or suggested strategies to apply at school and home, family counseling can just as well become an inactive approach like individual counseling, when considering the student resides in a non-supporting environment longer than 30 minutes.

Tucker (2009) explained how creating a better working alliance with the “Abandoned Black Community”, low-income families, decreases problems of alienation and feelings of powerlessness. The decrease of powerlessness and alienation among low-income families encourages a better support system with willing working stakeholders on behalf of the student. In a school setting, family counseling represents parents and guardians’ involvement in addressing students’ issues when problems occur to discuss solutions parents/guardians may use at home (Tucker, 2009). If family counseling is to be successful, home interventions appropriate for school should be implemented at school.
Group Counseling

Several researchers, conversely, have published on the effectiveness of groups with African American teens. According to group researchers, group advantages for adolescents consist of adolescents having the opportunity to relate to one another, learn life skills, practice generalizing real life situations, receive feedback, and experience an increase of self-esteem through helping others (Gerrity & DeLucia-Waack, 2007; Shechtman, Bar-El & Hadar, 1997). Many scholars affirm small group counseling methods are most successful when working with adolescents experiencing issues of self-esteem, depression, abuse, pregnancy, incarcerated parents, etc. (Day-Vines et al., 2003; Day-Vines & Terriquez, 2008; Gerrity & DeLucia-Waack, 2007; Harris, 1992; Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Johnson & Johnson, 2005; Locke & Faubert, 1993; Lopez & Bhat, 2007; Pinkey, 1994; Truneckova & Viney, 2007; Young, 1994; Zinck & Littrell, 2000). Pack-Brown et al. (1998) supported Boyd-Franklin’s (1991) suggestion that group counseling assists African American females with psychological growth by making use of their strengths. Boyd-Franklin (1991) further affirmed that group counseling is a supportive atmosphere where African American females can “work through a great deal of their pain and experience growth and change” (Pack-Brown et al., 1998, pg. 70). Although there is evidence supporting small group interaction based on an African-centered perspective contributing to the ego development of African American females, recent literature on African American female teenagers’ reactions to group counseling interventions is scarce in the counseling field (Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005; Locke & Faubert, 1993).
Reviewed literature has illustrated group counseling effectiveness for addressing school attrition, academic achievement, abusive and violent dating relationships, racial identity, and sexual abuse (Becky & Farren, 1997; Hale-Benson, 1986; Johnson & Johnson, 2005; May & Housley, 1996; Praport, 1993; Rosen & Bezold, 1996; Zinck & Littrell, 2000). In schools, group counseling is effective in assisting young people to adjust to changes in family structure and to manage aggression and stress (Lopez & Bhat, 2007; Whiston & Sexton, 1998). Zinck and Littrell (2000) stated thematic groups bring together students experiencing similar problems and allow counselors to make effective use of their time and skills (Gerrity & DeLucia-Waack, 2007). Baker’s (2001) case study of a psycho-educational group program that taught stress-prevention coping skills, found some participants had difficulty thinking about self-defeating thoughts at any time or even in a group environment. Thus, the process of thinking about the causes of stress, learning ways to cope with stress, finding out peers have similar experiences, and learning coping skills appear to create significant potential for preparing participants to use what they have learned in group counseling when confronted with life’s real sources of stressors (Baker, 2001; Pack-Brown et al., 1998; Pinkey, 1994). Gerrity and DeLucia-Waack (2007) reviewed current literature on groups in schools. From their review, the researchers discovered systematic analysis of group research are overall positive, yet majority groups use small sample sizes, studies are less likely to be repeated with the same population, and the participant’s progress is rated by self-reports. Throughout their review, studies with meta-analyses were reported to support the efficacy of group treatment, interventions in school settings, and short-term sessions and group treatments. Of the published group studies Gerrity and DeLucia-Waack (2007) reviewed, they
learned 74% of group counseling took place in schools and 60% of the studies showed behavioral and cognitive-behavioral improvement.

Johnson and Johnson (2005) evaluated a group model which focused on incorporating a cultural approach. The Empowerment Groups for Academic Success (EGAS) model highlighted the multicultural approach EGAS implemented in the group counseling process. EGAS’s approach was sensitive to circumstances impacting students living in urban settings and exhibited goals, which EGAS learned supported the participants’ individual student success. According to Johnson and Johnson (2005), all school counselors should consider using group processes to address a variety of situations. In comparison to Nicholas et al.’s (2008) coping model, group counseling is comparable to resistance, changing one’s environment. In consideration of school counselors’ daily work operations, group counseling is critical in developing a comprehensive school counseling program and therefore, is a logical, economical, and efficacious intervention to employ when servicing more students with similar needs (Gerrity & DeLucia-Waack, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005; Johnson & Johnson, 2005; Kulic, Horne, & Dagley, 2004; Sznitman, Reisel, & Romer, 2011).

Summary

Most African American female teenagers experience multiple environmental stressors that impact their development and identity. Due to estranged family circumstances, some African American females may endure transitional lifestyles and consequences of unhealthy decisions. According to reviewed research, group counseling
may be the most effective aid in increasing African American female teenagers’ awareness and healthier life style choices.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLGY

Participants and Procedure

Fifty African American female teenagers from one high school in a medium size urban school district participated in this study. Within the district, African American adolescents comprised 98% of student population (1,860) and 97% of students enrolled in the high school (Michigan Education Directory, 2010, pg 79). The following outline details how participants were informed about the study.

- Students were notified through posted flyers approved by the school and announcements made by teachers and the school counselor. The school counselor notified teachers of the opportunity for girls to participate in the research study through the school’s practiced communication method (i.e. email, person to person contact, and staff meetings) and asked teachers to convey general information about the study to girls in their classrooms recommending interested girls see the school counselor for more information. (See Appendix C for recruitment process).

- Teachers conveyed general information provided by the school counselor about the study to African American girls in their classrooms and suggested interested
girls within the age range see the school counselor for more information.

- The school counselor provided interested girls with more information about the research study and a parental form to take home to discuss with their parent.

- The school counselor requested the parental consent form be returned within two days signed by their parent for an individual pre-group interview facilitated by the researcher and school counselor. Parental consent forms were administered only to those students who expressed interest in wanting to participate in the group to their counselor. Although parental consent is needed for students under the age of 18 to participate, girls 18 and older were able to give their own consent to participate in the research study and advance to the pre-group interviewing stage. To ensure student privacy, parents were not invited to attend pre-group interviews or group sessions. (See Appendix D for parental consent forms)

- When interested girls returned their signed consent form to the counselor, the girls were invited to sign the assent form and invited to ask any questions regarding the assent form before starting the pre-group interview. The school counselor and the researcher conducted pre-group interviews at the school. Both researcher and school counselor co-facilitated all group sessions. The researcher delivered the intervention to ensure that the cultural framework was followed. To account for researcher bias the co-facilitator carefully monitored the responses of the investigator. After each session the co-facilitators met to discern problems in their responses, interaction with participants or delivery of the intervention (Johnson, 1997; Reis et al., 2005). During the interview, students were informed of the study, group’s purpose and goal, group time and location, the importance of
confidentiality, expectations and rights as a member upon participation, exceptions to confidentiality, a brief overview of the sessions’ content, and a summary of the measures.

- After the interview, girls interested in participating in the research project were invited to complete a demographic interest questionnaire and the three surveys. The demographic interest questionnaire served as a tool for collecting demographics of group members. Only individuals agreeing to participate in research were able to participate in counseling. Concluding the interview a referral list of community resources was offered to all interviewees and they were able to decide if they still wanted to participate in group counseling. After a student signed the assent/consent form, she was also notified that at any time she could discontinue her group participation without any penalties or consequences. (See Appendix E and F for consent/assent forms)

Prior to group participation, members were informed of group expectations. Group expectations consisted of respecting group members’ privacy and any disclosure group members shared within the group, as group facilitators were expected to abide by the same expectation. Confidentiality was stressed and essential for group members’ privacy and comfort. This reminder occurred several times: during the assent/consent process in the individual interview, at the first group session, and throughout later group sessions. When talking about confidentiality, the following outline was covered:

- What is said in the group stays in the group, this creates comfort and trust
- Confidentiality is a must because intense experiences may be shared
- When confidentiality is broken trust is broken and people withdraw
• If a member breaks confidentiality the group will decide on the action

Data Analysis

Group sessions were not recorded and all survey data and information was kept confidential. Students’ names were omitted from all forms and a code number was applied. The investigator kept a separate master list with the names of the students and the corresponding code numbers. Once data was collected and analyzed, the master list was destroyed. For final filing, data was transported in a locked briefcase. At the finalization of the study, all data was stored in a locked file and retained for three years on Western Michigan University campus and destroyed afterwards.

The data collected within this study does not support the normal distribution assumption. Assumptions of parametric measures do not support data collected using Likert scales with small sample populations. Paired t-tests analyses were inappropriate for this study, thus nonparametric measures were employed. The nonparametric measures used in this study were Wilcoxon signed-ranks test and Spearman’s correlation (Wilcoxon, 1945b).

Frank Wilcoxon, the initiator of research for nonparametric methods, designed statistical methods that were simple, easy to understand, and effortless to apply. His research on nonparametric practices inspired an extensive development on nonparametric methods causing a great impact in the social sciences (Bradley & Hollander, 1997). This study examined the impact awareness, self-belief, and behavior change of African American female teens caused by a structured group model exploring several
environmental factors, comparing treatment applied over a period of time (10 consecutive weeks) through a pre and post test. Wilcoxon fundamentally states “The question of experimental design is important in order to obtain the maximum information with a minimum expenditure of time and material” (p. 42), meaning the purpose of the research remains the focal point, not necessarily the extent of the research analysis and design. Wilcoxon rank signed test allows this study to rank pre and post scores of a purposive sample experiencing 10 treatment sessions to determine the impact of treatment by comparing the differences of the pre and post scores (Wilcoxon, 1945b).

In attempt to discover relationship between post tests’ scores, Spearman correlation was employed. Through a continual feud with Karl Pearson regarding correlational methods, Charles Spearman refined existing correlational methods to address and correct for measurement error (Lovie, 1997). Through his work displaying intercorrelational patterns for scores with quantifiable factors, Spearman (1904) developed the ‘rank correlation measure’, which he described as a difficult cross multiple method giving to probable error. He denotes disadvantages of the rank correlation as a method less perfect for extensive experiments; as a comparison based on an assumption that all subjects differ from one another by the same amount; and stating “…that rank affords a theoretically somewhat less full criterion of correspondence than does measurement” (p. 81).

Spearman’s conclusion of the advantages of the rank method seems, however, somewhat contradictory to his third objection. Primarily, the advantage of rank correlation measure is stated to be “the large reduction of the ‘accidental error’”
(Spearman, 1904, p. 81), which Spearman distinguishes from a normal frequency curve stating:

“in a normal frequency curve the outlying exceptional cases are much more spaced apart than are those nearer to the average; hence, any accident disturbing the position of these exceptional cases will have unduly great effect on the general result of the correlation” (p.81).

Additional advantages of the rank method are noted as eliminating disparity between two characteristics compared and allowing any two series to easily be “combined into a third composite one”, (Spearman, 1904, p. 81) which is best suited for short series “with the purpose to demonstrate some connection between two events” (p. 73).

All data collected were entered into SPSS 18 for analysis. Descriptive statistics are reported to identify mean scores and standard deviations of the pre and post-tests to determine differences between the mean variables within the sample. The reported demographics of the sample can be found in Table 1.

Research Design

The research design applied in studying the effectiveness of group counseling with African American female teenagers was a quasi-experimental design utilizing purposeful sampling. Understanding true experimental research investigates “cause and effect relationships by exposing one or more experimental groups to one or more treatment conditions and comparing the results to one or more control groups not receiving the treatment” (Isaac & Michael, 1995, pg. 56), a quasi-experiment, according
to Isaac and Michael, is a design that approximates the conditions of a true experiment in a setting where relevant variables are not controlled. This approach was chosen to investigate possible cause and effect relationships without having to implement a control group; therefore exposing four groups between the numbers of 8-14 participants equaling a total sample size of 50 to the same group intervention. The reason for choosing a sample size of 50 was based on the difficulty and lack of time to administer a group counseling intervention to a larger sample for 10 weeks. Although purposeful sampling is popular in qualitative research (Patton, 2006), purposeful sampling seems appropriate for this study for two reasons. Leary (2004) stated in a purposive sampling method the researcher is able to choose the sample based on the purpose of the study. Isaac & Michael (1995) explain the power in purposeful sampling “lies in selecting…information-rich cases…from which one can learn about issues central to the purpose of the evaluation and the needs of decision makers” (pg. 223) who may assist this population, thus allowing the group to be comprised based on referrals. This study examined a structured group counseling intervention effectiveness with African American female teenagers and the relationship between three constructs: resiliency, self-efficacy, and racial identity. Investigating the relationship between resiliency, self-efficacy, and racial identity assisted the researcher in identifying African American female teenager’s belief systems and worldviews regarding overcoming adversity, thoughts about themselves, and how their identity as African American females is impacted. This knowledge is an important gap in the literature because there are many models that can be employed to shape group counseling programs. However, models with
specified topics on race, gender, and class are limited and the curriculum used in this study can thus benefit planners of group programs.

The curriculum for this study was adapted from a Rites of Passage model piloted on Bowling Green State University’s campus that was successful with bridging the cultural gap between women of color on the campus of Bowling Green (Horton, 1998). Some topics were modified for thematic purposes to address the racial identity area of this study as it relates to African American teenage females’ experiences with being African American and being a young woman. Discussing African American females’ racial and cultural identity may assist these girls in the following ways: an increased level of cultural pride, self-esteem, and cultural awareness. The hope is that the participants may be able to understand each construct on an individual basis concerning the choices and behaviors these girls choose to engage in as African American females.

The researcher extracted from the original Rites of Passage curriculum the Nguzo Saba Principles of Kwanzaa (Horton, 1998) and used some of the same concepts such as Keeping Family Close, representing the Nguzo Saba Principle Umoja, which means unity. The researcher also changed the topics Speak Healing Words, Own Your Life, Stand Tall, and Trust in the Spirit to allow space for discussions about racism, sexism, and identified coping mechanisms. Racism, sexism, and coping mechanisms in this study are represented as The Face of Racism, The Body of Sexism, Know Thy Self, and Coping Mechanisms. The modified version of Rites of Passage curriculum used in this study assisted in the following ways: (1) focused girls on conversations about race and the role of gender; (2) how societal descriptions play out in their lives; (3) created awareness about how the girls’ choices were impacted by issues related to racism and sexism; (4)
and created opportunity for these girls to examine the healthiness, gains, and losses of their survival tactics. These changes were made to specifically address the research questions posed in this study and to help the structured group counseling intervention address racial identity, resiliency, and self-efficacy with a more targeted focus.

Harvey and Hill (2004) used a Rites of Passage model with an Africentric focus to examine the effects of an Africentric Rites of Passage program on African American youth’s resilience. These authors found a statistically significant gain in the participants’ motivation, self-esteem, and an increased racial identity and cultural awareness. Furthermore, incorporating a cultural awareness component in group counseling when working with African American adolescents appears beneficial for positive outcomes (Harvey & Hill, 2004; Lock & Faubert, 1993).

Measures

Demographic Interest Questionnaire (DIQ)

The demographic interest questionnaire was created for the sole purpose of gathering information for this study. The questionnaire addresses questions about subjects’ plans to attend college, interested major, if they are a teen parent, and if they work a job after school. The purpose of the questions was to guide group sessions pertaining to career plans and responsibilities such as being a parent and working a job while attending school. These questions asked about specific adverse circumstances some members were probably experiencing during group, which may support data collected from the surveys relative to subjects’ resiliency skills and self-efficacy. This information
was used as general statistics data in addition to grade and age for this studies analysis. A copy of the DIQ can be found in Appendix G.

The General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE)

The GSE scale is designed to assess perceived self-efficacy to predict coping skills with daily adversities and adaptation to stressful circumstances among adults and adolescents at the age of 12 and older. This scale is a 10-item paper-and-pencil test scored on a four-point Likert scale. The final score ranges from 10 to 40 points. Responses are comprised of 1 = not at all true, 2 = hardly true, 3 = moderately true, and 4 = exactly true. Examples of items on the GSE scale include “I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough” and “I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.” Each item places an emphasis on successful coping skills and implies an internal character of success. The idea of perceived self-efficacy represents, according to Schwarzer (1993), an optimistic self-belief related to behavior and the change of behavior; and assists with setting goals, resiliency, and effort investment.

GSE reliability is reported high among samples from 23 nations. The authors reported Cronbach’s alphas ranging from .76 to .90 with most results representing the upper .80s. Criterion-related validity is reported with positive coefficients for favorable emotions, optimism, and work satisfaction and negative coefficients with depression, anxiety, stress, burnout, and health complaints. The researcher contacted the authors through email for permission to use the scale in this study; a copy of the scale and email can be found in the Appendix.
Connor-Davidson Resiliency Scale (CD-RISC)

The CD-RISC is a 25-item paper-and-pencil test assessing resilience after treatment. The scale is scored on a five-point Likert scale. The total score ranges between zero and 100. Responses consist of (0) = not true at all, (1) = rarely true, (2) = sometimes true, (3) = often true, and (4) = nearly true all the time. Example items are “Good or bad, I believe that most things happen for a reason” and “I can deal with whatever comes my way.” Connor and Davidson (2003) insisted one’s ability to cope with stressful circumstances can be influenced by successful and unsuccessful adapting behaviors or ineffective protective factors, resulting in disruption of the biopsychospiritual homeostasis: balance among mind, body, and spirit.

CD-RISC is drawn on the work of four different authors to develop a valid and reliable measure for resilience for the general population as well as for clinical samples (Connor & Davidson, 2003). For example, items representing control, commitment, and change that appears challenging are taken from Kobasa’s (1979) work on hardiness while items assessing patience, the ability to endure stress or pain, and the role of faith are taken from the work of Lyons (1991) and Ernest Shackleton’s expedition experience to cross the Antarctica on the ship, Endurance (Browning, 2007). Connor and Davidson (2003) found CD-RISC demonstrates sound psychometric properties with good internal consistency and test-retest reliability. The scale’s validity is compared to other measures of stress and hardiness and was found to be positive and negatively correlated. For example, CD-RISC was positively correlated with Kobasa’s hardiness measure with a Pearson correlation of $r = 0.83$, $P < .0001$. A significant negative correlation with the Perceived Stress Scale (Pearson $r = -0.76$, $P < .001$) indicating higher levels of resilience.
with less perceived stress, the Sheehan Stress Vulnerability Scale (SVS) (Spearman $r = -0.32$, $P < .0001$), and with the Sheehan Disability Scale (SDS) (Pearson $r = -0.62$, $P < .0001$) existed. The Sheehan Social Support Scale (SSS) indicated a significant correlation with the CD-RISC (Spearman $r = 0.36$, $P < .0001$). Authors of CD-RISC did not reply to researchers request to use the scale in study; Appendix I show a copy of the scale.

Teenagers Experience of Racial Socialization Scale (TERS)

The Teenage Experience of Racial Socialization scale is a 40-item paper-and-pencil test assessing African American adolescents’ perception of how their parents discuss and implement proactive and protective socialization strategies for them to manage racism, have an appreciation for their culture, and believe in a spiritual faith. Stevenson et al. (2002) believe proactive and protective processes are necessary in understanding how African American adults believe they should provide African American adolescents healthy psychological approaches to view the world and make meaning of life events. Shorter-Gooden & Washington (1996) contend a Black racial identity for African American adolescents and adults is important to African American adolescents’ psychological development and believe African Americans racial identity has a positive relationship with their emotional well-being, which is therefore self-defined by African Americans. This scale is comprised of five subscales intended to create an understanding of African American adolescents’ beliefs about racial socialization. The authors believe African American adolescents’ understanding of racial socialization will predict their racial identity orientation. These subscales are: Cultural
Coping with Antagonism, Cultural Pride Reinforcement, Cultural Appreciation of Legacy, Cultural Awareness to Discrimination, and Cultural Endorsement of the Mainstream.

TERS is scored on a three-point Likert scale with total scores ranging between 40 and 120. The response format was changed from a five-point Likert scale to a three-point frequency format (1 = never, 2 = a few times, and 3 = lots of times) to target specific goals, such as increase reliability of measuring racial socialization conversations and interactions, understand family socialization interactions from adolescent’s perspective, and capture the frequency of racial socialization conversations instead of relying on yes or no answers (Stevenson et al., 2002). An example of an item on TERS is “Racism is not as bad today as it use to be in the 1960s.” Cronbach’s alpha for the scale’s factor reliability (subscales) was reported .91. Reliability for most factors were moderate and above an alpha of .71; however, correlations between the TERS factors were both significant and non-significant ranging from (r is -.13 to .64). Authors of the TERS granted permission for this researcher to use the scale in this study through email; a copy of the TERS measure and the email can be found in the Appendix.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Results of this study indicated that a structured group counseling method can be effective for educating and creating awareness for young African American females. The model used was especially effective for females who expressed having experienced racism, sexism, and some form of classism, due to their parents’ socio-economic and racial status. The following will describe the demographics of the study by examining responses to the demographic interest questionnaire and the study’s research questions.

Participants’ Demographic Interest Questionnaire Results

Demographic information from the demographic interest questionnaire representing sample ($N = 50$) are located in Table 1. The largest percentage of participants (28%) within the study was 17-year old girls. Among group members, twelfth (34%) graders were the majority. Ninety-six percent of the group self-identified as African American or Black.
Table 1

Demographic Description of Sample (N=50)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptors</th>
<th>(%)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American / Black</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bi-racial</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninth</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenth</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleventh</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twelfth</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The concluding questions of the Demographic Interest Questionnaire shown in Table 2, represents values and previous experiences of the respondents. Half of the total group (50%) indicated plans to attend college after high school. This half of the sample (50%) specified a college major; however, only 40% listed a college or university they planned to attend after graduating from high school. Ninety-four percent of the study was unemployed; 42% learned about the group through the school counselor; 56% were not currently under a physician’s care and 54% was currently not taking medication. Only 2% of the total group identified as being a teen parent. Less than half of the participants (42%) had no experience in individual counseling and more than half (60%) had no experience in group counseling.
Table 2

Values and Previous Experiences from DIQ of Sample (N=50)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Specified/n</th>
<th>Non-Specified/n</th>
<th>Unknown/n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you have plans to go to college?</td>
<td>50% 25</td>
<td>50% 25</td>
<td>0% 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What would you like to major in?</td>
<td>50% 25</td>
<td>42% 21</td>
<td>8% 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What college do you plan on attending?</td>
<td>40% 20</td>
<td>44% 22</td>
<td>16% 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Non-Specified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are you currently working?</td>
<td>6%  3</td>
<td>94% 47</td>
<td>0% 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many hours do you work? (20 – 30 hours listed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you currently under a physician’s care?</td>
<td>8%  4</td>
<td>56% 28</td>
<td>36% 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you currently on medication?</td>
<td>10% 5</td>
<td>54% 27</td>
<td>36% 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have children?</td>
<td>2%  1</td>
<td>98% 49</td>
<td>0% 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you received counseling before?</td>
<td>22% 11</td>
<td>42% 21</td>
<td>36% 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you received group counseling before?</td>
<td>4%  2</td>
<td>60% 30</td>
<td>36% 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How did you hear about this group?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Flyer (18% 9)</th>
<th>Sch. Counselor (42% 21)</th>
<th>Teacher (0% 0)</th>
<th>Other (8% 4)</th>
<th>Non-Specified (32% 16)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Statistical Results

Research Question 1

Does a structured group counseling model have a positive impact on African American female teenagers’ resiliency?

Wilcoxon signed-ranks test analysis was used to examine the impact of a structured group counseling model on African American female teenagers’ resiliency pre
and post-tests scores. Table 3 shows of the 50 participants, 38 participants ranked positive. Results of the ranks test indicated post scores increased with a mean score of 99.6 (See Table 8 for post scores). The alternative hypothesis is directional; therefore, the one-tailed p-value (less than 0.05) was chosen for statistical analysis. The two-tailed p-value is non-directional and signifies whether the scores are better or worse. The one-tailed p-value for CD-RISC display an expectancy of the post-values increasing, with a Z value of -2.439 (See Table 7 for z-values).

Table 3

Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Results (CD-RISC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CDRISCPOST - CDRISCPRE</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Sum of Ranks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative Ranks</td>
<td>12d</td>
<td>32.08</td>
<td>385.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Ranks</td>
<td>38c</td>
<td>23.42</td>
<td>890.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ties</td>
<td>0f</td>
<td>23.42</td>
<td>890.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 2

Does a structured group counseling model have a positive impact on African American female teenagers’ self-efficacy?

Wilcoxon signed-ranks test analysis was also used to examine the impact of a structured group counseling model on African American female teenagers’ self-efficacy pre and post-tests scores. Results of the ranks test in table 4 also show a higher value in positive ranks than negative ranks but show tied results for 8 of the participants. The one-tailed p-value for GSE indicate the expectancy of post values increasing (Z value = -
The Wilcoxon signed ranked test statistics show a 2 point increase in mean pre and post-scores (See Table 8).

**Table 4**

*Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Results (GSE)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Sum of Ranks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GSEPOST - GSEPRE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Ranks</td>
<td>8a</td>
<td>15.38</td>
<td>123.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Ranks</td>
<td>34b</td>
<td>22.94</td>
<td>780.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ties</td>
<td>8c</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 3

Does a structured group counseling model have a positive impact on African American female teenagers’ racial identity?

Wilcoxon signed-ranks test analysis was again used to examine the effect of a structured group counseling model on African American female teenagers’ racial identity pre and post-tests scores. Results of the ranks in table 5 also show a higher value in positive ranks just as the CD-RISC and GSE tests. According to table 8 participants’ post-test scores increased by 5 points with a mean score of 97.2. The one-tailed p-value also indicate the expectancy of post-scores increasing for the TERS test ($Z = -3.429$).
Table 5

Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Results (TERS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERSPOST – TERSPRE</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Sum of Ranks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative Ranks</td>
<td>$11^g$</td>
<td>23.09</td>
<td>254.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Ranks</td>
<td>$37^h$</td>
<td>24.92</td>
<td>922.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ties</td>
<td>$2^i$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 4

Does a positive relationship exist between resiliency, self-efficacy, and racial identity among African American female teenagers?

Spearman’s correlation was used to examine the relationship between resiliency, self-efficacy, and racial identity among African American female teenagers’ post-tests scores. Results indicated participants’ CD-RISC and GSE post-tests scores have a high correlation coefficient value of .681 and a one-tailed p value of .000. African American female teenagers’ in this study resiliency and self-efficacy post-scores exemplify a significant relationship. The test statistics also show a relationship between CD-RISC and TERS post-test scores, which may be due to chance with a correlation coefficient value of -.097; however, the relationship is not significant (p value = .251). The correlation coefficient for GSE and TERS (.005) is significantly low and therefore indicates no relationship between post-tests scores (See Table 6).
TERS Racial Identity Scale Results

The TERS responses of both girls who self-identified as bi-racial believed, according to the rating scale: A Few Times = 2: (Question 2) Black children will feel better about themselves if they go to a school with mostly White children; (Question 13) Black children will learn more if they go to a mostly White school; (Question 15) Racism is real, and you have to understand it or it will hurt you; (Question 35) A Black child or teenager will be harassed just because s/he is Black. Both girls also believed Lots of Times = 3: (Question 4) Black slavery is important never to forget and (Question 16) You are connected to a history that goes back to African royalty. Initially, one respondent circled (2 = a few times) and the other respondent circled (1 = never) pertaining to their beliefs of themselves being connected to a history that goes back to African royalty. Apparently, both girls struggled with responding to this statement during their pre-test experience.
### Table 6

**Spearman Correlations Statistics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N = 50</th>
<th>TERSPOST</th>
<th>CDRISCPOST</th>
<th>GSEPOST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spearman's rho</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TERSPOST</td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>-.097</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (1-tailed)</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.251</td>
<td>.486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.502</td>
<td>.971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDRISCPOST</td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>-.097</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.681**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (1-tailed)</td>
<td>.251</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.502</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSEPOST</td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.681**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (1-tailed)</td>
<td>.486</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.971</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 7

**Test Statistics\(^b\)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GSEPOST - GSEPRE</th>
<th>CDRISCPOST - CDRISCPRE</th>
<th>TERSPOST – TERSPRE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>-4.117(^a)</td>
<td>-2.439(^a)</td>
<td>-3.429(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exact Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exact Sig. (1-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point Probability</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Based on negative ranks.

\(^b\) Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test
Table 8

Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>

Noticeably, both respondents answers were erased or scratched out to reflect (3=Lots of Times) as their final answer); (Question 18) Schools should be required to teach all children about Black history; (Question 33) Never be ashamed of your color; (Question 34) Whites have more opportunities than Blacks; (Question 37) Black children should be taught early that God can protect them from racial hatred. Lastly, both respondents believed (Never = 1) that (Question 26) “You should know about Black history so that you will be a better person.”

The post-test for one of the respondents remained consistent; however, the second respondent differed in a few of her responses. Instead of circling (A Few Times = 2) “Black children will feel better about themselves if they go to a school with mostly White children”, she now believed (Never = 1). Her earlier response to number 37 (Lots of Times = 3) “Black children should be taught early that God can protect them from racial hatred”, changed to (A Few Times = 2). This respondent also struggled with responding to number 16, “You are connected to a history that goes back to African royalty.” The respondent erased her answers between (2 = A Few Times) and (3 = Lots of Times). This
young lady also demonstrated confusion with answering number 26: “You should know about Black history so you will be a better person.” Originally, she marked (2 = A Few Times) but finally marked (3 = Lots of the Time) and drew an arrow to signal (3) as the response she wanted to uphold.

When comparing the two respondents to the 48 respondents’ survey answers, at least half of the 48 participants or more agreed (A Few Times = 2) (Question 13) “Black children will learn more if they go to a mostly White school”; and (Question 35) “A Black child or teenager will be harassed just because s/he is Black.” More than half of the 48 participants also believed (Lots of Times = 3) (Question 4) “Black slavery is important never to forget”; (Question 16) “You are connected to a history that goes back to African royalty”; (Question 18) “Schools should be required to teach all children about Black history”; (Question 33) “Never be ashamed of your color”; and (Question 37) “Black children should be taught early that God can protect them from racial hatred.”

The 48 participants’ differed in their responses in comparison to the bi-racial respondents with questions 2, 15, 34, and 26. More than half of the 48 participants believed (Never = 1) (Question 2) “Black children will feel better about themselves if they go to a school with mostly White children”; and (Lots of Times = 3) (Question 26) “You should know about Black history so that you will be a better person.” Most of the 48 African American respondents also believed (Lots of Times = 3) (Question 15) “Racism is real, and you have to understand it or it will hurt you”; and (A Few Times = 2) (Question 34) “Whites have more opportunities than Blacks.”

Based on survey results, all 50 girls exhibited Black pride and a significant level of racial socialization as teenagers. One may conclude conversations about race have
taken place within their life. Whether the conversations have taken place within the home, school, or community (such as church) is unknown. One may also gather from these results that these African American female teenagers believe they may learn more if they attend a mostly White school because of the disparity of resources amongst predominantly White and Black schools in the area they live in. Therefore, it seems safe to conclude that these African American students are aware that one may obtain a good education with sufficient resources and that educational disparities are a factor within their educational system.

The table below illustrates the bi-racial respondents, identified by their code number, answers to questions 9, 10, and 14 on the TERS measuring tool. The questions were specifically chosen to indicate the participants’ operating racial identity in comparison to the 48 self-identified African American respondents. Instead of identifying each individual participant, the African American responses are indicated by the total number of participants answering alike.
## Table 9

Respondents’ TERS Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions Compared</th>
<th>Respondents (n=50)</th>
<th>Pre-Test Results</th>
<th>Post-Test Results</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>A Few</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q 9. You should be proud to be Black.</td>
<td>Bi-racial Respondents</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African American Respondents</td>
<td>N = 2</td>
<td>N = 46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 10. All races are equal.</td>
<td>Bi-racial Respondents</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African American Respondents</td>
<td>N = 20</td>
<td>N = 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 14. Knowing your African heritage is important for your survival.</td>
<td>Bi-racial Respondents</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African American Respondents</td>
<td>N = 9</td>
<td>N = 17</td>
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</table>

### Summary

Data results of 50 female participants in grades nine – 12 living in West Michigan were presented in this chapter. The samples’ pre and post-tests scores of the Connor-Davidson Resiliency, General Self-Efficacy, and Teenagers Experience of Racial Socialization scales were analyzed. The post-scores were examined for relationship. Also, the Teenagers Experience of Racial Socialization Scale was interpreted for comparison results between female teenagers who identified as African American and bi-racial.
Results of the data concluded: post-scores of each scale increased after participants experienced the 10 week group counseling model denoting group counseling was effective. A significant relationship between GSE and CD-RISC post-scores was found, which demonstrates participants’ self-efficacy and resiliency skills are correlated. A relationship between CD-RISC and TERS post-scores was shown but significance was not found; therefore, the relationship might be due to error. This finding indicates participants’ resiliency skills and racial identity are at some point connected as well. No other significant relationships were discovered.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 5 discusses limitations and delimitations of this study. Noteworthy findings and the researcher’s observations are also stated. Concluding the chapter are implications for counselor educators, school counselors, and group facilitators/clinicians. Recommendations for future research can also be found in this chapter.

Limitations

Fifty African American female teenagers were targeted for this study. Two participants in this study, however, self-identified as bi-racial. As a result, this study is limited to representing 48 self-identified African American female teenagers and two females who identified as bi-racial. Both bi-racial individuals reported experiencing racism due to their skin color; therefore, the students were included in this study. The small number of African American teenage girls sampled also limits this study. As well, the study did not code for socio-economic status (SES) among the participants; therefore, one may not assume that all participants were from a lower socio-economic status background limits this study. One should use caution when generalizing the findings of this study to all African American female teenagers and to female teenagers who identify as bi-racial.
Delimitations

There are a few delimitations that may have impacted the results of this study. The delimitations noted may support recommendations for future research. The first delimitation discussed is the length of sessions. The second delimitation is the structural arrangement of group sessions. The third delimitation is related to the assumptions behind missing data and the structure of participants’ households.

Length of Sessions

Each session was one hour and 30 minutes. During the 10 week group counseling intervention, some sessions were facilitated at a fast pace. Many group members complained group sessions were too short and requested more time to discuss issues pertinent to their current situations. For the facilitators, addressing each topic and completing each activity was the initial priority. However, during moments when group members shared intense experiences, most of the discussion time focused on exploring the individual’s experience and allowed additional sharing of personal and relative stories from other group members. In these instances, reflection on the topic and meditation time was lost. Based on the facilitator’s observations, instructing the girls to reflect on the session’s topic and group’s discussion while meditating appeared beneficial for the teens to make a connection with their previous awareness and the teaching for that session. When some of the girls were unable to share their personal stories because the previous stories were lengthy or their stories were tangential to the session’s topic, group members became unsettled. During these moments, the facilitators reminded the group about the
importance of the session topics and the purpose of this particular group. Facilitators also suggested the girls write about their thoughts and feelings in their journals. Upon request, the facilitators read the journals and provided written feedback. When the atmosphere felt comfortable and trustworthy group members were supportive, open, and committed. As group neared the end, group members protested about having group for only 10 weeks and requested more sessions. After the facilitators reminded the group again of the group’s purpose and began preparing for group counseling termination, group members started coming late to sessions and disconnecting from the group experience.

Structural Arrangement

Though some sessions did not allow members to engage in extensive discussion, group sessions became tense because members wanted to discuss pressing issues outside of group topics. For example, one member wanted to talk about an argument she had with a friend before coming to group. On a few occasions, some members were restless or agitated with discussion because other concerns were more current and immediate. Two members at different times asked if the group could discuss current issues on their minds instead of the scheduled topic for the day. During those moments, the group facilitators, again, recommended participants to journal about their pressing thoughts and written feedback would be provided upon request. This approach was exercised for three reasons: to maintain group focus during discussions, to ensure group members’ group fulfillment by addressing pressing concerns on a one-on-one basis, and to encourage a self-initiated intervention. In the case when a personal experience was shared and the facilitator(s)
believed the experience would benefit the entire group, the group member was asked to share the experience during the next session.

Assumptions Behind Missing Data

Another delimitation, which challenges the reliability of the data, is respondents not answering each question. For a few respondents, the last four to five statements on the TERS survey were unanswered. The assumption maintained by the facilitators is participants became restless with the surveys and wanted to be done. Missing data was computed in this study by mean imputation (Little & Rubin, 2002).

A final delimitation represents the unknown household structure of the participants. Incorporating a question on the DIQ asking with whom the participants live with and the SES of the household may potentially add to group discussion and create a deeper connection to discussion topics. Having knowledge about whether the participants live in a single-mother headed household or a two-parent headed household may potentially explain many characteristics and worldviews of the participants. If this study is to be replicated, the previous mentioned delimitations should be considered and a question inquiring about the household structure of group members should be added to the DIQ.

Findings

Within this study, structure appeared lacking within the participants’ lives. The young ladies observed appeared hungry for direction and knowledge. It was apparent that
some of the participants were making or had made some unhealthy decisions and were fully aware that their choices were detrimental to their emotional, social, and personal stability and growth. Yet, the participants presented as needing nurture and corrective attention. Case in point: group discussions mostly dealt with issues resulting from parental and peer concerns that were unaddressed and unresolved, which included but not limited to parental absence in their life, miscommunication, feeling misunderstood by teachers and peers, parental control over their decisions, and parents’ substance abuse life styles. As sensitive as these topics are, group members sighed with frustration, allowed noises in the hallway to distract them, and sometimes just looked at the facilitators with empty facial expressions, as if they understood nothing the facilitators had to say.

Demographic Interest Questionnaire

Two participants identified as bi-racial. These girls were not excluded from participating in the study due to having experienced some form of racism. For example, both girls participated in discussion on ‘being watched when purchasing from a convenience store. Of the participants who specified plans to attend college, a college major, and which university they planned to attend on the DIQ, these girls appeared more focused, involved, and ambitious during group counseling. These participants also performed leadership roles during group counseling such as clarifying a discussion point when other members seemed confused, they demonstrated complete comfort when sharing their personal stories, and encouraged other members to be present and on time for group. Although a small percentage of girls worked after school jobs, some were also in extracurricular activities. Based on the percentage of participants who were under a
physician’s care, some girls admitted they were currently seeing a community counselor or had seen an outside counselor in the past for family concerns. The small percentage of participants who noted they were taking medication listed birth control and medication for depression or anxiety. The amount of non-specified or unknown answers found on the DIQ was alarming and caused the researcher to question if the girls were either hesitant to answer honestly, unsure about what to write, or simply rushed through the questionnaire to finish quickly. Nonetheless, the DIQ assisted the group facilitators with group discussions on: ‘Coping Mechanisms’, ‘Commit to Excellence’, and ‘Know Thy Self’. See Appendix for detailed description of sessions’ themes and objectives.

Implications for Helping Professionals

Counselor Educators

Counselor educators and supervisors, according to American Counseling Association (ACA) (2005), are responsible for the adequate and competent training of all counselors. Counselor educators who are culturally sensitive and competent of various cultures and racial circumstances can adequately train counselors in training to work with individuals from culturally different backgrounds (Leonard, 1996; Pieterse, 2009; Smith, 2005). To ensure counseling education programs are producing culturally intentional ethical and competent counselors, departments must commit to recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty and student body (ACA, 2005, F.11.a & b). Faculty with persons who have research interests in different populations can provide students with the opportunity to learn about cultural issues and ethnic populations integrated in existing courses.
Additionally, counselor educators are responsible for providing students with opportunities that extend self-growth experiences (ACA, 2005, F.7.b); therefore, multicultural/diversity competencies and must be infused in all courses, training, and supervision practices (F.6.b & F.11.c); and practicum and internship sites must expose counselors in training to a wide range of cultures under competent supervision (Lassiter, Napolitano, Culbreth, Ng, 2008).

School Counselors

Specific implications concerning school counselors working with African American female teenagers, training, cultural sensitivity and competencies are warranted and discussed in the following paragraphs. Based on formulated groups targeting African American students, school counselors/clinicians/ or group facilitators may want to consider focusing group counseling on creating awareness and a sense of belonging for young African American girls. A structured group counseling method targeting African American female teenagers’ resiliency skills, self-efficacy, and racial identity development must be goal oriented and allows time for facilitators to locate group member’s pre and post topic discussions and activities. Reis et al. (2005), indicate that small group discussions also focused on reducing risks of maladjustment and strengthening factors that enhance positive outcomes can serve as a “mediating mechanism for remaining on an appropriate developmental trajectory to realize their high potential and achieve their goals” (pg. 118). Considering the reality that 30% - 40% of most school counselors’ time is not, but must be, allocated to responsive services including group counseling, individual counseling, crisis counseling, peer facilitation,
consultation, and referrals, urban school counselors have to become creative with the usage of their time (ASCA, 2005). For example, in the event where conducting group counseling for 30 minutes to an hour is impossible, school counselors are encouraged to gauge students’ developmental needs and incorporate a classroom guidance lesson that help students connect the impact of what they do in and outside of school to their later life (Reis et al., 2005).

School counselors, who work with African American students mostly impacted by adverse situations and circumstances due to impoverished living conditions, should consider additional training or supervision to adequately advocate and serve these populations’ needs skillfully and culturally (Dixon, Tucker, & Clark, 2010). Sutton and Page (1994) stated how many school counselors desire supervision for personal and professional development, to meet state requirements, for support, and to improve on their skills and diagnosis, but much of supervision post degree is not taking place (Borders & Usher, 1992; Page, Dale, & Sutton, 2001). Although, small numbers of school counselors are receiving supervision by guidance directors, peer school counselors who have longevity in the field, licensed professional counselors, or counselor educators (Page et al., 2001); therefore, school counselors are encouraged to initiate their own clinical supervision by seeking credentialed individuals for support.

Group Facilitators/Clinicians

School counselors, group facilitators, and clinicians who are culturally sensitive and multi-culturally competent will effectively work with students from different cultural backgrounds (Constantine, Donnelly, & Myers, 2002). One important aspect of the
African American community helping professionals should consider concerning their cultural sensitivity and competence, when working with African American adolescents in groups, is spirituality. Most African American children will often times seek comfort and guidance through their spiritual rituals or belief systems because it creates hope, freedom, support and peace for them (Moore-Thomas & Day-Vines, 2008; Constantine et al., 2002). Therefore, acknowledging student’s religious and spiritual beliefs during group counseling can be helpful and used as a tool for guidance.

As group facilitators and other helping professionals acknowledge multicultural needs and or issues with African American students in group counseling settings, Liu and Clay (2002) provide five guidelines to consider using when working with students of color. The guidelines are: 1) Evaluate relevant cultural aspects. 2) Determine the level of skills and information necessary for competent treatment and or referral. 3) Determine how much, when, and how to incorporate cultural issues. 4) Examine potential treatments and understand their cultural assumptions. 5) Implement the treatment using cultural strengths (pg. 179).

Recommendation for Future Research

If this study is to be replicated, the length of sessions should be extended to allow for more discussion and exploration time. In the event where a location within the community is unavailable, after school hours do work best for students who are not involved in many extracurricular activities. Though transportation for students after school is a factor, group programmers or group counselors should consider potentially
providing transportation as a possible incentive for favorable attendance. In the case where school counselors are interested in applying this structured group counseling method, consider alternating group counseling days to prevent pulling participants from the same classes on a weekly basis. Facilitators are also recommended to administer a formative assessment midway of group counseling or a rating survey at the end of each session to determine the group’s impact on participants’ development. Any form of assessment will allow for group facilitators to better gauge group activities and discussions to therefore ensure a successful growth experience for participants.

Future research might also focus on exploring how African American female teenagers’ resiliency and self-efficacy skills serve them as a benefit as well as a hindrance based on the unfavorable circumstances African American female teenagers face. Conducting a study on racial identity with teenage girls who identify as bi-racial may benefit school counselors to meet the needs of this population as well, considering the possibility that bi-racial students may experience psychological and behavioral issues due to conflicting cultural demands (Moss & Davis, 2008). Based on the pre and post scores of the two participants who identified as bi-racial in this study, a group intervention may benefit this population’s evolving or stunted racial identity and create a better understanding on their choice to either connect or disconnect from their Black heritage. However, according to Root’s (1994) Bill of Rights for People of Mixed Heritage, biracial individuals have the right to identify themselves differently in different situations and change their identity more than once over time. Since research is beginning to acknowledge the growing number of bi-racial students with psychological and behavioral problems and the struggles bi-racial students endure concerning their racial identity,
school counselors and other helping professionals could assist with specific strategies and interventions to apply when working with these students (Moss & Davis, 2008). Such research might also encourage more outreach toward this population as it concerns their self-identity development.

Knowing the household structures of young girls is vital to understanding their worldviews concerning the choices these girls make, whether healthy or not, regardless to how female teenagers self-identify. As research shows, one’s immediate family serves as one’s ‘safe haven’ from outsiders (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Bankston & Caldas, 1998; Boveja, 1998; Giordano et al., 1993; Krohn & Bogan, 2001; Powell, 2008). When the family stops operating as a protective barrier from the world and begins to malfunction, children look outside the family for love, belonging, and identity (Davis, 2006; Giordano et al., 1993; Heard, 2007; Hunter & Ensminger, 1992; James, 2009; McLoyd, 1990; Powell, 2008). Although group counseling offers group members the opportunity to be successful, group processes do have their limitations. Effective group counseling should be intentionally designed to leave participants with a transforming experience that continues outside of group due to the work of educating, creating awareness, and starting the beginning process of becoming emotionally, socially, and mentally balanced during the group process.
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Appendix A

Activities and Timeline

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<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3 - 12</th>
<th>Week 13 - 20</th>
<th>Week 21 - 25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Appendix B

School Letter of Consent

To: Muskegon Heights High School, Muskegon, MI
Re: Implementation of a Group Intervention for African American Females

Greetings Muskegon Heights High School Administration,

As a service to your students and support for my dissertation, I request your permission to conduct structured group counseling with your African American female students. My study investigates The Effectiveness of Structured Group Counseling on Resiliency, Self-Efficacy, and Racial Identity among African American Female Teenagers. This intervention will target female students between the ages 15 and 19 with a primary focus on juniors and seniors.

The intent of this study is to investigate African American female teenagers’ reactions to group counseling; the impact of group counseling on their resiliency, self-efficacy, and racial identity; and to discover more successful interventions to employ when working with African American female teens. The group’s goal is threefold: to discuss African American female teenagers’ identity as an African American and female; to discuss experiences of racism, sexism, and classism; and to become aware of developed coping mechanisms that may or may not be helpful for African American female teens managing their experiences of oppression and making healthy decisions.

According to research, group counseling is an effective intervention for African American teenage girls struggling with personal, social, academic, and career developmental issues that affect their identity, self-esteem, and motivation. Small group interactions have been proven by experimental research to contribute to ego identity development in African American youth. Research also state African American adolescents prioritize non-academic life responsibilities over academic responsibilities. Therefore, I hope you share my sentiment regarding the necessary work needed with African American females and support my work with your students upon parental consent, at Muskegon Heights High School.

Group participants will be chosen based on teacher, school counselor and self-referral as I will work with your guidance and counseling department to pre-screen group members. Group will take place after school once a week for a total of 10 weeks for 1.5 hours. All group members will be expected to complete an interest questionnaire, a one-on-one interview with myself, consent form, and three surveys during three different
intervals. I look forward to working with Muskegon Heights High School administration and making an impact on the African American female student population.

Yours in Education,

LaShonda B. Fuller, M.Ed., LSC, LLPC
Doctoral Candidate in Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology
Western Michigan University
Appendix C

Counselor’s Recruitment Script

Counselor Script to Teachers:
“A research study for all African American girls between the ages of 14-19 will be starting soon for the first 60 girls who sign up and will focus on African American girls’ life experiences and ways African American girls cope with issues in their life. Please inform the girls in your classes if they are interested in learning more about the group and fall within the age range see me for more information. Thank you.”

Teachers Script to Female Students:
“The counseling office is starting a group for all African American girls between the ages of 14 and 19 soon for the first 60 girls who sign up. The group is a research study that will talk about African American girls’ life experiences and how they cope with issues in their life. To learn more about the study see Mrs. Dye in the counseling office.”

Counselor Script to interested Female Students:
“There’s a group starting soon that is a research study on African American girls experiences as a black female and how your experiences may relate to racism, sexism, and classism. (African American and black are used interchangeably) The groups will talk about ways African American females deal with life issues and if the way you deal with situations are helpful for you when solving problems. If you are interested in participating, you will need a parental form to take home and talk over with your parents.
In order to participate you have to bring the form back signed by your parent or guardian 2 days after you receive the form. Once you bring the form back, you will meet with the researcher, the lady who is doing the research and will facilitate the group with me. During the meeting we will go over group expectations, group topics, and activities you can expect to take place in group.”

**Counselor/Researcher Script to Potential Group Members:**

“Thank you for showing interest in this research study. As you already know, this is a study that will focus on how African American girls experience and deal with being a black female, how they have experienced racism (being discriminated against because of their race), sexism (being discriminated against because of their gender), and classism (being discriminated against because of how much money their parent’s make). The purpose of this group is to find out if group counseling help African American females change how they cope with situations in their life, how they look at themselves, and what they believe about themselves. The group will last for 10 weeks and all sessions will take place here at the high school, after school. Each session will last for one hour and 30 minutes. Because we will talk about some personal experiences that may be hard for some people to talk about at first, confidentiality is a must. That means respecting people’s privacy, what we talk about in group stays in group. Therefore, once you leave group we expect that you will not discuss, even with group members, especially around non-group members what was talked about in group. Maintaining privacy is a must and can cause for people to not share and feel uncomfortable and therefore leave group if they cannot trust group members. Do you understand what confidentiality means and how important it is as a member? During group we will also talk about ways African
American females deal with life issues and how successful they are with solving problems by talking about family, relationships, spirituality or religion, your career goals, and more importantly your thoughts and beliefs about yourself. In many of our sessions, we will do activities; participate in devotions, which will consist of readings from a devotional book or poems, and meditations, which will consist of quietly reflecting on some situations we may discuss. It is possible that some of these activities and discussions may cause you feelings of discomfort or distress because we will be talking about sensitive topics like racism, sexism, and classism. For example, we may discuss words that may make you uncomfortable or upset like racial slurs like nigger, words that are used to degrade females like bitch, and words used to hurt people like stupid. You will always be able to choose whether or not you want to participate in the activities and discussions. If for whatever reason a session is too emotional for you and you want to be excused from that session, it will be okay and you being excused will not count as an absence. If at any time you feel emotional, your school counselor and I are trained counselors and we are prepared to provide crisis counseling if needed. As a group member you will be expected to attend each session, with only two absences excused. If you have other situations and circumstances after your two missed sessions and you still would like to participate in group, we ask that you inform us ahead of time so the group can be informed that you are not just missing group. Again we expect that you will respect individuals’ privacy and that you take the experience serious. Do you have any questions so far? If during session you share that you are being abused sexually or physically, as licensed counselors we are required by law to report that information to child protective services or we could lose our jobs if something happens to you and we
knew about it. If you have dealt with abuse in the past or even know of someone who has please take this referral list for outside help. You will not be dismissed from group; in fact we hope that all members will be able to create a support system with one another for whatever situations girls may find themselves in where a counselor may not be readily accessible to discuss issues. Do you have any questions before we go further? Here is the demographic interest questionnaire and the surveys you will have to complete now. You will have to complete the last set of surveys at the end of our last session. This concludes our interview; do you have any questions for us regarding the information shared with you, the forms, or anything?”
Appendix D

Parental Consent Form

Western Michigan University
Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology

Principal Investigator: Joseph R. Morris, Ph.D.
Student Investigator: LaShonda B. Fuller, M.Ed., LSC, LLPC
Title of Study: The Effectiveness of Structured Group Counseling on Resiliency, Self-Efficacy, and Racial Identity among African American Female Teenagers

Your daughter has been invited to participate in a research project entitled "The Effectiveness of Structured Group Counseling on Resiliency, Self-Efficacy, and Racial Identity among African American Female Teenagers." This project will serve as LaShonda Fuller’s dissertation for the requirements of the doctorate degree. This consent document will explain the purpose of this project and will go over all of the time commitments, the procedures used in the study, and the risks and benefits of participating in this research project. Please read this consent form carefully and completely and please ask any questions if you need more clarification.

What are we trying to find out in this study?
The purpose of this group is to find out if group counseling has a positive influence on how African American female teenagers cope with problems in their life, what they believe about their self, and their self-identity.

Who can participate in this study?
All African American girls between the ages of 14 – 19 can participate in this study.

Where will this study take place?
This study will take place at the high school, after school in a private location.

What is the time commitment for participating in this study?
The time commitment for participating in group counseling is 10 consecutive weeks, with the exception of days off from school (i.e. holidays and breaks). Each session will last for
one hour and 30 minutes. Before starting group, you will be asked to complete three (3) surveys that will take close to 30 minutes to complete. You will be asked to fill out the same three (3) surveys two more times: at the beginning of our first group session and at the end of our last group session.

You will also be asked to fill out one (1) questionnaire before participating in the group counseling session one (1) time, which will take less than five (10) minutes.

The total time commitment for participating in the study is expected to be 20 hours at most.

**What will your daughter be asked to do if you allow her to participate in this study?**

Your daughter will be asked to meet individually with Ms. Fuller and her school counselor to review her assent form and ask questions. If she chooses to participate in the study, she will be asked to fill out a paper-and-pencil questionnaire that will ask questions about her college plans, interested major, if she is a parent and work a job. This may take her 10 minutes to complete.

She will be asked to complete three paper-and-pencil surveys (The General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE), The Connor-Davidson Resiliency Scale (CD-RISC), and The Teenagers Experience of Racial Socialization Scale (TERS)) three different times: at the end of her first interview meeting with Ms. Fuller and Mrs. Dye, at the beginning of the first group session, and at the end of the last group session. It will take close to 30 minutes for her to fill out the surveys each time.

She will also be asked to participate in 10 group counseling sessions led by Ms. Fuller and Mrs. Dye with 12 other African American female students from her school. During group sessions, she will be asked to participate in discussions, respect and listen to others, think about her own situations, and participate in homework activities such as journaling and research. During group we will talk about ways African American females deal with life issues and how successful they are with solving problems by talking about family, relationships, spirituality or religion, career goals, and their thoughts and beliefs about themselves.

These group counseling sessions follow a format designed by Ms. Fuller that is based on a previously used group counseling model. Session topics include The Face of Racism,
Guard Your Mind, The Body of Sexism, Commit to Excellence, Know Thy Self, Coping Mechanisms, Keep Family Close, Pass the Lessons On, and Be Good to Yourself. Group activities will include devotion, (reading from a book of affirmations or poems), meditation (quietly reflecting on topics talked about), and arts and crafts. She may choose not to participate in any activity.

Your daughter will be asked to respect the privacy of other group members. Maintaining privacy is a must. She will be asked to avoid talking about what other people share within group outside of group. So everyone can feel safe, what is said in group stays in group.

She will also be asked to attend each group counseling session. She will only be able to miss two sessions. It is her responsibility to inform Ms. Fuller or Mrs. Dye when she will be absent and why. If she miss two sessions and still want to participate, the group will have to decide.

**What information is being measured during the study?**
How your daughter cope with situations, her beliefs about her ability to accomplish her goals, and her beliefs about herself will be gathered from the surveys she completes. During her participation in group, the information discussed will focus on her experiences as an African American, her experiences as a female teenager, her experiences with racism (being discriminated against because of her race), her experiences with sexism (being discriminated against because of her gender), and how she copes with life experiences overall for example, spirituality/religion. If she believes she has never experienced racism or sexism, she can still participate in group counseling.

**What are the risks of participating in this study and how will these risks be minimized?**
A risk of your daughter participating in this study may include her recalling past experiences which may have been difficult to share before and becoming emotionally upset (crying, angry, or sad) about something that took place or is taking place. After sharing an intense experience she may feel like she cannot trust group members. These risks will be minimized by the facilitators constantly reminding the group why trust and maintaining confidentiality is important throughout group sessions, so she can feel safe. If she become emotionally upset about a past or current situation, the facilitators may recommend that she seek individual counseling with an outside counselor. A list of community resources will be made available to her at her interview.

Another potential risk of participation is feeling emotionally upset (crying, angry, or sad) about topics, activities, or discussions that take place in group sessions. We will be
talking about and completing activities about sensitive topics like racism and sexism. This risk will be managed by giving her the opportunity to excuse herself from group or talk about her experience. For her security, Ms. Fuller and Mrs. Dye are trained professional counselors and will be available to listen and talk with her.

Another potential risk of participation is other group members talking about what was shared in group, including information she may share during a group session. This risk will be minimized by the group facilitators reminding the group to keep what is shared in group sessions confidential. All participants in the group will be asked to maintain confidentiality, to sign a consent or assent form indicating that they agree to keep information shared in group private, and given frequent reminders.

Limits to Confidentiality: Other group members will be asked to maintain confidentiality but I cannot guarantee they will do so. Under Michigan law, the privilege of confidentiality does not extend to information about sexual or physical abuse of a child or elder. If any member of the research team has or is given such information, he or she is required to report it to the authorities. The obligation to report included alleged or reasonably suspected abuse as well as known abuse such as molestation, aggressive physical beating, etc.

What are the benefits of participating in this study?
Your daughter may benefit from participating in group by developing better coping skills, communication skills, life skills, a higher self-awareness and care for others. Discovering ways to solve problems; becoming a part of an environment that encourages a sense of belonging, identity, and support may also be beneficial. Connecting with other young ladies who experience similar situations and learning how to support one another may benefit all group members.

Are there any costs associated with participating in this study?
To participate in this study it will cost your daughter her time, finding transportation and child care. Group counseling is a one hour and 30 minute time commitment after school for 10 weeks. In order to participate, it will be her responsibility to make personal arrangements for child care and transportation needs. After each session, Ms. Fuller will remain at school until all members have confirmed travel plans and have departed the school.

Is there any compensation for participating in this study?
There is no payment for participating in this study. She will not receive any extra credit. However, we will develop creative projects during activities that she will get to keep.
**Who will have access to the information collected during this study?**
Ms. Fuller will administer all surveys. All information will remain confidential. Her name will not be on any forms. Instead, we will use a code number to identify the surveys she completes. The principal investigator (my advisor) will keep a separate master list with her name and the matching code number. Once all information is collected and studied, the master list will be destroyed. All other forms will be kept for at least three years in a locked file in the office of Dr. Joseph Morris at Western Michigan University. No names will be used if the results of this study are published or reported at a professional meeting.

**What if your child wants to stop participating in this study?**
Your daughter can choose to stop participating in the study at anytime for any reason. She will not suffer any prejudice or penalty by her decision to stop her participation. She will experience NO consequences either academically or personally if she chooses to withdraw from this study. The facilitator can also decide to stop her participation in the study without her consent. Even if she agree today to participate by signing her assent form, she can stop participating at any time, including when we begin the surveys or at any time during group.

Should you have any questions before or during the study, you may contact Dr. Joseph Morris at 269.387.5112 or joseph.morris@wmich.edu. You may also contact the chair of Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at 269.387.8293 or the Vice President for Research at 269.387.8298 if questions arise 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.

Your signature below indicates that you, as parent or guardian, can and do give your permission for ______________________________ (child's name) to participate in group counseling and complete three surveys. You may request to view the surveys upon request.

_________________________________  ________________
Signature  Date
Appendix E

Student 18 and Over Consent Form

Western Michigan University
Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology

Principal Investigator: Joseph R. Morris, Ph.D.
Student Investigator: LaShonda B. Fuller, M.Ed., LSC, LLPC
Title of Study: The Effectiveness of Structured Group Counseling on Resiliency, Self-Efficacy, and Racial Identity among African American Female Teenagers

You have been invited to participate in a research project entitled "The Effectiveness of Structured Group Counseling on Resiliency, Self-Efficacy, and Racial Identity among African American Female Teenagers." This project will serve as LaShonda Fuller’s dissertation for the requirements of the doctorate degree. This consent document will explain the purpose of this project and will go over all of the time commitments, the procedures used in the study, and the risks and benefits of participating in this research project. Please read this consent form carefully and completely and please ask any questions if you need more clarification.

What are we trying to find out in this study?
The purpose of this group is to find out if group counseling has a positive influence on how you cope with problems in your life, what you believe about yourself, and your self-identity.

Who can participate in this study?
All African American girls between the ages of 14 – 19 can participate in this study.

Where will this study take place?
This study will take place at the high school, after school in a private location.

What is the time commitment for participating in this study?
The time commitment for participating in group counseling is 10 consecutive weeks, with the exception of days off from school (i.e. holidays and breaks). Each session will last for
one hour and 30 minutes. Before starting group, you will be asked to complete three (3) surveys that will take close to 30 minutes to complete. You will be asked to fill out the same three (3) surveys two more times: at the beginning of our first group session and at the end of our last group session. You will also be asked to fill out one (1) questionnaire before participating in the group counseling session one (1) time, which will take less than five (10) minutes. The total time commitment for participating in the study is expected to be 20 hours at most.

**What will you be asked to do if you choose to participate in this study?**

You will be asked to meet individually with Ms. Fuller and your school counselor to review this consent form and ask questions. If you choose to participate in the study, you will be asked to fill out a paper-and-pencil questionnaire that will ask you questions about your college plans, interested major, if you are a parent and work a job. This may take you 10 minutes to complete.

You will be asked to complete three paper-and-pencil surveys (The General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE), The Connor-Davidson Resiliency Scale (CD-RISC), and The Teenagers Experience of Racial Socialization Scale (TERS)) three different times: at the end of your first interview meeting with Ms. Fuller and Mrs. Dye, at the beginning of the first group session, and at the end of the last group session. It will take close to 30 minutes for you to fill out the surveys each time.

You will be asked to participate in 10 group counseling sessions led by Ms. Fuller and Mrs. Dye with 12 other African American female students from your school. During group sessions, you will be asked to participate in discussions, respect and listen to others, think about your own situations, and participate in homework activities such as journaling and research. During group we will talk about ways African American females deal with life issues and how successful they are with solving problems by talking about family, relationships, spirituality or religion, career goals, and your thoughts and beliefs about yourself.

These group counseling sessions follow a format designed by Ms. Fuller that is based on a previously used group counseling model. Session topics include The Face of Racism,
Guard Your Mind, The Body of Sexism, Commit to Excellence, Know Thy Self, Coping Mechanisms, Keep Family Close, Pass the Lessons On, and Be Good to Yourself. Group activities will include devotion, (reading from a book of affirmations or poems), meditation (quietly reflecting on topics talked about), and arts and crafts. You can choose not to participate in any activity.

You will be asked to respect the privacy of other group members. Maintaining privacy is a must. You will be asked to avoid talking about what other people share within group outside of group. So everyone can feel safe, what is said in group stays in group.

You will be asked to attend each group counseling session. You will only be able to miss two sessions. It is your responsibility to inform Ms. Fuller or Mrs. Dye when you will be absent and why. If you miss two sessions and still want to participate, the group will have to decide.

**What information is being measured during the study?**
How you cope with situations, your beliefs about your ability to accomplish your goals, and your beliefs about yourself will be gathered from the surveys you complete. During your participation in group, the information collected will focus on your experiences as an African American, your experiences as a female teenager, your experiences with racism (being discriminated against because of your race), your experiences with sexism (being discriminated against because of your gender), and how you cope with life experiences overall. If you believe you have never experienced racism or sexism, you can still participate in group counseling.

**What are the risks of participating in this study and how will these risks be minimized?**
A risk of you participating in this study may include you recalling past experiences which may have been difficult to share before and becoming emotionally upset (crying, angry, or sad) about something that took place or is taking place. After sharing an intense experience you may feel like you cannot trust group members. These risks will be minimized by the facilitators constantly reminding the group why trust and maintaining confidentiality is important throughout group sessions, so you can feel safe. If you become emotionally upset about a past or current situation, the facilitators may recommend you seek individual counseling with an outside counselor. A list of community resources will be made available to you at your interview.

Another potential risk of participation is feeling emotionally upset (crying, angry, or sad) about topics, activities, or discussions that take place in group sessions. We will be
talking about and completing activities about sensitive topics like racism and sexism. This risk will be managed by giving you the opportunity to excuse yourself from group or talk about what your experience. For your security, Ms. Fuller and Mrs. Dye are trained professional counselors and will be available to listen and talk with you.

Another potential risk of participation is other group members talking about what was shared in group, including information you may share during a group session. This risk will be minimized by the group facilitators reminding the group to keep what is shared in group sessions confidential. All participants in the group will be asked to maintain confidentiality, to sign a consent or assent form indicating that they agree to keep information shared in group private, and given frequent reminders.

Limits to Confidentiality: Other group members will be asked to maintain confidentiality but I cannot guarantee they will do so. We will not tell anyone what you tell us without your permission unless there is something that could be dangerous to you or someone else. If you tell us that someone is or has been hurting you we have to tell that to people who are responsible for protecting children so they can make sure you are safe.

What are the benefits of participating in this study?
You may benefit from participating in group by developing better coping skills, communication skills, life skills, a higher self-awareness and care for others. Discovering ways to solve problems; becoming a part of an environment that encourages a sense of belonging, identity, and support may also benefit you. Connecting with other young ladies who experience similar situations and learning how to support one another may benefit all group members.

Are there any costs associated with participating in this study?
To participate in this study it will cost you your time, finding transportation and child care. Group counseling is a one hour and 30 minute time commitment after school for 10 weeks. In order to participate, it will be your responsibility to make personal arrangements for child care and transportation needs. After each session, Ms. Fuller will remain at school until all members have confirmed travel plans and have departed the school.

Is there any compensation for participating in this study?
There is no payment for participating in this study. You will not receive any extra credit. However, we will develop creative projects during activities that you will get to keep.
Who will have access to the information collected during this study?
Ms. Fuller will administer all surveys. All information will remain confidential. Your name will not be on any forms. Instead, we will use a code number to identify the surveys you complete. The principal investigator (my advisor) will keep a separate master list with your name and the matching code number. Once all information is collected and studied, the master list will be destroyed. All other forms will be kept for at least three years in a locked file in the office of Dr. Joseph Morris at Western Michigan University. No names will be used if the results of this study are published or reported at a professional meeting.

What if you want to stop participating in this study?
You can choose to stop participating in the study at anytime for any reason. You will not suffer any prejudice or penalty by your decision to stop your participation. You will experience NO consequences either academically or personally if you choose to withdraw from this study. The facilitator can also decide to stop your participation in the study without your consent. Even if you agree today to participate by signing this form, you can stop participating at any time, including when we begin the surveys or at any time during group.

Should you have any questions before or during the study, you may contact Dr. Joseph Morris at 269.387.5112 or joseph.morris@wmich.edu. You may also contact the chair of Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at 269.387.8293 or the Vice President for Research at 269.387.8298 if questions arise 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.

I have read this consent document. The risks and benefits have been explained to me. I agree to take part in this study.

Please Print Your Name

Participant’s signature

date
My signature below indicates that I agree not to discuss outside of this group any comments made by the other participants.

__________________________________________  ____________________________
Participant’s signature                      Date
Appendix F

Student Assent Form

Western Michigan University
Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology

**Principal Investigator:** Joseph R. Morris, Ph.D.
**Student Investigator:** LaShonda B. Fuller, M.Ed., LSC, LLPC
**Title of Study:** The Effectiveness of Structured Group Counseling on Resiliency, Self-Efficacy, and Racial Identity among African American Female Teenagers

You have been invited to participate in a research project entitled "The Effectiveness of Structured Group Counseling on Resiliency, Self-Efficacy, and Racial Identity among African American Female Teenagers." This project will serve as LaShonda Fuller’s dissertation for the requirements of the doctorate degree. This consent document will explain the purpose of this project and will go over all of the time commitments, the procedures used in the study, and the risks and benefits of participating in this research project. Please read this consent form carefully and completely and please ask any questions if you need more clarification.

**What are we trying to find out in this study?**
The purpose of this group is to find out if group counseling has a positive influence on how you cope with problems in your life, what you believe about yourself, and your self-identity.

**Who can participate in this study?**
All African American girls between the ages of 14 – 19 can participate in this study.

**Where will this study take place?**
This study will take place at the high school, after school in a private location.

**What is the time commitment for participating in this study?**
The time commitment for participating in group counseling is 10 consecutive weeks, with the exception of days off from school (i.e. holidays and breaks). Each session will last for
one hour and 30 minutes. Before starting group, you will be asked to complete three (3) surveys that will take close to 30 minutes to complete. You will be asked to fill out the same three (3) surveys two more times: at the beginning of our first group session and at the end of our last group session.

You will also be asked to fill out one (1) questionnaire before participating in the group counseling session one (1) time, which will take less than five (10) minutes. The total time commitment for participating in the study is expected to be 20 hours at most.

**What will you be asked to do if you choose to participate in this study?**
You will be asked to meet individually with Ms. Fuller and your school counselor to review this consent form and ask questions. If you choose to participate in the study, you will be asked to fill out a paper-and-pencil questionnaire that will ask you questions about your college plans, interested major, if you are a parent and work a job. This may take you 10 minutes to complete.

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You will be asked to participate in 10 group counseling sessions led by Ms. Fuller and Mrs. Dye with 12 other African American female students from your school. During group sessions, you will be asked to participate in discussions, respect and listen to others, think about your own situations, and participate in homework activities such as journaling and research. During group we will talk about ways African American females deal with life issues and how successful they are with solving problems by talking about family, relationships, spirituality or religion, career goals, and your thoughts and beliefs about yourself.

These group counseling sessions follow a format designed by Ms. Fuller that is based on a previously used group counseling model. Session topics include The Face of Racism, Guard Your Mind, The Body of Sexism, Commit to Excellence, Know Thy Self, Coping Mechanisms, Keep Family Close, Pass the Lessons On, and Be Good to Yourself. Group activities will include devotion, (reading from a book of affirmations or poems),
meditation (quietly reflecting on topics talked about), and arts and crafts. You can choose not to participate in any activity.

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**What information is being measured during the study?**
How you cope with situations, your beliefs about your ability to accomplish your goals, and your beliefs about yourself will be gathered from the surveys you complete. During your participation in group, the information collected will focus on your experiences as an African American, your experiences as a female teenager, your experiences with racism (being discriminated against because of your race), your experiences with sexism (being discriminated against because of your gender), and how you cope with life experiences overall. If you believe you have never experienced racism or sexism, you can still participate in group counseling.

**What are the risks of participating in this study and how will these risks be minimized?**
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Limits to Confidentiality: Other group members will be asked to maintain confidentiality but I cannot guarantee they will do so. We will not tell anyone what you tell us without your permission unless there is something that could be dangerous to you or someone else. If you tell us that someone is or has been hurting you we have to tell that to people who are responsible for protecting children so they can make sure you are safe.

What are the benefits of participating in this study?
You may benefit from participating in group by developing better coping skills, communication skills, life skills, a higher self-awareness and care for others. Discovering ways to solve problems; becoming a part of an environment that encourages a sense of belonging, identity, and support may also benefit you. Connecting with other young ladies who experience similar situations and learning how to support one another may benefit all group members.

Are there any costs associated with participating in this study?
To participate in this study it will cost you your time, finding transportation and child care. Group counseling is a one hour and 30 minute time commitment after school for 10 weeks. In order to participate, it will be your responsibility to make personal arrangements for child care and transportation needs. After each session, Ms. Fuller will remain at school until all members have confirmed travel plans and have departed the school.

Is there any compensation for participating in this study?
There is no payment for participating in this study. You will not receive any extra credit. However, we will develop creative projects during activities that you will get to keep.

Who will have access to the information collected during this study?
Ms. Fuller will administer all surveys. All information will remain confidential. Your name will not be on any forms. Instead, we will use a code number to identify the surveys you complete. The principal investigator (my advisor) will keep a separate master list with your name and the matching code number. Once all information is collected and studied, the master list will be destroyed. All other forms will be kept for at least three
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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.

I have read this assent document. The risks and benefits have been explained to me. I agree to take part in this study.

---

Please Print Your Name

Participant’s signature __________________________  Date __________________________

My signature below indicates that I agree not to discuss outside of this group any comments made by the other participants.

Participant’s signature __________________________  Date __________________________
Demographic Interest Questionnaire (DIQ)

Western Michigan University
Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology

**Principal Investigator:** Joseph R. Morris, Ph.D.
**Student Investigator:** LaShonda B. Fuller, M.Ed., LSC, LLPC

Age: __________ Race: ____________________________ Grade: 9th 10th 11th 12th

What are your plans after high school? __________________________________________

Do you have plans to go to college? Yes ___ No ___

What would you like to major in? ______________________________________________

What college do you plan on attending? _________________________________________

Are you currently working? Yes ___ No ___ How many hours do you per work? __

How did you hear about this group? Flyer ___ School Counselor ___ Teacher ___

Are you currently under a physician’s care? Yes ___ No ___ If so, how long? _________

Are you currently on medication? Yes ___ No ___ If so, type? _______________________

Do you have children? Yes _____ No _____

Have you received counseling before? Yes ___ No ___ If so, when? _________________

Have you received group counseling before? Yes ___ No ___ If so, when? ___________
Appendix H

General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE)

**Instructions:** Please respond to the following items in terms of how true the statements are for you. Circle the number that most accurately reflects your experiences.
1 = Not at all true   2 = Hardly true   3 = Moderately true   4 = Exactly true

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I can usually handle whatever comes my way.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix I

Connor-Davidson Resiliency Scale (CD-RISC)

Instructions: Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements as they apply to you over the last month. If a particular situation has not occurred recently, answer according to how you think you would have felt.

Circle the “1” if it is Not true at all
Circle the “2” if it is Rarely true
Circle the “3” if it is Sometimes true
Circle the “4” if it is Often true
Circle the “5” if it is True nearly all of the time

1. I am able to adapt when changes occur.
2. I have at least one close and secure relationship, which helps me when I am stressed.
3. When there are no clear solutions to my problems, sometimes fate or God can help.
4. I can deal with whatever comes my way.
5. Past successes give me confidence in dealing with new challenges and difficulties.
6. I try to see the humorous side of things when I am faced with problems.
7. Having to cope with stress can make me stronger.
8. I tend to bounce back after illness, injury, or other hardships.
9. Good or bad, I believe that most things happen for a reason.
10. I give my best effort, no matter what the outcome may be.
11. I believe I can achieve my goals, even if there are obstacles.
12. Even when things look hopeless, I don’t give up.
13. During times of stress/crisis, I know where to turn for help.
15. I prefer to take the lead in solving problems, rather than letting others make all the decisions.
16. I am not easily discouraged by failure.
17. I think of myself as a strong person when dealing with life’s challenge and difficulties.
18. I can make unpopular or difficult decisions that affect other people, if it is necessary.
19. I am able to handle unpleasant or painful feelings like sadness, fear and anger.
20. In dealing with life’s problems, sometimes you have to act on a hunch,
without knowing why.
21. I have a strong sense of purpose in life.
22. I feel in control of my life.
23. I like challenges.
24. I work to attain my goals, no matter what roadblocks I encounter along the way.
25. I take pride in my achievement
Appendix J

Teenagers’ Experience of Racial Socialization Scale (TERS)

Instructions: Do your parents or any of your caregivers say to you any of the following statements now or when you were younger? Circle the number on the line depending on how often you remember hearing any of these messages: 1- Never, 2- A Few Times, 3- Lots of Times.

Circle only one number per question.

1. American society is fair toward Black people.  
2. Black children will feel better about themselves if they go to a school with mostly white children.  
3. Families who go to a church or mosque will be close and stay together.  
4. Black slavery is important never to forget.  
5. Relatives can help Black parents raise their children.  
6. Religion is an important part of a person's life.  
7. Racism and discrimination are the hardest things a Black child has to face.  
8. Having large families can help many Black families survive life struggles.  
9. You should be proud to be Black.  
10. All races are equal.  
11. If you work hard then you can overcome barriers in life.  
12. A belief in God can help a person deal with tough life struggles.  
13. Black children will learn more if they go to a mostly white school.  
14. Knowing your African heritage is important for your survival.  
15. Racism is real, and you have to understand it or it will hurt you.  
16. You are connected to a history that goes back to African royalty.  
17. Too much talk about racism will keep you from reaching your goals in life.  
18. Schools should be required to teach all children about Black history.  
19. Depending on religion and God will help you live a good life.  
20. Families who talk openly about religion or God will help each other to grow.  
21. Teachers can help Black children grow by showing signs of Black culture in the classroom.  
22. Only people who are blood-related to you should be called your "Family".  
23. Getting a good education is still the best way for you to get ahead.  
24. "Don't forget who your people are because you may need them someday."  
25. Spiritual battles that people fight are more important than the physical battles.  
26. You should know about Black history so that you will be a better person.  
27. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and he will not turn away from it."  
28. You have to work twice as hard as whites in order to get ahead in this world.  
29. Whites make it hard for people to get ahead in this world.  
30. Be proud of who you are.
31. Going to a Black school will help Black children feel better about themselves.
32. You need to learn how to live in a White world and a Black world.
33. Never be ashamed of your color.
34. Whites have more opportunities than Blacks.
35. A Black child or teenager will be harassed just because s/he is Black.
36. More job opportunities would be open to African Americans if people were not racist.
37. Black children should be taught early that God can protect them from racial hatred.
38. Blacks don't always have the same opportunities as whites.
39. Black children don’t have to know about Africa in order to survive life in America.
40. Racism is not as bad today as it used to be before the 1960's.
Appendix K

Group Sessions Weekly Outline
(Time frame, general activities, and purpose)

Session 1: Introduction
- Facilitators will review the purpose of the group, group expectations, and the requirements and importance of confidentiality.
  - “You have been asked to respect the privacy of your fellow group members and you have signed a document agreeing to not discuss outside of this group any comments made by other participants. In order for us to trust one another and enjoy our time in group we must maintain confidentiality. What we discuss in group should stay in group at all times and should not be shared with other people outside of group. We want everyone to feel safe sharing. Can we all agree to that?”
- Group members will be reminded that they can end their group participation whenever they decide they do not want to continue group participation.
- Group members will discuss and create group goals and rules and individual goals.
- Activities: Members will be asked to participate in an icebreaker (Person Bingo), which is a game that allows individuals to get to know other group members by asking if they identify with specific characteristics (i.e. is the only child or favorite color is pink); and a Trust Walk experience involving two people alternating roles of leader and follower by guiding a partner blind folded throughout one floor of the
school building, where the facilitators can observe, to expose one’s vulnerability pertaining to trust.

- Session will conclude with group members processing their trust walk experience as the leader and follower. At this session, journals will be distributed in order for group members to begin journaling about their group experience.

- Materials: Flip chart, markers, journals, blind folds, copies of person bingo sheet.

**Session 2: The Face of Racism**
- Facilitators will introduce the concept of racism as a systemic obstacle that discriminates based on race against people of color. Facilitators will ask group members how they define racism; if they have witnessed or experienced racism and to give examples.

- Group members will be asked to identify experiences of racism in the media (i.e. news, movies, talk shows, etc.).

- Activity: In small groups participants will research negative and positive depictions of race in the media and discuss the impact of their occurrences on black women.

- Session will conclude with each group sharing their research.

- Materials: Newspaper articles, magazines, poster boards, construction paper, glue.

**Session 3: Racism: Guard Your Mind**
- Facilitators will begin session with a recap of the previous session and ask for girls to take a seat at a piece of paper faced down. (*Facilitators will inform girls that the activity for ‘Guard Your Mind’ may be upsetting or difficult and remind members it is okay to dismiss themselves during group.*) Each piece of paper will list a racial slur
(nigger), a word used to degrade females (bitch), and a word used to hurt individuals
(stupid). Each person will turn their paper over, silently read the word printed on the
paper, and take a moment to reflect on the word. Each person will read aloud their
word and share with the group, their feelings they experienced when reading their
word silently.
- The group will discuss the impact of negative thoughts and words said by others;
identify experiences/behaviors that were influenced by negative thoughts/words said
by others to them.
- Activities: The session will conclude with members turning negative words said to
them into positive affirmations to replace the negative words planted in their minds.
The affirmations will be placed in a basket each member will receive to take home for
moments when an affirmation may be needed; they can pull from their basket for
encouragement. Members will freely journal about their experience and their current
emotions.
- Materials: baskets, paper, pens or markers, affirming stickers (optional).

Session 4: The Body of Sexism
- Facilitators will introduce the topic of sexism by asking what comes to mind when
they read the word or hear the word sexism; share their personal understanding of the
word and what sexism means to them.
- Members will be asked to discuss how sexism is a system and explore ways African
American females experience sexism; discuss gender roles, gender role expectations,
and the impact gender roles have played in their life.
- Group members will be asked to identify symbols and situations that encourage
sexism in movies, magazines, businesses, and home life.

- Group will conclude with a demonstration of a slide show of African American women in the media in a positive manner to dispute negative images and to instill hope and encouragement.

**Session 5: Sexism: Commit to Excellence**

- Facilitators will recap last session on sexism and how negative experiences may influence one’s motivation to succeed. Facilitators will ask group members what the difference is between a career and a job and discuss members’ responses.
- Group members will be asked to identify their career aspirations through exploring their passion, talents, abilities, interests, skills, experiences, strengths, and weaknesses; identify career interests in who predominate the field of interest; identify career goals through exploring goal-setting, different motivational paths, and resources that support the field of their interest.
- Activities: As a homework activity, the group will be asked to research magazines and newspapers, create a career collage, and note local or national people in chosen field for potential mentors members should pursue as a resource. Facilitators will discuss the potential benefit of writing a letter of interest for mentorship to a professional in their interested field before concluding group.
- Group will conclude with member’s journaling about their experience during session.
- Materials: Career inventory (optional), journals, pens.

**Session 6: Know Thy Self**

- Facilitators will introduce the concept of self as the core of who we are and other involvements, beliefs, relationships as layers in one’s life that adds or takes away
from who we are.

- Group members will take turns telling the group one thing about them that the group does not know all while looking into a mirror as they talk; explore layers as a created worldview/self-view (negative/positive) and asked to engage in the activities: Bed sheet demonstration, a display of a facilitator or volunteered group member wrapped in a bed sheet several times to represent the many layers of life people struggle with; Affirming one’s self and others through reciting affirmations.

- Activity: The session will conclude with the group designing their own mirror of affirmations.

- Materials: Mini mirrors, affirming stickers, glue, glitter, journals, putty glue.

**Session 7: Coping Mechanisms**

- Facilitators will recap sessions that discussed painful experiences and ask group members to reflect and share how they overcame.

- The group will be asked to identify sources of strength and ways of coping; discuss examples when their coping mechanisms were helpful (share testimonies) and when they were not helpful. What happened? What did they do differently?

- The group will be asked to engage in meditation (quiet reflection on personal situations related to session’s topic), breathing exercises, and journal about the experience.

- Activity: The session will conclude with group members meditating with soft music playing in the background on events where their coping mechanisms were not helpful and possible alternatives they could have possibly used to assist them by visualizing what a better outcome may look like and believing they can make a better decision or
take a better approach next time.

- Materials: CD Player, therapeutic music, journals.

**Session 8: Relationships: Keep Family Close**

- Facilitators will introduce the topic of family with a discussion on identifying the meaning of family, situations with families, loss of family; members will discuss and explore the concept of keeping family close.

- Activities: The group will engage in an activity that demonstrates the people in their life who influences their total behavior (good or bad) [Multiple Perspectives/ Board of Directors Table] and journal about the experience.

  - The Board of Directors (B.O.E.) table is an activity taken from the researchers graduate studies class experience. This activity challenges individuals to think about who or what influences their decisions or behaviors. For example, music, specific family members, or friends may be influential icons in someone’s life. Who or what group members deem as influential representations in their life will be who or what is represented at their table. When the concept of budget cuts is introduced, because the business is one’s self, group members will have to eliminate someone or something from their board of directors. (This process can continue for 2 or 3 more times).

Eventually, the activity should demonstrate who or what is directing the individual’s decisions and behaviors mostly; and who or what icon at the table may need to be eliminated from the position of having a great amount of influence over the individuals’ decisions and behaviors. This activity also illustrates who and what individuals value most and possibly, where their
strength comes from. See pictures 1 – 8 for example illustrations of someone’s table of Board of Directors in the appendix.

- The session will conclude with reciting “Love Continues” by LaShonda B. Fuller.
- Materials: Journals.

**Session 9: Pass the Lessons On**
- Facilitators will begin session with having group members reflect on total experience (session by session); Reflect on goals created and goals accomplished during group.
- The group will discuss the group’s impact on their current awareness, knowledge, and self-identity; discuss how participant’s group experience may have impacted others in their life (family members, friends, etc.).
- Members will be asked to create short-term and long-term goals with measurable objectives that will encourage the continued awareness and change; identify accountability partners; and take notes in their journal.
- Activities: Devotion (a reading of positive affirmations); Meditation (quiet reflection on personal situations related to session’s topic).
- Materials: CD player, candles, In the Meantime CD by Iyanla Vanzant.

**Session 10: Be Good to Yourself**
- Facilitators will begin this final session with a discussion on obstacles the group believed they overcame and concrete ways the group approached the obstacle whether right or wrong.
- Facilitators will then have each group member, individually, stand before the group
and receive her gift and new name that symbolizes her transformation throughout group. Gifts are decided on by facilitators and are not identified until group is nearing the end but may consist of positive symbolic expressions of transformation such as a candle, a fragranced bar of soap, or flower seeds. *(An approximate cost of all items will not exceed a figure of twenty dollars.)*

- Activity: Members will pledge to do something different and journal about the retreat.
- Session will conclude with completion of final surveys.
Appendix L
Illustration of Board of Directors

Figure 1: Circular Illustration B.O.D.

Granny
Best
Cousins
Friend
Prayer
Music

Figure 2: Illustration of 1st Cut

Granny
Cousins
Best Friend
Prayer
Music

Figure 3: Illustration of 2nd Cut

Granny
Cousins
Prayer
Music

Figure 4: Illustration of 3rd Cut

Granny
Prayer
Music

Figure 5: Rectangular Illustration of B.O.D.

Mentors
God
Me
Friends

Figure 6: Illustration of 1st Cut

Mentors
God
Me
Friends

Figure 7: Illustration of 2nd Cut

Mentors
God
Me
Friends

Figure 8: Illustration of 3rd Cut

Mentors
God
Me
This is a research study on African American female teenagers (ages 14 – 19) conducted by a Western Michigan University Doctoral Candidate, LaShonda Fuller. This group will discuss African American female teenagers’ identity as an *African American* and as a *female*; experiences of racism, sexism, and coping skills African American female teenagers use that may or may not be helpful when making healthy decisions. Group sessions will take place Friday, after school once a week for 10 weeks and will last for 1 hour and 30 minutes each.

For more information, see Mrs. Dye in the counseling office.
Appendix N

Approval Letter from the
Human Subjects Institutional Review Board

Date: February 24, 2010

To: Joseph Morris, Principal Investigator
LaShonda Fuller, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number: 09-11-05

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project titled “The Effectiveness of Structured Group Counseling on Resiliency, Self-Efficacy, and Racial Identity among African American Female Teenagers” has been approved under the full 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: December 16, 2010
Email Permitting Researcher to Use Teenagers’ Experience of Racial Socialization Scale

From: "Howard Stevenson" <howards@gse.upenn.edu>
To: "LaShonda B Fuller" <lashonda.b.fuller@wmich.edu>
Cc: "Joseph R. Morris" <joseph.morris@wmich.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, July 13, 2010 12:31:09 PM
Subject: RE: TEENAGERS EXPERIENCE OF RACIAL SOCIALIZATION SCALE (TERS)

Thank you Ms. Fuller for your email and I’m sorry for the delay. We’ve developed more measures that replace the TERS now but I’ll send you the whole packet of info and you decide. Right now, the measure we are about to publish is called the CARES and has more robust factors and utility for understanding the construct of Racial socialization for parents and youth. Email me again (and repeatedly) if the email doesn’t answer your questions. Please let me know what you come up within your findings. Peace. Dr. S.

-----Original Message-----
From: LaShonda B Fuller [mailto:lashonda.b.fuller@wmich.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, July 13, 2010 12:24 PM
To: howards@gse.upenn.edu
Cc: Joseph R. Morris
Subject: TEENAGERS EXPERIENCE OF RACIAL SOCIALIZATION SCALE (TERS)

Greetings:

This email is intended for Dr. Howard Stevenson, one of the developers of the TEENAGERS EXPERIENCE OF RACIAL SOCIALIZATION SCALE (TERS) designed to assess adolescents discussions of race with parents, beliefs about racism and discrimination, and cultural pride.

My name is LaShonda Fuller, a current doctoral candidate at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan.
As a current student in Western’s Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology program, I am studying the resiliency, self-efficacy, and racial identity of African American female teenagers who have undergone a structured group counseling technique for my dissertation, in which Dr. Joseph Morris presides over my dissertation committee. My interest is to determine if a group counseling model impacts African American female teenagers’ resiliency, self-efficacy, and racial identity.

Your TERS scale specifically target areas my research is studying such as having cultural pride, awareness of racism and other discriminating systems such as sexism and classism, and the co-existence of spirituality with one's racial identity, etc; therefore, I am asking for your permission to use your scale in my study.

Your permission would be greatly appreciated and acknowledged as I move forward with my research.

Thank you for your time. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

LaShonda B. Fuller, School Counselor
Doctoral Candidate - Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
lashonda.b.fuller@wmich.edu
Appendix P

Email Permitting Researcher to Use General Self-Efficacy Scale

From: "Ralf Schwarzer" <health@zedat.fu-berlin.de>
To: "LaShonda B Fuller" <lashonda.b.fuller@wmich.edu>, health@zedat.fu-berlin.de
Cc: "Joseph R. Morris" <joseph.morris@wmich.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, July 13, 2010 3:36:54 PM
Subject: Re: General Self-Efficacy Scale

see attachment

At 17:47 13.07.2010, LaShonda B Fuller wrote:

Greetings:

This email is intended for Dr. Ralf Schwarzer, one of the developers of the General Self-Efficacy scale designed to assess one's self beliefs.

My name is LaShonda Fuller, a current doctoral candidate at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan in the United States of America.

As a current student in Western's Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology program, I am studying the resiliency, self-efficacy, and racial identity of African American female teenagers who have undergone a structured group counseling technique for my dissertation. My interest is to determine if a group counseling model impacts African American female teenagers' resiliency, self-efficacy, and racial identity.

Your GSE scale specifically targets areas my research is studying such as being resourceful, handling adversity, and the ability to remain calm when facing difficulties, etc; therefore, I am asking for your permission to use your scale in my study. Your permission would be greatly appreciated and acknowledged as I move forward with my research.

Thank you for your time. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

LaShonda B. Fuller, School Counselor
Doctoral Candidate - Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
lashonda.b.fuller@wmich.edu
**********************************************

Prof. Dr. Ralf Schwarzer, Freie Universität Berlin, Psychologie,
Habelschwerdtter Allee 45, 14195 Berlin, Germany, FAX +49(30)838-55634
Office JK 25/114 E-mail: ralf.schwarzer@fu-berlin.de
Personal Web: http://www.RalfSchwarzer.de/
**********************************************
Everything you wanted to know about the
General Self-Efficacy Scale
but were afraid to ask

by Ralf Schwarzer, January 5, 2009

The purpose of this FAQ is to assist the users of the scales published at the author's web pages
http://www.ralfschwarzer.de/

DOWNLOAD of PDFs: http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/~health/self/selfeff_public.htm

Before attending to the questions below you might want to study our web pages. You might not have any questions after reading the web pages.

Do I need permission to use the general perceived self-efficacy (GSE) scale?

You do not need our explicit permission to utilize the scale in your research studies. We hereby grant you permission to use and reproduce the General Self-Efficacy Scale for your study, given that appropriate recognition of the source of the scale is made in the write-up of your study.

The international source is:

The source for the German version is:

I am not sure whether I want to measure general perceived self-efficacy (GSE) or specific health-related self-efficacy.

You have to decide which one fits your research question. If you intend to predict a particular behavior you are better off with a specific scale. You might be best off by designing your own items, tailored to your study, such as:
"I am certain that I can do ...xy..., even if ...zz..." (1 2 3 4).

Health-specific self-efficacy scales can be found at:
http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/~health/healthself.pdf

For the English version of the teacher self-efficacy scale, see Schwarzer & Hallum (2008).

If you are interested in other health behavior constructs, consult the NCI Health Behavior Constructs Website:
http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/constructs

What is the scoring procedure for the GSE?

Add up all responses to a sum score. The range is from 10 to 40 points. Or use a mean score, such as:

\[ \text{COMPUTE \ SEFF = Mean (SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, SE5, SE6, SE7, SE8, SE9, SE10).} \]

In many samples the mean had been around 2.9

Occasionally, someone will not respond to some of the items. What do you recommend to do with missing data?

Our rule of thumb is to calculate a score as long as no more than three items on the ten-item scale are missing.

In SPSS, this is done by:

\[ \text{COMPUTE \ SEFF = Mean.7 (SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, SE5, SE6, SE7, SE8, SE9, SE10).} \]

However, there are also other methods such as regression, hot deck, or multiple imputations techniques (ask your advisor).

How can I categorize persons as being high or low self-efficacious?

We do not endorse the view that people should be categorized this way. There is no cut-off score. One could, however, establish groups on the basis of the empirical distributions of a particular reference population. One could do a median split, which is to dichotomize the sample, for example, at the cut-off point of 30 (if this is near the median in your sample).

Can I use some original data to compare with my own data?

Yes, there is an international data set as an SPSS SAV file that includes about 18,000 respondents. Available for free download at:

http://www.fu-berlin.de/gesund/gesu_engl/world_zip.htm

What are the psychometric characteristics of the GSE?

It depends on the sample and the study context. There are more than 1,000 studies that have used the scales in many countries and languages.

There are currently scale versions adapted to 30 languages. See:

http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/~health/selfscale.htm

Updated psychometric findings have been published recently, for example, in:

Can you tell me more about the validity of the GSE?

| Concurrent and Prognostic Validity of General Perceived Self-Efficacy |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------|
|                                                 | 1989     | 1991     |
|                                                 | Men | Women | Men | Women |
| Depression                                      | -.31 | -.44  | -.27 | -.32  |
| Loneliness                                      | -.39 | -.39  | -.27 | -.24  |
| Anxiety                                         | -.41 | -.45  | -.31 | -.32  |
| Shyness                                         | -.47 | -.47  | -.33 | -.29  |
| Self-Esteem                                     | .51  | .59   | .34  | .40   |
| Optimism                                        | .48  | .51   | .20  | .56   |
| Pessimism                                       | -.27 | -.30  | -.20 | -.19  |

Note. The correlations were derived from a sample of East German migrants in 1989 and 1991.

n = 528 men and n = 380 women took part in the first wave of data collection, n = 122 men and n = 102 women participated also at the second point in time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations between Self-Efficacy and Other Personality Traits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Extraversion (FPI)</td>
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<td>Neuroticism</td>
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<td>Extraversion (PDE)</td>
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<td>Failure or action orientation</td>
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<td>Decision or action orientation</td>
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<td>Action centering</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hope for success</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fear of failure</td>
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Note. The correlations were derived from a sample of N = 180 university students. All correlations are highly significant.

What are the norms of the GSE?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>T-Norms of the General Perceived Self-Efficacy Scale</th>
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<tr>
<td>Heterogenous Adult Population</td>
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<td>High School Students</td>
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<td>US-American Adult Population</td>
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Note. *Heterogenous Adult Population*: The T-norms for the German version of this scale are based on a sample of N = 1,660 persons. The weighted mean was found to be 29.28, the weighted variance equalled 25.91.

*High School Students*: These T-norms were derived from a sample of N = 3,494 German high school students (12 to 17 years old). In this sample the mean was found to be 29.60, standard deviation equalled 4.0.

*US-American Adult Population*: These T-norms were derived from a sample of N = 1,594 US-American adults. In this sample the mean was found to be 29.48, standard deviation equalled 5.13. Gender was equally distributed, male 50.9%, female 49.1%.
Where can I read more about the scale and the research that has been conducted with it?


We wish you much success with your research.

If you still have questions, you may send an e-mail to Ralf Schwarzer at health@zedat.fu-berlin.de

DOWNLOAD of PDFs: http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/~health/self/selfeff_public.htm