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Messages of Meaning: African American Ethnic-racial Socialization Practices of Fathers and Paternal Definitions of Academic Success

Sharon Coley-Wilson

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Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine

Department of Psychology

MESSAGES OF MEANING: AFRICAN AMERICAN ETHNIC-RACIAL
SOCIALIZATION PRACTICES OF FATHERS AND PATERNAL DEFINITIONS OF
ACADEMIC SUCCESS

By Sharon Coley-Wilson

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Psychology

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DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the thesis presented to us by Sharon Coley-Wilson on the
4th day of March, 2019, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Psychology, has been examined and is acceptable in
both scholarship and literary quality.

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Abstract

This research explores the unique experiences of African American fathers, their ethnic-racial socialization practices, definitions of academic success and the intersectionality of the three concepts. Through a semi-structured interview, the present study explored how African American fathers socialize their children to understand how being Black fits into the larger context of society. The primary focus is to explore what types of racial socialization messages are used, how they are delivered, and if/how the fathers' academic expectations are a part of the conversations. Implications for how school systems can utilize African American fathers' perspectives in supporting positive home-school collaboration and promoting culturally responsive experiences in the school setting are discussed.

Keywords: racial socialization, African American fathers, and academic expectations

Preface

“Being a father has been, without a doubt, my greatest source of achievement, pride, and inspiration. Fatherhood has taught me about unconditional love, reinforced the importance of giving back and taught me how to be a better person.”

- Naveen Jain

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the fathers in my life who have greatly influenced me. To my own father, Larry, you have been a model of gentle masculinity and set the foundation for high expectations for myself and my future. To the father of my children, Camara, who picked up where Larry left off, your support and commitment to being a present, loving father through your own challenges sets the tone for our children, me, and our community. I would like to thank my mother, Sharon, for her forever grounding abilities not matter how I may feel to be in the middle of a storm. To my sisters, Tambra, Damita, and Lori, thank you for listening and encouraging me through this lengthy process. Your words of support continue to sustain me beyond your knowledge.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

The process of parenting is a rewarding experience. The responsibility of transferring the family's beliefs, values, and expectations is a lifelong endeavor. Parents are the first teachers in teaching their children societal norms. Their teaching styles and the actual information that they share is colored through the parents' own historical context, as well as, societal contexts such as social-political views, religion, and social constructs such as race and gender (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). When parents belong to a minority group, they have the added responsibility of teaching their children the societal norms of the majority population, yet also maintaining an understanding of what it means to operate as a minority group member within the larger context of society.

African American parents share important information about what it means to be African American in this world to their children through a variety of messages. This process of ethnic-racial socialization takes place through a variety of methods (Hughes & Chen, 1997). These messages are generally transmitted either through implicit or explicit means. Children may learn what it means to be African American through direct messages and conversations or exposure to perceived positive aspects of African American culture (Hughes et al., 2006). These conversations or experiences may come as a part of a general practice of exposure to African American culture through trips to museums, and children's books with African American prominent characters that capture the African diaspora experience. Ethnic-racial socialization messages can be transmitted through direct conversations about perceptions of African Americans in media. For example, a parent may use an opportunity while watching a fictional television show with his or her adolescent in which the central character is an African American

woman who leads a successful professional career, but who is unable to manage a positive romantic relationship. These conversations may take place when discussing a newscast reporting the shooting of an unarmed African American teenager. Both situations provide opportunities to view how a larger society may view African Americans and opportunities for parents to filter the information through their own experiences to share within a meaningful context with their children.

Types of Ethnic-Racial Socialization Messages

The forms of these messages, whether implicit or explicit, can be categorized into four categories: cultural socialization, preparation for bias, egalitarianism, and promotion of mistrust (Hughes et al., 2006). Each style of messages has its own benefits related to psychological outcomes such as feelings of self-worth, sense of agency, and group belongingness (Hughes et al., 2006). Each category of messages has inherent properties that include information about how an individual's ethnicity or race connects to societal experiences. The primary goal of cultural socialization as defined by Hughes, Rivas, Foust, Hagelskamp, Gersick, and Way (2008) is to convey knowledge and importance of specific traditions, historical contributions, and heritage about the parent and child's racial/ethnic group. African Americans, in particular, are likely to engage in cultural socialization practices in very much formalized ways (Hughes & Chen, 1997). Formal methods of socialization may include activities such as visiting a museum devoted to African American culture and historical events, purchasing children's books with African American characters overcoming challenges, and participating in a living history project in which they select an African American inventor. In addition to explicit messages, African American parents utilize implicit messages as a means of cultural socialization (Hughes & Chen, 1997). For example, parents may use repeated exposure to cultural music, movies with African

American themes, and traditions. In the current author's own experience, certain foods are served on New Year's Day that represents the hopes for monetary increases for the upcoming year. This cultural tradition was associated with practices of slaves that continues through oral and practical tradition.

Preparation for bias messages are a means for parents to prepare children for the likelihood of experiencing discrimination or prejudicial events based on their race or ethnicity (Hughes et al., 2008). The goal of these messages is two-fold. The first goal is to provide the child with potential scenarios. For example, a common adage is that African Americans often "work twice as hard to get half as far" as their majority counterparts (DeSante, 2013). The historical context for this statement is economic and political in nature. African Americans have historically, and continue even now to be unemployed, be employed as part-time workers, experience job mismatches, and be described as "working poor" (De Jong & Madamba, 2001). Another example is related to the potential impact of having an ethnic name and a resume screening. Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004) found that White Anglo-Saxon Protestant names received 50 percent more callbacks for interviews than that of candidates with African American names. These experiences are real considerations for African American families. The second goal of preparation for bias messages is to provide coping strategies to deal with potential, racially based transgressions (Hughes et al., 2009). Such coping strategies to deal with these previously named discriminations may lead to discussions about pursuing advanced studies in areas that are highly employable or using abbreviations to mask names that suggest a specific ethnic background. Peters (2002) reports that when Black mothers were asked about specific coping strategies used to combat racism, many identified a "good education" as a top priority (Peters, 2002, pg. 64). These mothers saw education as a way to combat discrimination.

Egalitarian messages focus on the cultivation of one's ethnicity as part of the total identity and belief of commonality among all people (Doucet, Banerjee, & Parade, 2018). Egalitarian messages are not to be confused with colorblindness. Colorblindness is the minimization or total denial of the importance of race and its impact (Neville, Spanierman, & Doan, 2006). Egalitarian messages acknowledge and highlight diversity. Although ethnicity is highlighted, it is not considered to be the most salient characteristic. General qualities that promote family values within society are considered to be just as important. These qualities may include valuing hard work, equality, morality, and self-worth to be as, or more, important than ethnicity (Iqbal, 2014). Doucet, Banerjee, and Parade (2018) suggest "parents who emphasize similarities want their children to grow up with a sense of equality and hope. There also was a sense of protectiveness underlying egalitarian messages."

Promotion of mistrust messages focuses on issuing cautions about interactions with other ethnic groups (Coard, Wallace, Stevenson, & Brotman, 2004). In these cases, parents explicitly teach messages such as maintaining social distance from Whites (Thorton et al., 1990). There are discrepant findings regarding the prevalence of usage of promoting distrust socialization. Studies that use quantitative methods to measure racial socialization patterns typically have fewer endorsements of usage of promotion of mistrust (Thorton et al, 1990). However, when parents are given an opportunity to respond to open-ended questions, there is an increase in reporting of use of promotion of mistrust as a means of socialization (Hughes et al., 2006). The discrepancy in reporting promotes the utility of qualitative approaches when investigating racial-ethnic socialization practices. Promotion of mistrust from African Americans towards Whites is likely rooted in both historical and personal experiences for parents. Interestingly, this same type

of socialization practice has been found to be used by immigrant West Indian, Caribbean, and Dominican parents against African Americans due to their “low” social status (Waters, 1994).

Racial Socialization and Academic Outcomes

Children with higher levels of racial-ethnic pride were found also to be higher achievers as measured by reading and math grades and standardized test scores (Smith, Atkins, & Connell, 2003). Adolescents, who report that their parents use cultural socialization and preparation for bias, report higher rates of academic achievement as measured by academic efficacy and engagement (Hughes et al., 2009). Racial socialization practices, particularly preparation for bias and cultural socialization, are used to provide buffers for possible discrimination and negative perceptions about African Americans. This buffer is important because research has shown that as adolescents encounter increased levels of discrimination, their performances on academic outcomes related to academic curiosity and persistence decrease (Neblett et al., 2006). Caughy, O'Campo, Randolph, and Nickerson's (2002) study showed that parents who provide racial-ethnic messages related to African American culture (e.g. cultural socialization) tend to have children who perform better on cognitive assessments measuring problem-solving skills and factual knowledge. With such correlations between racial-ethnic socialization practices and positive academic outcomes, it is important for schools to understand the connection between home socialization and how they can support them in schools.

Statement of the Problem

As reviewed, African American parents transmit what it means to be African American in society to their children in a variety of ways. It ranges from explicit lessons through indirect means of exposure. Regardless of the method used, it occurs throughout the majority of the studies reviewed (Hughes et al, 2006). It appears that messages related to academic socialization

are often enveloped in messages about ethnic-racial identity and socialization (Cooper & Smalls, 2010). The vast majority of the research examining the two constructs is quantitative in nature. A variety of questionnaires measuring the concepts identified to establish a criterion for explicit messages and at what age these messages are delivered are typically used in research (Hughes et al., 2006). The source of this information comes both from parents and from their children. The impact of these messages is historically taken from the perspective of the child or the mother (Hughes et al., 2006). What is not routinely investigated is to what degree fathers think their messages impact their children's educational attainments and performances. Furthermore, if this information were obtained, how do parents determine if there is an impact? Although quantitative measures could certainly be generated to gather this information, a qualitative approach would provide fathers with an opportunity to share their experiences and stories on how messages of ethnic-racial identity are intermingled with their ideas about academic success by their own relative definition.

Purpose of the Study

In particular, the current study seeks to investigate how African American fathers maneuver through the responsibility of racial and academic socialization. Of particular interest, is the notion of how fathers navigate their children towards their definition of academic success. Previous research shows that when given the opportunity to answer questions about racial-ethnic socialization, parents are more likely to endorse promotion of mistrust, which, historically in quantitative studies, is reported to be the least used (Hughes et al., 2006). Qualitative approaches allow individuals to give their lived experience in their own words. Additionally, measures of academic success relate to static scores, academic efficacy, and academic engagement (Siren, 2005; Hughes et al, 2009).

Parent engagement and its relationship to academic achievement is a well-researched area (Fan & Chen, 2001). In Fan and Chen's (2001) review of twenty-five studies, findings indicate that parental aspirations/expectations for children's educational achievements have the strongest relationship to students' global academic achievements (e.g. grade point average). Ethnic-Racial socialization practices are a means of sharing parental academic aspirations and expectations. The purpose of the current study is to provide insights into the degree to which African American fathers' racial socialization practices intersect with their own definitions of academic success.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction

Ethnic-racial socialization is the process in which minority parents prepare their children for integration into the larger society in which they are minority members (Neblett, Smalls, Ford, Nguyễn, & Sellers, 2009). This ethnic-racial socialization takes place within the context of families through a delivery of many avenues. These messages are typically translated through direct and indirect means that focus both on how race will impact the child's social standing and on how the child's ethnicity is a component of his or her total identity. These messages take the form of cultural socialization (familiarizing oneself with cultural practices/norms), preparation for bias (discussions of racial bias), egalitarianism (value of diversity and equal treatment), and promotion of mistrust (need for wariness of other groups) (Hughes & Chen, 1997). These types of messages, as well as the developmental approach used to deliver these messages, vary according to a variety of factors. A primary variable is related to the socialization experiences that the parents have themselves have known. Additionally, factors such as socioeconomic status impact the types of messages that parents share with their children relative to ethnic identity and its importance in their lives. These messages implicitly or explicitly often carry information about the parents' expectations and hopes for academic success within a cultural context (Neblett, Smalls, Ford, Nguyễn, & Sellers, 2008).

Definition of Ethnic-Racial Socialization

Ethnic-racial socialization is defined as the transferring of information regarding an individual's racial makeup and/or ethnic background from one party to the next within the minority group (Hughes & Chen, 1997). This transmission of information typically takes place between, but not limited to, the parent and child (Hughes, Rodriguez, Smith, Johnson, Stevenson,

& Spicer, 2006). It encompasses information regarding how the child retains aspects of his or her cultural background, uses messages of empowerment related to his or her specific heritage, and provides information regarding possible biases the child may experience due to his or her ethnic-racial minority membership (Hughes et al., 2006). Ethnic-racial socialization is utilized as a buffering measure to protect and prepare children of minority groups for adversity (Neblett, Smalls, Ford, Nguyễn, & Sellers, 2008). In the research, the distinction of racial socialization and ethnic socialization depends on the construct defined by the principal investigator; it is difficult to distinguish between the two theoretically when considering the messages being transmitted by African American parents (Hughes et al., 2006). The messages are typically the same whether they are described as racial socialization or as ethnic socialization (Hughes et al., 2006). As a review of literature from a chronological perspective reveals that there has been a shift from the measurement solely of racial socialization in contrast to ethnic socialization. The combination of the two are now recognized as the true essence of the nature of the content and perspective which parents communicate to their children (Worrell, 2014). Nevertheless, it is important to understand how the two “discreet” concepts originally were conceptualized in order to understand how they are integrated to form a new hybrid that better includes the total experience (Neblett, Smalls, Ford, Nguyễn, & Sellers, 2008).

Definition of Racial Identity as it Relates to Ethnic-Racial Socialization

In American society, a person’s race has a clear definition. It is related to the historical ancestry of the individual and to self-identification (Hahn, 1992). For African Americans, their race is defined by having African origins. The definition of Black, as defined by Merriam-Webster dictionary, is “of or relating to a race of people who have dark skin and who come originally from Africa” (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/black>). When looking at

the process of racial socialization for African Americans, parents often transfer information about how the child's membership is related to possible adversity within the larger society (Neblett, Smalls, Ford, Nguyễn, & Sellers, 2008). It is this direct relationship between race and its impact on Americans' experiences in American society that is explored. There is certainly a contextual and cultural component of racial socialization; however, the underlying concept is that of the interaction of racial features and historical treatment because of those features that is conveyed to children by parents (Neblett, Smalls, Ford, Nguyễn, & Sellers, 2008). The messages related to possible racism and how to recognize, avoid, and recover from it are steeped in the historical context of being African American in a larger society.

The general theme in the definition for racial socialization is conceptualized as the overt and covert messages that parents extend to their children relative to race (Neblett, Smalls, Ford, Nguyễn, & Sellers, 2008). The purpose of these messages is to foster a positive racial identity. A positive racial identity can be defined as racial acceptance and interaction of race among other social constructs and positive in-group associations (Davis, 2007).

One of the goals of racial socialization for parents is to develop a racial identity in their children (Friend, Hunter, & Fletcher, 2011). Racial identity development is a well-established area of research in the area of developmental psychology (Peck, Brodish, Malanchuk, Banerjee, & Eccles, 2014). The majority of the research centers on the developmental process in which African Americans, in particular, move from an absence of knowledge or internalizing negative concepts about their race to the integration of knowledge of their race as part of their overall identity (Cross, 1978).

Cross (1978) identified a developmental theory describing the progression through the process of "becoming Black". The first stage is described as Pre-Encounter. At this stage,

African Americans either internalized negative stereotypes about being African American from the larger society or do not consider their race as a component of their overall identity (Cross, 1978). The second stage is described as the Encounter stage. At this stage, the individual has an experience in which his or her race becomes salient. This experience may be personal in nature such as experiencing some type of discrimination. The experience may also be indirect or societal in nature such as the assassination of a civil rights leader. This experience allows the individual to be open to new interpretations of how his or her racial membership impacts his or her central identity. The third stage is characterized by a voracious attempt to gain information about what it means to be “Black”. In addition to the seeking and consuming of information, the individual develops an all-or-none, absolute concept of what it means to be “Black”. This stage, defined as Immersion-Emersion, encompasses things associated with what the individual has deemed as “Blackness” and be considered as ideal. Things or people who associate with anything other than this category are deemed undesirable, thus setting up a dynamic of “black” or “anti-black” (Cross, 1978). The fourth stage, Internalization, is a return to equilibrium for the individual. During this stage, there is a “resolution of conflict” (Cross, 1978). The individual moves from simply viewing him or herself based solely on racial membership to incorporating this racial membership into his or her overall identity. The last stage, Internalization-Commitment, is characterized by individuals who now are attempting to integrate personal values and beliefs into practices valued by their racial reference group (Cross, 1978). For example, individuals within this stage may look to work with their local school districts to help support academic achievements for African American students through cultural diversity training.

Definition of Ethnic Identity as it Relates to Ethnic-Racial Socialization

The distinction between ethnic identity and racial identity is murky at best. However, when looking up the definition of “ethnic” there is some cross-over in the definition of a person’s race, but with an emphasis on culture (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ethnic>, 2014). This emphasis on culture is a major component of ethnic socialization. Again, similar to the concept of racial socialization, in order to understand this framework, the tenets and historical contexts of ethnic identity development have to be explored.

Ethnic identity has many components that help to envelop the overall construct. Many researchers consider the psychological associations of belonging to an ethnic group as the key component of ethnic identity (Phinney & Victor, 1995). Tajfel (1981) defines ethnic identity as part of an individual’s social identity, “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership”. Furthermore, other authors focus on observable, tangible components of culture such as language, explicit ethnic group history, and values of their ethnic group (Rogler, Cooney, & Ortiz, 1980). Although these are often considered to be the fundamental components in which ethnic identity is measured, there is still the question of the process in which an individual’s ethnic identity is developed.

Phinney (1995), like Cross (1978), composed a developmental model of ethnic identity development that progresses through stages. The three-stage cycle centers on Marcia’s ego identity development, which essentially proposes that adolescents develop ideas about their progression into adulthood in relation to occupation and ideas based on the degree of exploration/exposure and commitment to an adult identity (Marcia, 1967). Phinney (1995) utilizes this continuum of exploration and commitment to describe the varying stages through which individuals migrate in developing an ethnic identity. The first stage is based on a lack of

exploration related to their unique ethnicity (Phinney, 1995). At the initial stage, individuals either failed to engage in exploration because, as yet, interest in their ethnic group was absent or because they inherently accepted the view of others related to the ethnic group imposed on them (Phinney, 1995). This first stage, identified as the unexamined ethnic identity, means that the individual absorbed both positive messages from parents and their ethnic community without reflection or through negative messages from the dominant culture about their respective ethnic group (Phinney, 1995). At any rate, their notion of what it means to be a part of their ethnic group has not been under much personal consideration.

The second stage identified by Phinney (1995), similar to Cross's Encounter and Immersion/Emersion stage, entails the active investigation of information related to their ethnicity (Cross, 1978). As identified by Cross (1978), Phinney's (1995) stage, labeled "ethnic identity search", is initiated by some event that the individual experiences propelling them into active involvement in an explicit immersion into tangible identifiers of their ethnic group. The individual explicitly begins to explore and gather information through engaging in cultural practices, visiting ethnic educational sites and reviews literature specific to their ethnic group. Although not specifically indicated as a hallmark of this stage, individuals in this stage may begin actively to reject elements of the dominant culture in preference for their own (Phinney, 1995).

The last stage is that of an achieved status (Phinney, 1995). Individuals in this stage move beyond the physical and tangible trappings of their respective ethnic group and begin internalizing the values and beliefs, not as others impressed upon them, but rather as a reflection of how their ethnic identity is a part of their global identity. Conversely, to Cross' theory of racial identity development, this stage of achieved identity does not necessarily translate into a

“higher degree of ethnic involvement” (Phinney, 1995). Rather, it may prompt the individual to engage in a cyclical feature of continuing to gather and re-examine the role of their ethnic identity in their lives (Phinney, 1995).

Research within the last decade proved to show that the attempted finite line between the definition of racial socialization and ethnic socialization has been blurred. In fact, even when some authors define one or the other, there is still the presence of the sister concept. The usefulness of the combined concepts can be found because they include both social implications of an individual’s racial makeup as well as the cultural underpinning associated with his or her ethnic identity. For many African Americans, the social implications of being African American and cultural aspects are so intertwined that they cannot be separated (Hughes et al, 2006).

Ethnic-Racial Messages

The means in which messages are transferred from parent to child come in many forms. The types of messages that are transmitted from parent to child can vary, based on many factors (White-Johnson, Ford, & Seller, 2010). One of these factors includes the age of the parent (Thornton, Chatters, Taylor, & Allen, 1990). Older parents likely have a larger fund of knowledge to pull from in regard to experiences related to ethnic-racial identity both in positive and negative situations. Not only do older parents have the advantage of time and experience, they are also more likely to be further along in regard to the ethnic-racial identity continuum; therefore, they place more emphasis on race and ethnicity as part of their global, central theme of socialization and child rearing (Thornton et al, 1990).

The sex of the parent, also, is likely to impact the type, intensity, and modality of messages sent to children. In the majority of the studies investigating ethnic-racial socialization, mothers were overwhelmingly the parent utilized to measure the types of ethnic-racial messages delivered

(Hughes et al., 2006). Mothers are researched in the area of racial socialization because they are typically considered to be the primary caregivers (Priest, Walton, White, Kowal, Baker, & Paradies, 2014). Mothers are involved in the day-to-day child-rearing practices; this is the setting in which conversations about race/ethnicity are shared (Quintana & McKown, 2008). The conversations can come out of reviews of the child's day, a particular experience in the media, or within the context of everyday activities such as cooking dinner. In most of these cases, the mother is the parent engaging in this didactic conversation. Mothers are not the sole contributors to this experience; fathers and their ethnic-racial socialization practices have also been studied, though to a lesser degree (Cooper, Neblett, Smalls-Glover, & Banks, 2014). Although there is minimal research that explicitly investigates racial socialization patterns with fathers, available research supports similar comparisons to racial socialization intensity levels between African American mothers and fathers (Cooper, Neblett, Smalls-Glover & Banks, 2014). African American fathers are just as likely to engage in positive ethnic-racial socialization practices that emphasize the importance of preparation for discriminatory practices as a psychological buffer, actively seeking knowledge about their African American heritage, and engaging in cultural practices that are viewed as uniquely African American.

The degree of emphasis in which these messages are shared between parent and child are heavily influenced by a number of characteristics, with the parents own level of ethnic-racial identity development as a prominent factor. The salience of race for the parent likely determines the salience of significance as part of global socialization and child rearing. Naturally, parents who identify closely with their race/ethnic group are more likely to share the importance of race and ethnicity in everyday life with their children.

Hughes and Chen (1997) also identified specific historical parental characteristics that impact the primary use of positive or negative ethnic socialization messages. As socialization is contextual in nature with the intersection of many systems: intimate, extended, and chronological in nature. There is an element of social timing within an historical context that must be considered (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Therefore, it is not surprising to find that many of the ethnic-racial socialization messages transferred from parent to child are a product of the messages that the parent has received during his or her own childhood (Hughes & Chen, 1997). Positive messages beget positive messages. There is a less clear connection in relation to the origin of negative messages. These negative messages can come from parents who were socialized in a variety of ways; however, the strongest correlation has been between parents who were socialized to be overtly aware of discrimination were those who were more likely to engage in share negative messages (Hughes & Chen, 1997). Although this correlation was found to be significant in this previous study, the presence of this mode of socialization was the most infrequent.

Types and Content of Messages

Research has identified global characteristics of the types of messages that African American parents use when socializing their children in regard to what it means to be African American (Hughes and Chen, 1997). These messages, by far, are either positive or negative in nature, or emphasized or not (Thomas & Speight, 1999). Positive messages stress racial heritage and buffering for future or experienced discrimination. Positive messages also concentrate on the importance of valuing diversity among all racial and ethnic groups. The shift is from categorizing others as a whole to valuing a person as an individual. This is vastly different from a color blindness approach which seeks to describe equality through diminishing the impact of

diversity (Plaut & Goren, 2009). Last, negative messages regarding racial socialization typically stress the importance or preference to remain in social relationships with in-group members rather than those from other ethnic groups. It also emphasizes the need to be cautious in interactions with members from other ethnic groups (White-Johnson, Ford & Seller, 2010). Four explicit types of messages, both positive and negative in content, that have been extensively researched are identified as cultural socialization, preparation for bias, egalitarianism, and promotion of mistrust (Hughes, Rivas-Drake, Witherspoon, & West-Bey, 2009).

Cultural Socialization

The primary goal of cultural socialization as defined by Hughes, Rivas, Foust, Hagelskamp, Gersick, and Way (2008) is to convey the knowledge and importance of specific traditions, historical contributions, and heritage about the parent's and child's racial/ethnic group. These messages may be explicit or implicit in nature. African Americans, in particular, are likely to engage in cultural socialization practices in very much formalized ways (Hughes & Chen, 1997). A formal expression of cultural socialization include activities such as reading historical literature about African Americans who have made social, academic, and innovative contributions to society. Parents build their own personal libraries for their children to reference. Items may include: flashcards with historical information, historical nonfiction recounting important African American historical figures, and movies containing similar content. They may also include visiting historical sites or museums that focus on African or African American history. These practices may also include purchasing and reading books with African American main characters. One of the goals of this continued explicit exposure to these activities, conversations, and literature is to instill ethnic-racial pride (Hughes & Chen, 1997). Parents seek to make a connection between the historical figures' struggles directly to the child and how the

child is a part of that lineage (Sanders & Thompson, 1994). Parents may socialize their children to value their African American heritage by participating in African American cultural events or festivals (e.g. Kwanza). In addition to particular shared experiences, African American parents also utilize material items to emphasize the importance of their African American heritage. For example, as part of a mixed design longitudinal study of families in New York City from ethnically, as well as socioeconomically varied families, it was found that African American parents and adolescents almost exclusively reported on the presence of Afrocentric or ethnic artifacts as part of formal ways of engaging in cultural socialization (Hughes et al., 2008). Perhaps one of the reasons that this particular modality of cultural socialization is unique to African Americans is due to their lack of cultural identity related to language. Many other ethnic groups utilize a shared language to their original nation of origin as part of their ethnic socialization process, as retention and proficiency in their language of origin is closely tied to their ethnic identity. Phinney, Romero, Nava, and Huang (2001) found that this retention and proficiency in the language is an important aspect of cultural maintenance in their researched populations of Armenian, Vietnamese, and Mexican families.

Although explicit messages of cultural socialization are taught, many messages related to ethnic socialization are transferred through implicit means, such as immersion in traditional categories associated with cultural practices. These include cultural music, traditional holiday practices, and consuming and preparing ethnic foods (Hughes & Chen, 1997). These messages are likely to be shared during everyday conversations, if there is a formal conversation at all. Rather than a conversation, this form of cultural socialization involves consistent exposure to the traditions that relay the importance of the activity and relationship to ones' ethnic identity (Hughes & Chen, 1997). Furthermore, African American mothers may promote the preservation

of cultural tenets such as “respect for elders, family closeness, spirituality and religion, and soulfulness” through indirect methods (Hughes et al., 2008).

Preparation for Bias

Another primary modality of ethnic-racial socialization is the transmission of messages that deal with the inevitable encountering of discrimination by African Americans. Parents actively and indirectly engage in socialization practices that highlight awareness of racial bias towards African Americans. These biases include a historical belief that African Americans, particularly males, are plagued with drug addiction, violence, and viewed as uneducated, and uncivilized (Tomes, 2013). In highlighting these situations, parents attempt to provide coping strategies for times and situations when their children encounter such incidents. This preparation is rooted in racial identity development models (Cross, 1978) and ethnic identity models (Phinney, 1990).

African American parents and children are more likely to report delivering and receiving higher levels of messages related to the preparation for bias than any other ethnic group (Hughes et al., 2008). The contexts in which these conversations take place are more likely to be based on an explicit situation or conversation rather than on passive socialization through exposure. These conversations are either preemptive in nature or are based on a particular incident. When questioned about preemptive conversations regarding preparation for bias, many parents report that they cannot recall a specific situation but rather, they consider ethnic-racial socialization practices regarding awareness of bias to be part of their general practice for ethnic-racial socialization (Hughes et al., 2006). These conversations are related to how other ethnic groups may view African Americans as second-class citizens or devalue them as people. For example, parents may reference how the media portrays African American males as dangerous through

news accounts, and through perpetual reinforcement in entertainment such as hip-hop videos and movies for African American adult males, as well as African American adolescent males (Gayle, 2014; Ward, 2004). Furthermore, African American females must combat media images that portray them as hyper-sexualized beings that focus on appearance (Gordon, 2008). This representation of African American females has to be tempered with the knowledge of the chronological/historical context of this depiction of African American women as “jezebels” from a period of exploitation of African Americans, post slavery (West, 1995). These negative stereotypes are openly discussed between parent and child. In addition to simply identifying what types of negative beliefs and practices others may display, African American parents may specifically attempt to counteract negative societal messages by discussing positive aspects of being African American to thwart internalization of such stereotypes.

Messages regarding preparation for bias can also be encountered by dealing with an explicit incident in which parents attempt to help their children cope with the fall-out of such situations. On these occasions, parents seek to provide guidance on how to deal with these situations in the future and process the potentially emotionally charged incident. Strategies for dealing with these incidents may range from engaging in specific role-playing activities to practicing coping skills to ignore the event or negative comments of others (Hughes et al, 2008).

Egalitarianism

Egalitarianism is often referred to as “parental beliefs and practices that emanate from a desire for children to appreciate the values and experiences of all racial groups, and to notice people’s individual qualities rather than their racial group memberships” (Hughes et al., 2006). There is a shift in focusing on how differences separate people to create hierarchies within society. Rather, the shift is to demonstrate how differences in ethnic groups are a source of

beauty to be appreciated. The focus is on the individual characteristics possessed, rather than on how the individual is similar and represents stereotypes of an ethnic-racial group. The nature of interaction with others is based on individuality rather than automatic referencing. This mode of ethnic-racial socialization is viewed more like a lens for general socialization that also applies to an ethnic-racial context (Hughes et al, 2006). There is an emphasis on being generally open to experiences and engagement with others based on the here and now. Essentially, the interaction and person is judged on face value without the presence of prejudice.

African American parents conscientiously engage in this form of ethnic-racial socialization by exposure to other ethnic groups (Howard, Rosen & Barbarin, 2013). This may include enrolling their children in school settings with an ethnically diverse population. These parents seek out school settings that are not just ethnically and racially diverse statistically, but also promote ideals similar to their own. Such practices as having a multicultural curriculum and positive behavior plans such as “No Place For Hate“ programs sponsored by the Anti-Defamation League (<http://philadelphia.adl.org/noplaceforhate/>), which focuses on combating a number of “isms” support these types of parental egalitarian messages.

In other studies, egalitarian messages are intertwined with preparation for bias messages. These parents may refer to a situation in which there is potential for discrimination, referencing the need for an egalitarian view of others (Hughes et al., 2006). This correction in behavior infers an egalitarian preference of interaction with others. Furthermore, this value is related to how the child should interact with others and be viewed by others. For example, a mother may state that rather than judging other people in the way many view African Americans (as a collective group), the child should view others as individuals. This comment contains both a cautionary tale as well as expectations for individualized treatment of others.

Promotion of Mistrust

The last category of ethnic-racial socialization is related to the transferring of messages that caution children in their interactions with members of other ethnic groups. It promotes and supports segregation and the need to be on guard when interacting with others considered to be outside one's ethnic-racial group (Hughes & Chen, 1997). Preparation for bias messages and promotion of mistrust messages have some similarities. The major similarity between the messages is that they typically contain some element of acknowledgment of inevitable discrimination. They also emphasize how members of other ethnic-racial groups become the creation of barriers to success and further development. Although there is a historical context to which these statements are true, parents do not provide any sort of reactive message to this identified institutionalized discrimination (Caughy, O'Campo, Nettles & Lohrfink, 2006). The major contrast between the two is that when parents typically engage in and utilize the preparation for bias messages, there is an element of teaching that takes place. The parents provide coping strategies about how to deal with negative interactions. Messages that promote distrust lack this feature (Caughy, O'Campo, Nettles & Lohrfink, 2006).

Across studies, promotion of mistrust messages have been found to be used minimally by most ethnic groups (Thornton et al., 1990). In a qualitative study investigating racial socialization messages used by fifteen African American parents of five and six-year-old children, parents' utilized messages supporting social distance and defensive mistrust composed only 33% of messages aimed at preparing children for racism. This is in contrast to 40% of messages that provided specific strategies for being able to adapt in heterogeneous settings and 60% of messages supporting awareness of ethnic-racial barriers (Coard, Wallace, Stevenson, & Brotman, 2004).

Developmental Delivery of Messages

African American parents communicate information regarding ethnicity across the developmental span. The age of the child likely will predict the type of message utilized. Across multiple studies (Hughes et al., 2006), cultural socialization has been found to be the most prominent mode of ethnic-racial socialization. It occurs throughout the developmental child-rearing span at the highest rates. This likely occurs because it places the least amount of concentration on social-cognitive functioning (Umaña-Taylor & Fine, 2004). It is much easier and developmentally appropriate to expose children to artifacts of African American culture than to grapple with emotionally charging instances of discrimination. Additionally, a focus on positive associations is likely to be utilized as a coping strategy for possible discrimination. Having this line of ethnic-racial socialization provides psychological support to combat discrimination.

Quintana (1998) proposes a theory about how ethnic and racial identification and understanding develops through childhood from preschool age to adolescence. The first level emerges between the ages of three and six and is marked by an awareness of ethnicity based on physical characteristics such as skin color (Quintana, 1998). Ethnic-racial preferences at this time are absorbed by children through implicit and indirect methods such as parent modeling and attitudes found within the larger society as a whole. These messages are the strongest when parental attitudes regarding ethnic-racial socialization match those of larger society. It is possible that one of the reasons that cultural socialization is a common form of ethnic-racial socialization at this age has to do with the pairing of cultural events and people with positive messages.

The second stage of Quintana's (1998) developmental model takes place between the ages of six and ten. During this stage, children begin to link social practices with a particular ethnicity. For example, they may begin to associate certain music or food with a particular ethnic group. A shift from physical forms or indicators transforms into cultural indicators as identifiers for ethnic-racial identification. These associations are more permanent due to cognitive functioning related to concrete reasoning (Quintana, 1998). During this stage, Hughes and Chen (1997) report an increase in preparation for bias messages between the ages of five through eight with similar rates between ages nine through eleven. Perhaps the increase in these particular messages is that children are becoming aware of cultural differences, compared with physical differences. This increase in sophistication may be the first indication of the social relevance of ethnicity and race (Quintana, 1998).

Quintana's (1998) third stage takes place between the ages of ten and fourteen. Children during this stage begin to become aware of the micro associations between ethnicity/race and societal views based on group membership. Children move beyond cultural aspects of belonging to a racial and ethnic group, such as cuisine and tradition, and move to increasingly refined nonliteral features (Quintana, 1998). Children within this stage can begin to differentiate how complex constructs such as socioeconomic status are different between ethnic-racial groups. Children are also able to identify how belonging to a particular ethnic group can impact friendships. It is during this time period in child development that children begin to seek out relationships with similar, other ethnic-racial minority students (Tatum, 1997). When viewing the types of messages that parents send during this time, ethnic-racial socialization messages are likely to come at the highest frequency (Marshall, 1995). Children are beginning to interpret information from a variety of sources. Parents likely increase their delivery of messages to

continue to provide an environment of insulation and preservation of positive messages delivered throughout child rearing.

The final stage of ethnic-racial cognition takes place during adolescence (Quintana, 1998). The shift from receiving messages from a variety of sources transforms into the child actively seeking information regarding their ethnic/racial identity. During this stage, the goal is for children to move beyond verbal rehearsal of messages provided by others to project their own views about ethnicity and race. For many children, this means that they are within the immersion/emersion stage of racial identity development (Cross, 1978) or ethnic identity search stage (Phinney, 1990). The ultimate goal is typically the expression of egalitarian views in which ethnic/racial identity is part of the child's global sense of self. Egalitarian messages delivered by parents are the eventual goal of ethnic-racial identity development (Quintana, 1998).

African American Students' Educational Experiences

African American students often underperform, compared with majority ethnic member students; this phenomenon is frequently referred to as the achievement gap (Davis-Kean & Jager, 2014). This trend has complex origins rooted in the historical context of unequal educational opportunities, socio-political oppression, and tremendous gaps in economic earnings (Ladson-Billings, 2006). These barriers contribute to 37.5 percent of African American children under age 18 living in poverty and 45 percent living in concentrated poverty (Child Poverty in the U.S., 2013). As recent as 2015, African American students perform an average of twenty-six points lower than their White counterparts on reading standardized assessments at the eighth-grade level (No significant changes in racial/ethnic score gaps, n.d.). Similar performance discrepancies are also observed in math, with an average difference of thirty-two points between

White and African American students (No significant changes in racial/ethnic score gaps, n.d.). Over time, African American students tend to have less mobility in achieving high scores and are more likely to move in a downward trajectory from the third to eighth grade (McDonough, 2015). This trajectory extends to the likelihood of completion of high school with a diploma and dropout rates for African American students. Stetser and Stillwell (2014) report that during the 2011-2012 school year, the average graduation rate for White students ranged from eighty-four to eighty-six percent. Black students reportedly graduated at only sixty-seven to sixty-nine percentage rates. This discrepancy is alarming, considering the national average for graduation rates at the time was eighty percent (Stetser & Stillwell, 2014). Discrepancies in math achievement between Black and White students are evidenced across urban, suburban, and rural communities (Lleras, 2008).

The impact of a growing discrepancy in achievement has both immediate and long-term effects. An immediate impact is related to performances on college admission tests such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), a widely accepted standardized assessment tool used for college admissions and prediction of freshman grade point average (Young, 2004). With only approximately 1,000 of accredited colleges and universities using alternative methods other than standardized assessments or “test flexible” policies, the use of standardized assessments continues to be a cornerstone of admission policies (James, 2017). Young’s (2004) review of 29 studies between 1974 and 2000 including a sample of approximately 100,000 students suggests that performances of SAT verbal assessments as predictors for freshman GPAs produce differential validity coefficients of White and Black students of .35 and .25, respectively. A greater discrepancy in prediction between high school and freshman GPA was observed between White and Black students of .45 and .28, respectively (Young, 2001). With such poor potential

outcomes related to performance on standardized assessment and later performance, it is incumbent upon African American parents to socialize their children for academic success.

Stereotype Threat

A core reason that African American parents actively use racial socialization messages is to combat stereotype threat. Stereotype threat is defined as a “situation in which a member of a group fears that his or her performance will confirm an existing negative performance stereotype” (Wasserberg, 2014). This theory has historically been applied to analyzing the perceptions of those in minority groups as it relates to performance on evaluative tasks, particularly intelligence tests (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Although initial relationships focused on stereotype threat and intelligence, the body of research has grown to include perceptions across race, gender, and lifespan. Spencer et al., (1999), researched the impact of stereotype threat on women and their performance in areas of math. Their research suggested that eliciting stereotypes regarding diminished math performance based on gender contributed to lower math performance in women. Similar findings that mature-age employees who experience stereotype threat based on negative stereotypes (e.g. inflexible, grumpy) are less likely to be engaged in the workplace (Kulik, Perera, & Cregan, 2016).

Recognition of stereotype threat is a complex task requiring the ability to take on another’s perspective and metacognition. In order for stereotype threat to take place, three conditions must be fulfilled. First, the individual must be aware of relevant stereotypes (Wegmann, 2017). For example, an African American student must be aware of the stereotype that African Americans are considered intellectually inferior to their White counterparts (Aronson, Fried, & Good, 2002). The second condition is that the individual must personally identify with the importance of the assigned task (Wegmann, 2017). Intelligence is widely

regarded as a well-used measure of predicting academic achievement. Last, there must be an evaluative context for the task (Wegmann, 2017). The evaluative context can be real or perceived. It is the evaluative aspect of the conditions of stereotype threat that determines the type of threat experienced: self as the target or the group as the target of being evaluated.

“Under self-concept threat, a person worries that his or her performance will confirm that a stereotype is personally true” (Wagmann, 2017). The individual may ask, “Is what I am doing mean that the stereotype is true about me?” When acquiescing to this type of stereotype threat, one may see a child who may be presented with material above his or her ability level give up because she is not “smart”. However, the view of not being “smart” must be within a context in which a negative stereotype has been elicited. These situations can be found in many high schools in America where African American students are in lower track core curriculum classes and relatively absent in advanced placement classes, compared with their White and Asian counterparts (Moore & Slate, 2008).

The second type of stereotype threat in which the individual feels judged by others can come from a within-group or out-group member. In both cases, the individual feels that his or her own reputation is being judged by others as conforming to a negative stereotype (Wagmann, 2017). For example, an African American student may be laughing loudly with a group of peers as an elderly African American woman from his or her family church passes by and shakes her head in what the student deems as disapproval. If being positively viewed by elders is a concept that is central to the youngster’s identity, he or she may feel that his or her actions mean “She thinks I am like the rest of the Black hoodlum kids”. The identical experience can occur with an out-group member (e.g. middle age, White man) and the child may have the same perception. In

both cases, he or she feels that he or she is confirming the negative stereotypes for both onlookers.

Stereotype theory can also be applied to group behavior. Although similar to the self-evaluative stereotype threats described previously, the focus for group evaluative threats shifts from how the individual feels he or she will be seen to that of, to what degree do behaviors from their representative group embody negative stereotypes (Wagmann, 2017). Group concept threat is defined by the individual viewing behaviors of his or her representative group embodying negative stereotypes (Wagmann, 2017). They themselves judge the group. For example, students are assigned to work in groups to complete a project. Perhaps a group of African American students are working together and plan to present their project in the form of a rap. Another African American student may view their presentation as “subpar” because it is not presented in a traditional manner. In this case, the singular African American student is passing judgment on the group, based on stereotypes that African American students do not take academic tasks seriously. Group reputation threat—in group or outgroup- would take place when the singular student may be concerned that a teacher will rate the rap presentation poorly, based on negative stereotypes.

Academic Socialization and African American Attitudes/Expectations

Academic socialization is similar to that of ethnic-racial socialization because the goal is to instill particular values and practices through the transfer of messages from parents to children (Taylor, Clayton, & Rowley, 2004). Its specific intent is to share expectations about academic performance based on parental expectations. Some researchers suggest that academic socialization takes place within the greater umbrella of ethnic-racial socialization for African Americans (Taylor, Clayton, & Rowley). These messages are shared early on from parent to

child and have long-range impact (Davis-Kean, 2005). Although ethnic-racial peers may influence the day to day academic practices of African American children, particularly adolescents, the messages shared by parents related to academic expectations, ability, and eventual academic attainment can influence long-range goals such as attending college (Davis-Kean, 2005). When children believe that their parents value the importance of performing well and support educational attainment, they internalize the global importance of education, particularly as it is associated with future economic opportunities (Darensbourg & Blake, 2014).

Style in Communication Based on Parenting Styles

When reviewing research on the parental impact and academic achievement for their children, parenting styles routinely surface as predictive factors of measurable components of academic achievement (e.g. grade point average, grades in reading, grades in math) (Hill, 2001). Historically speaking, the three major parenting styles associated with this literature are related to authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive styles (Baumrind, 1991). The majority of research supports the efficacy of an authoritative parenting style (Holden & Miller, 1999). Authoritative parenting styles are child-rearing practices that are centered on developing a competent child through a balance of engagement through verbal exchange and encouraging independence (Baumrind, 1991). This nurturing approach is set against a backdrop of clear expectations for performance and behavior. Authoritarian parents' goals are also to shape their children's behaviors but in a different fashion. Authoritarian parents shape behavior through high demands as well, but do not engage in the same level of verbal discourse with their children. Rather, they take a "do as I say" approach. In contrast to the guiding principles used by authoritative parents, authoritarian parents seek to control their children (Baumrind, 1991).

Research has differed in regard to determining the primary parenting style utilized by African American parents. Research attempting to answer this question often has many confounding variables that make it difficult to isolate whether or not a particular parenting style is based on ethnicity alone or is a combination of other variables such as parental educational attainment and income (Smith, Atkins, & Connell, 2003). Steinberg, Dornbusch, and Brown (1992) suggest that African American youth in impoverished, urban settings are more likely to benefit academically when parents use an authoritarian approach. The benefits of this approach likely serve as a protective factor. African American children in these environments are at risk for a myriad of social difficulties that are all too well associated with poverty. By providing an environment of strict adherence to rules, parents are likely sheltering them from negative influences and focusing their attention on academic demands (Taylor, Hinton, & Wilson, 1995). Still, other researchers have found that there is relatively no difference between authoritarian and authoritative parenting outcomes for African American youth (Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992). The African American students in this study were from an urban school setting in Milwaukee and suburban schools in California. The variability in African American participants may have accounted for the difference in outcomes. Later still, Taylor, Hinton, and Wilson (1995) found that African American parents who utilized authoritative practices had children with better grades, compared with those that used authoritarian practices. The geographic sample for this population was not explicitly identified in this study.

Connection between Ethnic-Racial Socialization and Academic Socialization

Much like ethnic-racial socialization, the origin of parental attitudes towards education and its importance comes from both historical and personal experiences (Taylor, Clayton, & Rowley, 2004). Parents bring their own school experience to the table when preparing their

children for academic success. These experiences will color what messages they share with their child. If they have had negative experiences, they may devalue education. Conversely, they may value education because they understand how their relative lack of education has impacted their lives (Davis-Keans, 2005). In regards to the historical context of African Americans and education, a system of oppression that is certainly intertwined with the availability of adequate educational systems for many African Americans impacts academic socialization practices (Friend, Hunter, & Fletcher, 2010). However, even when steeped in the quagmire of inequity, many African American parents continue to value the importance of education, even if they do not actively participate in tangible ways (e.g. parental involvement in the school setting) (Taylor, Clayton, & Rowley, 2004).

Smith, Atkins, and Connell's (2003) research explicitly investigated how ethnic-racial socialization practices of parents' and teachers' support of positive ethnic-racial identity, and neighborhood "connectedness" impact children's academic achievement as measured by academic outcomes. Results from this study showed that children whose parents engaged in positive cultural socialization practices that emphasize pride in the child's African American heritage were more likely to receive better grades in core content areas and on standardized achievement tests (Smith, Atkins, & Connell, 2003). In contrast, it was found that children whose parents primarily utilized preparation for bias and promotion of mistrust messages were more likely to have lower achievement scores. The difference in academic performance related to the positive self-reflective messages, compared with negative messages is likely a function of stereotype threat. Stereotype threat occurs when a member of a particular group experiences anxiety about the possibility of fulfilling a negative stereotype associated with his or her membership in that group (Steele & Aaronson, 1995). When parents utilize these particular

messages, they are essentially putting their children “on alert” for the potential, if not inevitable, negative treatment and lowered expectations of being African American. This may cause anxiety and lead to poor performance. It may also lead to an oppositional identity (Murray, Neal-Barnett, Demmings, & Stadulis, 2012).

Racial socialization practices not only impact a child’s general ability to maneuver through society, but also specifically aid in his or her ability to navigate through school (Hughes, Witherspoon, Rivas-Drake, & West-Bey, 2009). Particular types of messages have been linked to such outcomes as academic efficacy and academic engagement (Hughes et al., 2009). Specifically, cultural socialization messages tend to be positively correlated with a child’s belief that he or she is capable of successfully completing academic tasks (Hughes et al., 2009). Cultural socialization practices have also been linked to increased reports of academic engagement (Hughes et al., 2009). Students who have positive regard for their ethnicity and connectedness to their ethnic group either as a part of “total identity” or minority identity status tend to have higher grade point averages in adolescence (Oyserman, Kimmelmeier, Fryberg, Brosh, & Hart-Johnson, 2003). Smith, Atkins, & Connell (2003) found similar findings indicating racial socialization messages transmitting higher racial-ethnic pride was related to higher achievement as measured by grades and standardized test scores in African American fourth graders. These findings underscore the importance of school systems’ understandings of the utility of considering the relevance of promoting cultural socialization practices within the school setting.

The Inclusion of African American Fathers in Research

Historically, research connecting racial/ethnic socialization practices to various student outcomes have focused on maternal or mixed (maternal and paternal) perspectives (Kim & Hill,

2015). Mothers are typically considered to be primarily socializers related to general social norms. Research has often focused on maternal input due to a perceived and actual diminished participation of fathers' explicit experiences (Kim & Hill, 2015). There is a bias based on the high percentage of single, maternal primary caregiving homes in the African American community, suggesting that nonresidential fathers do not significantly impact socialization practices (Brown, Linver, & Evans, 2010). Social and popular commentary would have some believe that African American fathers and father-like figures are primarily absent from youths' lives (Lindsay, 2015). Contrary to misguided beliefs, research that seeks to include residential and/or nonresidential, African American fathers' and father-like figures' influence provide that their impact on racial socialization does have positive outcomes (Cooper et al, 2015).

In their review of over three thousand studies between 1980 and 2013, Kim and Hill (2015) found that only 52 explicitly included fathers' impact of parental involvement as it correlates to student academic achievement. This is particularly relevant when expanding research including African Americans. In a review of the 52 studies, Kim and Hill (2015) identified that 90% of the research available was conducted with racial majority (e.g. Caucasian) participants. The remaining 10% were conducted with a mix of African American and Latino fathers. The meta-analysis review of the literature highlights the magnitude of the missing perspectives of African American fathers (Hofferth, 2003).

Empowerment and Transparency of a Qualitative Approach

As mentioned previously, a qualitative approach provides a gap in the literature regarding the experiences of African American fathers' perspectives on racial socialization practices, definitions of academic success and intersectionality between the two. Although racial socialization messages can be categorized into static definitions through surveys (Hughes &

Chen, 1997), the lived experience through the words of fathers themselves are dynamic (Stephanie, Scyatta, Howard, & Laurie. 2004). The nuances of delivery of messages can be best analyzed through the actual words of participants. Parenting techniques are influenced and delivered through an historical, individual, societal, and interpersonal context (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). A qualitative approach allows fathers to share the potentially integrated nature of their parenting experiences and beliefs about academic success. Through the fathers' words, this study will give them the voice that is often minimally available in quantitative research (Kim & Hill, 2015).

Chapter 3: Methods

Overview of Research Design

Qualitative research provides investigators with a unique method for “hearing the stories” of participants. By allowing those who actually live a phenomenon to tell their experience through their own words provides a rich context in which to understand an occurrence. This approach, as it relates to the current topic, provides a particular advantage. As indicated previously, African American fathers’ perspectives, in isolation, are rarely captured regarding specific practices of racial socialization (Lindsay, 2015). When their perspectives or observations are considered, it is typically through the dyad of the mother and father (Kim & Hill, 2015). Using a phenomenological theory approach, in particular, allows researchers to take what may seem as typical experiences to the participant and analyze them as truly complex incidents. It bridges the experiences across a group of individuals to capture similarities and differences of how and what they experience (Davidsen, 2013). Through increased description, the researcher is able to determine the true essence of the phenomenon. Additionally, a phenomenological approach allows the researcher to be “present” with the participant as he or she explains his or her story. There is no pre derived expectations for particular outcomes, but rather the investigator follows the participant’s lead. The investigator uses him or herself as a tool during the interviewing process as themes emerge over time across participant responses (Davidsen, 2013). Using a qualitative approach to researching racial socialization practices provides an avenue for empowerment for African American fathers in a way that allows their voices to be heard.

Participants

The participants in this study were self-identified African American fathers of children attending public, private, and parochial schools. Fathers, through biological or adoptive/foster means, were required to have a child or children ranging between the ages of five and twenty-one. The age of five was selected as the basal point because many children enter a formal school setting for the first time at this age. This is likely when fathers begin to discuss academic expectations as their children are faced with clear formal academic experiences for the first time. Exclusionary factors include individuals who were not willing to be audiotaped; those unavailable for the entire time allotment of approximately an hour for the interview, and those that identified with a primary ethnic identity other than African American. Inclusionary factors included those that self-identify as male currently and historically, and have participated in child-rearing practices. They could participate in child-rearing practices as part of a unified dyad, co-parenting, or as a single parent. The fathers had to have provided a substantial contribution towards child rearing for at least five years (See Appendix E).

Research Methods

Participants were initially recruited through the use of social media pages and membership meetings for African American parent advocacy groups. None of the local African American parent advocacy groups responded to outreach. Permission to post a flyer (See Appendix A) and address the parent advocacy groups (See Appendix C) was requested from advocacy group board members (Appendix A). An online African American father parent advocacy group and social group for African American school psychologists responded and a flyer was posted on their Facebook pages (Appendix B). Contact information for the responsible investigator was provided. A brief screening interview was conducted to determine if

prospective participants met inclusionary and exclusionary requirements. The researcher provided a general overview of the purpose of the study (See Appendix D).

Data collection methods were explained as well, regarding the collection of responses verbatim through the use of audiotaping, transcription, coding and analysis of presenting themes through the use of a semi-structured interview. Time obligations were shared, indicating an approximately hour-long interview. All interviews were conducted over a web-based conference call line. All interviews were conducted in anonymity through the use of pseudonyms to protect the identity of participants. Saturation was reached at 16 participants. Saturation is essentially the point in data collection in which no new information is yielded (Davidsen, 2013).

Measures and Materials

A semi-structured interview was used to gain insight into African American fathers' methods of racial-ethnic socialization practices, the definition of academic success, and any possible intersection between the two (Appendix E). Open-ended questions were employed to gain in-depth information and prefaced by the following introductory remarks:

I will be asking you a series of questions today and I am hoping that you will reflect on experiences that you have had in your past. There are no right or wrong answers; I just want to hear about your experiences and your honest feelings in response to them. I encourage you to tell me as much as you remember and are comfortable revealing. There is no set number of things that I want you to tell me, just please speak to what comes to mind when I pose a question to you. Please let me know if you have any questions at any point of this interview or if you wish to discontinue. Your responses will be audiotaped, but no information about you that could reveal your identity will be kept.

I would like to ask you a few questions to make sure you meet the inclusion criteria for the interview and study.

1. Are you 18 years old of age or above?

2. Do you self-identify as African American or Black American?
3. Are you a father of a child or children between the ages 5 and 21?
4. Have you provided a substantial contribution towards parenting for at least five years?
5. Are you willing to be audiotaped?
6. Do you reside in the United States?

Do you want me to use your actual name or a pseudonym? Are you ready to begin?

The questions that will be included in the interview are as follows:

Interview Questions

1. Describe your racial and ethnic identification.
- 1b. What does this mean to you and how did you come up with these views?
2. Tell me about how you share your racial or ethnic values with your child or children.
- 3a. Can you give me some specific examples (if not already provided)?
4. Tell me about how being a father plays a part in the messages you use.
- 4a. Can you give me some specific examples (if not already provided)?
5. What does academic success mean to you?
- 5a. Can you give me some specific examples (if not already provided)?
6. Tell me about a time when your racial or ethnic values as they relate to your definition of academic success played a part in your parenting.
7. What would you want schools to know about what we just discussed?
8. Is there anything else you would like to share?
9. How old are your children?
10. What genders are your children?

Minimal to no risk to the participant is anticipated. However, discussions about previous parenting or personal experiences may elicit uncomfortable feelings in some participants.

Therefore, a list of possible resources were provided to participants (Appendix F).

Procedure

Depending on the nature of the responses provided to the open-ended questions, follow-up questions or probes that were also to be open-ended were asked for the purposes of clarification and/or elaboration when needed and when the researcher felt it to be appropriate. For example, these may include: “Tell me more about...?”, “Could you describe that?”, “Could you help me understand that more?”, “What do you mean by?”, “Could you give me an example?”, etc. At the end of each interview, each participant was asked if he had any further questions or thoughts he would like to share. These responses will also be audiotaped. The participants were then thanked for participation.

Following completion of each interview, the researcher wrote a journal entry as a way to reflect upon each interview experience as well as to consider any potential, unintended personal influence imposed by the researcher. Thus, the content of the journal entries included a section in which the researcher reflected upon her feelings about the interview, the participant, or anything the interview brought up for the researcher. In this regard, the goal of the journaling process was to help reduce researcher bias from interfering with the objective research protocol. The other section of the journal entries provided reflection about the content of the interview as well as any thoughts the author had as the interview content related to the aims of the present study. This portion of the journal allowed the researcher to reflect on the emerging themes that surfaced in comparing the content of the interviews (memoing; Creswell, 2013).

As a separate step from the journaling process, the researcher had interviews transcribed

verbatim into a text file after the interviews were completed. This transcription was completed by an online transcription program. The audio was then compared with the transcript for verification and accuracy. Transcription involved the author playing and re-playing the recording numerous times in order to match the audio with the transcription into an electronic document that is considered as the data source. The transcribed information was then read and re-read by the author numerous times and the dominant themes identified. Specifically, categories or units of information composed of events and occurrences became the data that were eventually analyzed (Creswell, 2013) by both the investigator and members of the validation team.

Data Analysis

The first phase of analysis began with open coding in which the researcher reviewed the transcripts for major categories of information and formed a list of dominant themes. The next step involved axial coding in which the researcher pinpointed one open coding category on which to focus (the “core phenomenon”) and then returned to the transcripts (data) to create categories around this core phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). The factors that contribute to or cause the core phenomenon (causal conditions), resultant reactions to the core phenomenon (strategies), situational factors (both broad and narrow) that impact the core phenomenon (intervening conditions), and outcomes related to the strategies (consequences) were identified in accordance with the systematic grounded theory approach (Creswell, 2013). A series of dominant themes that are related to the core phenomenon (axial coding) were identified and a series of probable explanations (propositions or hypotheses) and descriptions were formulated to describe the relationships between elements and categories in the model. The overall process consisted of going back and forth between the participants’ transcripts, gathering new stories

through subsequent interviews, and then returning to the evolving theory to fill in the gaps. The growing theory or explanation was compared with the evolving categories and elaborated upon as to how the process appears to occur for the participants as a whole (constant comparative method of data analysis; Creswell, 2013). The end result of this entire process was a theory that was developed by the researcher, in which the themes from the current study related to findings from previous research regarding African American fathers' patterns of racial-ethnic socialization and intersections with messages/practices regarding academic success.

To further examine the potential categories and themes that underlie the developed theory, a validation team was formed. This validation team helped reduce bias and offered perspectives beyond that of the study author. The team consisted of the research investigator and three other individuals. One member was from the dissertation team (3rd committee member); the second member was a school psychologist familiar with the qualitative approach to research, and the third member was a doctoral level, social worker professor familiar with quantitative and qualitative research design who teaches classes in human diversity which includes parenting styles of African American parents. All of the team members, in light of their research and clinical experience in working therapeutically with others, were selected because they would be able to relate readily, the contents from the interviews to common themes/issues they have noticed in their clinical and academic work. The two of validation team members were assigned five transcripts and the dissertation team member was assigned six to review. The validation team reviewed the transcripts on an individual basis prior to meeting as a group and when together, brainstormed and discussed the emerging categories and noteworthy examples they highlighted in their reviews of the transcripts. It is important to note that the author's identified themes were not shared prior to the group's brainstorming session because it was the goal for the

validation team to discuss their observations while “blind” to what the author deemed as essential themes in light of the aims of the study. As the author reviewed the themes she independently identified, the group worked collaboratively to determine whether or not the group’s review of the transcripts confirmed, disconfirmed, or added to the author’s initial list of themes. The involvement of the team’s discussion led to the data to become aggregated by the benefit of their ongoing analysis, reading, and discussion. At the conclusion of the meeting, the group formed a definitive list of the dominant themes that they all consistently endorsed.

Chapter 4: Results

Data Sources and Collection

The interviews and accompanying transcripts that compose the database for this study were gathered, analyzed, and interpreted over the duration of approximately eight weeks. During this time frame, the author recruited participants through various African American parent advocacy organizations, a social organization for African American school psychologists, and through referrals that study participants made to other fathers. The total of convenient sample participants ultimately yielded 21 individuals initially volunteering to participate in the study and to provide information in regard to the eligibility questions; however, only 16 participants went on to partake in the study activities and their data were included for analysis. One of the fathers who originally agreed to participate did not meet eligibility criteria due to his children's ages (age two and three) (N= 1). The remaining four volunteers who were not included, did not respond to follow-up attempts to schedule interviews (N= 4). It is noteworthy that much of the data collection took place over the winter holidays and at the start of the New Year, which may account for the struggles some individuals encountered in making time to participate.

The 16 participants in this investigation agreed to answer criteria inclusion questions and engage in a semi-structured interview with the primary author/researcher. All 16 interviews were completed over the phone, using an internet-based conference call program. No identifying information was used during the process of the recorded interviews. The author spent time prior to the interviews establishing rapport by answering any questions the participants had before they began the study procedures such as responses being recorded. Throughout the investigation, the author journaled after each interview about her own comfort level, the perceived comfort of

the interviewees, her thoughts on the pace at which the interview took place, as well as potential themes that were emerging.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data analysis in qualitative research consists of organizing the data for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding (Creswell, 2013). As a result, the grounded theory approach of qualitative research involves a framework that allows a researcher to construct categories from the acquired information (drawn from the interviews; open coding), note where the categories interrelate (axial coding), and create an explanation that integrates the categories (selective coding) and culminates with a collection of theoretical proposals/explanatory hypotheses (Creswell, 2013).

The interpretation of the interview content in terms of the overall themes each interview contributed was an ongoing process throughout the entire eight-week data collection period and beyond, through a validation team. Audio files were downloaded and transcribed through an automated internet-based program. Transcripts were then compared with the original audio for verification and accuracy. The author re-read the transcripts and reviewed her process notes (content in the journal entries relating to the evolving themes) on a frequent basis in order to begin identifying dominant themes inherent in the participants' stories. The themes the author identified through journaling were regarded as the most salient in capturing the essence or general nature of the transcript. After roughly the third interview, the author moved from reflecting on the "gist" of the interviews in a holistic sense to identifying specific categories and their connections to other categories that surfaced across transcripts. The author then sought out illustrative examples of the participants' statements as they corresponded with the identified categories.

After the 16th interview, the researcher gathered experts in the field to form the validation team. The 16 transcripts were distributed evenly across the three members for review one week prior to meeting to discuss possible themes. One member was from the dissertation team (third committee member), the second member was a school psychologist familiar with the qualitative approach to research, and the third member was a doctorate level, social worker professor familiar with qualitative research design, who teaches classes in human diversity, which include parenting styles of African American parents. The validation team members were provided with transcripts a week prior to the meeting to review for independent generation of themes. In the validation team meeting, these team members brainstormed ideas from their review of the transcripts. The procedure for identifying these was as follows. An interview question was stated; the researcher shared her generated themes from responses. Members of the validation team supported or denied the presence of similar themes from their points of view. Additional themes from validation team members were then presented. The team discussed any discrepancies in viewpoints. From that discussion, the themes were cross-referenced and the group was able to construct a culminating list of the dominant themes that surfaced in all members' review of the transcripts. All final themes presented in the current study were agreed upon by the validation team. The inclusion of the validation team was a measure to reduce bias and to ensure that the themes the author identified were substantiated by additional expert analysis of the transcripts.

Findings

The research findings were divided into two separate sections, based on description of findings in regard to two demographic questions referencing the age and gender of the father's child or children and the responses to qualitative interview/research questions. The demographic

questions were pertinent to understanding the context from which participants spoke about racial socialization and academic success. The second section provides descriptive summaries of participants' responses to the research questions. The participants' descriptions are further broken down according to the dominant themes analyzed by the validation team that were noted as pertaining to the research questions. In particular, the themes (discussed as a function of when the question was posed in the interview, e.g., first question versus fifth question) corresponded to the progression of how the individual reflected on his life experiences with racial socialization, academic socialization and possible intersectionality.

Demographic Findings.

The participants of this study were 16 fathers identified as African American or Black American racially and/or ethnically. Fathers reported having at least one child or children between the ages of five and 21 as part of the inclusion criteria. Combined, the fathers reported providing substantial contributions to a total of 52 children. Many of the fathers had additional children who fell outside of the inclusion criteria range, ranging from age two to 33. These fathers were still considered to be eligible for participation, based on having at least one child between the ages of five and 21. The average age of children was 15.82 years. Of the fathered children, 73% were identified as boys (N= 38) and 27% (N= 14) were identified as girls. All participants resided in the United States. Interviews ranged from approximately eight minutes to 50 minutes. The average length of interviews was 19 minutes and 22 seconds. See Table 1 for a summary of the demographic information of participants.

Table 1

Participant Demographic Information

Descriptive Category	N
Number of Participants Providing Recording	16
Combined Number of Children	52
Number of Children between ages 5 – 21	37
Fathers to Sons	38
Fathers to Daughters	14
Mean Age of All Children	15.8
Mean Interview Duration Range in Minutes	19.22

Descriptive Findings

The questions from the semi-structured interview included eight core questions that were designed to probe how the participants self-identified racially or ethnically, the origins of how they developed their racial or ethnic identity, racial socialization practices, the influence of being a father in using their identified racial socialization practices, their definition of academic success, and what schools could gain from knowing about African American fathers' experiences. The questions were worded so that they would elicit the participant to provide

stories and anecdotal examples. The participants were able to convey their thoughts openly regarding their experiences.

Themes

Several themes emerged from interviews with the fathers regarding racial-ethnic identity, racial-ethnic socialization messages, descriptions of roles of fathers, self-identified definitions of academic success, and fathers' suggestions for improved relations to support home-school collaboration. All fathers identified either as Black American or African American, as indicated by inclusion criteria. Fifty percent of the fathers spontaneously attached their sex to their response, indicating that many of the participants viewed their sex as a binding component to their racial or ethnic identity. Sources of ethnic or racial identity came from others, such as the fathers' parents and society. Fathers also cited their connection to their African ancestry and slave trade to America as an important source that informed their racial and ethnic identity.

All fathers reported using some type of racial-ethnic messages, with many using a combination of types. All four types of racial-ethnic socialization messages were represented within this sample (preparation for bias, egalitarian, cultural socialization, and promotion of mistrust). Fathers who used preparation for bias messages often discussed interactions with law enforcement exclusively with their sons. Fathers often used a storytelling method in which they shared their own previous interactions with police. These stories were used either as illustrations on how to positively engage with police, or were used cautionary tales on perceived less productive ways to interact with officers. Other fathers used a more direct approach in discussing how to interact with police, thus providing explicit procedures. Preparation for bias messages used with daughters focused on not embodying negative stereotypes. Egalitarian messages centered on promoting equal treatment of others, regardless of racial background and

having a strong work ethic, whether towards vocational goals or academic endeavors. Fathers used cultural socialization messages to instill racial-ethnic pride through the use of African American literature and discussions about specific aspects of African American history. Historical contexts were typically related to the discussion of the slave trade and how African Americans have progressed since that time. Last, promotion of mistrust was the least endorsed message reported. When used, the father spoke of remaining separate from Whites.

The fathers in the current study closely identified being fathers to be a central component of their identities. They took the privilege of being a father seriously and considered their roles to be that of a teacher and role model. Those that saw themselves as teachers, discussed general life experiences with their children, again often using storytelling as a technique to engage in these conversations. Other fathers focused on being direct models of desired behaviors, particularly relative to how to be a positive father, demonstrating positive character traits, and modeling a loving relationship for their daughters. Last, there was a belief that simply being an African American male allowed these fathers to provide a unique experience in viewing the world.

Racial and Ethnic Identity Development

Participants responded to the first interview question phrased as the following: “Describe your racial and ethnic identification”. Responses to this question were typically short, including either a response of being African American or Black American. Approximately 50% (n=8) of respondents spontaneously attached their gender representation to their response. For example, Interviewee 2 responded to defining his racial/ethnic identification as the following:

I’m Black. I’m a Black male. It’s my ethnicity, that’s what I am. So racially, I view myself as a Black male...I don’t know what else I could be, so it’s very difficult to

answer the question. I've always identified as a Black male, I've never thought about any other race or anything like it. So that's why I identify as a Black male.

Interviewee 4 simply stated that "Well, I'm a Black man. That's it. A Black man!"

Racial and/or Ethnic Identification Development Sources

The first question was followed up with a secondary question designed at determining the participant's origin and the development of his racial and/or ethnic identity. The specific question was phrased as, "What does this mean to you and how did you come up with these views?" Participants primarily discussed how their identification was shaped through society (N= 9) and knowledge of African ancestry (N= 6). One participant (Interviewee 13) discussed that his identification as being African American was supported by a formal exploration. Yet another (Interviewee 10) discussed an almost existential experience in his journey of identification of being a black man as he stated, "It means life to me that I came up with these views, because that's how I was born".

The nature of racial and ethnic socialization is that they are messages that are passed from one person to another. Fathers shared that their notions of racial or ethnic identity development stemmed from others. "Others" for the purposes of this study were identified as family and society as a whole. Fifty-six percent (N= 9) of the participants indicated that their sense of racial and/or ethnic identification was attained in this way. For example, Interviewee 1 shared the following to illustrate this notion:

"Wow, that's a good question. That's what I've always been called. You know, I mean, I've never really thought about that question. I mean that's always what we've been identified as."

Interviewee 8 shared that his source was from how he was socialized by his community, parents, and society:

I guess a Black man living in America is pretty, you know, that's the reality of it. I mean, I don't think, it wasn't me that came up with those views, it's from what I've been subjected to and how I grew up and the things that I've witnessed, you know, witnessed from growing up, watching television, stories from, you know, parents or others and things like that.

Interviewee 12 discussed how, along with being explicitly told by his parents about his racial and ethnic identification, physical features also cued him into his identity as evidenced by the following statement, "well, first my parents let me know that I was an African American male, but I also identified by my skin complexion and it was quite different from a lot of the other people that I was around."

Interviewee 11 goes on to share how, in addition to his racial and ethnic identity being developed by those in close proximity, such as family members, he also discusses how governmental systems force one to select a racial or ethnic identity:

It means to me that I am Black. I am of color, and mainly I came up with these views by the others that I came up around and by the system, which also gives you your identity through forms that have to be filled out and what not. That gives you options to choose what you are.

In addition to identifying how society and the community around them shaped their ethnic or racial identity, 38% (N= 6) of the fathers discussed how their African ancestry directly impacted how they identify as being Black or African American. Some spoke of this awareness and contribution, although they themselves have never been to Africa. For example, Interviewee 3 identified as "American citizen with African Ancestry". He went on further to say:

Interesting, I look at it this way, I was born in the United States; my parents were born in the United States. My grandparents were born in the United States. So I've never been to Africa and as far back as I know, none of my immediate relatives were from Africa. But I do understand I have African in my ancestry.

Interviewee 15 indicated a similar perspective

It just means that I have ancestry that goes back to the continent of Africa. My family ancestry has always been identified as African American throughout its time here in the United States, and it's pretty much the way I am identified by everybody that I come across in my daily life.

Additionally, participants not only highlighted a connection to the continent of Africa but also the heritage and history of how they are specifically descendants of Africans brought to the United States through the slave trade. For example, Interviewee 6 shared that his source for identification was the following:

I guess through understanding of history, reading, grandparents. I know a little bit of history of my great, great grandparents as former slaves. They still lived on the same plot of land that they were actually slaves in. The stories were that they derived from the other continent, Africa.

Interviewee 9 discussed the complex relationship of nationality, African ancestry, physical associations of race and unique experiences of those slaves eventually brought to America for those that identify as African American:

What does it mean to me? That means that I identify that my ancestors were brought over here in the slave trade. And my ancestors' origins is of African descent and... which is why I said African American because I'm African first and I'm American second, or African American as one whole thing. I also said Black because I am a person of color. In this day and age with the amount of immigrants that are in our country, there are many different types of people that are Black. Because they can't just be directly from Africa, but they could also be of Caribbean descent or of Afro-Mexican descent or any of those sort of things. So, African American, I'm Black.

Interviewee 13 also discusses how, due to the complexity of relationships and historical context in which African Americans came to the Americas, he feels at a particular disadvantage related to a lost ethnicity:

And in terms of ethnicity, ethnicity refers to culture or a country. For example, you could be Italian ethnically, or Irish ethnically, you know what I mean? So for African Americans, from the historical perspective, we're stripped of our ethnicity per se. So I suppose our only ethnicity at his point would be the American ethnicity. It gets a little complex that way, or not really inclusive to...I feel like as African Americans we're left

out of that ethnicity conversation because of that. So, I think for African Americans, often our race is uniquely tied to our ethnicity, because of our experience here in America, historically. If that makes any sense?

Although the majority of participants' responses to the development of their racial and/or ethnic identity came from others or their connection to their African ancestry, one participant (Interviewee 13) discussed how his racial identification was developed through more formal means, explicit conversations with others, and cultural experiences.

Let me see. That would have to do with a lot of just education in terms of reading a lot about the...Let me go back to...probably going back to college, having conversations about race, whether it's a cultural diversity class, and then civics, and just my own interest of reading books about race, and race in America, being part of cultural proficiency teams in my role as a leader in the building and education.

Racial Socialization Messages

In order to assess how fathers spoke to their children regarding navigating in society as a member of a racial minority member, the third core interview prompt was presented as “tell me about how you share your racial or ethnic values with your child or children.” All 16 participants endorsed using some type of racial socialization message with their children. All major categories of racial socialization messages as identified by Hughes et al. (2006) were represented in the sample to include the following: cultural socialization (i.e. racial pride, cultural artifacts), preparation for bias (i.e. preparing children for discriminatory interactions/exchanges), egalitarian (i.e. focus on global identity traits) and promotion of mistrust (i.e. separation and weariness of other races). Eighty-one percent (N=13) of the fathers utilized a combination of racial socialization messages to include a least two distinct different types of messages. Fathers were most likely to report using preparation for bias messages (38.2%; N= 13), followed by egalitarian messages (32.3%; N= 11), social acculturation (26.5%; N= 9), and promotion of mistrust (2.9%; N= 1).

Preparation for bias. Preparation for bias statements, as an identified theme, were the most frequently utilized form of racial socialization messages used by fathers with their children to share their racial and ethnic values. This type of message was indicated in 38.2% (N=13) of responses. This type of socialization message acknowledges that racism and discrimination are a part of the experience of being African American. Of the 13 instances in which preparation for bias messages were used, five of 13 (38%) included discussion about how their children should govern themselves when interacting with the police. It was noteworthy that these conversations were discussed exclusively between fathers and sons, even if those fathers also had daughters. The remaining eight of the 13 instances in which preparation for bias messages were used addressed combating negative stereotypes of African American males, general discrimination due to social construct of race, need for presenting with increased effort and work ethic to be perceived as competent due to minority membership status, and encounters with individuals who use racial slurs. Considering the inevitability that at some point the fathers believed their children would be faced with bias, fathers sought to guide their children on how to deal with such situations. Fathers reported sharing these messages through explicit means such as procedural guidelines for interactions and through storytelling of their own experiences with discrimination. Many of the messages discussed countering negative perceptions/stigma about African American men in some form or another.

Interviewee 5 discussed his own experience in how just his physical presence has been a source of bias from others during his interactions:

I mean, I've had dealings with discrimination in schools, dealings with law enforcement, and even people prejudging me. Because, I'm a tall, big, Black man and sometimes I get responses from people where they say that after speaking to me it was a different experience than what they intended, because I think there's just a lot of stigma on us.

Interviewee 14 expressed how he wanted to prepare his daughter on how to think critically through images and conversations about the portrayals of Black men:

Well number one, we want her to be aware that beyond propaganda and the conversations that she may hear out in the mainstream about African American males not loving or supporting or being a part of the family, that's just not true. There's probably more African American...as many African American males as any other nationality that support their family.

Interviewee 7 further goes on to explain that it is important for his children to recognize that they will likely be treated differently due to privilege afforded to other races and the importance of being able to recognize when in those situations:

One example I tell my kids is if you look around, you've got Caucasian, you have African American, you have European, and a different types of race. All races by growing up, you'll see some Caucasians (are) privileged and some African Americans had a rough life. I try to explain the difference between the two.

Interviewee 14 used storytelling as a means of sharing with his sons how he has personally been involved in encounters with racism and used his reaction as a cautionary tale:

I guess, in particular we would have a conversation a lot about like the "N" word. That word, I would always explain as far as my experiences of having to deal with that from another race, particularly like Caucasian race. I've been called that before. In some instances, I didn't really handle it the right way. I was actually kind of putting myself in harm's way and kind of risk my freedom as a young man. But as I've gotten older, I've learned to handle that a lot better, especially being here in the South, pretty much with that.

Interviewee 13 discussed how he has had explicit conversations about the use of the "N" word in an attempt to prepare his son for the possibility in hearing that word in larger society and how to discern the difference when different groups use the words:

So with my younger kids, my biracial kids, I don't ever say...they rarely hear that word, unless it's in music or T.V. So one day, I sat down and explained it to my 10 year old, like, what the word meant. This was probably, like two years ago. From, like a historical perspective what it meant, and how hurtful it was, the word, and how it's our word, and that we shouldn't say the word. And if a White person says this to you, I told them what that could mean, and we processed his feelings about that. So that's just an example of

how I want to prepare him or protect him in the event someone calls him a nigger one day; he knows what context of this is.

As indicated previously, 38% of preparation for bias messages between fathers and sons centered on interactions with police. Interviewee 2 shared how he uses his own experiences with police officers as a way of preparing his son for interactions with law enforcement with the following:

So I guess, for like my son, there are times when I tell him about how the police treat Black men, especially, and how they have treated me. So the harassment I've endured growing up, the harassment I've endured as a young adult. And I try to get him to understand that he has to make sure he's on his best behavior during those times, because it doesn't take anything but...the police, they can make a mistake or they can be intentional, who knows, but that's not how I wanna lose my son.

Interviewee 2 continues by using a personal experience in a potentially violent interaction with the police that his son witnessed. Through his storytelling, he was able to use the situation as a vivid explanation of what not to do when interacting with police.

In addition to using storytelling as a means of preparation for bias when interacting with law enforcement, some fathers used explicit messages, almost as if providing a manual of how to interact with police. For example, Interviewee 3 advised his son to respond in the following way:

Make sure when you're out and about, you pay attention to your surroundings, make sure you watch who you hang with, and do the right thing. So of course, in this society, unfortunately, a lot of African American males have been killed by police. So as I explain to my son, that if you're ever confronted by the police, follow their instructions, don't make any sudden, crazy movements, don't become confrontational. Because if you didn't do anything, ninety-five percent of the time, it'll be a couple of questions and you'll be on your way.

Interviewee 13 discusses how preparing his son for interactions with police is a necessary duty of a father, due to the potentially fatal outcomes that have both historically and recently been publicized:

So as my 10 year old has gotten older, we've had more conversations recently about race in regard to...like historically, how blacks have been treated. We've had conversations about the police, with everything that's been going on in the past several years in terms of the injustice with young Black males and police, because you know, although I want to protect his innocence, I can't do it at his peril. It's important for him to know that in certain situations it could be dangerous for him.

Only two of the fathers specifically discussed how they used preparation for bias messages with their daughters. One of the two fathers (Interviewee 16) referenced how he prepared his daughter for bias regarding her academic abilities and how she, herself, should not internalize overt stereotypes about White students and covert messages regarding lack of intellect of Blacks:

Interviewee 16 shared that he has had the following conversation with his daughter:

Not all White kids are smart. They're just not. Proportionally, they have the same challenges as anyone else. Any other nationality. You can't go into an environment thinking just because they (are) White that they're smart. That they're inherently smart.

The other father (Interviewee 4) discussed how he talks to his daughters about countering negative stereotypes of Black women, generally speaking, and later details how to combat the stereotype of an "angry Black woman".

With my girls, I let them know you have to be a lady at all times. There is no turning up, getting drunk. There's no terrible language, or the way you approach people and things like that. Your first impression is your last impression. And that goes with both of them. Just little simple things like that.

He later details about a time when he counseled his daughter who was attempting to advocate for herself in what she deemed was an environment that promoted nepotism rather than merit.

They would give her their nieces and nephews to train. And always put them above her. And finally she would get frustrated and she became a little combative...There's certain ways that you go around and you do things. You can't show anger and be combative in those situations, because they always going to think you're the angry Black woman. And I told her to either leave the job, or start your own business, or you know what you're dealing with and find ways to get the things that you need. Because, you already know

they're not going to promote you but so far. You already know that they're using you, and you're not part of the family...Your anger, and you being mad, and you being combative in those situations won't help you. Be proactive instead of reactive, that's all.

Egalitarian messages. In response to the third probe of, "tell me about how you share your racial or ethnic values with your child", a theme of egalitarian messages were also noted. Egalitarian messages place racial and ethnic identity development into the overall context of general identity development. Rather than specifying how race or ethnicity are isolated out and addressed specifically at depth, it places it at a value equal with any other component of the developing child. Approximately 32.3% (N= 11) of the racial socialization messages used fell within this category. It was noteworthy that of the 11 instances, fathers also used other types of messages (cultural socialization and preparation for bias) 91% (N= 10) of the time. A common overall theme that was discussed related to the fathers' overall values of a strong work ethic. For example, Interviewee 12 discussed how he would like his children to treat others equally, regardless of race:

Basically, I talk to my kids about treating Black kids of their own race and White kids the same. Treat them the same. If you're nice to an African American kid, then be nice to a White kid. Try to stay the same in who you are and that will help you build character. That will help you have an identity. Black kids will see you the same and White kids will see you the same."

He further talks about race as being not as important as character when interacting with others:

It doesn't matter that you are Black or African American. It matters in your character, it matters what you represent. It matters to see everyone as your equal, but just have good character in everything you do and make good decisions, so that these decisions don't come back to be used against you.

Interviewee 13 followed up with the importance of considering all possible motives of negative interactions with others prior to assuming bias:

But when they got older, when they ran into issues of race and racism, we often navigated those conversations. I was a parent, because of my ethnic background, experience, and education, who would want them to think the reason why things were happening to them

that were due to race, make that a last resort; to rule everything else out first. And if that's what they were left with, then that's what they were left with. So it was important for me for them not to think of it as being...if they're being mistreated, that it's not because of their race, not the first thing they should think of, to rule everything else out first.

For example, Interviewee 9 talks about explicitly discussing the value of working hard through storytelling:

And I've talked to my kids in the context of working hard, so values of doing your best and working hard. But also within the context of how do you use negative feedback to fuel your motivation... You could yield to that and be angry, upset and not do anything or you try to use that as fuel and turned around and earned a college scholarship based on that kind of using that a fuel throughout my time at school.

Interviewee 11 talked about valuing work ethic consistently and going above and beyond requirements so that you are available for opportunities:

So just to always, them be conscious that they always need to make sure that they're doing their best and not just their best that they are probably going to bit more over and beyond than them because their over and beyond easily is equal to someone's best who is not their color.

He further goes on to tell about a practical application of this lesson for his son when seeking advancement in his career:

Even if he wasn't at the time interested, he always needs to be knowledgeable of the ladder that he had to climb and he needs to be knowledgeable of what steps it took to climb the ladder and not wait until they come to you and offer it to you but to already be in the process of doing what he needs to do to be in the next position.

Some of the fathers discussed the value of staying connected with family. For example,

Interviewee 6 connected his ethnic values of family cohesiveness:

We have, I guess related to being African American, if those values are different. I guess as a whole, I would say that the biggest dynamic would be family. We always had extended family and large family, in which we share while eating and telling stories and passing down important events. I pretty much try to emulate that for my kids."

Cultural socialization. Fathers also responded to the third prompt of, “Tell me how you share your racial or ethnic values with your child or children”, with responses suggesting cultural socialization. Cultural socialization messages share affirming cultural information that serves as a buffer against later negative stereotypes that the child may encounter (Hughes et al., 2006). Fathers reported using these types of messages approximately 26.5% (N= 9) of the time during interviews. Interviewee 2 explained the perceived function of these types of messages, as analyzed by the research, as a means to, “balance, I guess societal norms against how they (children) should feel about their ethnicity and why they should be proud of it; why they should look at it as a badge of honor, as opposed to looking at it as some less than.” Some of the messages were explicit, using concrete visuals, books, or experiences. Interviewee 1 discussed how he utilizes learning about important historical African American figures and returning to his “home” with his children to practice holiday customs:

Sure, for mandatory reading time, you might have to read the Autobiography of Frederick Douglass. Understanding the way we celebrate different customs and holidays, such as Thanksgiving or Christmas, the way we do it back home in Arkansas. Sharing those experiences with them through our holidays and just carrying forward our culture that we grew up on.

Interviewee 2 also discussed the use of literature to share important contributions of African Americans.

Yes. We have books here that they read. One book that we read to all our kids is called *The Shades of Black*, which just tells of different colors I guess is the best way to put it, different shades of Black Americans. We’ve read it to all our kids about how it doesn’t matter the shade of blackness, but they’re all still Black. There’s also cards that I found, I lost them again, but I found them and it reviews...It’s a really small card; it reviews great accomplishments of African American males. Or not just males, but African Americans in general that were done over time, and they still are doing currently.

Although some fathers used specific literature, many fathers used conversations about the historical contributions, contexts that African Americans have endured, and specific nuances

related to being African American. For example, Interviewee 9 indicated that he shared his racial and ethnic values in the following ways:

I would say that I share what I would consider to be kind of cultural norms based on the society we live in and the world in which we live in. Some based on (inaudible) as well as real life experiences, as well as like a historical aspect that my children just don't necessarily have, that I have to kind of share with them to provide some perspective on kind of where we were and kind of where we are. And our country as African American people and where we're trying to go as (a) culture.

Interviewee 15 indicated similar experiences and methods in racial socialization practices:

Share them (racial or ethnic values) through explaining...through discussions of the historical things that have happened throughout our country as the United States to African Americans. I explain to them about their personal family history and the things they've done, and I also do it through life experiences and things like that.

Interviewee 12 discusses nuances related to skin tone and historical context in which they may have developed:

Well, I definitely sit down. I've sat down with them and discussed their heritage, what continent that they are, that race or ethnicity is believed to started from. I definitely explain that as African American people, we come in different shades, different colors. We have all different types of personal identities and looks, but we definitely are one race.

He goes on to explain the historical context of his direct family that contribute to differences in skin tone:

Well with my daughter and my son, they are much lighter than me, so I'm very dark in complexion, so I explained to them that my parents on my side of the family, they are dark in nature and they are, from what they explained to me, that they spent a lot of time outside in the fields working the farms and picking cotton, so they asked me why is mom lighter than me and I said, most likely she spent more...her family spent a little more time inside and possibly could have been mixed with White people.

Promotion of mistrust. Last, one father responded to the third prompt of, "Tell me how you share your racial or ethnic values with your child or children", with a response suggesting promotion of mistrust. Promotion of mistrust messages warn children about discrimination in the

world (Hughes et al., 2006). However, they do not have a teaching component that outlines how potentially to deal with them should they encounter a discriminatory or bias situations. Rather, the solution is to simply maintain a distance from discriminatory sources, often interactions with Whites. Of all instances of messages used, this type of message was mentioned only once. The statement indicating this type of racial socialization strategy contained, excessively, the description of Blacks being separated from Whites. It is important to note that promotion of mistrust was not the only method of socialization the father used. When asked how he (Interviewee 10) shared his racial and ethnic values with his children, he reported that he had conversations with them, indicating the following:

You're not pale. You are of color. You have, you will be looked at as different, because you are not white. You are non-white, so you're not of them, you are of color. And you will be treated as such, you know? Separate from White. Treated differently.

He later details that the function of using promotion of mistrust, again goes back to injustices when interacting with law enforcement and the angst that is created from simply being a Black father of sons:

And if you are one of those that spoke that way and play that way and walk the straight and narrow and everything as like Trayvon Martin may have done and he (inaudible) that and everything, but he still ended up being killed. So, what do we do? And it hurts. It hurts as a father to try to ensure your kid and confirm that he won't be there. It hurts as a Black man to see that, when you're looking at a father that gets choked up on the sidewalk, like in New York or whatever, you know, it hurts. That you try to live right and everything and you still end up in... don't work for you because you're a Black man in America.

Role of a Father

To elicit responses about how participants viewed the idea about how being a father played a role in their racial socialization practices, they were asked to respond to the fourth prompt, "Tell me about how being a father plays a part in the messages that you use". Many of the fathers reported that being a father was a central component of their identities. Some chose

to use their own fathers as models for parenting, yet others were making a conscious effort to counteract experiences with their own fathers. Three themes emerged from fathers' discussions of their roles as father: the father as a role model, father as a teacher, and their unique perspective as an African American male. Responses related to actively modeling or describing behaviors that they display as part of parenting were identified as acting as role models. Responses that discussed indirect messages, conversations or direct messages were considered to be teaching modalities. Responses commenting on their race and gender intersectional specifically contributes to their perspectives in parenting as related to the theme of unique perspective-taking. Instruction came in many forms through direct modeling, direct messages, indirect messages, and conversations about what it means to be Black American. Of the 23 instances in which participants discussed their specific roles as fathers, 39.1% (N=9) were identified as role model statements, 43.5% (N=10) statements were identified as teacher statements, and 17.4% (N= 4) were identified as unique perspective statements.

Father as role model. Interviewee 1 talked about how he viewed his role of being a father as being a good role model for how his sons should be as fathers.

Well, I think that it plays a very important role because being a father and being the father of men who will be fathers. I think that it's important for them to understand the impact and the constructive role and responsibility that fathers has to guide their children. And so one, it's being from the perspective of being a father, and two, having them understand that one day they are going to have to be a father and that model is going to be shared with them throughout their lives, as long as I'm part of their lives, if that makes sense.

Interviewee 9 also talked about how he felt it was important to model what it means to be a father to his son:

So, it's important to me to know my son really takes hold of these lessons that I'm trying to teach them because number one, he needs to have himself in a position where he can be a successful father, but number two, I want him to be able to pass it on down to all his children. But most

importantly you really grip people with your actions. I could talk all I want to but, if they don't see the success in me or they don't see that what I'm telling them is to be of truth or working cause I'm not acting it out or living it out, it's to no avail anyway.

Interviewee 5 spoke at length, through storytelling, about how the fact that his father was not involved in his own life directly impacts his approach in parenting his own sons:

“It plays a huge part, because my biological father is not...I don't have a relationship. Don't really know him or anything like that. That's really why I take a dad being so serious, because I understood what effect they had on me and I never want my kids to ever feel like that.

Interviewee 6 also shared how his approach to parenting is decidedly different from the model outlined by his own father:

Now, you want me to dig deep now. Okay. From my dad, he was raised where there wasn't a lot of affection. I guess males back then had identity roles as you take care of your kids and your family without spending a lot of time with them. For myself, I try to spend a lot of time with my children. We have a few rules that I've identified for them, a few rules, but we try to switch on and off whenever we can. We just, pretty much, playing your role is important. But also being able to help each other in different roles if needed.

Interviewee 9 also discussed how he sees his role as a father as part of a being a responsible parent:

It can...how being a father plays a part...I don't know. I'm just thinking...I look at it more as being a responsible parent. So these are things that our children, my children, they need to know, they need to consider along their walk in life. To be able to provide for themselves some perspective and as my role specifically as a father, how's that involved.

Interviewee 8 moved from just being a role model to being a father to include overall positive “character”:

Well I just think being a father you have to be a person of, you know, hey good character. You know, you want to be the best role model you can be for your son and hopefully; you know we're doing that. You know you want him to kind of learn from that and (have) a direct effect of what they see and how, you know, hopefully they'll continue to grow and mature as well. So, I think you know, we're that first and last, you know, kind of connection for them, that immediate connection, that foundation.

Although many of the fathers discussed how they are role models for their sons, Interviewee 16 discussed how his ability to be a role model for his daughter is important:

So we do have to have that conversation about the number of men, of Black men and prison. We do have to have those conversations about the number of African American males that appear on TV to be violent, but I just want her to have a good image of what an African American male really is.”

Interviewee 4 also talked about how he parents differently, based on gender:

“Well, it’s different with the women. With my girls and my boys. With my sons, as being a Black man, I let them know that there are certain things that we can’t and cannot do in society. So, with my girls, I always let them know how beautiful they are. That they can do anything. It’s just different with boys and girls.”

Father as teacher. Although some fathers focused on how their actions as a father influence their children, others saw their role as a teacher. This theme is highlighted by “lessons” from fathers through conversations with their children using the fathers’ experiences as the curriculum. As Interviewee 15 shared:

My being a father plays a part because, one, one of the things that I try to get across to my children is the experiences and the wisdom that I gained from those experiences. One of the things that I always tell them is that you can get the knowledge I have, but you can’t have the wisdom, because you don’t have the experiences to go with the knowledge, and I have the experiences to go with the knowledge.

Two of the fathers discussed the idea that although they were in a position to be the authoritative member of didactic interactions with their children, they viewed themselves both as the teacher and as student. Their view of parenting allowed for flexibility and growth as the needs of their children changed. Interviewee 4 talks about how he is in a process of “relearning” through parenting:

I mean, the way we brought up, we’re taught different things. I try to wade through what I consider that was harmful to the way I was brought up, and try to get them more the realistic view of the world that my parents didn’t have. So it’s almost like re-learning. So, I’m actually learning with them as I go along, but with my experience in life, it helps

me be more of a teacher because I know more than they do. But we actually learn together, because I'm actually relearning myself.

Interviewee 3 discusses how his parenting style allows him to be a teacher and also evaluate his effectiveness, compared with that of parents, thus placing him in a student position:

Being a father...It's funny because I see myself in two aspects. I see myself as a father and sometimes it feels like I'm outside of myself looking at myself because I realize that growing up, of course we're, and it's just confrontational with your parents because they don't see things the way you see them or you wanna be something and they tell you not to do it for a good reason, but you don't understand that reason. So it's funny to on the other side and see that that was me. And it's like, "Okay, now I'm becoming my parents." And hopefully, the kids become their parents and see things from a positive perspective. But it feels weird. Even though years, years later, it still sometimes feels weird that at one point, I was on the other side. It's as though, as you mature, you evolve, you understand the world better, and then you realize.

As Black men, some of the fathers talked about the fact that, as teachers, they have a unique perspective to share with their children that cannot be duplicated by anyone else. Some described how their perspective was implicit, such as Interviewee 2:

All I know is that I'm just a father, so I don't know how that plays a part. I guess my children look at it differently coming from me than they would from their mother, just because of me being a male. I've never sat back and thought about how me being a male affects my children and how they view things coming from me. Because I've always been a male, so I don't know any other way to describe it or to put it. I describe things the way I see them. Sometimes that's for good and sometimes that's for bad. I describe things the way I see them, and I don't know any other way to describe things besides that of a male. There are times I can put myself in a female's point of view, but that would still be putting myself in a female's point of view, so I'm not necessarily describing things the way a female would see them. So all I know is about being a male, so it very difficult to answer that question because it's all I know is being a male.

Interviewee 7 discussed that being a father allows him to focus on gender specific aspects of parenting that are his responsibility as a male:

So for example, I try to take my kids out. I do the father and daughter dance with them. Then my son, I take him out and explain to him different sports and this is what you have to do. Mom can't teach you how to play football 'cause she's not a football player. Or watch and grow up and show them that it takes a man to open a car door. Different stuff that men do that females can't do.

Interviewee 9 discusses the unique experiences that African American men bring to the lives of youth both through lessons and direct modeling:

I think there is something about having a male voice. I think there's something about having a male role models and the lives of our young people, specially those that are our children to not just talk, but to walk the talk. And to show them exemplars as we are talking about values and norms and experiences and what we hold to be true, the expectations we have for them as they go about their life.

Definitions of academic success

Fathers were asked to provide their definitions of academic success and were asked for specific examples for clarification. The specific interview question to elicit responses for their relative definition of academic success was as follows: "What does academic success mean to you? And a follow up query, if necessary, stated: "Can you give me specific examples?" The fathers' responses were thematically grouped into traditional measures such as mention of grades, performance on standardized assessments and advanced degrees. Additional themes related to the fathers' relative definition of academic success were identified as, display of effort, and ecologically relevant or real world application themes such as developing a skill /talent and applying said skill, and acquiring knowledge or skills that allows for an increased standard of living. Of the these previously mentioned, identified themes under definitions of academic success, fathers' responses were categorized as falling under traditional academic measures (i.e. grades, standardized scores, and degree attainment)

Grades, test scores, advanced degrees as measures. Across the sample, fathers provided 12 (41.4%) instances when they specifically commented on the importance of good grades and high performance on standardized assessments. As Interviewee 16 states, "number one, grades matter. Grades absolutely matter."

Interviewee 7 shared that he leads by example in demonstrating the importance of good grades and advanced education:

I completed my Associates degree and my Bachelor's degree. I am working on my Master's degree. I try to stay an example and show my kids that school is very important. I preach to my son like you have to have A's and B's to be successful in this world, so education plays a big part.

Interviewee 5 also talked about the importance of performing well on standardized assessments.

He uses his experiences with standardized assessments as a cautionary tale for what to avoid:

I would probably say maybe studying for the ACT. When I was in high school, I didn't take it as seriously, but again, I didn't grow up in an environment where it was really pressed upon me to really take it seriously to the level that I should...However, you have to study to increase your...I know that, because even though I even notched my stuff up the next few times, if I would have just studied, no telling what I would've been able to do. He's (son) been taking that to heart and taking it seriously, because I never steered him wrong in anything we've talked about. I would say that the ACT, I didn't really take it seriously and I really pressed upon him to really take it seriously.

Interviewee 11 detailed an example in which his son demonstrated athletic ability. He was successful playing football but was not meeting the father's expectations for academic performance. The father simply stated to the son and coaching staff "Hey, you need to make sure your grades are up, you could do better than this, a C is not acceptable." Despite having all the athletic ability needed to be successful to play high school football, this father felt a solid foundation in education as evidenced by good grades was more meaningful for reaching long-term goals.

Interviewee 13 talked about pushing his daughter, in particular, to display "academic success" through good grades:

I feel like with my oldest daughter, I'm much more strict for academic success, because as a young parent, all I had was my parents' example. So for her, I wanted her to have all As. When she got lower grades, I was very disappointed, and her mom was also disappointed...But, you know, my daughter was a pretty decent student, and she, I would say was academically successful.

Although some fathers focused on individual grades and assessments as a means to gauge academic success, other fathers measured academic success by the attainment of advanced degrees. Interviewee 8 talks about the importance of obtaining advanced degrees as they become more relevant in a competitive market:

“In this day and age, academic success is how you can continue to achieve, and I guess it doesn’t stop. I guess the thing that I preach the most is it doesn’t stop anymore with just the college degree, especially for our young kids, especially for my daughter. You know, again, what I preach to her is you know, college degrees, they are really so normal and common now that you know, you have to, you know kind of even, you know, a Masters is not, you know, that big of a, you know, it’s an accomplishment but again, I want her to set her sights on, well just a little higher, just so she can have a fair shake or just so she can be in the game. You know what I mean? I think, you know, hey, when I was coming up, you know, a college degree especially for my family was kind of everything, but nowadays, again, it’s not that big of a deal. So, achievement to me, or educational achievement, would be somebody accomplishing, you know, hey their doctorate degree, you know, as far as up the ladder as they can go.”

Effort. Aside from grades, many of the interviewed fathers (N= 7; 24.1%) commented on demonstrating effort and perseverance as their definition of academic success. Some fathers valued effort over grades. Interviewee 3 discusses that grades may not always be the best indicator of effort:

“I challenge my son to do the best he can. And my thing is, if he does his best and he doesn’t get an A plus, but he does his best, then I’m good with that. But if he doesn’t try and then fails, I have an issue with that.”

Interviewee 9 followed stating that academic success means:

“That you try your best, that you give your best effort every time. I think that’s it in a nutshell if you give your best effort every time, do your best, give your best effort every time. You have an opportunity to learn, do it better than the time you did before. I think that’s all part of it. In relationship to the context of my children, it is that and that you challenge yourself so...and that you’re challenged so it’s not just that you’re giving the best effort, but you’re giving great effort at the appropriate academic challenge for you.”

Similarly, Interviewee 12 shared that academic success is about giving your best effort within your capacity:

“I think that academic success, to me is having the discipline and dedication to try your best. Everyone is not as gifted as, you know, are not equally gifted. Some can work less and they get it faster. Some have to put in a lot of work to achieve the same goals, but if you’re disciplined and you put forth a lot of effort and you practice a lot, then to me that is academic success. A lot of people put a grade on academic success. What I believe in is just giving 100%. If you give 100% effort that is academic success to me.”

Interviewee 13 takes the discussion of effort as the definition of academic success to be an indicator of resiliency that reaches beyond academic pursuits:

“So now, as a parent with my two younger children, being an educator myself, having a lot of experiences in terms of my upbringing, and a lot of knowledge in terms of what I’ve read, to me, academic success means for my kids that they try their best. And if they’re trying their best, that’s success. For me, academic success for my kids is to demonstrate resiliency. So, if they’re struggling with something, and they keep pushing, even if they get a C or a B for that, to me that’s academic success. Success for me is resiliency for them, to push themselves when challenged, not to give up when challenged. And that not just academic success. That’s just success for me in any endeavor that they go through, whether it’s sports, or friendships, just to try your best and put your best foot forward.”

Academic application of knowledge for future outcome. Ten (34.5%) of the definitions offered by fathers for academic success involved the importance of acquiring a skill, knowledge, or honing in one’s talent. Although the acquisition was important, fathers also stressed that knowledge was not enough, that the true demonstration of academic success was the ability to apply learned information. For six fathers, application was measured by the individual’s ability to engage in a career that provided a high standard of living.

Interviewee 15 talks about the ability to apply learned knowledge to everyday life as academic success:

“So academic success means to be able to acquire knowledge, but, more importantly, being able to apply the knowledge once you acquire it. It’s not...I don’t always, even though it’s important, put focus on grades, because you can obtain good grades but not be able to apply knowledge independently once you move on past that subject matter in that moment. So, it’s the learning and understanding of the knowledge well enough that when the situations arise, you can apply the knowledge that you earned in real-life situations.”

Interviewee 5 talks about the importance of identifying one's passion or talent as academic success. It is through identifying, developing, and pursuing one's talent that a person realizes academic success.

“To me, I think it's important. However, I don't think it's as important as knowing what you want to do. The reason I say that is because when it comes to owning and being a business owner in this world, most of them don't have the academic from college. As far as a doctorate or even a bachelor's degree. I mean, over 70% of the billionaires don't have...I think it important, because I definitely think we need to know how to articulate, read, write, definitely know how to add and do certain things. But, I don't think it's important as knowing what you want to do. I really talk to my kids about really figuring out what they want to do, and being passionate about what they want to do, and not worry about having to satisfy what some people consider as success in academics, because you have all that and still have nothing and really not have any direction. I think it's important and even more powerful when you really know what you want to do.”

For many fathers (N= 6), the purpose of performing well academically, putting forth their best effort, and identifying a talent is to provide a higher standard of living for their families. If their children can demonstrate success in that way, the fathers consider the children to be academically successful. As Interviewee 2 indicated:

“Academic success, to me, it just means you have the ability to provide for yourself and your family. When you become an adult legally, you would provide for yourself and your family, however that is. It could be traditional academics; it could be outside of traditional academic form. But when I hear academic success, that's what I think of. As long as you're able to provide for your family in a safe, loving, caring, nurturing way, that is legal, then that's what I view as academic success.”

Interviewee 15 goes on to share how increased academic success means financial freedom:

“Academic success means...to me, is an opportunity to create a foundation level for financial success. The world is changing, and academia is becoming more and more of a foundation for success. It's not like it was during the industrial age, where somebody could graduate from high school, go straight to the factories, spend their whole career in the factories, and just make a lot of money and sustain a good life. I mean, that's still possible, but those jobs are dwindling as the different events have happened in society.”

Interviewee 1 provided a definition of academic success that included all themes of educational attainment, effort, and application of vocational skills increasing financial freedom suggesting the connection between all of them for Interviewee 1:

“So when I said a road to success, I mean that through education, you find yourself a career or a vocation to get you to the path where you can make a living and be a productive part of society and a standard of living that you choose, based upon you level of education that you are willing to pursue. I think it’s a form of enlightenment because it teaches you how to think and logically reason.

Interaction of Racial Socialization, Definition of Academic Success, and Role as a Father

Fathers were asked if there were times when their approaches to talking to their children about race and/or ethnicity influenced how they parented around the discussion of academic success. Specifically, the question was worded as, “Tell me about a time when your racial or ethnic values, as they’re related to your definition of academic success, played a part in your parenting.” Admittedly, many participants found this question difficult to answer, perhaps due to the wording of the prompt (N=11). This will be later addressed in Chapter 5 under limitations. There were five clear instances in which fathers discussed the intersectionality of the three constructs.

Of the five instances when the intersectionality was articulated (31.5%), many of the participants talked about how, historically, advanced education was denied for African Americans. It was because of the denial of education that participants push their children to demonstrate their relative definitions of academic success. Interviewee 6 shared his experience of moving forward in education and the importance of an historical legacy that limited opportunities for African Americans:

I was the only one in my family to go to college, let alone have a Master's Degree, although I wasn't pushed to really excel in college, because that wasn't information that my parents had access to. I was supported, but in terms of a guideline, that wasn't accessible. But for my children and...I guess being African American, and I guess during that time, my parents didn't have to have a higher education. Back then it was pretty much you can find a job and...I wouldn't say heyday, but it was really accessible, along with my dad. He was military and he was able to get a job straight out of the military.

Interviewee 6 goes on to further detail how discharged African American soldiers, including his father, were relegated to unskilled labor jobs, but Caucasian service members were offered managerial roles. For this father,

“mean, it does matter, your ethnicity and you do have to try harder. Even though you have a degree and even though you might have a government job, you still have to push for financial freedom or dependency from having those types of employment positions where someone can dictate whether you come or go.

Interviewee 7 also discusses a legacy of being denied education and the importance of education to African Americans in particular.

I was saying how important it is for education because for African American, back in... it's important because we used to could go to college and have separate colleges and now we can go to college with them. I preach that. It's very important to African Americans have an education to be successful in this society today.

Interviewee 9 also discussed the historical legacy of unequal opportunity; its impact on perceived need to work “twice as hard”, and the importance of taking personal responsibility to fulfill their potential for academic success:

But the part that wasn't necessarily from (inaudible) compare to my White counterparts, I would have to do twice as well for the same sort of recognition. While I don't necessarily use the same conversation point with my own children, it's certainly in the back of my mind as I talk to them about their academic pursuits. But also just our cultural history of having been brought to this country enslaved and working through 400 years of enslavement all the way through the civil rights movement until having elected our first African American president, Barack Obama. There is a cultural history in not having had access to academic pursuits and that that was once at one point in time, illegal for folks that looked like us. And as a result, we want to pay homage to our ancestors because many of them literally fought to the death so we could live right, attend school. An so we want to ensure that we are doing our best, not only for ourselves in this current

day and age, but as a way to kind of pay respect to the efforts of the past that have allowed us to be where we are now.

Interviewee 12 provides commentary of how race, his belief of effort as being the definition of academic success, and the need to take action as a father of a son is detailed through storytelling. Essentially, his middle school age son began demonstrating less effort and associating with a group of peers, “that didn’t really care about academics or felt that it was cool to be dumb or not try a lot.” As an intervention, Interviewee 12 took his son to an educational environment “alternative program or in a school suspension and it was an environment that wasn’t conducive to learning”. The story continues as:

Then, I took him back to his original classroom and he saw how it was an environment where they could learn, but it took several months for me to get him to understand that it was important for him to really try his very best. Some of them were White, some of them were Black and then some of them were Hispanic. It was all about me spending quality time with him to get him to understand the importance of academics and his education.” This fathers approach included egalitarian messages about how effort is the key to academic success.

African American fathers as stakeholders and school response

In order to elicit their perspectives on how the fathers felt schools could support their children, based on interview questions, the following question was posed, “What would you want schools to know about what we just discussed?” All sixteen father responded to the question, generating a total of 20 responses. Fathers in the current study endorsed themes related to schools needing to increase engagement with students, particularly African American males (30%; N= 6), recognition of institutionalized racism and ways to rectify it (45%; N= 9), and the importance of seeing their children as individuals through programming and relationship building (25%; N= 5).

Engagement. Fathers reported six instances in which they highlighted the importance of schools' ability to engage students properly for better outcomes. Interviewee 5 outlines the basic idea of building connections with students by actively getting to know them:

When it comes to teaching, I would just say for a teacher, just ask more questions. When you don't understand someone or a student, ask more questions to get an understanding. I feel like sometimes we don't ask enough questions and we're trying to press upon what we believe is the right way or what is the uniform way, because we never know what people are going through. Everybody is different. Asking people questions to see where they are at, so you can meet and make an impact.

Interviewee 8 shared that families can serve as foundations for success for students; however, schools are also capable to increasing engagement through providing consistent expectations and support:

I just think you have to have, you know, somebody behind you that kind of (a) believes in you and (b), you know, keeps on motivating you and pushing you and telling you that you can do this stuff. You know what I mean? And it's always great to have some examples as well, some people that you can relate to. So, yeah, you have to just have, you know, you wanna have a strong foundation and you wanna have, you know, some form of support whether it be you know again, it could be family or it can be, you know a mentor or a teacher or whatever.

Interviewee 11 further encourages teachers to develop consistent, meaningful relationships with students. He feels that teachers have the unique opportunity to plant a seed of potential, especially when the student may have limited tangible role models:

So, I would think that the teachers need to know that you definitely have to do more to pull that out of them (students). You even have to start to put it into them cause like I say; a lot of them don't even have it. So you even have to give them a dream and then you have to do what it takes to help them to see that they are able to succeed at that dream that they had because I truly feel like a lot of theirs have been snuffed out...

Interviewee 12 further develops the sentiment that Black boys in particular are left behind because school systems do not know how to support youth in genuine, consistent ways.

Well, I think when it comes to schools, I think that we are really leaving young, Black males behind. I think that schools are afraid of you, Black males. I think the school

system doesn't know how to reach them and I also think that a lot of teachers are not trained to deal with young ones and I think that as a school systems, we have to learn to meet these young, Black males where they are and then show them a different way...but for these kids, these young, Black males need reinforcement that no matter what happens we are going to be there through the hard times as well as the easy times.

Institutionalized racism still present. These fathers endorse the concept that schools can play a part in socializing students about race through cultural socialization approaches. Four of the fathers talked explicitly about how schools have to be conscious and aware that institutionalized racism is still present in school and must be addressed. As Interviewee 16 explained:

That...you know what, I think schools are doing a pretty decent job of trying to level the playing field as far as access to opportunity. I think school need to not forget that there is a kind of systemic process out there that tries to shape non-whites in a certain way. That is not over. That is still taking place and they need to do a good job maintaining that focus of being sure that all people feel equal in their building.

Interviewee 10 further goes on to explain how the extraction of balanced history lessons is a part of institutionalized racism that continues to be present, greatly in part to diminish White guilt and to minimize the impact of slavery on the psyche of African Americans:

They took that out of schools. They don't want...that's a dark part in history. That's hell. And everything revolves; in this nation everything revolves around them. So...our history, then and there, wouldn't work, it's contradictory. So you can't have us with, talking about our history in there, and it's like "let it go". Okay, you all were enslaved and everything let it go...But we were enslaved for over 200 years. It's been that long and whipped, and dunked in the ocean...hit, used and misshaped form, but they turn around and "Hey, don't talk about that boy"...let's just celebrate how they came from it. That don't work right. That don't feel good.

Interviewee 13 further describes how institutionalized racism plays a part in the education of African American kids through sometimes less overt means, such as low teacher expectations and micro-aggressions.

I want schools to know that their expectations of African American kids and kids of color play a huge role in their success, and that it doesn't have to be something verbally that they say, it can be something nonverbal that they pick up on. As African American

children, they're very...because of how they grow up in their culture, they talk about race, they know they're different, and they know how people view them. They're very sensitive to that, because that's how we're brought up. Not just what we hear in the home, but just what you see in the street when you go outside. You walk down the street; you see how people treat your mom and dad. You see someone who's a little nervous about being around you, etc. They see these things. There are subtle things they pick up on. So as schools, I would want them to be aware that even if you're not coming out with your expectations saying...It's one thing to say, "oh, I expect all kids to do well in school" but your actions are something different, and your nonverbal actions, etc.

Although many fathers in the sample talked about how they themselves use cultural socialization messages or approaches, two fathers endorsed the importance of schools also using forms of cultural socialization or sensitivity as a means of connecting with students. Interviewee 1 talked about the importance of schools being willing to explore the ethnicities of their student population:

I think that in talking about parenting, education, and dealing with the racial aspect of it, I think that it's very important to be sensitive to others' ethnicities. And be open to explore them as a group or as a...I don't want to say congregation, but as a school population.

Interviewee 9 proposes that schools use culturally relevant materials to increase engagement with students of color. He sees strides in this area; however, there continues to be room for growth:

I think there's a lot of real good work that's being done around the concept of cultural competency. And this is not just for students that look like me, African American students, but students of all shapes, sizes, colors, creeds to be culturally competent and have a sense as to where these students are coming from. To be able to use that as a launching point to build from." He goes on to talk about specific curriculum, "tying themselves in social studies, spoken about...their cultures spoken about in a positive light.... I think through that relationship they're able to really do some great work with students and move learning forward.

Individualism as variety in instruction. Some of the fathers focused on macro level concerns such as institutionalized racism; others focused on the importance of schools being in tune with the individual strengths of their children (25%; N= 5). Statements focusing on

individualism were identified as those that focused on school could address desires for differentiation in instruction and vocational opportunities aside from liberal arts-based options. Their hope is that the school system would increase the variety of instructional opportunities based on their ability to individualize instruction.

Interviewee 4 talked about how having a son with an identified disability influences his emphasis on individualized education:

What would I want schools to know? I guess that every child is different. And that the same rules cannot apply to every child. I mean, I think that there should be some individuality in the school system, instead of just curriculum. Because everybody learns different. Everybody comes from different places. And everybody is an individual. And I think that you can...

Interviewee 4 continues to talk about how his son is diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome and his school was able to provide individualized supports to accommodate his needs. He shares:

And I think that's one thing that I would want schools to know. That everybody is different. And maybe they could come up with some kind of systematic program or something, ways where (you) could pinpoint...all right, this group of kids like this, this group of kids like that. But still gear them toward the educational part, based on a curriculum that's based towards what would help them more. I think that is what I would want schools to know.

Three additional fathers discussed the need to have more variety in education, particularly as part of preparing students for vocational choices as a way to individualize instruction. For example,

Interviewee 15 talked about the need for schools to adapt their curriculum to a changing workforce:

I would want them to know that, while all individuals need a baseline of academic information and academic knowledge, that, in the real world, the millions of kids that are in our school systems will go on to do different things, and they need to have all those things that interest them tapped into. I believe, as a society and the world moves toward technology, that we have put an overemphasis on things such as math and the sciences, and we've moved away from teaching and educating and developing the whole child.

Interviewee 2 also talked about schools needing to have a broader definition of success and preparation for careers:

I guess there's a thousand ways you can be successful. So I think schools do a really poor job of preparing kids for different types of jobs, I guess is the best way to put it. Schools, for the most part, prepare children to do jobs like what I do. So education, doctors, lawyers, scientists, mathematicians. Things like that schools do a great job of preparing people for. But other jobs that are slightly different, slightly out of the norm, school doesn't do a great job with that. I think schools...And I don't know how to improve it, so I'm not saying I know how to improve it, but I think they do a very poor job when it comes to preparing kids for success outside the box that they generally look in.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Summary of Findings

The purpose of the current study is to provide insight into the degree to which African American fathers' racial socialization practices intersect with their own definition of academic success. The current study sought to investigate how African American fathers communicate their own racial and ethnic values to their children. This process known as racial socialization has been well documented by others, with four main types of messages utilized: cultural socialization, preparation for bias, egalitarian, and promotion of mistrust (Hughes et al., 2006). All 16 fathers, formally and informally, socialized their children through implicit or explicit messages about what it meant to be African American. In order to discuss how they socialize their children about race or ethnicity, it was necessary to determine to what degree and how the fathers identified with their racial or ethnic identity.

Racial and Ethnic Identity Development

All of the participants identified with a racial or ethnic identity that was either Black American or African American. There was certainly an overlap between the identification of Black American and African American relative to how fathers identified themselves. Only one participant specifically separated their ethnicity from their racial identity (e.g. Black versus African American). In previous research there may be a distinct difference between the two for many ethnic groups (Phinney, 1995; however, Black Americans face a unique disadvantage because their culture per se is not concretely solidified by discrete characteristics such as language, lineage to a particular country, or specific customs (Hughes et al, 2006). The participants in the current study identified particular "cultural" norms as family norms that were not clearly articulated as uniquely African American.

Additionally, racial and ethnic identity development models suggests that in order to be fully developed, that the individuals must move through a trajectory of not being aware of their race or ethnicity, have some sort of experience that makes their race salient, engage in an investigative period and full immersion into their culture, and finally incorporate their racial or ethnic identity into their total identity (Cross, 1978; Phinney, 1995). When asked how participants came up with their identity related to their racial or ethnic identity, many indicated that they assumed their racial or ethnic classification based on others around them. The designation was told to them through family encounters, interactions within the community, and interactions from those outside their community (e.g. government). One participant reported not ever really giving it much thought at all. On first glance, the assumption would be that many of the participants who endorsed their identification as being developed, based on others' definitions are at the underdeveloped stages of racial and ethnic identity development, such as unexamined (Phinney, 1995) or pre-encounter (Cross, 1978). However, further questioning later in the interview clearly indicated that many were able to articulate clearly, an experience in which they were confronted with their racial identification in a very overt manner. For example, Interviewee 5 shared a story in which he and a group of African American young men were pulled over by law enforcement for a seemingly unnecessary reason, none other than to harass them. The interaction with the police led to a delay in their returning home, thus resulting in violating a city ordinance of curfew. Interviewee 5 continued:

Again, we got stopped well before midnight and we were only a couple a miles from home. We wasn't that far and I felt like the whole thing, them thinking that we were in a gang, saying things like that, that was my first encounter of having to deal with discrimination. And then, I felt like they made us go to the precinct for curfew when we had got stopped well before that. I just felt like that was one experience I had where I'm like, "Okay, I know I'm Black."

In regard to following established linear racial and ethnic identity development models, again, only one participant isolated the idea that his racial identity was developed through discreet means such as an investigation of Black culture, race relations, and trainings on cultural proficiency.

Let me see. That would have to do with a lot of just education in terms of reading a lot about the ... Let me go back to ... probably going back to college, having conversations about race, whether it's in a culture diversity class, and then civics, and just my own interest of reading books about race, and race in America, being part of culture proficiency teams in my role as a leader in buildings and education. So, you know, a lot of experiences have brought me to where I am today in terms of my feelings and knowledge about race and ethnicity.

The majority of the participants split their references for identity development between input from others and knowledge of their African ancestry. So at face value, their responses may appear to be, at most, moderately developed when aligning their statements with racial and ethnic identification models, the current author offers an alternative perspective.

Approximately 50% of the interviewed fathers “simply” identified their race or ethnicity as Black or African American male. This combination of gender and race as a response to the probe, “Describe your racial and ethnic identification”, suggests inherently, that the individual has not only incorporated being African American or Black American into his total identity but that for 50% of the sample, they are fused together. The close connection of race with gender suggests that these fathers have achieved a status of ethnic or racial identity in which their race is a part, though perhaps central, component of their overall identities. Ghavanmi and Peplau (2013) found others also view the relationship between race and gender for Black American males to be the most salient.

When asked what their racial or ethnic identification meant to them and how they came up with their views, many referenced others or their ancestry. However, a further inquiry

regarding racial socialization practices outlines that the fathers think about race often, either from their own experiences or with their own children as part of their parenting. For example, the purpose of preparation for bias messages is to provide children with the ability to identify discrimination and a working plan on how to address these situations when encountered. If William Cross's model (1978) of racial identity development is used, an individual would find that the encounter stage is marked by the awareness of race due to an event either direct or vicariously. Fathers who use preparation for bias messages are introducing such a situation, thus potentially moving their children through a racial identity development continuum.

The use of egalitarian messages may also be a secondary window into analyzing fathers' stages of racial and ethnic identity development. The definition of egalitarian messages proposes that parents consider race when socializing their children but see it as a component of socialization equal to the development of any other character trait. If these types of messages are aligned with Phinney's ethnic identity development model (1995), it would compare to the identity achieved status stage. This stage proposes that ethnicity is recognized as part of an overall identity. Parents who use egalitarian messages are modeling this type of achieved status.

Use of Racial Socialization Messages

All of the 16 participants in the current study reported using racial socialization messages in some form with their children. Similar to findings from Hughes, et al. (2006), participants in this study were more likely to use preparation for bias messages. Although preparation for bias messages were the most popular mechanism for talking about race, it is important to note that many of the fathers utilized additional methods of racial socialization as well (e.g. cultural socialization, egalitarian). Of particular interest was the fact that when fathers engaged in

conversations utilizing preparation for bias, approximately 50% of the population specifically discussed interactions with law enforcement.

It is reasonable that many of the fathers use this particular topic as a means of preparation. In the current sample, two of the 16 fathers shared personal stories in which they endured harassment by the police (Interviewee 2 and 5). Interviewee 2 highlighted the potentially fatal consequences of interactions with the police, whether warranted or not. Personal experiences impact the fathers' concerns about these interactions. Beuhler (2017) reports that in a review of death certificates from a national sample between 2010 and 2014, 2285 legal intervention deaths were identified. Among males aged 10 years or older, who represented 96% of these deaths, the mortality rate among non-Hispanic Black individuals was 2.8 times higher than that among White individuals. Preparation for encounters with law enforcement was not a topic of discussion between fathers and daughters. Preparation for bias conversations with daughters were typically related to combating negative stereotypes about African Americans such as subpar intellect or not perpetuating the stereotype of being overly aggressive. Berkel et al. (2009) reported similar finding from socialization practices of African American mothers' focus in preparation for bias in the community (e.g. interactions with police) for sons and respecting others and self-aware behaviors related to gender stereotypes for their daughters.

Egalitarian messages were the second most popular type of racial socialization messages used within the sample population. The egalitarian messages used through the sample varied but could be generalized into falling into three themes: emphasis on demonstrating a consistent work ethic, consistent positive character trait when developing relationships with all types of people, and family cohesiveness. Fathers who spoke about maintaining a consistent work ethic

usually placed this value to include needed effort to succeed academically. Further discussion of effort and definitions of academic success are fully discussed later in this paper. Within this category of racial socialization messages, fathers also endorsed messages valuing equality in relationships. Fathers who focused on this dynamic shared that one of their goals of parenting was to make sure that their children interacted with others as equals. There should not be a discrepancy in interactions based on race, at least on their part. In Hughes et al. (2006) review of 44 studies studying racial socialization practices, egalitarian messages were isolated out in twelve instances. Of these twelve studies, four studies specifically contained equality in relationships as the content of egalitarian messages used by parents. Comparisons between the current sample and findings from Hughes et al. (2006) indicate that egalitarian messages specifically aimed at equality in relationships were endorsed on fewer occasions in the current sample, 18% and 27%, respectively.

Cultural socialization was the third most frequently endorsed type of racial socialization practices endorsed in the current sample. This finding is contradictory in findings from other studies because parents typically endorse this type of message more frequently (Hughes & Chen, 1997). This discrepancy in findings may be related to the high frequency of sons in the convenience sample. Although the frequency of endorsement is different, the content of messages is the same. Two of the fathers discussed using literature as part of their practices. Afrocentric literature is common in many African American homes. These fathers made a concerted effort to acquire text and trivia about African American accomplishments. However, a search on ERIC did not yield specific data regarding the percentage of African American children's literature available, compared with that of the majority population, a stroll through the local mega-bookstore refreshingly contains historical children's books and captivating fictional

African American characters that have mass appeal such as the Disney character, Doc McStuffins. The availability of books for purchase with African American characters and experiences seems to be available whether through a traditional purchase at a bookstore, online, or school book fairs, ultimately adding to home libraries of African American children.

Promotion of mistrust was the least endorsed method of racial socialization in the sampled population, as evidenced by only one clear indication of this type of message. This fits with findings from previous research indicating that across various ethnic groups, including African Americans, promotion of mistrust was the least likely to be reported (Thornton et al., 1990). The previous literature has found that youth that report promotion of mistrust as the primary method of racial socialization endorse higher rates of maladaptive functioning such as depressive symptoms (Liu & Lau, 2013). Although it is impossible to extrapolate this assertion to the reporting father's state of psychological functioning, it is noteworthy that this participant was the only father to express the angst that is associated with parenting an African American son. The transcription of his interview loses the heartfelt emotion he expressed in the tone of his voice. He shared statements such as "it hurts" when talking about police brutality and the absence of a balanced, inclusive history curriculum. Moreover, he talks about being told to "get over" slavery as "not feeling good".

Role of a Father

All of the participating fathers endorsed being a father as a central component of their overall identities. Many reported taking their roles seriously. Their perspectives on how to approach parenting came from their own personal experiences and their respective parents. Some fathers chose to continue similar parenting approaches, but others reported to actively choose to parent differently from their family of origin. Regardless of the source, fathers

reported seeing their roles as primarily that of a teacher and role model. Doyle et al. (2016) also found that being a role model was the most highly endorsed mechanism for teaching racial socialization practices. Fathers in the present study used role modeling as a mechanism to teach their sons how to be future fathers, display positive character traits, and strive for academic excellence. Although not specifically categorized in Doyle et al.'s findings (2016), the role of a teacher is implied; the mechanism of role modeling is to teach information such as general values, critical race messages, masculinity, and educational achievement. Many of the fathers in the current study felt they offered a unique perspective as African American males to both their sons and daughters. For their sons, they were able to provide and relate directly to their shared experiences. For their daughter's, they were able to model what love looks like from an African American man in order to refute negative stereotypes.

Definitions of Academic Success

Historically, research on parental definitions of academic success have focused on grades and standardized assessments, and to a lesser degree academic efficacy and engagement (Hughes et al., 2009). Findings from the present study also support the fact that the fathers in this sample also measure academic success by these traditional measures. Many of the fathers measured academic success by individual grades, stating, "grades are absolutely important", and encouraging their children to strive for high letter grades. Another father outlined the importance of performing well on college entrance exams. These expectations appeared to be clearly articulated to their children through direct conversation and in some instances modeling by the father. Additionally, other fathers focused on the attainment of advanced degrees as an indicator of academic success. Again, these desires were communicated through direct conversations as well as modeling how the father's own advanced degrees has helped in his

career trajectory. Most often, even when fathers used their own relative success as a benchmark, they often talked about pushing their children to aspire for advanced degrees beyond their own.

Fathers' endorsements of their children's ability to remain engaged through sustained effort and resilience was also a central theme reported by fathers. This core value is also mirrored in the literature under the concepts of academic engagement and efficacy (Hughes et al., 2009). Many of the fathers considered their children's ability to put forth sustained effort over grades as their primary definition of academic success. This preference can pose as a challenge for school systems who are looking to quantify academic success. With school's performances often being evaluated by tangible measures such as grades and performance on state standardized assessments, there is a potential for misalignment between school expectations of academic success and those of these fathers.

A third category that was uncovered through interviews that are not supported in the research as falling under academic success or academic achievement was related to the themes of demonstrating learned skills, identifying one's talent, and earning potential. Fathers in the current sample indicated that their greatest concern is that their children are able to apply skills for successful adulthood. The identification of these themes relative to academic achievement is future-oriented. This orientation poses challenges for researchers and school systems to receive immediate feedback for program evaluations.

Intersectionality of Racial Socialization Practices, Parenting, and Academic Success

Five of the 16 fathers explicitly discussed the relationship of their racial socialization practices and relative definitions of academic success. When discussing the intersectionality of the constructs, the fathers referred to a mixture of cultural socialization and preparation for bias. Many of the fathers referenced the importance of taking advantage of educational opportunities

due to historical inequalities offered for educating African Americans. Some referred to moments during the Civil Rights period of the 1960s and others referred to the denial of basic human rights violated through enslavement. There was a sense of pride associated with the fact that their ancestors had rallied and continued on to the gain equal opportunities and it is now the responsibility of the father to make sure their children take full advantage of their sacrifices, suggesting messages of cultural socialization. As one father stated, “(It’s a) way to kind of pay respect to the efforts of the past that have allowed us to be where we are now.” Preparation for bias messages was related to the amount of effort that would be needed for recognition and advancement, referred to having to “try harder” because of their ethnicity.

Implications for Practice

Fathers were prompted to share what they felt school systems should know about their experiences as African American fathers and how to support their children. Fathers provided a variety of responses. A common thread throughout their responses clearly articulated that they valued education for their children. For these fathers, a “good education” meant that their children could demonstrate mastery as evidenced by high achievement, emotional regulation through demonstration of perseverance, and application of learned information through achieving successful careers and applying taught skills. The fathers were able to indicate their desired goals as well as barriers they determined hindered acquisition of these collective goals for their children. Their responses can be categorized as falling under increased engagement, the need for individualized experiences, and the continued presence of institutionalized racism. Frequently, school improvement plans include needed areas of growth as identified by community stakeholders. The fathers in this study have outline clear areas of concentration for school systems to improve practices.

Many of the fathers discussed the need for increased engagement of African American male students in particular. One father discussed the need for appropriately designed, rigorous curriculum; however, the majority of the fathers who voiced concerns under engagement referred to emotional engagement rather than that which was academic and curricular in nature. These fathers want schools to make social-emotional connections with their students. As one father stated, "Ask questions". Although this may sound simple, with the pressure of pacing charts and standardized testing, it may seem impossible for some teachers to fit this into their schedules. Additionally, having an "open format" may prove to be challenging for teachers who have difficulty with classroom management. Responsive classroom approaches may be a semi-structured way of formally allocating time to have teachers get to know students and create supportive environments in which children can take emotional and academic risks with the guidance of a teacher to help moderate discussions (Horsch, Chen, & Wagner, 2002).

Fathers also reported concerns regarding a lack of individualized instructional planning for their children as a barrier to demonstrating relative definitions of academic success. They are seeking individualized support in helping students identify potential career paths, talents, and instruction based on their learning preferences. Vocational interest assessments such as the Career Interest Inventory may provide a measurable means of helping students identify potential career paths (Stone, 1993). Utilizing these types of interest inventories both in the middle school and in high school years allows for a comparison and a way to verify if interests remain the same or if curricular selections support interests and talents. Middle school career planning programs that include components such as a six-year plan of study in the area of identified interests, curriculum infusion, and job shadowing have been shown to help students identify, and at minimum explore, a variety of career opportunities (Kelly, 2000).

The final area of consideration for an implication of findings regarding African American fathers' concerns and lapses in consideration by schools is continued overt and covert institutionalized racism that still exists. One of the ways that schools can assist with combating racist or discriminatory practices is first to acknowledge them. Landa (2011) suggests that in order for teacher to engage in cultural proficiency the most be able to engage in the following: evaluate how their own culture and awareness impacts their behaviors, values, and perceptions of students; perceive differences in cultures; consider the experience of non-dominant children; understand the historical and current social constructs associated with race, prejudice, and discrimination, and the role of culture in education. Teachers and school systems should not shy away from discussing race and ethnicity in school settings. Previous research (Hughes et al. 2006) and current participants clearly assert that African American families are likely already talking about race and ethnicity. African American children are likely to be acutely in tune with overt racism and micro aggressions before their White counterparts; essentially, they are aware before many White educators and children believe they can consciously perceive negative and affirming interactions. The nuances of racial socialization methods of preparation for bias and promotion of mistrust may be outside of their competency area of schools; however, they can certainly promote cultural socialization and egalitarian messages as part of character education programs and multicultural curriculum selections.

Further Research

The findings of the current study yielded many fruitful details related to African American fathers' experiences in parenting related to racial and academic socialization practices. Even with the wealth of information obtained, there are certainly limitations to the current study that future research should consider related to question formatting, preparation for bias

socialization practices for girls, endorsement of promotion of mistrust, collecting additional data regarding demographic information and potential concerns of researcher bias.

The concept of intersectionality between roles is complex. Due to the complex nature of the subject matters of race, academic socialization, and parenting practices, the current researcher found it difficult to elicit responses with a question that was simply stated for participants. On multiple occasions, participants asked for the prompt specifically addressing these relationships to be cumbersome as evidenced by asking the author to repeat the question. Occasionally, the respondent would begin to answer the question and appear to lose the purpose of his statement. This response style lends itself to suggest that many participants struggled to integrate the three components of the question. It is suggested that future research consider either rewording the prompt to elicit clear responses regarding intersectionality with a response requiring a yes or no, followed by a query for respondents to explain, further, the origin of their response.

Another area for further research is related to the discrepancy in preparation for bias messages by gender related to police interactions. Many of the fathers in the current study spoke at length about how they prepare their sons for potential interactions with law enforcement. Some gave personal narratives about their own experiences about how they prepare their sons, and another gave explicit instruction on how to behave, down to not making any “crazy movements”. In a review of available literature related to racial socialization practices, there was no mention of how daughters are socialized to deal with law enforcement. This is of particular concern, considering reports of police brutality against women of color and social justice movements such as #sayhername and #metoo (Hutchinson, 2018). Future research should investigate whether or not these conversations are taking place with African American daughters.

Do African American fathers perhaps feel that this is a gender-based socialization topic that should be handled by female primary caregivers or mothers? If not, then how are daughters learning to navigate these situations in gender specific ways, if at all?

Previous research asserts that promotion of mistrust messages are more likely to be endorsed in qualitative studies compared with quantitative studies (Hughes et al, 2006). In the current sample, only one participant explicitly endorsed promotion of mistrust messages during the recorded interview. However, two additional participants endorsed promotion of mistrust statements after the formal interview was discontinued. These statements were made in the context of the author stating her purpose for engaging in the current research and for personal relevance. The additional, undocumented statements suggest that promotion of mistrust may be more prevalent, at least within the current sample, than identified. Hesitations to share promotion of mistrust statements may be a function of stereotype threat for fear of judgment from out-group members. It is hypothesized that this type of stereotype threat may be the antecedent because, in both instances, the participant asked if the interviewer was still recording. Future research may find a focus group that directly asks about promotion of mistrust messages as a better approach to soliciting responses. In a group setting, participants may feel more comfortable sharing these types of messages, particularly if they know that others have similar experiences.

No specific data were collected regarding any demographic information concerning the participants outside of the inclusionary criteria. Although useful information was obtained without this information, future research should consider the benefit of collecting demographic information for analysis. In particular, the inclusion of information regarding the fathers' socio-economic status and levels of education may shed additional light on themes and practices of the

fathers. This would be of particular interest in regard to relative definitions of academic success. Do fathers who are currently striving for advanced education define academic success and those who have “achieved” higher education? Are the benchmarks for academic success different, based on the fathers’ socioeconomic status? Not only would specific information from survey demographic data be important but the inclusion of interview questions that question the link between socioeconomic status and conscience parenting practices regarding racial-ethnic socialization would be important to explore.

The final presented limitation related to the current study is the possible influence of researcher bias related to participants wanting to give the “right” answer and in-group membership. During the rapport-building component of interviews, the author revealed that she was a doctoral candidate working towards the completion of the final requirements for her degree. Because all of the participants valued academic achievement and effort, as evidenced by later responses in their interviews, it is hypothesized that they wanted to “please” the examiner. Although the opening script assures participants that there are no “right or wrong answers”, some of the respondents would ask if their responses were correct. One explicitly stated once the recording was discontinued that he hoped he did a “good job”. Although researcher bias in interpretation of findings was minimized by journaling about emotional responses to interviews and use of a validation team, there is the possibility that there could have been an impact on how fathers responded, based on wanting to present as a “good participant”.

Additionally, in-group membership on behalf of the researcher also may have impacted the depth in which probing took place. For example, in a review of transcripts, there were potential opportunities for additional probing of responses. However, due to the researcher’ shared race and ethnicity with the respondents, implied messages or comments were not probed

because the researcher was aware of the context or content due to familiarity with their shared culture. An out-group researcher may have probed deeper due to lack of familiarity of statements. For example, Interviewee 9 talked about having the thought that he had to, “do twice as well for the same sort of recognition”, compared with his White counterparts. Although he did not share this explicitly with his children, it was “certainly in the back of (his) mind”. He also defined academic success as giving your “best effort”. So although both of these statements were under the context of his definition of academic success, the reference of “twice as well” is a comment on a common proverb in the African American community known as a “Black Tax”, in which it is said that African Americans have to “work twice as hard to get half as far”. So his comment on “effort” for academic success also served a dual purpose as a means of preparation for bias. However, this is a hypothesis on the part of the researcher because he, the father, did not actually endorse such a message when explicitly prompted to share racial socialization practices.

Conclusion

Parenting is a nuanced, complex, yet rewarding endeavor. Parents are their child’s first teacher and role model. Parents of minority groups have the additional context of introducing race identity development as well. For African Americans, this can be an especially formidable task due to the social constructs that are associated with race. Despite the enormous responsibility, it comes intuitively for many.

For the 16 African American fathers in the current study, all report valuing the opportunity to be a father. They considered their most important duty as a father to be a role model, through demonstrating desired skills and behaviors through examples, and a teacher through their unique perspective as an African American male. The current study allowed these

fathers a chance to voice their unique lived experiences as an African American father. They discussed the challenges of socializing their children around race and their varied approaches. All of the fathers used documented racial socialization messages such as cultural socialization, preparation for bias, egalitarian, and promotion of mistrust (Hughes et al., 2006). Preparation for bias messages were the most frequently utilized messages in the current sample. Fathers used this mode of communication as a way to help their children identify discriminatory situations and have action plans to address them. Fathers often discussed that they used this form of racial socialization with their sons to combat potentially fatal interactions with law enforcement. Fathers were likely to use preparation for bias messages with their daughters regarding gender and racial stereotypes such as combating the negative stereotype of being the “angry Black woman”. Fathers also reported using egalitarian messages with their sons and daughters, often focusing on equality in developing relationships, work ethic, and family cohesiveness. Cultural socialization messages were reportedly used with sons and daughters as a means of encouraging cultural pride to act as a buffer for later encounters with discrimination or negative stereotypes. The least frequently documented racial socialization method was promotion of mistrust, advising their children to steer clear of other ethnic groups. Although this message was the least reported, informal conversations suggest that the use of the messages may occur at higher rates than originally considered. Further research should consider the use of focus groups potentially to elicit these responses for fathers who utilize this strategy but feel uncomfortable verbalizing it.

Fathers’ perceptions of academic success were also investigated as part of the current study. African American fathers report defining academic success by traditional and nontraditional means. Some look to historical, measurable measures such as grades, performance on standardized assessments and attainment of advanced degrees. Others view

traditional measures of effort or engagement as indicators of academic success through the demonstration of resiliency and perseverance. Differing from literature related to definitions of academic success and expectations, fathers in this study also identified their child's ability to identify a talent and apply a taught skill in all world situations that foster increased standards of living as academic success. Although identification of talent can be determined through interest inventories and exposure to a variety are feasible, the remaining two components of this definition are more difficult to quantify and program. Application of taught skills could potentially be measured by well-equipped and intentional project-based learning courses. Future earnings would require a longitudinal approach, thus making it difficult for school systems to make adjustments in programming based on evaluation results.

Fathers are clearly able to articulate their racial socialization preferences and relative definitions of academic success. However, they were not as clear in describing the intersectionality of being an African American father, racial socialization practices, and academic socialization. Part of the inability in clearly articulating is likely due to the wording of the question. Many of the respondents found this prompt particularly challenging. Additionally, there is also the possibility that for some of the fathers there is no intersectionality. Those that did comment on how the three constructs were interwoven discussed how a legacy of discrimination in access to appropriate education since slavery has impacted their view of the necessity for students to perform academically. Future research should consider probing specifically in a less generalized manner to ascertain properly if fathers connect the three constructs.

African American fathers are present socializers in their children's' lives. They are emotionally invested in their success and want them to achieve. Their position as a community

stakeholder is at times overlooked for a variety of reasons. The fathers in this study shared areas of improvement within school systems that serve as barriers to their children demonstrating their relative definitions of academic success. Of particular concerns are the acknowledgment of institutionalized racism and lack of individualized instructional programming. Fathers reported that they are concerned that schools do not recognize the consequences of continued institutionalized racism through direct methods such as the blatant omission of a balanced history curriculum, including the accomplishments and dark history of slavery and implied methods such as micro-aggressions. Possible solutions to minimize the impact of institutionalized racism include cultural proficiency through professional development and using schools as positive cultural socializers. Lack of individualized programming was also a larger theme under areas of improvement in school systems by fathers in the study. Variety in instructional opportunities as well as developing true emotionally meaningful relationships between students and teacher can allow for greater individuality.

In conclusion, African American fathers are valuable members not only in our society as a whole but also to their children. The current qualitative study gives African American fathers a voice in the literature about their experiences, racial-ethnic socialization practices, and views on education. The greatest contribution to the field is that the present project highlights the fact that when given the opportunity to share their experiences, others can learn the important contributions and values that African American fathers provide in raising the next generation. As one interviewee put it, "As the man of the house, or the father of the home, you have three major responsibilities: provider, priest, protector." The beauty of being a father is to be all that their children need.

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Appendix A

LETTER TO ADVOCACY GROUP BOARD MEMBERS

Dear Board Members:

I am a Pennsylvania certified school psychologist currently working on my doctoral level degree in school psychology at the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. As part of my dissertation research, I am conducting research collecting qualitative interviews from African American fathers about how they teach their children what it means to be Black as it relates to their definitions of academic success.

I would appreciate your help in sharing the opportunity for participation in the study to your members by posting a flyer on your social media site and permission to share this opportunity at an upcoming meeting. Participation in the study is completely voluntary. No identifying information about participants will be collected and retained. Participants may withdraw from the study, or discontinue the interview, at any time. The interview may take up to one hour. Audio from interviews will be recorded. Interviews can be conducted in person or via telephone based on the preference of participants.

Responses from participants will enable me to better understand the racial socialization practices of African American fathers as it possibly relates to their definition of academic success. There are no foreseen risks to participating in the interview.

By completing the interview, participants are giving permission for their responses to be utilized in the current research study. Responses are anonymous and cannot be linked to individual fathers in any way.

If you would like additional information or have questions about the current study, please feel free to contact me by phone at 313-205-6774 or by email at sharoncol@pcom.edu. You may also contact Dr. Terri Erbacher, dissertation chair, at terrierb@pcom.edu. If you are interested in receiving information about the findings of this study, please contact me directly through either the email address or phone number listed above.

This study has been approved by the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine Institutional Review Board. For further information on this approval, please contact the Research Compliance Specialist at 215-871-6782.

Appendix B

RECRUITMENT FLYER

A recruitment flyer with a dark teal background and a red vertical bar on the right. The title 'Calling Active African American Fathers' is centered at the top in white. Below the title is a photograph of a smiling African American man holding two young children. To the left of the photo are three questions in white text. To the right are two more questions and a statement about the interview focus. At the bottom, contact information for Sharon Coley-Wilson is provided in white text.

Calling Active African American Fathers

Do you contribute towards child rearing practices?

Do you talk about race with your children?

Do you talk about academic expectations with your children?

Would you be willing to participate in a research interview?

The interview will focus on African American fathers' parenting experiences.

If interested in participating in the study and would like more information
Please contact
Sharon Coley-Wilson
sharoncol@pcom.edu or 313-205-6774

Appendix C

RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

I am very happy to meet with you all today and see everyone here supporting the well-being of their children. I am a graduate student at the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. I want to learn and share ways to support parenting practices of African American fathers. I am working on a research project where I speak with African American fathers about how they teach their children what it means to be Black and their definitions of how to be successful in school. In order to work on how to share this important information with others, like schools, it is important to know about the experiences of fathers. I am in the process of gathering fathers who are interested in sharing how they connect with their children about their race and their own definitions of academic success, and I would greatly appreciate any volunteers. Please give this invitation some thought and reach me, via the contact information I will provide you if you are interested.

Appendix D

DESCRIPTION OF STUDY

Father's Perspectives in Discussing Race-Ethnicity and Academic Success

African American parents share important information about what it means to be African American in this world to their children through different types of messages. This is referred to as racial-ethnic socialization. This process takes place in many different ways. These messages can be given in direct or indirect ways. Children may learn what it means to be African American through conversations or exposure to aspects of African American culture. Beliefs about parents' expectations for academic success can be related to these practices.

Research has often focused on mothers' input due to a belief that African American fathers do not help towards parenting. This bias is based on the high percentage of single mothers in the African American community. Social and popular culture would have some believe that African American fathers and father-like figures are absent from youths' lives.

The current research seeks to explore the ways that residential and/or nonresidential, African American fathers parent about race and academic success, in their own words.

Anyone who is interested in participating will be asked to share their experiences in an interview that could take about 1 hour to complete. Participation is completely voluntary and participants are allowed to stop participation at any point.

Appendix E

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Introductory Remarks:

I will be asking you a series of questions today and I am hoping that you will reflect on experiences that you have had in your past. There are no right or wrong answers; I just want to hear about your experiences and your honest feelings in response to them. I encourage you to tell me as much as you remember and are comfortable revealing. There is no set number of things that I want you to tell me, just please speak to what comes to mind when I pose a question to you. Please let me know if you have any questions at any point of this interview or if you wish to discontinue. Your responses will be audiotaped but no information about you that could reveal your identity will be kept.

I would like to ask you a few questions to make sure you meet inclusion criteria for the interview and study.

1. Are you 18 years old of age or above?
2. Do you self-identify as African American or Black American?
3. Are you a father of a child or children between the ages 5 and 21?
4. Have you provided a substantial contribution towards parenting for at least five years?
5. Are you willing to be audiotaped?
6. Do you reside in the United States?

Do you want me to use your actual name or a pseudonym? Are you ready to begin?

The questions that will be included in the interview are as follows:

Interview Questions

1. Describe your racial and ethnic identification.
- 1b. What does this mean to you and how did you come up with these views?
2. Tell me about how you share your racial or ethnic values with your child or children.
- 3a. Can you give me some specific examples (if not already provided)?
4. Tell me about how being a father plays a part in the messages you use.
- 4a. Can you give me some specific examples (if not already provided)?
5. What does academic success mean to you?
- 5a. Can you give me some specific examples (if not already provided)?
6. Tell me about a time when your racial or ethnic values as they relate to your definition of academic success played a part in your parenting.
7. What would you want schools to know about what we just discussed?
8. Is there anything else you would like to share?

9. How old are your children?
10. What gender are your children?

Appendix F

RESOURCE SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

Talking about parenting can be overwhelming at times. It can bring up both happy and uncomfortable feelings. After talking today, you may want to continue talking with someone else about your experiences.

Although the research team is not able to recommend individual therapists, the following sources may help you find a local mental health professional:

- ❖ Ask your doctor for a recommendation
- ❖ Contact the departments of psychiatry, psychology, counseling, or social work at your local university or hospital
- ❖ Use the American Psychological Association's locator service at locator.apa.org or 1-800-964-2000.
- ❖ Contact The American Psychiatric Association's referral service at apa@psych.org or call 1-888-357-7924 and press 0 to speak with a customer service representative
- ❖ Contact the National Association of Social Workers' referral service at naswdc.org or helppro.com/HP/BasicSearch.aspx
- ❖ If you are a veteran, contact Veterans Affairs at mentalhealth.va.gov/gethelp.asp
- ❖ The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration maintains lists of therapists as well as treatment centers at store.samhsa.gov/mhlocator
- ❖ For low-cost options, visit the Mental Health America website at nmha.org/go/help or call 1-800-969-6642
- ❖ If you have insurance coverage, you can contact your insurance carrier for in-network referrals
- ❖ Access the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) through the human resources department of your job/work