“But Dad, Why Was He Shot?” Racial Socialization and the Psychosocial Wellbeing of Black Youth

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Race-Related Stress

- Event/Stressor
  - Biological
  - Psychological
  - Sociodemographic

Appraisal/Perception
- Racism
- Different Stressor
- None

Coping
- Psychological
- Physiological

Health

Clark et al., 1999
Racial Discrimination

- The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people on the grounds of race

- Discrimination types and experiences can differ
  - In-vivo and vicarious
  - Objective and subjective
  - Interpersonal and institutional

- Perceived discrimination linked to adult and youth outcomes
  - Academic/Cognitive
  - Psychological
  - Physiological
Racial Stress and Trauma

- Symptoms as a consequence of emotional pain during and/or after discrimination
- Racial stress and trauma (RST) occurs in the vast majority of Black Americans during their lifetime
  - Differential experiences
  - Instantaneous and chronic symptoms
Raising Black Children

Jordan Davis' Parents Speak Out On Good Morning America

The Huffington Post | by Braden Goyette
Posted: 02/19/2014 8:58 am EST | Updated: 02/19/2014 9:59 am EST

Trayvon Martin’s Fate Is Still Too Many Parents’ Fear

A Mom's Advice To Her Young, Black Sons

March 29th, 2012 4:58 pm
Connie Schultz

Ten years ago, I was a newspaperman who had received treatment for cancer at the Mayo Clinic. My body had been through some tough times, but my spirit had remained strong. I had come to realize that life is not always fair, and that we must work hard to make the most of what we have.

Donna Britt and her sons Justin and Darrell Britt-Gibson read about how she prepared them as young people for a world that might view them with suspicion.

Listen to the Story

Morning Edition

March 22, 2012

In light of the shooting death of Florida teen Trayvon Martin, Steve Inskeep speaks with writer Donna Britt and her sons Justin and Darrell Britt-Gibson about how she prepared them as young black men for a world that might view them with suspicion.

This proved to be Green's undoing. Powell, lineups of black men. Eventually, she identified - - infamous Willie Horton ad ran against Democratic prez - -
Racial Socialization

- Communication between families about the racial world
- Racial socialization (RS)
  - Cultural socialization
  - Preparation for bias
  - Promotion of mistrust
  - Egalitarianism or colorblindness
- Adolescent Outcomes
  - Dependent on RS type
    - Academic
    - Psychosocial
    - Self-esteem
    - Identity
Clinical Considerations

- RS acts as a coping mechanism in Black families
  - Black youth and adults generally use more emotion-focused coping
    - Is problem-focused coping reasonable with racism?
  - Yet less is know about how well they cope with racism

- There are no diagnostic standards for RST
  - Stress symptoms
    - Externalizing: anger or rage
    - Internalizing: anxiety, depression, shame, or guilt
  - Trauma symptoms
    - Intrusion, avoidance, arousal, hypervigilance, or paranoia
Racial Encounter Coping Appraisal and Socialization Theory (RECAST)

Racial Socialization
- Skills
- Competency

Racial Stress → Appraisal → Reappraisal → Racial Coping → Resolution → Outcomes

Racial Self-Efficacy

Anderson & Stevenson, under review; Stevenson, 2014
What’s missing?

- We know the problem
- We’ve got a theory
- Why won’t someone do something about it!
EMBRace

Engaging, Managing, and Bonding through Race

Anderson & Stevenson, 2016
EMBRace is a 5-session family-based intervention designed to:

- increase parent and adolescent socialization efficacy;
- reduce parent and adolescent racial stress and trauma through coping; and
- improve adolescent psychological and academic outcomes

EMBRace involves skill development in:

- Engaging [Racial socialization content]
- Managing [Stress management and processing: CLC-BE]
- Bonding [Familial delivery and relationship]
Engaging, Managing, and Bonding through Race (EMBRace)

EMBRace: Content, Process, & Delivery

Racial Stress

Target:
- Increased awareness of stressor (re/appraisal)
- Development of self-efficacy

Target:
- Reinforcement of protective RS strategies
- Improving parent-child relationship
- Improving RS competence

Target:
- Improved stress management
- Advancement of self-efficacy
- Encouragement of racial assertiveness
- Expanded coping techniques

Outcomes:
- Reduced internalizing/externalizing problems
- Reduced physiological arousal
- Increased familial communication
- Increased awareness and management of racial stressors
- Increased academic assertiveness

Anderson, 2015
Method

- **Participants**
  - Black 10-14 year olds and their caregiver
  - **Youth** \((N = 10)\): 5 males, 5 females
  - **Parents** \((N = 10)\): 9 females (biological mothers) 1 male (biological father)
    - Participants were compensated $100(+) dollars per family for a completed trial
    - Books, t-shirts, gift certificates, and participation certificates

- **Recruitment**
  - Several referrals received from on-site social worker at a local elementary school
  - Partnered with a local college readiness program
  - Social media, word-of-mouth, community flyering
Method

Procedure

- Clinical manual and participant guide
  - Content and activities for parent, child, and family
  - 30 minute parallel, 15 minute dinner, and 45 minute conjoint sessions
Method

- Measures
  - Qualitative
    - Feasibility interview (Anderson, unpublished)
      - Ex: What was it like to come to EMBRace every week?
  - Quantitative
    - Stress Calculate, Locate, Communicate Scale (SCLCS; Stevenson, unpublished)
      - Ex: How well can you calculate how stressed you feel on a scale from 0-10?
Feasibility findings – is EMBRace useful?

- **Engaging**
  - [Youth] “…it felt good cuz like, we can talk about, like, what we seen. So like, we won’t have anger built up inside of us.”
  - [Youth] “It was exciting um talking. It helped me be able to get the feelings out. Because if I didn’t—it would have a negative impact on your character and morals.”
Preliminary Results: Qualitative

Feasibility findings – is EMBRace useful?

- **Managing**
  - [Youth] “Getting to get stuff off my chest about how I feel about White people and racial experiences…”
  - [Parent] “It was empowering…It opens up like obviously a different conversation that you wouldn’t typically have with your child. So, for me it was empowering because I feel like I’m teaching him, like you know, this is going to happen, but this is how you react.”
Preliminary Results: Qualitative

Feasibility findings – is EMBRace useful?

- **Bonding**
  - [Parent] “I wouldn’t mind coming…they [the clinicians] listened to everything from me to [my child] and they helped us try to communicate together.”
  - [Parent] “Prior to EMBRace, I thought I was well-informed about how my child thought about certain situations. Since EMBRace, I now listen more and encourage more communication from my child.”
Preliminary Results: Quantitative

Perception of Coping Ability

Youth

Parents

Anderson, McKenny, Mitchell, Koku, & Stevenson, 2017
Conclusion

- Both parents and youth appreciated having a platform to voice their concerns
  - Highlights reciprocal nature of RS practices
- Additional coping support may be needed in the midst of intervention (e.g., Session 2 “dip”)
- Continued recruitment will help to increase sample size for powered statistical analyses
What’s next?

- Partnering with the community in Philly and LA
  - Focus groups
    - Addressing recruitment, retention, and site placement
  - Advancing our Youth/Community Advisory Board

- Participant-focused data collection practices
  - Co-development of observational and self-report competency measures
  - Ensuring we are using common language to enhance coping
Discussion: What can dads do?

- **Be aware of explicit and implicit behaviors and communication**
  - Children are perceptive – talk to them about how you’re feeling in the moment.

- **Monitor your own stress**
  - Prior to talking to your children, it is useful to talk to your partner, parent, friend, or therapist about how you feel.

- **Start somewhere**
  - We think of it this way – if a flight attendant prepares passengers for plane crashes, wouldn’t it be just as logical for parents to prepare children for the sting of frequent discriminatory experiences?
Contact & Gratitude

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The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation - Culture of Health Leaders
Breakthrough Philadelphia
The EMBRace Team and most importantly, our families
Integrative Model of Developmental Competencies in Minority Children

Social Variables
- Race
- Class

Social Positioning
- Discrimination
- Oppression

Segregation
- Residential
- Economic

Promoting/Inhibiting Environments
- Schools
- Neighborhoods

Child Characteristics
- Temperament
- Appearance

Adaptive Culture
- Traditions
- Current Context

Development Competencies
- Coping
- Social
- Emotional

Family
- Racial Socialization
- Values

Garcia Coll et al., 1996
EMBRace
-Content
-Process
-Delivery
-Therapeutic Modeling

Underlying Process Targeted
Correction of RST for parent and reinforcement of protective qualities of RS components that improve upon academic and behavioral success for youth

Parent and Youth Intermediate Outcomes
-Improved Stress Management
  → Stress Appraisal & Reappraisal
  -RS Competence
  -Racial Self-Efficacy
  → Racial Assertiveness

Individual

Long-Term Outcomes
• Reduced internalizing/externalizing problems
• Reduced physiological arousal
• Increased familial accord and communication
• Increased awareness and management of racial stressors
• Increased coping techniques
• Increased academic assertiveness

Familial Intermediate Outcomes
-Improved Parent-Child Relationship
  → Increased Communication

Familial

Underlying Process Targeted
Modeling of Parent-Child Relationship Communication and Satisfaction

African American Parents and Youth