

**A Phenomenological Examination Of Racial Microaggressions In Intraracial  
Therapeutic  
Counseling Relationships**

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Written under the direction of  
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## **ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION**

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Dissertation Chair: Professor Norma Riccucci

Public service organizations involved in addiction and/or mental health counseling are becoming more racially and culturally diverse with a growing number of Black individuals serving as frontline workers within these types of organizations. Demographic changes coupled with an ever-increasing cultural diversification within American society has resulted in the Black frontline worker and the client of color engaging in therapeutic dialogues that involve different cultural backgrounds, beliefs, values, practices, behaviors, and/or languages. These types of therapeutic dialogues are persistent features of any competent frontline worker's approach to honing his or her craft. Therefore, in a society that is rapidly becoming more racially and culturally diverse, combined with the complexities of contemporary racism, racial prejudice, and/or cultural miscommunication, it is extremely important that Black frontline workers begin to understand how their perception of racial microaggressions and how they racially self-identify may influence their decision-making process during the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. In addition, public service organizations will also need to embrace these demographic realities by becoming more culturally competent and understand that their employees, especially their employees of color (e.g., Black frontline workers) are part and parcel of a culturally variegated society. As such, the effectiveness of delivery and the quality of service is contingent upon these organizations not only understanding the population that they service but also understanding the population that is doing the servicing. Quantitative results provide some preliminary evidence that the perception of racial microaggressions and the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers, to some extent, play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. Qualitative findings indicate that although racial microaggressions impact the experiential realities of Black frontline workers, those experiences are not brought into the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. Findings from this research illuminates its intrinsic value by adding to the cultural competency and social equity discourse in public administration and the cultural competency discourse in the field of addiction counseling education.

## DEDICATION

### To My Family:

#### To my beloved mommy, Rebecca Delores Wright-Williams, in your memory,

Various times throughout this journey, I have wanted to throw my hands up and walk away or at least take a very long break, however, your precious words, as only you can say, “Build a bridge and get over it” kept invading my thoughts. So mommy, I want you to know that I finally built that bridge and TODAY, I have crossed over it. Because of the foundation that you laid and the unselfish LOVE and dedication that you have shown me your entire life, I am who I am and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the life lessons you have taught me. I LOVE you and miss you more than words can ever be expressed! You are truly the wind beneath my wings.

#### To my beloved son, Andrew Jerrod Kelly, in your memory,

Abraham Lincoln once said: “In the end, it’s not the years in your life that count. It’s the life in your years” and so, for twenty-seven years, eight months, twenty-two days, and ten hours, you walked this earth and left a legacy that touched all you came in contact with. My precious road dog, through this journey with you, I learned to embody the Serenity Prayer: “God grant me the **Serenity** to accept the things I cannot change, **Courage** to change the things I can, and **Wisdom** to know the difference.” Thank you for all the life lessons that you gave to me; a mother could not have asked for a better son and for that; I know I have been truly blessed by the hand of God. Just know my son, that TODAY, I have copied all that my eyes have witnessed and pasted all that defined my heart. I made it! I LOVE you and miss you so, so very much!

To my Heavenly Father, I want to thank you for allowing me to be the mother to such a wonderful and gifted individual.

**To my beloved daughter, Senior Monáy Raines**

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**To all my babies from another mother**

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Humbly submitted with an attitude of gratitude,

Audrey Redding-Raines, Ph.D.



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## CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

### *Background of the study*

The historical and contemporary existence of racism in American society has evolved over time from overt acts and messages where Blacks have been subjected to devaluing, demeaning, and oppressive treatment that denied them equal access and opportunity to more insidious, subtle, and implicit manifestations that have had a dramatic impact on their everyday lived experiences (Sue, 2003). These manifestations exist in well-intentioned individuals who are not cognizant that their beliefs, attitudes, and/or actions oftentimes discriminate (Nelson, 2006). The term racial microaggressions, is used to describe these insidious, subtle, and implicit forms of expressions. Sue et al (2007a) define racial microaggressions as everyday short-lived verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional; that communicate hostile, derogatory, and/or negative racial slights to people of color (p. 271). Racial microaggressions also have a “cumulative and harmful impact on people of color by assailing their sense of integrity, invalidating them as racial/cultural beings, sapping their spiritual and psychic energies, and imposing a false reality on them” (Franklin, 2004; Solorzano et al., 2000; Sue et al, 2008a). This form of racism may be more harmful to people of color than overt acts of racial hatred and bigotry because of the hidden unintentional nature of microaggressions (Franklin, 2004; Hinton, 2004; Sue, 2003). In addition, a person of color may not necessarily discern or even understand a particular situation as microaggressions because of their sensitivity and their racial and/or ethnic awareness (Constantine and Sue, 2007, p. 143).

Sue et al (2007a), identified three forms of racial microaggressions: microassaults (e.g., explicit racial expressions directed towards a person of color), microinsults (e.g., communications that devalue a person of color's heritage and/or racial identity through disparaging messages), and microinvalidations (e.g., communications that disavow the feelings of a person of color) (p. 274). Sue et al (2007a) also defined a typology of several themes that show the various types of racial microaggressions that are imposed on people of color and the problems that they face after becoming the recipient of one of these expressions (p. 276), see (*Table I*). Although, the phenomenon of racial microaggressions was initially introduced forty-five years ago by Chester Pierce (1970) who examined subtle forms of racism that were manifested towards and experienced by African Americans through everyday lived occurrences (Pierce, Carew, Pierce-Gonzalez, & Willis, 1977); the concept has begun to receive increased attention in the literature, and more specifically, in the field of counseling and supervision (Barnes, 2011).

Counseling and other public service professions (e.g., criminal justice, education, health care, welfare, etc.) have acknowledged the significance of developing culturally competent skills when providing responsive and tangible services to an ever-increasing diverse population (American Psychological Association, 2003; Sue, Arrendondo, & McDavis, 1992). Developing culturally competent skills facilitate in bringing about cultural sensitivity, which can lead to providing those viable types of services. For counselors, an important step in achieving this goal is for them to become aware of their worldviews<sup>1</sup> during the therapeutic counseling relationship by acknowledging and understanding: (i) those benchmarks used to surmise normality and abnormality; (ii) the underlying values and suppositions about human behavior; and (iii) the biases,

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<sup>1</sup> Worldviews are defined as those basic sets of beliefs that guide action (Guba, 1990, p.17).

prejudices, and stereotypes inherited from the socialized learned behavior<sup>2</sup> of various institutions (Ridley, 2005; Sue, 2003). Although the counseling profession has taken significant steps to address those overt forms of racism, it has not been as efficacious in addressing those insidious forms of racism that have covertly contaminated not only the worldviews of well-intentioned counseling professionals but also the prejudicial practices and policies that are continually perpetuated within the profession (Sue et al, 2008b, p. 330).

The lived experiences of Blacks in the United States differ significantly from those members of other ethnic groups. While many ethnic groups experienced discrimination and oppression, and their worthiness oftentimes were called into question upon their arrival in American society, Blacks faced a unique form of oppression. Consequently, because of the institutional and structural racism that has been allowed to permeate through various forms of fiat against Blacks, the very essence of whom they were as a people, their humanity; was denied them by the U.S. Constitution (Sellers et al, 1998, p. 18). As a result of their lived experiences with oppression in this society, the concept of race has historically played a major role in the lives of Blacks. Race being a socially constructed concept is the defining characteristic for Black group membership, and as such, the significance and meaning that is placed on race in defining themselves may differ a great deal, in what they believe it means to be Black (Id., p. 19).

Rockquemore & Brunσμα, (2002) suggests that “although identity is influenced by physical appearance, it is a dynamic process that develops within the interaction between an individual and his or her context” (p. 261). The nature of these interactions, assist in

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<sup>2</sup> Socialized learned behavior also known as racialization, refers to the ways we are socialized to differentiate groups of people on the basis of physical characteristics (Butler, 1994).

defining how an individual comes to feel about his or her skin color and racial identification (Tummala-Narra, 2007, p. 261).

### *Research Problem*

Public service organizations involved in addiction and/or mental health counseling are becoming more racially and culturally diverse with a growing number of Black individuals serving as frontline workers within these types of organizations. Demographic changes coupled with an ever-increasing cultural diversification within American society has resulted in the Black frontline worker and the client of color engaging in therapeutic dialogues that involve different cultural backgrounds, beliefs, values, practices, behaviors, and/or languages. These types of therapeutic dialogues are persistent features of any competent frontline worker's approach to honing his or her craft and dictate that they possess the "requisite awareness, knowledge, and skills to work effectively with and across varying racial, ethnic, and cultural groups" (Constantine, 2001; Day-Vines, Patton, & Baytops, 2003; D.W. Sue & Sue, 2003).

Therefore, in a society that is rapidly becoming more racially and culturally diverse, combined with the complexity of contemporary racism, racial prejudice, and/or cultural miscommunication, it is extremely important that Black frontline workers begin to understand how their perception of racial microaggressions may influence their decision-making process during the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. In addition, since one's racial identity can change throughout their lifetime based on their lived experiences (Barnes, 2011, p. 47), it would be advantageous for the Black frontline worker to know if how they racially self-identity plays a role in their perception of racial

microaggressions and the impact these events can have on their everyday lived intraracial experiences.

Public service organizations will also need to embrace these experiential realities by “developing more inclusive work cultures that have a better understanding of the many ways people are different from one another and different from the organizations” (White & Rice, 2005, p. 3). In other words, public service organizations involved in addiction and/or mental health counseling need to become more culturally competent and understand that their employees, especially their employees of color (e.g., Black frontline workers) are part and parcel of a culturally variegated society. As such, the effectiveness of delivery and the quality of service is contingent upon these organizations not only understanding the population that they service but also understanding the population that is doing the servicing.

### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this study is to examine if there is a linkage between the perception of racial microaggressions and the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers, and if so, what influence does it play in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. In researching this topic area, the following studies highlighted one or more of the variables that the researcher proposes in this study. Studies such as Jones & Galiher (2015) that investigated 114 Native American Young Adults’ experience of racial microaggressions and links between microaggression experiences and self-reported ethnic and cultural identification and Hernandez et al (2010) that studied mental health professionals’ adaptive responses to racial microaggressions. Another study conducted



by Brittian et al (2015) focused on the association between perceived ethnic group discrimination and depressive symptoms. Davis, Ancis, & Ashby (2015) examined therapist effects, working alliance, and African American Women Substance Users. A study conducted by Gaddy (2012) examined the perception of therapists characteristics by Black and White clients, Barnes (2011) looked at racial microaggressions, racial identity, and the working alliance in cross-racial counseling supervision relationships between Black supervisors and White supervisees, and Arnold (2010) studied African American counselors' experiences in addressing issues of race, ethnicity, and culture with clients of color.

Additionally, there have been previous studies suggesting that racial microaggressions in counseling can negatively impact the processes and outcomes of cross-racial therapeutic relationships (Constantine, 2007; Constantine & Sue, 2007). Tummala-Narra (2007) examined the impact of societal and individual perceptions of skin color and the relevance of this impact in the psychotherapeutic relationship. Another study conducted by Watts & Carter (1991) examined the perception of racism in organizations as seen by African Americans. Clark et al. (1999) examined perceptions of intergroup and intragroup racism and their biopsychosocial effects among African Americans. Other studies have documented the lived experiences of African Americans and Asian Americans as invalidated, unimportant, and invisible (Franklin, 2004; Sue, 2004). Although the above-referenced studies do emphasize several key variables associated with this study, there appears to be a dearth of any published studies that explore the perception of racial microaggressions of Black frontline workers in intraracial therapeutic counseling relationships. There also, appears to be a dearth of any published

studies that explore any linkage or influence between the perception of racial microaggressions and the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers in intraracial therapeutic counseling relationships.

By addressing this gap in the literature, this research illuminates the intrinsic value derived from a study such as this by adding to the cultural competency and social equity discourse in public administration and the cultural competency discourse in the field of addiction counseling education. “Understanding the diverse nature of the population sets the stage for discussions of representative bureaucracy, discrimination, civil rights, affirmative action, and civic engagement” (Norman-Major & Gooden, 2012, p. 3). In addition, bringing awareness and understanding of the lived experiences of Black frontline workers is of interest as it can inform about additional variables that may surface in this type of therapeutic counseling relationship. For more descriptive information about existing racial microaggression studies conducted between the years 2007 – 2012, (*see Table VI*).

### *Research questions*

To address the purpose of this study, the following three research questions were explored:

- What role does the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers play in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship?
- What role does the perception of racial microaggressions of Black frontline workers play in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship?

- How does the perception of racial microaggressions influence the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship?

### *Significance of Study to Public Administration*

The significance of this study to public administration is to bring awareness and understanding to Black frontline workers about the racial microaggressions that they themselves experience every day. In addition, how they racially self-identify coupled with the experiences of racial microaggressions may influence and play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. This awareness can better assist them in acquiring the necessary tools to understand their own reactions and dilemmas, thereby moderating harmful effects during this type of service interaction. Also, from an organizational standpoint, it is essential that public service organizations (i.e., substance abuse and mental health facilities) begin to systematically acknowledge, understand, and unmask the dynamics, power, and impact of perceived racial microaggressions at both the macro (institution) and micro (individual) levels. As such, interventional strategies can be developed and/or enhanced as a contribution to the overall effectiveness and delivery of responsive and tangible services.

### *Definition of Terms*

*Black:* In utilizing of the terms *Black* and *African American*, Sellers, et al (1998) purposefully made a distinction in their usage. The term Black was used as an ambiguous category that, depending upon the individual's point of view, may or may not

include all individuals of African descent. For some African Americans, the term Black comprises of only African Americans. For other African Americans, the term Black holds a more Pan-African point of view whereby anyone of African descent is considered Black (p. 19).

For the purposes of this study, the term Black will be used to refer to the individuals' phenomenological point of view regarding the make-up of their referenced group and the term African American will be used to refer to those individuals of African descent who received the majority of their socialization in the U.S. (Id.). By utilizing the term Black in this study, the researcher also reaffirms Sellers, et al (1998) statement that Black is "culturally bound to a group of people within the context of American society" (Id.).

*Colorism:* Okazawa Rey, Robinson, & Ward (1987) define colorism as skin color stratification whereby, favoritism is established toward those individuals with lighter complexions while those with darker complexions experience rejection and mistreatment.

*Cultural Competency:* For the purposes of this study, cultural competency as defined by Cross, et al (1989) was viewed as: "a set of cultural behaviors and attitudes integrated into the practice methods of a system, agency, or its professionals that enables them to work effectively in cross cultural situations" (p. 42).

*Culture:* A cohesive benchmark that incorporates behavior, beliefs, communication, customs, directives, thoughts, and the values of a racial, ethnic, religious, or social group (Leighton, 1981).

*Frontline Workers:* Frontline workers also known as street-level bureaucrats are defined by Lipsky (1980) as "public service workers who interact directly with citizens in

the course of their jobs, and who have substantial discretion in the execution of their work” (p. 3).

*Race:* A socially constructed concept that has no significant biological inference except to reflect how various systems of power encroach on people of color, who represent visible racial ethnic groups (Day-Vines, 2007, p. 403).

*Racial identity:* Racial identity is defined as the importance and meaning that Africans Americans place on race when describing themselves (Sellers et al p. 19). There are some researchers who believe that the term racial identity should be replaced with the term ethnic identity when describing group identity within African Americans (Id.). However, in following the rationale of Sellers et al (1998) the researcher also believes that the significance of the social construction of race in describing the experiential reality of Blacks makes racial identity a much more preferable term. In this study, racial identity will be measured by the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity developed by Sellers et al (1998). For an overview, (*see Table II*).

*Racial microaggressions:* As defined by Sue et al (2007a) racial microaggressions are defined as everyday short-lived verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities . . . that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults against people of color (p. 271). In this study, racial microaggressions will be measured by the Racial Microaggressions Scale developed by Torres-Harding et al (2012). For an overview, (*see Table III*).

*Racism:* For the purposes of this study, the term racism as defined by Clark et al (1999) is characterized by the attitudes, beliefs, bureaucratic/structural measures and acts

that tend to malign individuals and/or groups because of their phenotypical traits or ethnic group affiliation (p. 805).

*Therapeutic counseling relationship:* For the purposes of this study, the researcher utilized Kazdin et al (2005) definition of the therapeutic working alliance, which they defined as “the quality of the interactions between clients and therapists, the collaborative nature of these interactions with regard to the tasks and goals of treatment, and the personal bond or attachment that transpires in treatment.” (p. 2).

#### *Dissertation Outline:*

This research study draws on four main streams of literature, namely racial microaggressions, racial identity development and colorism, social equity, and cultural competency. These key streams of literature will be discussed in Chapter Two. The scope of this dissertation is as follows:

Chapter One: provides the background of the study, the research problem, the research questions, the purpose of the study and its significance to the field of Public Administration as well as the definition of terms.

Chapter Two: provides the framework for this study and establishes a basis for the research questions. Some of the topics discussed in this literature review are racial microaggressions, racial identity development, colorism, the therapeutic counseling relationship, the role of public service organizations and frontline workers, social equity and Public Administration, cultural competency and Public Administration, and promoting cultural competency in Public Administration and public service delivery.

Chapter Three: discusses the research methodology used to answer the research questions in the study.

Chapter Four: presents the findings of Phase I (quantitative analysis) of the study. Specifically, this chapter discusses the methodology that was used to collect and analyze 2 evaluation instruments: 1) the Racial Microaggressions Scale (RMAS), which was used to assess the taxonomy of racial microaggression themes and categories, and 2) the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI), which was used to measure the significance of racial self-identification and the meanings attributed to being members of that racial category.

Chapter Five: presents the findings of Phase II (qualitative semi-structured interviews) of the study. Specifically, this chapter discusses the emergent themes and patterns related to the participant's perception of racial microaggressions as well as how they racially self-identify.

Chapter Six: discusses the limitations of the study, makes recommendations and discusses future research in this area as well as concludes the study.

## CHAPTER TWO –LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Racial Microaggressions*

#### *Racism – Then and Now*

Although the changing nature of racism in post-Civil Rights America has significantly gone through a racial metamorphosis, Thompson & Neville (1999) postulate that racism will continue to afflict and impact the United States (p. 271). In fact, McConahay & Hough, 1976; McConahay, Hardee, & Batts, 1981; Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000; Zamudio & Rios, 2006, suggest that racism has evolved from more overt and evident manifestations to more covert and implicit forms of racism (Sue, 2010c). No longer is racism overt, in your face, violent, and explicitly state-sanctioned, it is now covert, subtle, and insidious. In 1998, the Advisory Board to President Clinton's Initiative on Race concluded that: (i) racism is an acrimonious force in today's society, (ii) historical racial by-products continue to perpetuate unfair policies and practices between minority and majority groups, (iii) racial inequities that are virtually invisible are deep-rooted in American society, and (iv) most White Americans, unaware of the advantages that they enjoy in this society, unintentionally, through their attitudes and actions, discriminate against people of color (Sue et al 2007a, p. 271). Fast forward ten years later to the 2008 presidential election campaign, when there was hardly a week that passed by without some kind of inference to America's "post-racial" society, which the election of Barack Obama was supposed to establish (Fields & Fields, 2012, 2014, p. 1). As authors, Fields & Fields (2012, 2014) so eloquently elucidated, "If anyone was imagining such a thing as a post-racial America, what that might be was hard to pin down. Right through the campaign, references to "race" and the "race card" kept jostling the "post" in the "post-racial" (Id.). "Whatever the "post" may mean in "post-racial," it



cannot mean that racism belongs to the past” (Id., p. 10). In other words, no matter how historical a moment the election of President Barack Obama was to America, its time for being post-racial has not yet been born (Id., p. 11).

The term “post racial” was coined by the late Derrick Bell in his 1990 essay entitled, “After We’re Gone: Prudent Speculations on America in a Post-Racial Epoch.” In this essay, Bell, through the use of allegory highlighted the relationship between two divergent ideologies on race and racial issues in America (Id., p. 13). Those divergent ideologies still exist; however, for an individual to be viewed as an outright racist who espouses racist rhetoric in this day and time is absolutely repugnant and unacceptable. Blatant racial hatred and intolerance that was willfully and visibly exhibited through traditional forms of racism have now evolved into more subtler forms of racism. These subtle forms of racism have been characterized as *modern racism* (McConahay, 1986), *symbolic racism* (Sears, 1998), and *aversive racism* (Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, & Hodson, 2002), and all three forms share several similarities (Sue et al., 2007a, p. 272). According to Dovidio & Gaertner (1996, 2000), modern racism and symbolic racism are usually associated with political conservatives, who disavow any personal bigotry by adhering to long-established American values such as individualism, self-reliance, and work ethic (Sue et al., 2007a, p. 272). Aversive racism is described as unconscious or preconscious negative racial feelings and beliefs that Whites’ bear toward people of color, despite the fact that they see themselves as egalitarian, fair, and nonracist (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1996, 2000; Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Brown, 2000; Ridley, 2005; Sue, 2003).

Numerous studies conducted in the fields of education (Gordon & Johnson, 2003), employment (Hinton, 2004), health care (Smedley & Smedley, 2005), mental health (Burkard & Knox, 2004), and other public settings (Sellers & Shelton, 2003), regarding various categories of contemporary racism (Sue et al, 2007a, p. 272) have suggested that “these types of racism are difficult to identify, quantify, and rectify because of their subtle, nebulous, and unnamed nature” (Id.). The lack of sufficient taxonomy and knowledge of the pervasiveness and the sway of subtle racism can be potentially harmful to the well-being, the self-esteem, and the standard of living of people of color (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, (2000) theorized that the daily common experiences of racial aggression that is characterized by aversive racism may be considerably more impactful on racial anger, frustration, and self-esteem than the traditional types of racism (Sue et al, 2007a, p. 272).

Sue et al. (2007a) further expound that the invisible acts associated with aversive racism inhibits “perpetrators from realizing and confronting (a) their own complicity in creating psychological dilemmas for minorities, and (b) their role in creating disparities in employment, health care, and education” (p. 272). Kovel (1970) originally defined aversive racism as deleterious bigotry against Blacks; however, Gaertner and Dovidio (1986) expanded that definition to include “any racist feeling or thought, which – perceived by the person having it as deplorable. . . .” (Trepagnier, 2006, p. 18).

Racial microaggressions, an often common communicated form of aversive racism has been described by Sue et al (2008a) as being widespread, depicting a dynamic interaction amid the perpetrator and the recipient, and focusing primarily on commonplace active manifestations (p. 329). Pierce in 1995, stated that racial

microaggressions in and of itself may seem innocuous, but the increasing burden of a lifetime of microaggressions experienced by Blacks can hypothetically contribute to their diminished mortality, their escalated morbidity, and a flattened confidence (p. 281). To highlight this point, Sue, Lin, & Rivera, (2009) postulate that very few employers are aware that the elevated unemployment rates, and the “glass ceiling” that employees of color and women come up against, are reflected in the many microaggressions that are perpetrated by well-intentioned coworkers and upper managers (p. 17). In fact, Sue (2008) further elucidated that “the inequities in employment and education are not so much the result of overt racism, sexism, or bigotry, but the unintentional, subtle, and invisible microaggressions that place marginalized groups at a disadvantage. . .” (p. 17).

#### *Racial Microaggressions – The New Face of Racism*

Sue et al. (2007a) define racial microaggressions as brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicates hostile, disparaging, or negative messages to individuals based solely upon their disenfranchised membership (p. 271). Delgado and Stefancic (2001) also define racial microaggressions as “stunning small encounters with racism, usually unnoticed by members of the majority race” (p. 151). In many cases, these covert messages oftentimes nullify the group identity or the experiential authenticity of the individual, debase them on a personal or group level, convey that they are subhuman beings and that they do not belong on the same level as others in this society, and are threatened, intimidated, or consigned to an inferior status and/or treatment (Sue, 2010a). Sue (2010a) along with other researchers, DeVos & Banaji,

2005, Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, & Hodson, 2002; Nelson, 2006; Sue, Capodilupo, Nadal, & Torino, 2008b, further posit that:

Although overt expressions of racism (hate crimes, physical assaults, use of racial epithets, and blatant discriminatory acts) may have declined, some argue that its expression has morphed into a more contemporary and insidious form that hides in our cultural assumptions/beliefs/values, in our institutional policies and practices, and in the deeper psychological recesses of our individual psyches. In other words, race experts believe that racism has become invisible, subtle, and more indirect, operating below the level of conscious awareness, and continuing to oppress in unseen ways (p. 8).

Racial microaggressions can cause stress, harm, and damage to people of color and other ethnic minorities in a myriad of ways. These racist occurrences can be so inconspicuous in their delivery or message that the targeted individual might not be aware of its intent until after the incident has occurred, at which time, the individual is left wondering whether or not what just happened, really happened (Sue, 2010a). A microaggression is difficult to identify, especially when explications of the occurrence seem plausible. People of color oftentimes will describe feelings of being attacked, disrespected, or that something is amiss (Franklin, 2004; Reid & Radhakrishnan, 2003). They also describe quite intense psychological and physical reactions when confronted with microaggressions (Pierce, 1988). On the other hand, perpetrators will often minimize their importance or impact by describing those occurrences as “little things” and encourage people of color to let go of their anger and suspicions (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2008a). According to Sue (2010a):

Groups that are marginalized by our society exist on the margins (lower or outer limits) of social desirability and consciousness. We may view them in negative ways (undesirable) and/or be oblivious to their existence and their life experiences... When microaggressions make their appearance in interpersonal encounters or environmental symbols, they are reflections of marginality and/or a worldview of inclusion/exclusion,

superiority/inferiority, desirability/undesirability, or normality/abnormality (p.14).

What this means in American society today is that there are value-laden binary representations. People of color over an extended period of time find themselves having to regularly comprehend their everyday lives in relation to the various forms of racial microaggressions that they experience. These everyday common occurrences impact people of color by emotionally bankrupting them, psychologically draining them, and causing them to feel socially inept.

### *Forms of Racial Microaggressions*

Sue and his colleagues (Sue et al., 2007b; Sue & Capodilupo. 2008a) developed a classification system of racial, gender, and sexual-orientation microaggressions that fall into three major categories: microassault, microinsult, and microinvalidation. While all three forms can vary on the extent of the awareness and the deliberateness of the perpetrator, all three forms nonetheless, communicate either an overt, covert, or hidden derogatory message or meaning to the targeted individual (Sue, 2010a, p. 28). For the purposes of this study, even though there are diverse categories of microaggressions, this research study only focused on racial microaggressions. For a detailed schematic of the three major categories of racial microaggressions, (*see Figure II*).

### *Microassault:*

A microassault is defined as “an explicit racial derogation characterized primarily by a verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions” (Sue et al, 2007a, p. 274). One

can say that microassaults are akin to “old-fashioned” racism or “true racism” which is straightforward, calculated, evident, and unambiguous (Id.). Sue (2010a) goes on to further enumerate that: “in many respects, microassaults or blatant racism are easier to deal with by marginalized groups because their intent is clear and the psychological energies of people of color, for example, are not diluted by ambiguity” (p. 31). In fact, there are indications that people of color are better prepared to deal with overt microassaults (Salvatore & Shelton, 2007) than unintentional biased behavior that reside outside the level of awareness of perpetrators (Sue, 2010a, p. 31).

These microassaults are evidenced on an individual level and are most likely conscious and deliberate and generally expressed in limited isolated situations that give the perpetrator some measure of anonymity. In instances of a microassault, the perpetrator is likely to hold beliefs of minority subservience privately and will only display them openly when they either lose control or feel relatively safe to engage in this type of behavior (Sue, et al, 2007a, p. 274). In this study, the researcher has chosen to examine only the unintentional and unconscious expressions of racial microaggressions (i.e., microinsult and microinvalidation), and as such, microassault will not be examined.

#### *Microinsult:*

A microinsult is “characterized by communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person’s racial heritage or identity. Microinsults represent subtle snubs, frequently unknown to the perpetrator, but clearly convey a hidden insulting message to the recipient of color” (Id.). The conflicting communication begins with a facade in the form of an encouraging statement; however, it is weakened by an insulting

or negative metacommunication (Sue, 2010b, p. 9). For example, a Black student who has done exceptional work in his science/technology class is told by his White teacher that, “You are a credit to your race” On the conscious level, the teacher appears to be complimenting the Black student, while on the other hand, the metacommunication contains an offensive message: “Blacks are generally not as intelligent as Whites. You are an exception to your people” (Id.). This form of microinsult does several things: (i) it conceals a racial discrimination or deleterious worldview of the perpetrator; (ii) it gives sanction to the perpetrator to adhere to the belief in racial lowliness; and (iii) it subjugates and maligns in a guilt-free manner (Id., pp. 9-10). In addition, microinsults can occur nonverbally, as when a White teacher does not acknowledge students of color in the classroom or when a White manager seems inattentive when engaging in a dialogue with a Black employee by avoiding eye contact or turning away (Hinton, 2004). The message being communicated to the individuals of color is that their contributions are irrelevant (Sue, et al., 2007a, p. 274).

Microinsults can also occur environmentally where these types of microaggressions are generally unseen by those in the dominant group but are quite evident to those groups who are most disempowered (Sue, 2010a). For example, when a Fortune 500 company displays pictures of past CEOs and presidents who are all White males, the metamessage being conveyed to both employees of color and women is powerful: “You will not feel comfortable working for this company.” “You are not welcomed here.” “People of color and women should not be in leadership roles.” “If you continue to stay, your opportunity to advance is limited” (Sue, 2010b, p. 10). In addition, displaying derogatory, incendiary, and/or sexist symbols (e.g., a KKK hood, a Nazi

swastika, a noose, the Confederate flag; the burning of a cross; and/or hanging Playboy bunny pictures in a male manager's office) can also be considered examples of environmental microaggressions (Sue, 2010a, p. 28). With this form of racial microaggression, there is no guesswork involved in the true intent of the perpetrator, which is to harm, belittle, or devalue people of color. . . . (Id., pp. 31-32).

*Microinvalidation:*

A microinvalidation is defined as being analogous to a microinsult from the perspective that they usually happen outside the level of conscious awareness of the perpetrator (Sue, 2010a). "However, this form of microaggression is perhaps the most insidious, damaging, and harmful form, because microinvalidations directly attack or deny the experiential realities of socially devalued groups" (Id.). For example, when a Latina/o American born and raised in this country is complimented for speaking good English or is constantly asked where were you born, "the effect is to negate their U.S. American heritage and to convey that they are perpetual foreigners" (Sue et al, 2007a, p. 274). Another example of this type of racial microaggression is color blindness, which is one of the most commonly delivered microinvalidation intended for people of color.

Color blindness is defined as:

An unwillingness to acknowledge or admit to seeing race or a person's color. Such an orientation is predicated on the mistaken belief by many Whites that "not seeing color" means they are unbiased and free of racism. As a result, many Whites engage in defensive maneuvers not to appear racist by either pretending not to see color or by actively avoiding any discussions associated with race (Apfelbaum, Sommers, & Norton, 2008; Bonilla-Silva, 2006).



Although individuals in power embrace colorblindness as a way of refuting social inequities, through complex ideological formations that have provided them with rhetorical ammunition, they ignore the role of race and racism that serves to maintain the status quo in a system of race-based social inequality (Bonilla-Silva, 2001, 2003, 2006, p. 137). Additionally, Guinier & Torres (2003) have offered a similar assessment of the colorblind paradigm by concluding that it has led to paralysis rather than action (p. 37). They also contend that “. . . it is impossible to be colorblind in a world as color-conscious as ours. Moreover, efforts to be colorblind are undesirable because they inhibit racialized minorities from struggling against their marginalized status” (Id., p. 42).

Sue (2010b) furthers this discussion by postulating that in spite of previous studies emphasizing race and gender as two of the most easily recognizable traits observed by people, it is color blindness and gender blindness that bog down everyday relations (p. 10). When a person of color hears statements like: “There is only one race: the human race,” “When I look at you, I don’t see color,” “We are all Americans,” or “Regardless of your gender or race, I believe the most qualified person should get the job” (Id.), the underlying message being conveyed in these types of statements are that your racial, gender, or sexual orientation realities and experiences are repudiated (Id., pgs. 10-11). This suggests that “the denial of differences is really a denial of power and privilege. . . .” (Sue, 2010c), and when there are substantial power differentials between groups that hold the power and those who are most disempowered, that lack of power is most evident to those groups that are disempowered (Id.). In other words, Whites hold greater power over people of color and as such, a hierarchical system of access to power and privilege is established in our society (Sue, 2010b, p. 10).

Charles W. Mills (1997) also adds to this discussion by postulating that the United States reified racial attitudes and beliefs into a philosophy that has become an integral part of Western political theory (p. 3). This philosophy was referred to by Mills as a “racial contract,” which he defined as a set of formal and informal agreements entered into by Whites that established the parameters of social space for all ‘others’. Burleigh & Wippermann (1991) further this discussion by explicating that “this exploitive and hierarchical arrangement is a contract between those categorized as white over the nonwhites, who are thus the objects rather than the subjects of the agreement” (Lusane, 2003, p. 42).

*The Invisibility and Psychological Dynamics of Racial Microaggressions*

Studies have revealed that the racial identity of White Americans is unlike that of people of color, and as such, these differences, be it cultural or group-based, have helped to shape their worldviews and influence their perception of various groups (Babbington, 2008; Hanna et al., 2000; Sue 2010a; Sack & Elder, 2000). When racial microaggressions are delivered by well-intentioned Whites, the likelihood is that they are unaware of the hidden biased and derogatory messages that are being communicated to people of color (Sue, 2010b, p. 12). Because the majority of White Americans consider themselves to be good, moral, and upstanding human beings who believe in social justice, they find it difficult to comprehend that they possess biased racial attitudes and could engage in counterintuitive behaviors that are bigoted (Sue, 2004). Sue (2010b) suggests that “it is highly possible and even probable that most people have unconsciously inherited the cultural biases of their forebears and that of society” (p. 13). As such, if the rationale and

the offensive messages of perpetrators are outside their level of awareness, then how can the invisible be made visible? (p. 12). Sue (2010b) goes on to further state that:

When a clash of racial realities occurs, whose reality is likely to hold sway? Whose reality will be judged to be the true reality? The answer, unfortunately, is that the group who holds the greatest power has the ability to impose reality on less powerful groups (Id.).

People of color who point out microaggressive incidents to their perpetrators, oftentimes are told that they are out of touch with reality. Their perceptions and life experiences are negated by those in power who impose their experiential realities on them (Id., p. 13).

Jones, (1997) asserted that the group in power establishes what behaviors, beliefs and values are considered proper (p. 372). Studies have shown that “. . . groups who are least empowered have the most accurate assessment of reality” (Hanna et., 2000; Keltner & Robinson, 1996; Sue, 2003). Sue (2010b) makes the suggestion that individuals who have power, do not need to understand those groups who are disenfranchised to survive or do well. Those groups with little to no power must continuously assess the mentality and the intentions of those who have the power in order to survive (p. 13). The constant grind of having to continually assess the mentality and the intentions of those who have the power may cause the person of color to begin to feel emotionally bankrupt, psychologically distressed or drained, and socially inept. Epstein (2003) posited that:

The grinding of everyday stress of being poor and marginalized in America [experienced by people of Color] is weathering, a condition not unlike the effect of exposure to wind and rain to houses. . . .Stress hormones threaten the health of poor people, . . . Blacks, and Hispanics . . . when people feel frustrated, frightened, or angry stress hormones, affect the body (p. 80).

The disguised affront conveyed by way of the microaggression, presents psychological dilemmas for the targeted person of color. Sue et al (2007a) identified four

major dilemmas: (1) the clash of realities between the dominant group and the social devalued group, (2) the invisibility of unintentional bias and discrimination, (3) the perceived minimal harm of microaggressions, and (4) the catch-22 of responding, whereby the targeted individual is put into an unenviable situation of deciding whether or not to say or do something; the damned if they do and damned if they don't scenario (p. 279). For a detailed schematic of the dilemmas and phases of racial microaggressions, (see *Table VII*).

### *Racial Microaggressions as a Barrier to Clinical Practice*

When it comes to the issue of racism, Sue (2007b) enumerated that the greatest challenge that society and public service professionals (e.g., substance abuse and mental health) have is making the invisible visible (p. 281). The fourth-century Chinese sage Chang-Tsu would often expound that "how we view the world is not only about what we see, but about what we do not see" (Sue, 2004, p. 766). On a micro level, people are conditioned and rewarded for remaining in a state of being unaware and ignorant to how their beliefs and actions unfairly subjugate people of color, women, and other marginalized groups in society. On a macro level, people fail to recognize that policy procedures within the organization may aid in granting services and provisions to some while denying others the same opportunities (Id., p. 767). From an organizational perspective, Lipsky (1980) would refer to this concept as "creaming," those times when organizations are faced with having more clients than allocated resources and must choose (or skim off the top) those individuals who are deemed as being more likely to succeed in terms of bureaucratic success criteria (p. 107). Lipsky goes on to further

postulate that: differentiation among clients may take place because of the frontline worker's preferences for some clients over others. In some instances, frontline workers will find greater satisfaction when engaging with some clients as opposed to others; and having those opportunities, will act upon those preferences (p. 108).

Because White and Black counselors have not explicitly examined their own biases with regard to racial and cultural issues, there is more of a tendency to engage in color blindness and/or blaming the victim (Comas-Diaz & Jacobsen, 2001; Jones, 1997). According to Neville et al (2001) colorblindness refers to the repudiation, the spin or the normativity of race and racism, whereas blaming the victim; a phrase that was initially coined by William Ryan in his 1971 book entitled the same, refers to the minimization or flouting the culpability of Whites and the sociopolitical systems that propagates racism (Comas-Diaz & Jacobsen, 2001; Jones, 1997). Even though the concept of colorblindness has been subsumed by some individuals as a way of addressing social inequities, disregarding the role of race and racism only continues to substantiate a system of race-based social inequity (Bonilla-Silva, 2001, 2003, 2006). This statement bears much fruit when helping professionals have difficulty discussing racial issues; there is a likelihood that they will block off an avenue for clients of color to explore matters of bias, discrimination, and prejudice (Sue, Capodilupo, 2007a). In addition, this difficulty can lead to clients of color exercising excessive caution or avoiding mental health care and/or addiction treatment altogether.

Moreover, when racial microaggressive incidences are unknowingly and inappropriately conveyed by the helping professional; discourse, transparency and trustworthiness suffer . . . . (Liu & Pope-Davis, 2005). Sue & Sue (2008) have surmised

that in addition to White therapists, therapists of color are not immune from their own ethnic socialization or inheriting societal biases (p. 318). In fact, they go on to further postulate that:

It is clear that everyone, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, and so on, needs to examine the impact of their own value system or experiences as members of marginalized groups when providing therapy to those of the majority culture or a member of a different ethnic minority group. As with White therapists, the values and assumptions are often invisible to therapists of color as well, and may influence the provision of therapy (Id.).

In other words, a Black counselor's ability to develop an understanding and a working alliance is seriously diminished when their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors permeate the therapeutic session with a racial microaggressive incident (Sue, 2010a, p. 261). Lipsky (1980) has suggested that within a bureaucratic system:

If public officials were simply biased or racist, and if their prejudices were regularly manifested in behavior, the problem of bias in bureaucracy would be more pernicious but easier to root out. At the very least it would be easier to establish policy directives to reduce bias in bureaucracy. But patterns of prejudice are more subtle in the modern bureaucracy dedicated officially to equal treatment. Modern bureaucracy promises to eradicate prejudicial behavior through universalistic treatment; when prejudice does occur, it is more difficult to erase (p. 109).

Counselors not cognizant of their biases and prejudices may inadvertently create an atmosphere where clients of color may underutilize therapeutic services or prematurely terminate therapy (Burkard & Knox, 2004; Kearney, Draper, & Baron, 2005). For examples of racial, gender, and sexual orientation microaggressions in therapeutic practice, (*see Figure VIII*).

*The Manifestation of Racial Microaggressions in Counseling/Therapy*

Racial microaggressive incidents in clinical practice settings (e.g., mental health and/or substance abuse) are oftentimes unrecognizable to both White counselors and Black counselors who unintentionally and unconsciously express biases. The often unintentional and oblivious nature of microaggressions (Dilemma 2: Invisibility) creates a problem that is significant in size for most mental health and substance abuse professionals, who think of themselves as value-free and nondiscriminatory. Because mental health and substance abuse professionals are in a position of power, they are less likely to accurately assess (Dilemma 1: Conflict of Racial Realities) whether or not a racist act has occurred during the therapeutic alliance. Hence, the harm committed against clients of color is either unknown or lessened (Dilemma 3: Minimal Harm). In addition, racial microaggressive incidents not only subjugate and hurt, they also place clients of color in a Catch-22 predicament of whether or not to address the situation (Dilemma 4), which more times than not means that clients of color will not confront their counselors, but instead question their own perceptions regarding the incident. (Sue et al 2007a, p. 280).

Studies have shown that racial barriers exist in psychotherapy because traditional treatments models have not considered the implications of race and racism in the development of human personality (Aponte & Johnson, 2000; Carter, 1995). Smedley (1993) has suggested that:

Where race is the more powerful divider, it does not matter what one's sociocultural background may be or how similar ethnically two so-called racial groups are. In fact, the reality of ethnic or social class, similarities and differences is irrelevant in situations in which race is the prime and irreducible factor for social differentiation. The best examples of this are blacks and whites in the United States whose cultural similarities are so

obvious to outsiders but internally are obfuscated by the racial worldview. When the racial worldview is operant, there can never be an alteration of an individual's or group's status, as both status and behavior are presumed to be biologically fixed (p. 32).

The inherent power dynamic within the therapeutic alliance is complicated even more, as counselors whom are in a position of power make diagnoses and influence the course of treatment (Id., p. 281). Lipsky (1980) refers to this position of power as discretion, where frontline workers, unlike lower-level workers in most organizations: (i) exercise broad discretion in decisions about citizens whom they interact with, and (ii) have significant power in ascertaining the nature, amount, and quality of benefits and sanctions provided by their organizations, which is characteristic of organizational behavior (p. 13).

#### *Limitations of Previous Research on Racial Microaggressions*

Not until Sue et al.'s (2007a) seminal publication of the first comprehensive taxonomy of racial microaggressions providing directions and a conceptual framework; did research of this construct burgeon within the profession of psychology (Wong, et al., 2014, p. 181). Prior to this rapid growth, Sue et al. (2007a) inferred that a major hindrance of racial microaggressions continually being omitted from research itineraries was the perception that this construct was not as cogent or significant as other racist incidents that could be quantified and proven (p. 283). In fact, the non-inclusion of racial microaggressions in studies is rooted in the belief that not including them would be less deleterious, which emboldens those in the counseling and psychotherapeutic professions to look the other way (Id.). In addition, racial microaggressive occurrences are not just limited to White-Black, White-Latino, or White-Person of Color exchanges; interethnic



racial and intraethnic racial microaggressions exist between people of color as well. An example of this would be in the areas of counseling and psychotherapy in cross-racial dyads when: (i) the counselor is a person of color and the client is White, or (ii) the counselor and the client are both persons of color. Understanding how these types of cross-racial dyads impact the process and outcome of the therapeutic alliance would be a tremendous contribution because there are no racial/ethnic groups that are immune from inheriting the racial biases of this society and, all forms of microaggressions yield injurious results (Id., p. 284).

Moreover, even though worthwhile data has been learned about the experiences of racism in the lives of Black Americans, additional studies are needed, to not only garner a better understanding of how racial microaggressions impact the experiential realities of Black Americans, but also how their own personal characteristics may impact their perceptions of subtle racism (Barnes, 2011, p. 46). Further studies are likewise needed to explore how Black Americans racially self-identify and whether or not this influences the perceptions of racial microaggressions in their lives since one's racial identity can fluctuate throughout their lifetime (Id., pp. 46-47).

Additionally, studies have shown that racism is part and parcel of the foundation and cultural psyche of U.S. societal norms and institutions. In spite of established professional standards and ethics; racial microaggressions still exist and function within public service organizations (e.g., substance abuse and mental health facilities). The existence of racial microaggressions within public service organizations can adversely impact the quality of services provided, the organizational climate, and an employee's job satisfaction and morale. Public service organizations are not immune to deeply rooted

societal inequalities, beginning the process of evaluating organizational cultural values that breed this type of inequity within, would facilitate in bringing about an awareness and sense of inclusiveness, instead of exclusiveness.

Despite the fact that most studies on racial microaggressions have been conducted utilizing Sue et al.'s (2007b) taxonomy of racial microaggressions as the framework for their data analysis, the conceptualization of racial microaggressions is not without its limitation in theory and application (Wong, et al., 2014, p. 191). For a summary of the gaps in existing racial microaggressions' literature (*see Table V*).

### *Racial Identity Development*

Blay (2014) posed the following questions with regard to racial identity: "What exactly is Blackness and what does it mean to be Black?" "Is Blackness a matter of biology or consciousness?" "Who determines who is Black and who is not – the state, the society, or the individual?" "Who is Black, who is not, and who cares?" (p. 4). The U.S. Census reveals a lot about this country's perspective on race. Historically, the United States defined any person with any known Black ancestry as being Black. Although this definition oftentimes was referred to as the "one Black ancestor rule," the "traceable amount rule," and the hypodescent rule," it is more commonly known as the "one-drop rule," meaning that a single drop of Black blood makes a person Black (Id.). The rule completely replaced the concept that a person's physical characteristics were the defining marker that determined race (Gordon Jackson, 2013, p. 1). Pursuant to Floyd James Davis (2001) who wrote *Who is Black,?: One Nation's Definition*, an individual did not have to look Black to be deemed Black (Gordon Jackson, 2013, p. 1); however,

the message being conveyed was loud and clear and meant that “no matter how White you may appear, if there is but one drop of Black blood in your lineage, you will be considered Black and treated accordingly” (Blay, 2014, p. 10). Davis goes on to further postulate that:

Because blacks are defined according to the one-drop rule, they are a socially constructed category in which there is wide variation in racial traits and therefore not a race group in the scientific sense. However, because that category has a definite status position in society, it has become a self-conscious social group with an ethnic identity . . . It [*The One-Drop Rule*] is embedded in the social structures and cultures of both the Black and the White communities in the United States and strongly resistant to change (Gordon Jackson, 2013, p. 1)

Nash (1974) advances this thought even further in *Red, White and Black: The Peoples of Early America* that the politics behind the one-drop rule is:

Though skin color came to assume importance through generations of association with slavery, white colonists developed few qualms about intimate contact with black women. But raising the social status of those who labored at the bottom of society and who were defined as abysmally inferior was a matter of serious concern. It was resolved by insuring that the mulatto<sup>3</sup> would occupy a position midway between white and black . . . (Gordon Jackson, 2013, p. 2).

The issue of skin color is germane to almost all cultures around the world. Systems such as colonialization and slavery that were historically shown to exhibit control over groups of people can facilitate in helping to understand how power has been linked to the lighter skin color (Tummala-Narra, 2007, p. 256). In today’s society, the hierarchy and politics of skin color continues to dictate attitudes, behaviors, and policies on a worldwide scale

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<sup>3</sup> Mulatto is a term that was generally used during the antebellum period to describe people of mixed racial heritage. It was taken from the Portuguese and Spanish term meaning “young mule,” which refers to the offspring of a horse and a donkey – a hybrid. Whites held a myopic view of the mulatto progeny born of interracial sexual relationships that reflected a projected value system (Blay, 2014, p. 8).

to the point where an obstinate worldview of skin color has not only been internalized by generations of White people but people of color as well (Hall, 2003).

Throughout the course of history, skin color has been used as a yardstick for measuring good and bad. The depreciation and the perseverance of damaging images of the darker complexion have been internalized at both the individual and systemic levels (Hill, 2002b). Further denigration of the darker skin tone is discussed by Williams (1996) who suggests that discourse and prose reveal the underlying rationale of the politics of skin color, whereby catchphrases such as “black sheep of the family,” “black humor,” and “blacklist” denote something offensive or awkward. Even in societies that consist mainly of darker-skinned individuals, the depreciation of the darker skin tone is apparent in different stages of the human experiential experience such as, physical attractiveness, intellectual and social competence, social and economic power, and sexuality (Cramer & Anderson, 2003; Hill, 2002b).

The glamorization of the lighter skin tone as a benchmark for physical beauty has been reinforced and publicized throughout White mainstream culture and across ethnic communities in the United States (Tummala-Narra, 2007, p. 259). In fact, Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2003) conducted a study that examined the psychological impact of skin color on African American women and found that it played a major role in their perceptions, which led them to “shift” their behavior to acclimate themselves to White mainstream cultural demands (Hall, 1995). The researchers describe this phenomenon as the “lily complex,” which involves rejecting one’s natural, physical appearance in order to assimilate and be accepted as attractive (Id.).

According to Tummala-Narra (2007) the “conflict in racial identity development and acculturation processes can arise from efforts to manage one’s feelings about his or her skin color” (p. 260). Racial identification is viewed as being significant to an individual’s way of comprehending and reacting to their environment (Sanders Thompson, 2001, p. 155). Carter & Helms (1988) suggests that the valuation of racial identification can be understood as an attempt to represent the extent to which a person embraces good, bad, or a combination of both attitudes toward their own racial or cultural group and their ascribed place in it (Sanders Thompson, 2001, p. 156).

To facilitate an understanding of one’s racial identity, Cross (1971) proposed the Nigrescence theory, which he developed during the Civil Rights movement and named it after the French term for turning Black (Vandiver, 2001, p. 166). The Nigrescence theory describes the process whereby African Americans accept and affirm their Black self-identity and move from Black self-hatred to Black self-acceptance (Id.). When the Nigrescence theory was initially developed, emphasis was placed on the fact that the theory was “an identity change process as a Negro-to-Black conversion experience, the kind of process that could be seen in Black behavior during the Harlem Renaissance” (Cross, 1991, p. 189). Cross’s (1971) model suggested that Blacks advance through a series of five stages (i.e., Pre-Encounter, Encounter, Immersion-Emersion, Internalization, and Internalization-Commitment) as their racial identity evolved.

Since its advent formulation in 1971, Cross’s (1991, 1995) model has undergone substantial changes, whereby he reflected two major modifications. The first modification was the elucidation of the RGO (Reference Group Orientation), which refers to one’s social identity (e.g., race, ethnicity) and the PI (Personal Identity), which

is a combination of an individual's personality traits (e.g., intelligence), as well as the psychological functioning of the individual. As a result of empirical data that showed no significant changes, the second modification concentrated on the integration of Stage 5 (i.e., Internalization-Commitment) into Stage 4 (i.e., Internalization) (Barnes, 2011, p. 48). In making the change in 1991, Cross reconsidered the theory as a resocialization experience that transforms a preexisting identity (e.g., non-Afrocentric) into an Afrocentric identity (Richey, 2015, p. 99). For a detailed schematic of Cross's Original and Revised Nigrescence Models, (*see Table IX*).

Cross's (1971) seminal work has played a major role in other racial/cultural identity models being developed by various researchers such as (Atkinson, Morten, and Sue, 1993; Cross, 1995; Hardiman and Jackson, 1992; Helms, 1990) (Diller, 2015, 2011, 2007, p. 196). As upward progressions of opportunities for African Americans to obtain advanced degrees during the late 1960's and early 1970's came about, this increased the number of African American scholars who wanted to redefine how African Americans were conceptualized and portrayed by the broader society (Marks et al, 2004, p. 384). Marks et al, 2004, furthered this discussion by postulating that:

Much of the conceptualization of African American racial identity reflected this new sense of cultural autonomy and power. Whereas racial identity was originally conceptualized as a way to demonstrate a deficit in the African American psyche resulting from their stigmatized status, the African American scholars of the 1970's reconceptualized racial identity as an example of African Americans' resilience and strength in the face of oppression. Much of this work focused on the process by which a healthy Black identity developed from a psychologically-enslaved Negro identity (Id.).

Cross's model was beneficial in emphasizing racial identity in a myriad of ways such as:

(i) delineating the progression of racial identity, (ii) describing how individuals can be

influenced within and outside their ethnic group, and (iii) acknowledging ethnocentric and multicultural frameworks. Chavez & Guido-DiBrito (1999) suggested that Cross's earlier work, which was grounded in the context of the civil rights movement was problematic as he began from the assumption that before Blacks "experience identity, they are first unaware of their race and the race of others" (p. 41).

On the other hand, Parham (1989) suggested that the racial identity development of Blacks was a life-long continuous process of change where individuals progressed through feelings of being irate with Whites to developing a Black positive framework of reference, which enabled the individual's Black identity to advance from the unconscious to the conscious (Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999, pp. 41-42). Instead of viewing the exposure to racial difference as the primary trigger for the development of racial identity as Parham had suggested, Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999 believed that absorbing oneself in their own racial group along with the conveyance of a racial self through immersion was the primary trigger (p. 42).

Recognizing that white superiority and individual, cultural, and institutional racism existed; Helms (1993, 1994, 1995) developed one of the first White racial identity models (Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999, p. 42). Helms's model was based on the notion that racial identity for Whites was more about their perceptions, feelings, and behaviors towards Blacks as opposed to the development and consciousness of an actual White identity which, Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999 viewed as difficult because of Helms's confusion of an individual's development toward a nonracist structure with the development of a racial identity (Id.).

Previous research on racial identity (Clark & Clark, 1939; Horowitz, 1939) concentrated on African Americans within the framework of the group's stigmatization in American society, and gave little to no regard to the role that culture played (Sellers et al 1998, p. 19). This research tradition was referred to by Gaines and Reed (1994, 1995) as the mainstream approach, which focused mainly on the universal features of African Americans' group identity and which owes its roots to Gordon Allport (1954) (Sellers et al 1998, p. 19). In the late 1960s another group consisting mainly of African American psychologists postulated that the racial identity of African Americans should emphasize the distinctiveness of their oppression and cultural experiences. This research was referred to by Gaines and Reed (1994, 1995) as the underground perspective,<sup>4</sup> which dates back to the groundbreaking work of W. E. B. DuBois (1903) (Sellers et al 1998, p. 19).

#### *Mainstream Approach to African American Racial Identity*

The mainstream approach owing its roots to the work of Gordon Allport (1954), surmised that:

The experience of African Americans living in a racist environment must have negative consequences on their psyche. He assumed that African Americans were forced to either devalue aspects that reminded them of the stigma of being African American, or devalue the broader society for its prejudice against them, in order to function (Sellers et al, 1998, p. 20).

Prior to the late 1960s, the perception of an unhealthy, stigmatized identity was consistent with the dominant ideologies in how African Americans self-identified (Clark, 1965, Horowitz, 1939; Kardiner & Ovesey, 1951). Consequently, earlier mainstream

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<sup>4</sup> Gaines and Reed (1994, 1995) used the term underground to emphasis the fact that traditionally, research from this perspective has been virtually ignored by the mainstream psychological community (Sellers et al, 1998, p. 19).



researchers focusing on African American racial identity assumed that self-hatred was an important aspect in the way African Americans viewed themselves (Cross, 1991). In their analysis of the mainstream approach, Gaines and Reed (1994, 1995) have suggested that this approach was mainly concerned with explaining how and why individuals, irrespective of their race, exhibited deleterious behavior (Sellers et al, 1998, p. 19).

*Underground Approach to African American Racial Identity*

Compared to Allport (1954), DuBois (1903) did not view the way African Americans self-identified as being necessarily damaging. He did, however, feel that the racial subjugation of African Americans played a significant role in the progression of their self-concepts, and he also, recognized that cultural influences had a direct positive impact on the ego development of African Americans (Sellers et al, 1998, p. 21). Hence, DuBois surmised that African Americans could have a healthy, strong self-concept of themselves even with the stigmatization of being devalued by the larger society (Sellers et al, 1998, p. 21). The underground approach looked at racial prejudice as being the consequences of America's history involving slavery and exploitation and is viewed within the framework of "White society's need to resolve the dissonance between the high moral ideas that embody being an American and America's immoral treatment of African Americans" (Id., 20).

### *Colorism*

. . . the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line  
(W. E. B. Du Bois, 1903)

The above-referenced quote by W. E. B. Du Bois (1903) prophetically acknowledged that the color line would be a problem in the twentieth century, and I dare to say, that it has continued to be a problem in the twenty-first century. Social-science literature has deliberated for more than 60 years about the relevance and the role skin color has played in the lives of African Americans. Historical and contemporary literature has alluded to the fact that the skin color of African Americans has held a powerful and unrelenting sway on societal attitudes regarding the treatment of Blacks, within both the White and Black communities (Coard, Breland, & Raskin, 2001, p. 2256). Racial discrimination in the United States has been a perpetual and insidious problem for people of color, especially African Americans. Veiled within these discriminatory occurrences is the Achilles heel of the Black community; that last vestige that has long been considered unmentionable and off-limits, the issue of the color complex; the issue of colorism!

Alice Walker, the acclaimed author is credited with coining the term colorism in an essay she wrote for *Essence Magazine* in 1982 (Russell, Wilson, & Hall, 1992, p. 164) and mentioning it again in her 1983 book entitled *In search of our mothers' gardens.* "Colorism has been defined as the prejudicial process whereby lighter-skinned people of color are afforded opportunities and privileges that their darker-skinned counterparts are not (Hunter, 2005). In fact, studies have shown that lighter-skinned individuals have more earning potential, are better educated, live in a more preferable neighborhood, and marry other higher-status individuals than darker-skinned individuals of the same race or

ethnicity (Arce et al, 1987; Espino and Franz, 2001; Hill, 2000; Hughes and Hertel, 1990; Hunter, 1998, 2005; Keith and Herring, 1991; Murguia and Telles, 1996; Rondilla and Spickard, 2007). Jackson-Lowman (2013) postulated that colorism is a kind of oppression that is conveyed through the disproportionate treatment of individuals and groups based on their skin color. While lighter-skinned individuals are usually given preferential treatment, darker-skinned individuals experience rejection and mistreatment (The Association of Black Psychologists, 2013). Russell et al (1992) have suggested that colorism is a psychological obsession about skin color and physical characteristics (e.g., hair texture, broad nose, eye color, and fuller lips) that have resulted in Blacks discriminating against one another (p. 2).

The issue of colorism takes place on at least two levels. The first level involves an individual's racial category, where Blacks of all skin tones, regardless of their physical characteristics, are subjected to certain kinds of biased occurrences, disparaging remarks, and are viewed as second-class citizens, simply because of their Black status (Hunter, 2007, p. 238). This type of racial discrimination has both ideological and material consequences for the targeted individual (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Feagin, 2000). The second level involves the issue of colorism and its association to the darker skin tone or the lighter skin tone. Hunter (2007) extrapolates this thought by suggesting that:

Although all Blacks experience discrimination as Blacks, the intensity of that discrimination, the frequency, and the outcomes . . . will differ dramatically by skin tone. . . . These two systems of discrimination (race and color) work in concert. The two systems are distinct, but inextricably connected. (p. 238).

An example of this type of racism would be a light-skinned African American experiencing racism, in spite of his or her light skin, and a dark-skinned African

American experiencing racism and colorism at the same time (Id.). To emphasize this point even further, In *Shades of Brown: the Law of Skin Color*, Trina Jones (2000) examining the history of colorism and the discrimination of individuals based on skin color within the legal system, draws a distinction between intra-group colorism and cross-racial colorism and traditional discrimination. With regard to intra-group colorism, lighter-skinned African Americans and Whites disfavor darker-skinned Blacks while cross-racial colorism and traditional discrimination involve Whites discriminating against all Blacks, regardless of the individual's skin tone (Ware, 2013, p. 3).

Many people believe that colorism is the experiential reality of only Blacks and Latinos; however, colorism is practiced by both Whites and people of color alike. If given the opportunity, those in positions to hire would only hire a lighter-skinned person as opposed to a darker-skinned person of the same race (Espino and Franz, 2002; Hill, 2000; Hughes and Hertel, 1990; Mason, 2004; Telles and Murguia, 1990). In fact, the 1995 Federal Glass Ceiling Commission found that opportunities for professional advancement were affected by “graduations of skin color.” It was determined that:

Color-based differences are inescapable but nobody likes to talk about them. . . . Though it is mostly covert, our society has developed an extremely sophisticated, and often denied, acceptability index based on gradation in skin color. . . . It is applied to African Americans, to American Indians, to Asian and Pacific Islander Americans, and to Hispanic Americans [(Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995): 29, emphasis in original]; see also (Zweigenhaft and Domhoff, 1998)].

In addition, Hochschild (2007) has suggested that individuals with darker skin are more than likely to grow up in challenging conditions. For example, darker-skinned individuals living in segregated communities have lower mediocre income and elevated levels of social disorder, violence, and noticeable substance use disorders (e.g., alcohol

and/or drugs) (p. 646). For the darker-skinned individual, interpersonal relations and cultural exchanges are also impacted. It has been postulated by Edwards et al (2004) that darker-skinned individuals are less likely to marry, and if they are married, studies have shown that their spouses are of a lower socioeconomic status (Hughes & Hertel, 1990; Hunter, 1998; Edwards et al, 2004). The perpetuation of further denigration is conveyed through such institutions as advertising agencies, adoption agencies, the media, as well as the entertainment industry, which reinforces the hegemonic viewpoint that the lighter-skinned individual is much more preferable than the darker-skinned individual (Hochschild, 2007, p. 646).

Because the dominant aesthetic of colorism is so deeply ingrained in our cultural psyche, many people are unconsciously drawn to the lighter skin tone (Kilbourne, 1999). Ware (2013) goes on to further suggest that individuals are probably not consciously seeking to look White, but more than likely are just color struck,<sup>5</sup> and that “color discrimination is often masked by a combination of subjective notions of attractiveness and unconscious stereotypes” (p. 1). Hunter (2007) surmises that colorism is a manifestation of the larger and systemic social processes of racism (p. 238). Russell et al (1992) continue this discussion by suggesting that “. . . prejudice of any kind creates systems of privilege as well as oppression. Skin color bias is no different; while many Blacks are hurt by colorism, others benefit from it” (p. 4). In the film *Cracking the Codes: The System of Racial Inequity*, producer/director Shakti Butler suggests that:

The subject and behaviors that characterize any form of oppression are set against established norms and standards of ‘rightness’ within any society and are reinforced by institutional and economic power. There is no

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<sup>5</sup> Color struck “is an old saying among African-Americans that refers to individuals who believe that a lighter complexion and European features represent the epitome of beauty and desirability” (Ware, 2013, p. 1).

hierarchy to oppressions; all are terrible, destructive, painful and wasteful in terms of human capital. . . . And yet, even with the understanding that all forms of oppression intersect, racial disparities continue to be a complex and layered issue that many people deny and/or are afraid to confront (Butler, 2012).

For a visual representation of a holistic frame developed by Word Trust that shows the continual interaction between the internal (personal) and the external (interpersonal, structural/institutional) manifestations of bias (*see Figure I*).

African-Americans, South Asians, Latin Americans, and other people of color for many generations have internalized the Eurocentric standard of beauty. Through the use of bleaching creams, perms that straighten the hair, hair extensions, and cosmetic surgery, individuals are attempting to look white without consciously being aware of that fact. Research has shown that the socioeconomic disparities in the United States as a result of colorism; can be as severe as those that have traditionally been linked to racism. Although the United States is becoming more multi-racial with the old fashioned “Jim Crow” type of racism slowly dissipating, the issue of colorism still persists (Ware, 2013. p. 2) and is deeply entrenched in the mindset and lived experiences of both Blacks and Whites. In 2013, Culbreth developed The People of Color Skin Color Identification Chart (POCSCIC). It is a skin color chart consisting of 75 skin colors in three skin color categories (i.e., light, medium, and dark). The chart was designed to help identify the skin tones of people of color belonging to varied racial groups with each skin color category consisting of 25 skin colors. Culbreth expanded the POCSCIC from an original chart that she developed in 2006 (The Intraracial Colorism Project, Inc., 2009). For a visual representation, (*see Table X*).

### *Historical Origins of Colorism*

Hunter (1998) suggested that the hierarchy of skin color among African Americans is essential to understanding race and the process of racialization in the United States (p. 517). For African Americans and Latinos, colorism is rooted within both the European system of colonialism and the U.S. system of slavery (Hunter, 2007, p. 238), which according to Feagin et al (2001) has been broadly sustained via a hierarchal system involving White racism (Id.). The perpetuation of White supremacy is based on the idea that persons of African descent were genetically inferior to Whites and as such, their dark skin symbolized savagery, irrationality, ugliness, and inferiority while White skin symbolized civility, rationality, beauty, and superiority (Hunter, 2007, p. 238). From this racialized context, an individual's phenotypical characteristics became the benchmark by which his or her social standing and moral character were measured. Physical characteristics such as skin color, eye color, hair texture, broad nose, and fuller lips are coded representations of one's physical attractiveness, worth, and societal standing (Hill, 2002b, p. 77). Reuter (1918) and Williamson (1980) add to this discussion by suggesting that: "Such color distinctions filtered into the African American population during slavery, as light-skinned "mulattos" – often the children or other relatives of their white owners – commonly received special advantages in comparison with darker slaves" (Hill, 2002b, p. 78).

Racist beliefs and a skewed value system were the fundamental glue that was used in rationalizing and perpetuating the institution of slavery in the United States, which (Hunter, 1998) has suggested helped demarcate the races in relationship to each other (p. 519). Europeans used their racist beliefs and values along with varied forms of

symbolisms to further the continuance of discriminatory and denigrating treatment of Africans who were brought into this country as slaves (Williamson, 1986). As postulated by Fanon (1967) and Omi and Winant (1991) any public discourse surrounding issues of race or slavery were dealt with through the lens of racial binarisms and oppositions (Hunter, 1998, p. 519). Because racist ideologies have historically linked blackness to negative and/or evil connotations and whiteness to virtuous connotations, the concept of blackness and whiteness have manifested into associating one's actual physical traits with those ideological inferences (Id.).

Several studies (Clark and Clark, 1947; Drake and Cayton, 1945; Johnson, 1941; Marks, 1943; Myrdal, 1944; Seeman, 1946) that were conducted in the mid-1940s emphasized the experiential reality of colorism and its impact within the African American community (Hill, 2002b, p. 78). These studies have suggested that the community "had internalized a variant of the traditional American bias against dark skin and African features" (Id.), and as a result; throughout Black communities, their churches, clubs, and social organizations, various skin color measurements (i.e., brown paper bag test, comb test, flash light test, blue vein test, color tax test, nail test, door test, etc.) were utilized to determine an individual's lightness and acceptance. Fanon (1967) suggested that the utilization of such varied skin color measurements were symptomatic of the internalization of colonial ideologies (Hunter, 1998, p. 523).

Toni Morrison (1970) in her acclaimed novel *The Bluest Eye* highlighted this point when she deconstructed the standards of Eurocentric beauty by conveying how some Black women are emotionally impacted as a result of racially coded principles of beauty and desirability that exist and continue to be perpetuated in society. In Morrison's



*The Bluest Eye*, Pecola Breedlove, the eleven-year old protagonist was obsessed with having blue eyes, which she prayed for every night. Pecola's experiential reality and obsession caused by her internalized attitudes ultimately drove her insane (Ware, 2013, p.

9). Ware (2013) goes on to further state that:

. . . . A substantial body of empirical and theoretical work in cognitive psychology has confirmed that the causes of discriminatory actions often operate at an unconscious level without the individual's awareness of the source. Discrimination is an interaction of social cognitions about race and behavioral outlets that bring congruence to a person's racial preferences and social settings. Many of these beliefs are formed during the early childhood years, and they serve as a basis for judgments about events, groups, and ideas during their adult years. Socialized beliefs can provoke negative sentiments when individuals make judgments about issues that activate stereotypes (p. 16).

#### *Colorism and Black Racial Identity*

The ideology behind the concept of colorism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century lives on and is just as viable and relevant as it historically has been. Research has shown that both Blacks and Whites have continued to give meaning and validation to skin color, which has impacted life opportunities for darker-skinned individuals (The Association of Black Psychologists, 2013). A copious amount of contemporary research has indicated that an individual's skin tone is a predicator of educational achievement, professional standing, and personal as well as family socio-economic status (Edwards, 1973; Hughes & Hertel, 1990; Keith and Herring, 1991). Hunter (1998) postulated that:

Because skin color stratification is the manifestation of a racialized ideology, it is not self-sustaining and must be reinforced and recreated on a daily basis in order to continue. . . . Ideologies and the systems created from them do not stand alone, but must be deliberately perpetuated to remain intact. Ideologies about race, racial groups, and skin color then evolve as a complex method of everyday interaction (p. 521).

Racist occurrences perpetrated by individuals outside of their ethnic/racial group have been well documented to illustrate the profound effects it has on victims' psychological lives (Daniel, 2000). In addition, studies have also shown that intraracial disparities involving issues of colorism are just as detrimental as those disparities that have been traditionally associated with racial divisions (Ware, 2013, p. 3).

Color discrimination within one's own ethnic/racial community, presents other types of internal conflicts. Clinicians (Boyd-Franklin, 1993; Fortes De Leff, 2002; Williams, 1996) have discussed the problem of intra-familial colorism, where skin color is used as a way of either demeaning or idealizing family members because of their darker-skinned or lighter-skinned tones (Tummala-Narra, 2007, p. 262). Individuals can be affected on an intrapsychic level in a myriad of ways as a result of the connotations associated with their skin color. For example: (i) an individual may begin to question their self-identity or sense of belonging, which may bring about feelings of guilt, shame, or even pride about their skin color; (ii) a person or the entire family may be in denial as to the role skin color plays in their lives by preferring to see themselves as colorblind, or (iii) a person may internalize denigrating representations conveyed by mainstream society about his or her skin color thus, transferring those representations to interpersonal relationships (Id., pp. 262-263).

The process of understanding the issue of colorism begins with the understanding of racial identity (Hochschild, 2007, p. 648). Russell et al (1992) have suggested that:

Black identity is a multifaceted and in some ways nebulous concept. Being Black affects the way a person walks and talks, his or her values, culture, and history, how that person relates to others and how they relate to him or her. It is governed by one's early social experience, history and politics, conscious input and labeling, and the genetic accident that dictates external appearance (p. 62).

A Black child initially does not become aware of race until sometime between the ages of three and five (Id., p. 63). By the time Black youths become teenagers, they have acquired well-defined stereotypes about skin color. Historical and contemporary studies have corroborated that attitudes still exist about skin color among today's Black youth who have bought into the cultural stereotypical ideology that light to medium skin tones represent intelligence and refinement, while darker-skin skin tones represent toughness, meanness, and physical strength (Id., p. 66). As light-skinned Black males outgrew their adolescence, they quickly realized the enormous advantages of their color. However, for darker-skinned Black females, the scenario was vastly different whereby, they were seen as less successful, less happy in love, less popular, less physically attractive, less physically and emotionally healthy, and less intelligent than their lighter-skinned counterparts (Id., pp. 67-68).

The lexicon that was used to identify Blacks has evolved over the years. Because Blacks have been described in a multitude of ways, (e.g., "Negros," "colored people," "persons of color," "colored Americans," "Black Anglo-Saxons," "Afro-Americans," "Afra-Americans," "black Americans," Black Americans, "African Americans," and now back to persons of color); one's sense of racial identity may have been affected in the process (Id., p. 71), including individuals who are trying to understand and embrace their biracial and multiethnic racial identity (Id., p. 78). In addition to the evolving lexicon that has been used to identify Blacks, a preponderance of colloquial terms, both positive and negative; have been used to define their skin tone. Terms such as "skillet blonde," "coal black," "tar baby," and "blue-black," were used to identify individuals with dark

skin; and “red,” “red-bone,” “high yellow,” and “light” “bright and damn near white” have been used to identify individuals with light skin (Coard et al, 2001, p. 2257).

Kardiner & Ovesey (1951) have suggested that although many dark-skinned Blacks are secure with themselves; and view their skin color as positive, others are unsure and see their skin color as a source of oppression (Coard et al, 2001, p. 2257). Similarly, many light-skinned Blacks have been disparaged because they have been viewed as not being authentic enough because of their skin tone, as well as their physical appearances are more in line with Eurocentric characteristics than Black characteristics (Sandler, 1992-1993; Scales-Trent, 1995). As Russell et al (1992) have so profoundly put forth:

Historically, the one-drop rule has both helped and harmed the Black community. . . . Nowhere else in the world does a single race encompass people whose skin color ranges from white to black, whose hair texture varies from tightly curled to straight, and whose facial features reflect the broadest diversity. Were it not for this artificial grouping, part of the legacy of racism, Blacks might not criticize each other so harshly for having skin or hair that does not meet some arbitrary standard (p. 80).

### *Therapeutic Counseling Relationships*

In helping professional fields such as employment, health care, mental health, or social services, frontline workers are “dependent upon the formation of a working relationship between the help giver and the help seeker” (Horvath & Symonds, 1991; Sue & Sue, 2008). This working relationship is important and has been characterized in the fields of counseling and psychotherapy as the foundation of a profoundly personal association between a helping professional and a client that involves relevant and precise interpersonal interactions and communications (Sue & Sue, 2008). For an effectual therapeutic alliance to occur, some form of constructive coalition must develop between

the involved parties. This has been referred to by many as the “working relationship,” the “therapeutic alliance,” or the “establishment of rapport” (Id.).

Most helping professionals will agree that an efficacious outcome is related to the value, essence, and soundness of the therapeutic relationship (Constantine, 2007; Grencavage & Norcross, 1990; Kazdin, Marciano, & Whitley 2005; Liu & Pope-Davis, 2005). If a successful alliance is to occur, several conditions must be included as part of the therapeutic practice: (i) communication must be explicit, factual, and relevant, and (ii) in the eyes of the client, the helping professional must demonstrate integrity (Sue & Sue, 2008). In the addiction field, the therapeutic alliance has often been cited as being the most important aspect of a client’s substance abuse and subsequent recovery (Claunch, et al, 2015, p. 1) and is a reliable indicator in both general clinical (Ackerman et al, 2001; Horvath & Symonds, 1991; Norcross & Lambert, 2011; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [USDHHS], 2001a; Wintersteen, Mesinger, & Diamond, 2005) and substance abusing populations (Barber et al, 2001; Connors et al, 1997; Martin et al, 2000; Meier et al, 2005).

Pursuant to the American Counseling Association’s Code of Ethics (2005), counselors are ethically responsible to provide culturally appropriate counseling interventions (Day-Vines et al, 2007, p. 401), which include the counselor demonstrating the ability to consider sociopolitical factors such as race and ethnic influences along with the representativeness of the client. Failure to do so plays a significant role in counseling benchmarks. Day-Vines et al (2007) suggests that one way to start the process of discussing those sociopolitical factors is by broaching the subject (p. 402). Broaching according to the researchers:

Creates an opportunity for healing this legacy of silence and shame by providing an environment of emotional safety within which the counseling relationship can transition from a level of superficiality toward a measure of intimacy that is crucial to embracing difference (Id.).

In other words, Black and White counselors who are not immune from perpetuating racial microaggressions during the therapeutic counseling relationship, would bode well in the opportunity to broach the subject of race and ethnic influences with all clients; especially their clients of color. In addition, counseling pedagogy rooted in Eurocentric worldviews in conjunction with Western values only add to the myopic understanding of difference. This lack of awareness presents another opportunity for counselors, both Black and White, to begin the immersion process of transformative learning where embracing and understanding difference is the accepted and expected norm within the therapeutic counseling relationship as opposed to color blindness and/or blaming the victim mentality.

Although to date, there has been no conceptual or theoretical model of racial microaggressions proposed that would explain their impact on the therapeutic process, the opportunity for frontline workers and public service organizations to facilitate in making the invisible visible is by openly and honestly engaging in a transformative dialogue about the issues of race and racism that impact people of color. Orlinsky, Grawe, & Parks (1994) have suggested that obtaining information about how the therapeutic working alliance may be viewed in light of perceived racial microaggressions is absolutely important given the fact that the working alliance has been found to be the best predictor of psychotherapy outcomes (Constantine, 2007, p. 2).

*The Role of Public Service Organizations, Administrators and Frontline Workers*

Just as each part of the human body has a specific role to play in order to function cohesively as a unit, so too, does the functionality and cohesiveness of public service organizations, its administrators and their frontline workers during this symbiotic collaborative process. Each prescribed role within this bureaucratic unit often leads to varied goals and objectives that can change as societal goals and objectives change. Laws coupled with professional standards of ethics are set in place to ensure that all citizens, inside and outside of this bureaucratic sphere are fairly and equitably represented and serviced. However, despite having these measures in place, racism in conjunction with the disenfranchisement of racial and ethnic groups in the United States are; part and parcel of the ingrained cultural psyche of U.S. societal norms and institutions. Regardless of whether or not organizations are public or private, those same systematic inequalities are rooted in U.S. institutions and as a result, organizations, oftentimes inadvertently, function as tools of oppression, replicating and supporting the very marginalization that some are committed to undoing (Adams & Balfour, 2004). Griffith et al (2007) posit that racism functions within organizations to adversely affect the quality of services, the organizational climate, and the job satisfaction and morale of its employees (p. 287).

In nearly all aspects of life, there are various organizational systems (e.g., chain-of-command systems; management systems; hiring, retention, and promotion systems; performance appraisal systems; educational and training systems; and employer-employee relationship systems) that dictate and control the everyday lives of individuals. Such organizations are generally viewed as being monocultural in nature (White Euro-American) and demand complacency in the form of cultural-bound rules and regulations

on the part of any individual who interacts and/or engages with them (Sue, 2015, p. 102). When racism extends its tentacles into those organizational systems that are there to serve the citizens, this can be construed as institutional racism. Although, institutional racism is present in many organizations in our society, the biases derived from it are difficult to recognize because they are hidden within the very fabric of the policies and practices of said organizations (Jones, 1997). While the policies and practices of said organizations may appear impartial and unbiased in nature given the fact that they are applied equally to everyone, in actuality, their effects are to give certain groups advantages while other groups are not given the same opportunities (Sue, 2015, p. 102).

Institutional racism has been referred to as “a systematic set of patterns, procedures, practices, and policies that operate within institutions so as to consistently penalize, disadvantage, and exploit individuals who are members of non-White groups” (Better, 2002; Rodriguez, 1987). It has also been characterized as “a set of priorities and accepted normative patterns designed to subjugate, oppress, and force dependence of individuals and groups on broad societal values” (Jones, 1997) by allowing unequal goals, status, and access to goods and services (Sue, 2015, p. 102). It also proposes roles that are not as significant for people of color and endorses them through shrewd enforcement of laws, blocks economic viability and outcomes, and through assimilation and acculturation, it imposes compliance (Id.). Griffith et al (2007) have surmised that:

Institutional racism explains how oppression can permeate different organizational characteristics and dimensions. At the individual level, racism operates through staff members’ attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. At the intraorganizational level, institutional racism operates through an organization’s internal climate, policies, and procedures. These include the relationships among staff, which are rooted in formal and informal hierarchies and power relationships. At the extraorganizational level,



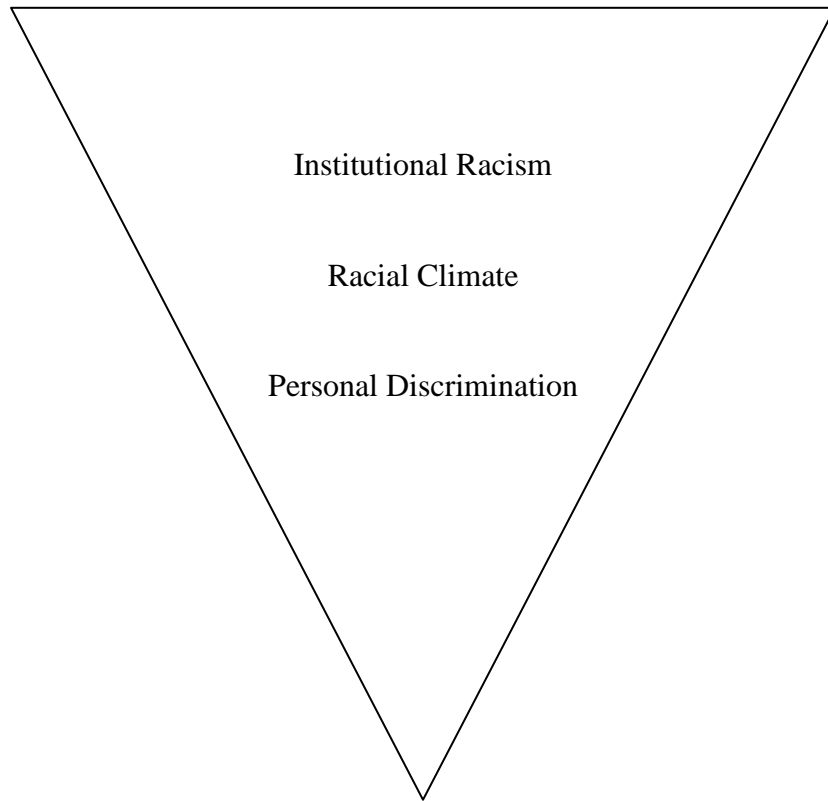
institutional racism explains how organizations influence communities, public policies, and institutions. . . . (p. 289).

Within the contextual framework of institutional racism, organizational systems, regardless of their intentions, are not value neutral because of their ability to further the continuance of racism and other forms of subjugations (Id., p. 290). The systemic manifestation of racism known as institutional racism is established and maintained in organizational policies and are fueled by the dominant group's power (Watts & Carter, 1991, p. 329). In a study conducted by Watts & Carter in (1991) a multilevel framework for racism in organizations was presented based on three key ideas: policies and indicators, climate, and personal experience. The framework is diagrammed as an inverted triangle to emphasize how the upper levels largely affect perceptions at the lower levels. At the institutional-racism level, policies and indicators are nonconcrete notions that have generic yet pervasive effects on the organization's work units. These indicators are the building blocks of institutional racism. In individual work units, which are further down in the organization, notions become concrete. Upper-level policies are interpreted, expanded, and acted upon by managers at the work-unit level. It is at this level that a racial climate<sup>6</sup> is recognized. The impact on the day-to-day life of employees is direct and immediate at this level. The third level, the perceived personal impact of organizational events represents the experience of personal discrimination. This is the most concrete level at which racism is experienced (Id., pp. 330-331). The assumption is that racist systems produce individual occurrences of discrimination (Barbarin & Gilbert,

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<sup>6</sup> "The notion of climate has been used in previous research on institutional racism (Hunt, 1987) to describe the atmosphere that manager or power-holders and majority-group members create. Chesler and Delgado (1987) called these phenomena institutional procedures and norms" (Watts & Carter, 1991, p. 330).

1981). See an example of the Multilevel Framework for Racism in Organizations adapted from Wright, 1977 below.



Grant-Thomas and powell, (2006) add to the discussion by proposing that structural racism expands upon institutional racism by acknowledging the increased effects of social equity across organizations that compound and fortify each other (p.4). Gooden (2014) continues this discussion by stating that although structural racism is akin to institutional racism in the sense that individual racial attitudes are not the target, structural racism puts forth a more expansive framework (Id., p. 12) as explained by Grant-Thomas and powell (2006):

The [institutional racism] framework fails to account for the ways in which the joint operations of social institutions produce import outcomes. This is crucial gap, for it is often the interaction between institutions, rather than the operation of each in isolation, that generates racial group

disparities. . . Structural racism emphasized the powerful impact of inter-institutional dynamics, institutional resource inequities, and historical legacies on racial inequalities today (p. 4).

### *Public Service Organizations*

The goals and objectives of public administration are both action-oriented and results-driven (Norman-Major & Gooden, 2012, p. 3) and through various public service organizations, these goals and objectives facilitate in maintaining a civil society and providing for the needs of its citizens. Public service organizations also known as street-level bureaucracies is a term that Lipsky, (1980) used to collectively describe “schools, police and welfare departments, lower courts, legal services offices, and other agencies of benefits whose workers interact with and have wide discretion over the dispensation of benefits or the allocation of public sanctions” (p. xi). Prottas (1978) defined street-level bureaucracy as “... organizations that deliver public services to individuals using low-level employees as intermediaries. . . . Street-level bureaucracies differ from other public bureaucracies in their relationship with their clients and in how that relationship is actualized” (p. 2).

Public service organizations and public administrators both have a shared responsibility to serve all individuals of the community and to acknowledge the diverse makeup of the population and the differing needs of the community being serviced (Norman-Major & Gooden, 2012, p. 3). Although the historical evolution of the United States has been shown to encompass individuals with a multitude of varying characteristics, the fact of the matter is that the public sector has not always acknowledged the differing needs of the communities, which consequently has led them

to design programs that represent a one size fits all (Id., p. 4) for those individuals utilizing their services. Norman-Major & Gooden (2012) go on to further state that:

This lack of recognition of cultural differences often leads to development and implementation of ineffective, inefficient, and inequitable public services. Instead of serving the community as a whole or being open to all persons, programs and policies that lack of recognition of cultural difference often leave part of the public out of public service (Id.).

Understanding the population that is being serviced is paramount when providing tangible and responsive services. Yet, this helping process is severely impacted when frontline workers of color; especially Black frontline workers, who are part of the mosaic landscape of society, are not recognized or even understood for their cultural differences within the interior fabric of public service organizations. Adams and Balfour (2004) highlight this point by suggesting when people act in ways that are detrimental to others without being cognizant of the negative effect they have on them; they refer to this as administrative evil. Furthering this discussion, the researchers posit that “since administrative evil wears many masks, it is entirely possible to adhere to the tents of public service and professional ethics and participate in even a great evil and not be aware of it until it is too late (or perhaps not at all)” (p. 11).

### *Public Service Administrators*

By taking on a leadership role, the goal of the public service administrator according to Lipsky (1980) is to achieve results that are consistent with the objectives of the organization (p. 19). Marion Anderson (n.d.) extrapolated that “Leadership should be born of the understanding of the needs of those who would be affected by it” (Siljander et al, 2005, p 37). This referenced quote highlights the point that a good leader knows that

they cannot do everything by themselves and that leaders are as good as the individuals that surround them. Additionally, a good leader needs to possess the necessary wherewithal to effectively and efficiently coordinate and/or delegate the efforts of other people. William E. Kirwan, President, Ohio State University stated in 2002 that “Leadership in its truest and finest form is not about division, but about unity. It is not about power, but about service. It originates not from vanity, but from Empathy. It’s not about “me;” it’s about “us”” (Siljander et al, 2005, p 37). In other words, there is a need for organizational leaders to understand the frontline workers that are doing the servicing so that the population that is being serviced; receives the effectiveness of delivery and the quality of services being offered.

Moreover, an effective leader also acknowledges that leadership facilitates in the process of how well people interact with one another, a point emphasized by MacAdam (2004) who said that “Leadership is a people process. It calls for the application of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that allow us to successfully influence and inspire others to do the right things. . . .” (Siljander et al, 2005, p 38). However, this may not always be the case given that public service administrators “have attitudes that influence how they implement policy that arise from both their experience inside and outside the bureaucracy” (Meyers & Vorsanger, 2003). This point can also be representative of frontline workers as well who have their own experiential realities, which can create divergent interactions within the organization. In his groundbreaking work on the U.S. Forest Service, Kaufman (1956) contends that bureaucrats bring their personal attitudes with them into the organization and understanding these personal attitudes can facilitate in understanding organizational behaviors (Keiser, 2010, p. 249).

Along with their personal attitudes, Kaufman (1960) also contends that bureaucrats go into organizations with their “opinions, values, preferences and their own interpretations of the world” (pp. 80-81). This could be somewhat problematic for public service administrators who want to ensure uniformity in the implementation of organizational policies. Kaufman (1956) has suggested that “to overcome this challenge, managers seek to integrate all members into the goals of the agency and the selection of like-minded people” (Keiser, 2010, p. 249). In some organizations, the ability of leaders to create consistency in values may vary (Meier, 1993) while in other organizations because the attitudes of public service administrators vary, the implementation of policy within the same organization may differ between public service administrators (Keiser, 2010, p. 249), which can send conflicting messages to the workers.

### *Frontline Workers*

All theories of counseling and psychotherapy are influenced by the assumptions counselors (i.e., frontline workers) make with regard to the goals for therapy and those processes used to implement change (Ivey et al, 2005), which are reflective of their importance and the degree to which they wield the power of discretion. The term frontline workers refer to “public service workers who interact directly with citizens and who have substantial discretion in the execution of their work” (p. 3). Lipsky (1980) has suggested that because frontline workers have a wide leeway of discretion when performing their responsibilities; they should be seen as policymakers as opposed to policy implementers (p. 14). He goes on to further suggest that with discretion being a relative concept, it would follow that the greater degree of discretion that one has, the

more saliency there is in understanding the character of the frontline worker's behavior (Id., p. 15).

Lipsky (1980) along with other researchers such as (Nielsen & Host, 2000; Prottas, 1978; Riccucci, 2005; Rothstein & Stolle, 2001) have all discussed the role and the importance of frontline workers. In a study conducted in four states between 1998 and 1999, Riccucci (2005) examined the role of street-level bureaucrats in the implementation of welfare reform, and suggested that frontline workers "often pursue goals that are consistent with their work norms, familiar routines, professional standards, and socialization experiences" (p. 2). What this study highlights is the importance of organizational culture and norms, and how these organizational variables play a role in the behavior of frontline workers, and in the long run, the service interaction itself.

To further emphasize the discretionary practices of frontline workers, Maynard-Moody and Musheno (2003) garnered stories of street-level experiences from frontline workers asking them to tell stories about how and when their own beliefs about fairness and unfairness helped them in the decision making process (p. 5). Through these stories, it was found that there were times that frontline workers would be conflicted about state-agent narrative (i.e., the application of state laws, rules and procedures that are administered to clients) and citizen-agent narrative, which focuses on the "judgements that street-level workers make about the identities and moral character of the people encountered and the workers' assessment of how these people react during encounters" (Id., p. 9). When state-agent narratives do not coincide with the frontline worker's perception of fairness and appropriateness, then, deciding what is the right decision and what is the right thing to do becomes, a source of contention for the worker (Id.).

*Social Equity and Public Administration*

The tribulations associated with race and racial issues along with the subjugation of marginalized populations, laid the foundation for the pervasiveness of inequality and injustice to continue to plague U.S. society to such a point, that in 1968, urban cities across the nation again, began to implode under the weight of this pervasiveness. For far too long, citizens of this country, especially its Black citizens, although their belief was waning; continued to hold on to the seemingly elusive edict put forth by the Founding Fathers in the Declaration of Independence that stated “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” Johnson & Svara (2011) called this the “self-evident” principle, which throughout the history of this nation, has been the rallying cry for efforts to advance the notion of equality by correcting abuses and restructuring the political process (p. 6), which Black citizens, for far too long have felt they were being left out of. Ameliorating the conditions that were linked to inequity and injustice had been a formidable opponent in the field of public administration because those “issues were not central to public servants or public administration theorists” (Frederickson, 1990, p. 228). It was not until a group of public administration scholars gathering in Minnowbrook, New York in 1968, did a conceptual theory of social equity and the need to practice a new public administration come about (Norman-Major, 2011, p. 233).

One of the strongest advocates at the Minnowbrook conference, who rallied the cry for the need to practice a new public administration that would incorporate values in its practice and include social equity as a key component was H. George Frederickson



who developed the conceptual theory of social equity (Id.). Frederickson (1990) stated that when he developed the theory of social equity, it was a way to set right, a glaring inadequacy in both thought and practice (Gooden, 2014, p. 16). Although the concept of equity can be traced back to Aristotle and Plato, it was not until the 1960s, did the focus on social equity within public administration begin (Rutledge 2002). Shortly after the Minnowbrook conference, the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) created the Standing Panel on Social Equity in Governance, which defined social equity as being:

The fair, just and equitable management of all institutions serving the public directly or by contract; the fair, just and equitable distribution of public services and the implementation of public policy; and the commitment to promote fairness, justice, and equity in the formation of public policy (Ospina et al, 2012, p. 471).

Even though social equity was deemed by Frederickson in 1968 to be the third pillar of public administration and elevated to the fourth pillar in 2005 by NAPA, it is still striving to be on the same level as economy, efficiency and effectiveness (Norman-Major, 2011, p. 234). As Wooldridge and Gooden (2009) have suggested, “It is the rare public administrator who has the courage to make social equity a primary goal of policy” (Id.). Norman-Major (2011) has suggested that to achieve *equity* for social equity among the pillars of public administration, the following three changes must be considered: (i) the ambiguity of its meaning must be made clear, (ii) development of more definitive measures, and most importantly, (iii) public administrators must be educated to include social equity when developing and implementing public policies (p. 234); especially those policies and programs that can be negatively impactful towards racial and ethnic minority group members.

Gooden (2014) stated that “although the public sector has become more racially and ethnically diverse, there remains an uncomfortable, poorly articulate, and difficult to navigate divide between racial and ethnic minority group members and white public servants” (p. ix). I would also add that because Black frontline workers are not immune from their own ethnic socialization or inheriting societal biases (Sue & Sue, 2008, p. 318), they would also find it difficult to navigate the divide between racial and ethnic minority group members. This cleavage reflects the historical disconnection between the public servant and the citizens that they serve and is most noticeable in the area of welfare-caseload management (Gooden, 2014, pp. ix-x).

To emphasize this point further, Soss et al (2011) have suggested that race and the administration of welfare programs are intricately intertwined and as such, because the saliency of racial identities are high in welfare settings, they have a tendency to structure the casework relationship. In addition, the researchers have also suggested . . . that regardless of whether frontline officials favor racial equality in principle, they do respond to the discrediting, stereotype-consistent markers of their Black clients that has continually contributed to institutional patterns of racial inequity (Gooden, 2014, pp. x). Gooden has posited that race along with racial equity represent important and disconcerting nervous areas of government (Id., xi). She goes on to further posit that social equity, in particular racial equity, is a nervous area of government that:

Over the course of history, this nervousness has stifled many individuals and organizations, leading to an inability to seriously advance the reduction of racial inequities in government. Until this nervousness is effectively managed, public administration efforts to reduce racial inequities cannot realize their full potential (p. 3).

The trepidation of public administrators in addressing issues of racial inequities is problematic as it can significantly interfere with the day-to-day responsibilities of public agencies providing services in ways that are associated with those democratic principles that are set forth in the Constitution (Id.). In addition, the emotions associated with the nervousness that public administrators, feel is connected to their avoidance of race conversations. Having these types of conversations can bring people with multiple perspectives, histories, and issues together to create democratic spaces and provide a better understanding and appreciation for one another. Engaging in conversational discourse and having interactive meetings about race, racism, and the administration of public services provide an opportunity for increased understanding about the role social identity and group membership plays in the provision, administration, and delivery of those services (Id., p. 56). In the long run, “the aggregate effect of improved individual-level understanding of the role of race in the administration of public services should lead to intentional, specific organizational actions that will eliminate racial inequities in the administration of public services” (Id.).

Additionally, Akram (2004) surmised that the issues surrounding equity and justice are the fundamental concerns for public administrators; who continually struggle with assessing the nation’s social climate to ensure equity in governance (Gooden, 2014, p. 4). Gooden furthered this discussion by expounding that:

Such evaluation is unlikely to occur in a serious way if organizations are fundamentally too uncomfortable to directly engage the topic. The result is an important, taken for granted but unacknowledged, context of nervousness, which is debilitating to our public sector organizations and thwarting our progress toward achieving racial equity in governance (Id.).

Although the idea of nervousness has not been scientifically studied in relation to public sector organizations, it does however, have significant conceptual lineage (Id.) with Merton's (1952) research on the "dysfunctions of bureaucracies," wherein he states that the positive achievements of the bureaucracies are highlighted and the internal stresses and strains of the bureaucracies are almost entirely neglected (p. 364). For a visual representation of Gooden's Conceptual Model of the Nervous Area of Government, see (*Figure II*).

Frederickson in 2005 stated the following: "Over the years, public administrators have contributed much in helping to create a more equitable, fairer, and more just America. Yet we have much more to contribute. As a core value in public administration, social equity is no longer novel or new. . . ." (p. 31). Just as Frederickson rallied the banner cry in 1968 at Minnowbrook advocating for the need to practice a new public administration that would incorporate values in its practice and include social equity as a key component, so too, must this rallying cry continue, for the work is far from being over. Now more than ever, is the time for all public administrators "to relentlessly ask the so-called second question. The first question is whether an existing or proposed public program is effective or good. The second is more important: For whom is this program effective or good? (p. 36).

Gooden (2014) adds to this discussion by raising the following:

As public administrators, we cannot have discussions about fiscal resources without discussing budgets. Neither can we have a discussion about personnel without discussing positions, units, and people, similarly, we cannot have a discussion about inequities in the provision of public services without talking about race. Nor, as public administrators, can we turn a blind eye to our contributions to and responsibilities for reversing these inequities. Like it or not, comfortably or not, race and social equity –

a nervous area of government – is a clear reality in the windshield of public administration that compels our attention (p. 39).

### *Cultural Competency and Public Administration*

During the past several decades, the cultural landscape of the United States has dramatically changed, and central to these changes has been the influx of people of color from every corner of the world. This diversification of America, as referred to by Atkinson, Morten, and Sue (1993) has continued in an upward trajectory since it began in the 1980s (Diller, 2015, 2011 2007, p. 10). Utilizing the 2000 U.S. Census as its base for future projections over the next 40 years, Diller surmised that the implications of this continued expansion is that by the year 2050, nearly 50% of all U.S. citizens will identify as being a member of a racial/ethnic group, thereby, making people of color, especially Hispanics, part of the new majority minority populations (pp. 10-11). See table below for the projected percentages of ethnic groups in U.S. population:

Projected percentages of Ethnic Groups in U.S. Population<sup>7</sup>

Group	2009%	2050%
Non-Hispanic Whites	66	46
Hispanics	15	30
Africans Americans	13	15
Asians	5	9
Native Americans	1.6	2.0

While the mosaic makeup of the United States has continued to flourish in its distinctiveness, the public sector has not always acknowledged the differing needs of the varied populations on this mosaic canvas and as such, has tried to adhere them to a one-size-fits-all approach, which oftentimes has led to the development and implementation

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<sup>7</sup> Note: Adapted from U.S. Census (August 14, 2008). An older and more diverse nation by midcentury. U.S. Census Bureau News. CB 08-123. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Press, as cited by Diller (20015, 2011), p. 11.

of ineffective, inefficient, and inequitable public services that have not been representative of the populations' cultural differences (Norman-Major & Gooden, 2012, p. 4). Understanding the racial and cultural differences of populations at both the micro level and at the macro level, which is two-fold (e.g., organizations through their policies and implementation of programs that affect both internally and externally, their frontline workers and the varied populations being serviced) is tantamount to being culturally competent.

Cultural competency in its broadest sense is having the aptitude to provide effective and efficient services to cross-cultural populations (Diller, 2015, 2011, 2007, p. 17). Cross (1988) defined it as a "set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enable that system, agency, or those professionals to work efficiently in cross-cultural situations" (p. 13). Betancourt et al. (2003) have posited that before the profession of public administration and public service delivery systems can be considered culturally competent, the following characteristics must be recognized and included on all organizational levels: (i) the significance of culture, (ii) assessment of cross cultural relations, (iii) awareness toward the dynamics that result from cultural differences, (iv) expansion of cultural knowledge, and (v) variation of services to meet the distinctive cultural needs of the population (Rice, 2007. P. 43).

Within the field of public administration including how public services are delivered, cultural competency has evolved very slowly, which has left it largely uncharted, with the cultural differences and cultural variations of disenfranchised groups, especially people of color, not being considered important enough as research topic areas

(Stafford, 1999). Additionally, cultural competency has received a miniscule of scholarly attention and is seen as a “soft science” that is deficient in evidence-based approaches that emphasis implementation and effectiveness in public and social service programs (Betancourt et al., 2005), and as indicated in a forward written by Riccucci, the health care and social work professions are the only two professions that have rallied the banner cry for their organizations and personnel to begin the immersion process towards being culturally competent (Norman-Major & Gooden, 2012, p. vii). The implications of this as Adler (1991) has suggested is that the concept of cultural competency within the profession of public administration and via public service delivery is skewed in the sense that it views cultural differences and cultural variations as being invisible, illegitimate, and negative (Rice, 2007. p. 44).

The ever-increasing seeds of cultural differences and cultural variations that are continually being planted in American soil, warrants that public service organizations and administrators embrace these varied opportunities and challenges by developing and incorporating a more inclusive culturally competent care system that rest upon a unified set of values. These values according to Diller (2015, 2011, 2007) “share the notions that being different is positive, that services must be responsive to specific cultural needs, and that they must be delivered in a way that empowers the client” (p. 18). Creating a more inclusive culturally competent care system pushes the profession of public administration and public service delivery systems to the forefront by providing a culturally holistic approach that incorporates cultural sensitivity and brings about the opportunity to offer tangible and culturally responsive services.

*Promoting Cultural Competency in Public Administration and Public Service Delivery*

In his telling and insightful book entitled *Dear White America: Letter to a New Minority*, Wise (2012) espoused that in this so-called “age of Obama,” most Whites are largely unaware and to some degree still in denial about the fact that institutional racial inequity in conjunction with outright institutional discrimination still persist (p. 36). He goes on to further elucidate that, it’s not that Whites are incapable of seeing the truth, it’s just that, for far too long, they have had the luxury of remaining in a perpetual state of being, which fostered a level of unawareness to the experiential realities that people of color, especially Blacks experienced. This level of unawareness was based on the notion that knowing or acknowledging their realities was not a primary concern nor was it a condition for Whites to obtain academic or professional credentials, and as such, has now exacerbated and fortified the rationality as to why most Whites have failed to appreciate and embrace the obvious, instead of choosing to ignore it (Id., pp. 36-37). What this equates to, is that the judgment of Whites regarding the experiential realities of people of color, especially Blacks, has not been the best and so, they would do well to listen to the voices of those individuals who have been and continue to be besieged by racial discriminatory incidents that are part and parcel of their everyday lived experiences (Id., p. 37).

Engaging in conversational discourse about race and racial issues that involve accumulated inequities dating back generations is not an indictment against Whites. It is not even intended to generate a guilty conscience, as no one living today would be directly responsible for those accumulated inequities. It does however, bear strange fruit that the legacy of those inequities are still perpetuated in many of today’s institutions that



Whites either own and/or control through laws, policies, and programs. To take advantage of the historical inherited privileges and assets of past generations yet refuse to address the historical discriminatory actions or inactions that have led to the accumulated inequities of people of color is morally irresponsible (Id., pp. 24-25) and perpetuates a cycle of reproducing racism upon future generations. The truth of the matter is that discrimination and inequity is not only a reality of historical significance, it is also a significant facet in contemporary reality and as such, the responsibility for fixing this nation's racial inequities rests with all stakeholders, especially those in the public sector who need to take a more vested interest in addressing and finding amicable solutions to this ever-burgeoning quandary (Id., pp. 25-26).

The formulated process of addressing those racially accumulated inequities that have been allowed to saturate and fester throughout U.S. public policies must begin with the public sector (i.e., public service organizations and public administrators) who “are at least partially responsible for the development and maintenance of these inequities” (Gooden, 2014, p. 21) and their private sector contractors (Id., p. 22). Saturation of racially accumulated inequities as suggested by Gooden (2014) represents the fact that:

The pattern of racial distribution is mutually compounding and permeates multiple aspects of public policies that significantly affect one's life chances. Environmental inequities affect health inequities, which affect educational inequities, and so forth. These inequities compound in predictable patterns and are maintained from generation to generation. Although their severity may decrease over time, as overall societal conditions improve, significant racial disparities are maintained (p. 22).

Throughout today's society, many racially accumulated inequities are so pervasive and prevalent, that instead of being viewed as problems, their existence is ironically viewed as being normal, which oftentimes allows them to be blended into the fabric of everyday

life. These saturated conditions are accepted by elected officials, public administrators, frontline workers, researchers, and the public at large as an evocative depiction of American life, as opposed to a legitimate and acknowledged societal crisis (Id.). For a visual representation of the saturation of racial inequities model see ((*Figure III*)).

Racial inequities in the United States are largely saturated because of their aggregate and reinforcing characteristics, which are embedded in a historical structure where people of color ubiquitously and persistently experience pervasive negative differences. The amalgamation of these differences, exponentially generate a cycle of racial saturation that has now manifested into a continually persistent generational curse. While there are moments of definitive exceptions within and among racial groups, the general inclinations even with fiat laws governing the promotion of racial equity; are still prominent. Full implementation of both the intention and the spirit of these laws demand robust policies, norms, and cultural changes at the agency level. The successful implementation of racial equity in American society requires attentive public administrators who doggedly monitor, assess, and eliminate the permeation of accumulated racial inequities that have advanced through structural racism (Gooden, 2014, p. 39). In addition, incorporating these culturally competent skill areas would facilitate in bringing about an equitable distribution of resources that have been allocated through public service policies and programs.

Rice (2007) in discussing the importance of promoting and incorporating cultural competency into both the study and practice of public administration and public service delivery, has suggested several reasons for continued efforts in acknowledging those barriers that hinder and/or prevent provision of tangible and responsible services and the

necessary steps needed to address these shortcomings. First, public service agencies and their administrators must recognize that culturally variegated differences play a vitally significant role in understanding the delivery of public services and public programs. Second, internal leadership and support on a continual basis must be given to all public service organizational members. Third, cultural appropriateness; cultural accessibility; and cultural acceptability are part and parcel of a culturally applicable public service delivery system and as such, public administration and public service agencies must fully incorporate these three attributes into the process of becoming culturally competent (Rice, 2007, p. 50). Fourth, utilizing culturally competent skill sets that build onto the strengths and perspectives of cultural differences and cultural variations facilitate in forming interventional service delivery strategies and approaches that can assist in framing and providing culturally responsive services (U.S. DHHS, 2001b, p. 5). Five, through the attainment of various culturally competent skill sets, public service agencies and their administrators, must acquire and hone those necessary skills needed to avoid stereotypical biases and promote positive service delivery encounters (Id., p. 5). Finally, the process whereby public administration and public service agencies start thinking outside the box to examine and integrate various nontraditional and non-mainstream sources and approaches is an important aspect in the teaching and practice of cultural competency in this multicultural and multifaceted era (Rice, 2007, p. 51).

As suggested by Rice (2008):

Cultural competency allows organizations to demonstrate behaviors, attitudes, policies, and structures that enable them to work effectively in all aspects of policymaking, administration, practice, and service delivery of a defined set of values and principles. Organizations can better value diversity, conduct self-assessment, manage the dynamics of difference, acquire and institutionalize cultural knowledge, and adapt to diversity and

the cultural contexts of the communities they serve by supporting an organizational position of cultural competency (p. 34).

Additionally, Diller (2015, 2011, 2007) posits that the development of cultural competency requires looking at the pain and suffering that racism has caused and examining one's own attitudes and beliefs (p. 33). Above all, promoting cultural competency in public administration and public service delivery demands that all vested stakeholders, regardless of their role, develop a level of empathic understanding and a serious commitment to change.

### CHAPTER THREE – RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter of the dissertation discusses the research design and the data collection methods used to determine if there is a linkage between the perception of racial microaggressions and the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers, and if so, what influence does it play in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

#### *A Mixed Methodological Approach to Examining Racial Microaggressions and Black Identity*

The fundamental rationale as to why a researcher would consider utilizing a mixed methodological approach as postulated by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) is that:

We can learn more about our research topic if we can combine the strengths of qualitative research with the strengths of quantitative research while compensating at the same time for the weaknesses of each method. This has been called the fundamental principle of mixed methods research (also see Punch, 2009, p. 290).

Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) suggested that the fundamental principle of mixed methods research involves researchers collecting multiple data using different strategies, approaches, and methods in such a way that the combination of the two methods is likely to result in complementary strengths and nonoverlapping weaknesses (also see Brewer & Hunter, 1989). Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) continue this discussion by stating that “effective use of this principle is a major source of justification for mixed methods research because the product will be superior to monomethod studies” (p. 18). See (*Figure VII*) for the schematic notation of mixed methodology utilized in this study.

Thus, for the purposes of this dissertation, a mixed methodological content analysis using a phenomenological two-phase sequential design that is also exploratory in nature; was chosen. The utilization of mixed methods research strengthens evaluation research, because no single method is without weakness or biases.... By combining the two, research can be more objective and rich (Besculides, et al, 2006, p. 2). According to Creswell (2009), a phenomenological research is used to identify the essence of human experiences as described by the participants (p. 13). Moustakas (1994) further expounds by stating that “understanding the lived experiences marks phenomenology as a philosophy as well as a method” (p. 13). By employing this type of approach, “the researcher brackets or sets aside his or her own experiences in order to understand those of the participants in the study” (Nieswiadomy, 1993). See table below for the strengths and weaknesses of mixed methods research:

#### Strengths and Weaknesses of Mixed Methods Research<sup>8</sup>

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
Words, pictures, and narrative can be utilized to add meaning to numbers.	May be difficult for a single researcher to carry out mixed research, especially if two or more approaches are expected to be used concurrently; it may require a research team.
Numbers can be utilized to add accuracy to words, pictures, and narrative.	The researcher has to learn about multiple methods and approaches and understand how to mix them appropriately.
Can provide quantitative and qualitative research strengths. See <i>Table 11</i> for the strengths and weaknesses for both quantitative and qualitative research.	Methodological purists contend that one should always work with either a qualitative or quantitative paradigm.
The researcher can generate and test a grounded theory.	More costly.
Can answer a broader and more complete range of research questions because the researcher is not confined to a single method or approach.	More time consuming.
Specific mixed research designs have explicit strengths and weaknesses that should be considered (e.g., in a two-stage sequential, the Stage 1 results can be used to develop and inform the purpose and design of the Stage 2 component).	Some of the details of mixed research still need to be fully worked out by research methodologists (e.g., problems of paradigm mixing, how to qualitatively analyze quantitative data, how to interpret conflicting results).

<sup>8</sup> The strengths and weaknesses of mixed methods research were identified by Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004), p. 21.

The researcher can utilize the strengths of an additional method to overcome the weaknesses in another method by incorporating both in a research study.	
Provides stronger evidence for a conclusion through convergence and corroboration of findings.	
Adds insight and understanding that might otherwise be missed when only a single method is used.	
Can be used to increase the generalizability of the results.	
Mixed research produces more complete knowledge necessary to inform theory and practice.	

### *History of Mixed Methods Research*

Debates about singular or universal truths or approaches to how we view the world versus multiple or relative truths, date back to at least ancient Western ideology. The spirit of these debates is alive and well today with the primary philosophy of mixed methods research being that of pragmatism. How we interpret knowledge, what we look for, the expectations of our findings, and the belief that we are going to find and justify knowledge, continues to impact the way research is conducted. The authors have positioned mixed methods research amid the extremes of Plato (quantitative research) and the Sophists (qualitative research), with mixed methodology attempting to respect the viewpoints of both methods while also pursuing a workable middle solution for varied research problems (Johnson et al, 2007, p. p. 113). Thus, mixed methods research is “an approach to knowledge (theory and practice) that attempts to consider multiple viewpoints, perspectives, positions, and standpoints (always including the standpoints of qualitative and quantitative research” (Id).

In the social science methodological literature, Campbell and Fiske’s (1959) article entitled *Convergent and discriminant validation by the multitrait-multimethod matrix* is viewed as formalizing the practice of using multiple research methods through the introduction of triangulation. Campbell and Fiske are credited with being the first to

clearly demonstrate how to use multiple research methods for validation purposes. The article refers to the concept of “multiple operationalism,” whereby more than one method is used as part of a validation process to ensure that the explained variance is the result of the underlying phenomenon or trait and not the method (e.g., quantitative or qualitative) (Johnson et al, 2007, pp. 113-114). The concept of multiple operationalism was furthered by Webb et al (1966), who defined it as multiple measures that “are hypothesized to share in the theoretically relevant components but have different patterns of irrelevant components” (p. 3). According to Webb et al,

Once a proposition has been confirmed by two or more independent measurement processes, the uncertainty of its interpretation is greatly reduced. The most persuasive evidence comes through a *triangulation* [italics added] of measurement processes. If a proposition can survive the onslaught of a series of imperfect measures, with all their irrelevant error, confidence should be placed in it. Of course, this confidence is increased by minimizing error in each instrument and by a reasonable belief in the different and divergent effects of the sources of error. (p. 30).

Thus, the term triangulation was first coined by Webb et al., and this type of triangulation is known as a between-or across-method triangulation (Johnson et al, 2007, p. 114).

Denzin (1978) was the first to frame how to triangulate methods. He defined triangulation as “the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon” (p. 291). The following four types of triangulation were framed by Denzin: (i) data triangulation (i.e., the use of multiple sources in a study); (ii) investigator triangulation (i.e., the utilization of multiple researchers); (iii) theory triangulation (i.e. the use of varied perspectives and theories to understand the findings of a study); and methodological triangulation (i.e., the use of varied methods to study a research problem). He also differentiated *within-methods* triangulation, which refers to the use of varied quantitative or varied qualitative methods, from *between-methods* triangulation,



which refers to the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods (Johnson et al, 2007, p. 114). Denzin surmised that three outcomes occur from the use of triangulation: convergence, inconsistency, and contradiction and no matter which outcome prevails, superior explanations of the observed social phenomena can be constructed (Id., p. 115).

Acknowledging that triangulation may not be a favorable methodology for all research purposes, Jick (1979) highlighted the following advantages of triangulation: (i) its use allows researchers to become more confident of their findings; (ii) creates innovative ways of collecting data; (iii) can lead to more in-depth data; (iv) can lead to the synergistic relationship of theories; (v) can uncover flaws; and (vi) its comprehensiveness may serve as the litmus test for opposing theories. Morse (1991) added to this discussion by outlining two types of methodological triangulation, which he described as simultaneous or sequential. Simultaneous triangulation represents the simultaneous use of qualitative and quantitative methods where there is limited interaction between the two methods of data during the data collection phase; however, the results complement each other at the data interpretation phase. Sequential triangulation is utilized when the findings of one method are necessary for planning the next method (Id.).

In recent years, some of the strongest advocates of qualitative research (i.e., Denzin, Lincoln, and Guba) have made statements that give validation to mixed methods research. For instance, Lincoln and Guba (1985) postulated that “indeed, there are many opportunities for the naturalistic investigator to utilize quantitative data – probably more than are appreciated” (pp. 198-199). Guba and Lincoln (1989) have also stated that “the information may be quantitative or qualitative. Responsive evaluation does not rule out

quantitative modes, as is mistakenly believed by many, but deals with whatever information is responsive to the unresolved claim, concern, or issue” (p. 174). Guba and Lincoln (1994) further noted that “both qualitative and quantitative methods may be used appropriately with any research paradigm” (p. 105). Guba and Lincoln (2005) similarly restated that “within each paradigm, mixed methodologies (strategies) may make perfectly good sense” (p. 200).

### *Current Definitions of Mixed Methods Research*

Johnson et al (2007) have suggested that the third methodological movement has been given many names such as: blended research (Thomas, 2003), integrative research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004), multimethod research (e.g., Hunter & Brewer, 2003; Morse, 2003), multiple methods (Smith, in press), triangulated studies (cf. Sandelowski, 2003), ethnographic residual analysis (Fry, Chantavanich, & Chantavanich, 1981), and mixed research (Johnson, 2006; Johnson & Christensen, 2004) (p. 118). As suggested by Johnson et al (2007) an advantage of the broader term mixed research, as well as the term integrative research, is that it does not suggest a constraint of mixing to methods only (p. 118). Because the concept of mixed methods has been defined in a number of ways, the authors examined the criteria of 19 leaders in the field who are currently deemed important enough to define mixed methods research, see (*Table XII*) for a breakdown of the definitions.

### *Mixed Methods Research in Public Administration*

According to Riccucci (2010) the use of triangulation or mixed methods research has become an increasingly favorable mode of research in public administration because the benefits derived from both quantitative and qualitative research methods can be integrated (p. 108). Similarly, Yang, Zhang, and Holzer (2008) have suggested that mixed methods are applicable and should be trusted and utilized in public administration research (p. 38). Although, there are opinions within various disciplines that continue to push forth the notion that the utilization of quantitative and qualitative modes of research are not well-suited because of their mutually exclusive epistemological and ontological assumptions (p. 38), Yang et al (2008) contend that quantitative and qualitative designs are complementary and that researchers can use a parallel strategy that simultaneously applies to both research designs (p. 39). The authors conclude this discussion by stating that: “public administration may benefit greatly from more conscious efforts to apply multiple paradigms in a research project.” (Id.). With the burgeoning interest of mixed methods research in public administration and other social science disciplines, “public administrationists as well as other social scientists are thus presented with opportunities to participate in the ongoing dialogues about the contours of mixed methods and their significance for the social and behavioral sciences” (Riccucci, 2010, p. 115).

### *Theoretical Perspectives*

Two theoretical perspectives were integrated by the researcher to facilitate in the guiding and shaping of this dissertation. As a means of bringing awareness, understanding, and identifying a pathway to change, the first theoretical perspective that

the researcher utilized was the concept of transformative learning, which Butler (1994) defined as being:

A form of adult education that unearths deeply embedded assumptions about our respective belief systems and resulting worldviews. Transformative learning fosters and develops capacities that invite people to live more meaningfully. It gives rise to deep-seated shifts in awareness that impacts our understanding, critical thinking, feelings and relationships with other people, the natural world and ourselves. It can also provide ways to invite the power of the intellect to connect with the wisdom of the heart (p. 6).

The second theoretical perspective, which the researcher believes has an interrelated and synergistic relationship to transformative learning are the philosophical assumptions of the advocacy/participatory approach. This approach gained momentum during the 1980s and 1990s from individuals who felt that the postpositivistic assumptions that imposed structural laws and theories did not benefit marginalized individuals in society or adequately address issues of social justice and/or social equity (Creswell, 2009, p. 9). Although, this worldview is usually seen in qualitative research, it can also be a foundation for quantitative research as well. An advocacy/participatory worldview suggests that research inquiry should be interconnected with politics and a political agenda that is both action orientated and geared toward the types of reforms that enhance the lives of the participants, the institutions in which individuals work or live, and the researcher's life. In addition, important social issues such as empowerment, inequality, oppression, domination, suppression, and alienation can also be addressed utilizing this approach (Id.).

Historically, several of the advocacy/participatory or emancipatory authors have drawn on the works of Marx, Adorno, Marcuse, Habermas, and Freire (Neuman, 2000). The contemporary authors of this perspective are Fay (1987); Heron and Reason (1997);

and Kemrnis & Wilkinson (1998). These advocacy/participatory writers have felt that the constructivist stance does not go far enough in their advocacation of an action oriented plan for marginalized and/or disenfranchised individuals. Advocacy research gives a voice to the participant, thereby raising their consciousness or promoting an agenda for change that improves their lives (Creswell, 2009, p. 9).

The utilization of both the transformative learning and the advocacy/participatory theoretical perspectives give an holistic worldview that focuses on the needs of those groups and individuals that historically have been and continue to be marginalized and/or disenfranchised in society (Id.). It also provides a way to convey the interrelatedness of the internal and external/structural components of racial inequity, and reveals how self-perpetuating systems continue to reinforce disparities within varied institutions (Butler, 2012). Additionally, the integration of these two perspectives become a united voice for reform and change, through the contextualization of constructive conversation, which lends itself to a collective will and the development of a deeper, interconnected understanding that can be directly applied to analysis, healing and action (Id.).

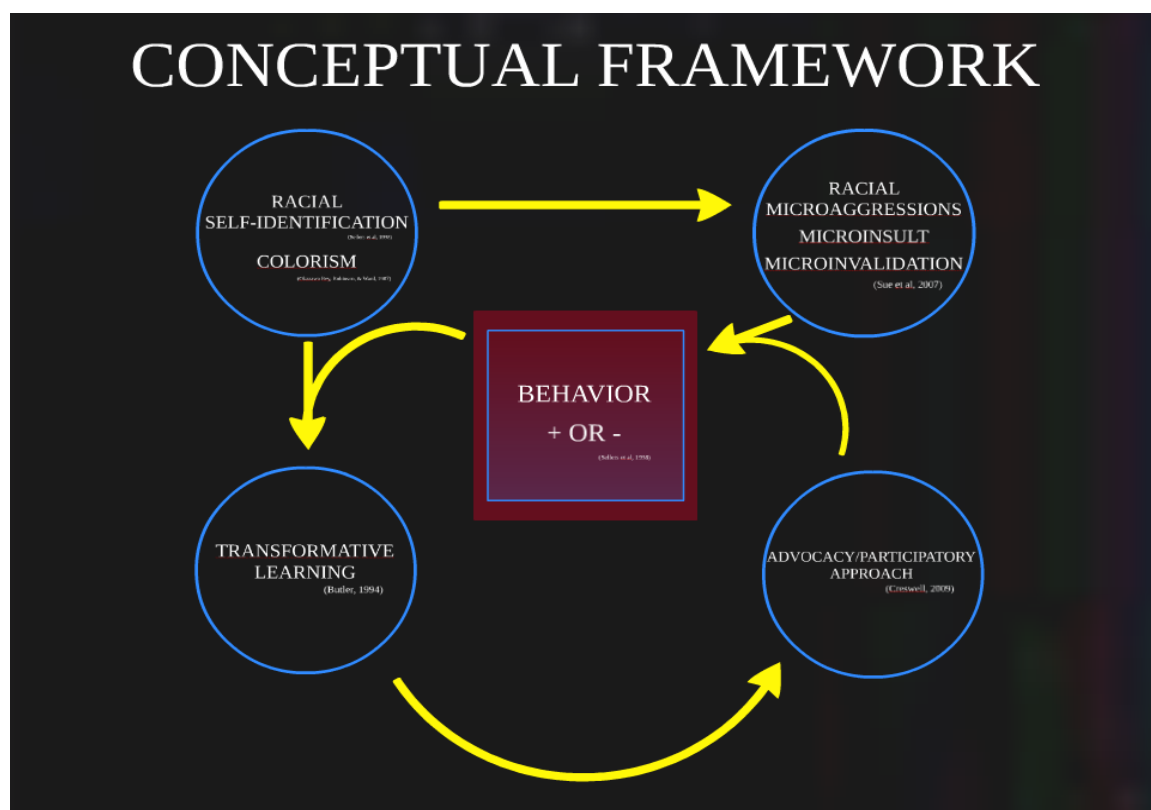
To start the process of transformative learning from an advocacy/participatory perspective, the study applied and integrated the Racial Microaggression Scale (RMAS) and the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI) as evaluating instruments. The utilization of the RMAS to measure the negative impact of racial indignities, slights, mistreatment, and/or offenses allowed this researcher to: (i) assess whether common themes exist across racial groups, and (ii) to test the assertion that racial microaggressions, like other forms of perceived racism, have a significant impact on the psychological and physical well-being of Black frontline workers (Torres-Harding, et al,

2012, pp. 153-154). The MIBI was utilized to measure the significance of race in the self-concepts of Black frontline workers and the meanings attributed to their being members of that racial category. Utilizing this instrument to measure the significance and meaning of the participant's racial category allowed this researcher to delve deeper into the following two questions: (i) "How important is race in the individual's perception of self,?" and (ii) "What does it mean to be a member of this racial group?" (Sellers et al, 1998, p. 19).

### *Conceptual Framework*

Within the conceptual framework referenced below, there is an interconnected relationship between how one racially self-identifies and their values and beliefs associated with colorism. This interconnected relationship coupled with the level of degree to which racial microaggressions are experienced, can impact the person of color's behavior either positively or negatively. From a positive perspective, the racial microaggressive incident(s) can be a motivator towards change whereby the person of color strives to do better so as not to validate the perpetrator's negative thoughts or actions. From a negative perspective, these everyday common occurrences can impact a person by emotionally bankrupting them, psychologically draining them and causing them to feel socially inept. However, through transformative learning, there are deep-seated shifts in awareness that impact our understanding, critical thinking, feelings relationships with other people, and the natural world. This transformative learning has an interrelated and synergistic relationship to the advocacy/participatory approach, which suggests that through research, social issues can be addressed enhance the lives of the

participants, the institutions in which individuals work or live, and the researcher's life by bringing an understanding and awareness about the participant's experiential realities. As such, all four circles have an interconnected relationship and is the catalyst of change that flows back to behavior.



### *Sites*

For the purposes of this study, the researcher utilized the New Jersey State Treatment Provider Directory that is accessible to the public to collect the names and locations within Essex County, NJ of substance abuse treatment facilities and mental health treatment facilities, whose clients also experience substance-related and addictive disorders. Once the agencies were identified, the researcher contacted the Executive Director of each agency to request permission to come to their agency and speak with

their clinical staff about participating in a research study. See (*Appendix F*) for the Executive Director initial phone contact script. Of the 44 agencies that were identified in the New Jersey State Treatment Provider Directory, 14 of those agencies ultimately gave their permission for recruitment to begin at their facility. See (*Appendix G*) for the names of participating agencies. Substance abuse treatment facilities and mental health treatment facilities in Essex County were chosen because Essex County is the largest of the 21 counties in the State of New Jersey and it also has 40 percent of the State's drug and alcohol caseload (Waldman, N., & Hercik, J.M., 2002, p. 10).

### *Research Design*

As previously stated, this dissertation utilized a mixed methodological content analysis with a phenomenological two-phase sequential design that is also exploratory in nature. In this two-phase mixed methods research design, quantitative data was collected and analyzed during the first phase, and qualitative data was collected and analyzed during the second phase. Punch (2009) has suggested that “quantitative investigation is inappropriate until exploratory qualitative methods have built a better foundation of understanding” (p. 297). Utilizing this research design explicitly frames inquiry of two worldviews, each of which remains distinct and offers the opportunity to tell a different piece of the story by integrating material to create larger frameworks for discussion.



### *Data Collection Procedure*

After receiving research approval from the Rutgers University Institutional Review Board (IRB), as well as gaining approval from agency Executive Directors, a multi-stage clustering procedure was used to recruit potential participants to take part in the first phase of the study. A multi-stage clustering procedure allowed the researcher to first sample the agencies (i.e., clusters), obtain the names of interested participants within the clusters, and then sample within those clusters (Creswell, 2009, p. 148). For the second phase of the study, a purposeful sampling was used to select perspective participants. This form of sampling enabled the researcher to identify and select those participants who were able to further elucidate their perception of racial microaggressions and inform about the shaping of their racial identity. Participants for the study were 21 years of age or older, and were employed as a counselor in a substance abuse treatment facility and/or a mental health treatment facility in Essex County, New Jersey for a period of not less than one year.

### *Phase I*

#### *Racial Microaggressions Scale (RMAS):*

Racial microaggressions denote the racial indignities, slights, mistreatment, and/or offenses that people of color may experience consistently on a daily basis. For people of color, these racial microaggressive occurrences can and usually do typify a significant source of stress (Torres-Harding et al, 2012, p. 154). Bell (1997) has suggested that “people of color may experience different types and degrees of racial microaggressions because of differing histories of discrimination, exploitation, exclusion, and expulsion directed toward diverse racial groups within our country” (Torres-Harding

et al, 2012, p. 154). Others have taken the position that microaggressive occurrences like other forms of perceived racism; can be detrimental because they represent distinctive and continuing stressors that cause increasingly physical and psychological maladies (Carter, 2007; Moradi & Risco, 2006; Sellers & Shelton, 2003; Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder, 2008a; Williams et al, 1997).

As a way to address the potential negative impacts of microaggressions and to explore the validity of the categories reported by Sue (2010a) and others (Constantine & Sue, 2007; Solorzano et al., 2000; Sue, Bucceri, et al., 2007d; Sue et al, 2008a; Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007b; Torres et al, 2012; Yosso et al., 2009), Torres-Harding and her colleagues (2012) developed the RMAS to provide a conceptual framework to assess the themes and categories of racial microaggressions that were identified by Sue, Capodilupo, et al, (2007a). Specific themes within the larger categories of microinsults and microinvalidations were used as the underlying basis for the 36-items questionnaire (Torres-Harding et al, 2012, p. 154).

The RMAS assumes commonalities of themes that may occur across racial groups. These common themes may arise because of one's status of belonging to a subservient or oppressed group in society (Bell, 1997; Trickett, Watts, & Birman, 1991), or noticing that one's group is debased when compared with the White group (Torres-Harding et al, 2012, p. 154). The scale measures both the occurrence (i.e., how often a person experiences racial microaggressions) and the distress elicited by the incident (i.e., how much the incident caused the participant to feel stressed or upset). Only those items that focused on the occurrence of racial microaggressive incidents were examined to determine whether or not they fit within the themes discussed in the literature (Id.). The

questionnaire measured an individual's experience, which gave the researchers the opportunity to assess whether or not common themes exist across racial groups as well as, test the assertion that racial microaggressions, like other forms of perceived racism, have a significant impact on the psychological and physical well-being of people of color (Id.). See (*Table II*) for a visual representation of the RMAS.

### *Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI)*

The Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI) see (*Table III*) provides a conceptual framework for understanding both the significance of race in the self-concepts of Black frontline workers and the qualitative meanings attributed to their being members of that racial category (Sellers et al, 1998, p. 19). The MMRI suggests 4 dimensions of racial identity that addresses both the significance and the meaning of race in the self-concepts of Blacks. These 4 dimensions consist of: (i) racial salience,<sup>9</sup> (ii) the centrality of the identity, (iii) the regard to which the person holds the group associated with the identity, and (iv) the ideology associated with the identity. Because racial identity is a complex element of the Black self-concept, the MMRI does not consider any of the 4 dimensions to be synonymous with racial identity, rather, the dimensions simply represent different approaches to how racial identity is manifested (Id., p. 28). Racial salience and racial centrality refer to the significance individuals attach to race in defining themselves and racial regard and racial ideology refer to the individuals' perceptions of what it means to be Black (Id., p. 24). Prior research on Black racial

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<sup>9</sup> According to Sellers et al, (1998) racial salience refers to the degree to which one's race is an interrelated part of one's self-concept at a given moment or in a given situation. The authors believe that their definition of racial salience is more in line with the viewpoint of McCall and Simmons (1978) where "the event is the unit of analysis and salience is considered to be influenced in part by situational cues (p. 24).

identity utilized two discrete approaches: (i) the mainstream approach focused on universal properties related to ethnic and racial identities, and (ii) the underground approach focused on recording the qualitative significance attached to one's Black racial self-identity, with an emphasis on its distinctive cultural and historical experiences (Id., p. 18). The MMRI not only embodies an amalgamation of the strengths of these two approaches, it also has the potential to make contributions to traditional research objectives of both approaches, as well as provide the stimulus to explore new questions (Id.).

#### *Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI)*

In order to operationalize the MMRI, Sellers, et al (1998), developed the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI) see (*Table III*), which adapted items from previous identity scales as well as developed items on their own. The MIBI is comprised of 3 scales that measure the centrality, ideology, and regard dimensions. The Ideology Scale also consists of four subscales (e.g., Nationalist, Assimilation, Minority, and Humanist), and the Regard Scale consists of two subscales (e.g., Private Regard and Public Regard), see (*Figure V*). The mechanism by which an individual's beliefs regarding the meaning and significance of their racial group membership influences the way in which they appraise and behave in specific events (Id., p. 28). Studies have shown that the construct that is most attainable to the person during a specific event is the construct that will most likely be utilized in judgments of behavior or in the shaping of an impression regarding that specific event (Bargh et al, 1986; Bargh et al, 1988; Bargh & Pietromonaco, 1982; Bargh & Pratto, 1986; Bargh & Thein, 1985; Higgins et al, 1982;

Higgins et al, 1977). For a schematic representation of how racial identity influences behavior, see (*Figure VI*).

Higgins (1989, and 1990) describes two instances when a construct can become accessible in a particular event: (i) A temporarily accessible construct becomes accessible as a result of recent contextual or situational factors, and (ii) A chronically accessible construct is one that has a high probability of becoming accessible in any situation because it is developed out of a person's unique life history of social encounters (Sellers, et al, 1998, p. 28). Previous studies suggest that the MIBI is a valid and reliable measure of the MMRI (Id., p. 30). For the purposes of this study, the researcher modified the MIBI from its original version of 56 questions to 36 questions to address the length of time that participants would utilize completing both questionnaires. In each of the thematic headings: (i.e., the Centrality Scale, the Regard Scale, which includes the Private Regard Subscale and the Public Regard Subscale, and the Ideology Scale, which includes the Assimilation Subscale, the Humanist Subscale, the Oppressed Minority Subscale, and the Nationalist Subscale), the researcher made the decision to not include those questions that were similar in nature, see (*Table IV*) for the Modified Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MMIBI).

## *Phase II*

In keeping with the goals and objectives of qualitative inquiry, the researcher's primary focus was to understand the significance and value that participants placed on their lived experiential realities (Heppner et al, 1999). By utilizing whole text qualitative analysis to categorize and code data taxonomies derived from the participant's

transcribed interview facilitated in assisting the researcher to process and understand the participant's lived experiential realities as it related to their perceptions of racial microaggressions and as being members of a racial category (Patton, 2002). Heppner et al. (1999) have postulated that qualitative inquiry is an applicable strategy for understanding an individual's experiential realities including the value and importance that is place on those realities. As previously indicated in Chapter 1, there appears to be a dearth of any published studies that explore the perception of racial microaggressions of Black frontline workers in intraracial therapeutic counseling relationships. There also, appears to be a dearth of any published studies that explore any linkage or influence between the perception of racial microaggressions and the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers in intraracial therapeutic counseling relationships. To assist the researcher in addressing the research questions put forth in this study, semi-structured questions were utilized to further elucidate the participant's perception of racial microaggressions and inform about the shaping of their racial identity.

### *Participant/Recruitment*

The researcher identified and recruited 50 participants for this study. Of the 50 recruited participants, 32 self-identified as being Black or African American and 18 self-identified as being either Hispanic or White. Each of the 50 participants were given the Participant Consent Form, which was thoroughly explained, and the Participant Demographic Questionnaire, to complete. After the researcher obtained the necessary signed forms, the 32 participants who identified as either Black or African American were given the option of: (i) completing both questionnaires (i.e., RMAS and the MIBI)

at the time of consent, or (ii) getting a code to access the 2 questionnaires online using a computer application that was accessible through Rutgers University. For the remaining 18 participants who identified as either Hispanic or White, those participants were given the option of completing only the RMAS at the time of consent or completing the questionnaire online. For those participants who chose the first option, they were given a numbered envelope (the assigned number identified the participant throughout the study) containing the 2 questionnaires to complete. For those participants who chose the 2nd option, they were also assigned a number that identified the participant throughout the study. Completion of the 2 forms and both questionnaires took approximately 30 minutes to complete and completion of the 2 forms and the RMAS, took approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Because the focus of this study is on racial microaggressions in intraracial therapeutic counseling relationships, only the data of those participants who self-identified as either Black or African American were analyzed.

The last question on the Participant Demographic questionnaire asked if participants would be interested in participating in Phase II of the study. For those participants who indicated yes, the researcher followed-up with them to take part in a semi-structured interview that consisted of 20 interview protocol questions. For an overview of the protocol questions, see (*Appendix A*). Of the 32 participants who identified as African American or Black, 20 indicated that they would like to take part in Phase II of the study. Their assigned numbers were entered into a database in order to randomly select 10 participants to actually take part in this phase of the study. Once the 10 participants were identified, the researcher contacted them to see if they still wanted to be part of Phase II of the study. Several of the participants were unable to participate

because of their work schedules or other commitments. The researcher went back to the list of 20 participants and ran their assigned numbers again until ultimately 7 participants reconfirmed to be part of Phase II of the study. The questions for the semi-structured interview were developed by utilizing the themes and categories from the RMAS, as well as, the meanings and the significance associated with racial membership from the MIBI. The interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes and took place at either the participant's place of employment or at Rutgers University-Newark in a private room. Before the interviews began, the Participant Consent Form for Phase II and the Audio Consent Form, which allowed the researcher to audio record each interview session, was thoroughly explained, afterwhich, the participant signed both forms and the interviews commenced.

### *Role of the Researcher*

My experiential realities as a Black female are in part, interrelated in the narratives that have been formed and shared with others. These narratives reflect my identity as a woman, as well as reflect the saliency of my racial and ethnic backgrounds in guiding, influencing, and shaping my lifelong decisions. As Green (2014) has suggested, these narratives are inevitably influenced by the position and the realities of the researcher in relation to the participants (p. 1). Maykut & Morehouse, (1994) proposed that:

The qualitative researcher's perspective is perhaps a paradoxical one: it is to be acutely tuned-in to the experiences and meaning systems of others – to indwell – and at the same time to be aware of how one's own biases and preconceptions may be influencing what one is trying to understand (p. 123).



The experiential realities of the researcher are particularly true as it pertains to insider research, which focuses on the study of the researcher's own social group or society (Naples, 2003, p. 46). Expanding on this concept of insider research is the idea of positionality. It has been suggested that positionality is "determined by where one stands in relation to the other; this can shift throughout the process of conducting research. Positions are relative to the cultural values and norms of both the researcher and participants" (Merriam et al, 2001). Chavez (2008) has also suggested that insider positionality denotes "the aspects of an insider researcher's self or identity which is aligned or shared with participants" (p. 45).

The researcher's points of views about racial microaggressions and Black racial self-identity are derived from both a personal and professional perspective and as such, were either suspended or ignored while conducting this research study. The researcher along with each participant engaged in the discourse of dialogue, which David Bohm (1994) defined as a free flowing conversation where an attempt to collectively understand and experience points of views, fully, equally, and nonjudgmentally is reached. This type of dialogue can lead to a new and deeper understanding and appreciation of other worldviews (p. 7). Although, the researcher's points of views during the one-on-one interviews could not be dismissed, a neutral position was maintained so that the essence of the participant's perception of racial microaggressions and how they racially self-identified would be captured during the interview process.

In addition, the process of active listening was also utilized, which Butler, (1994) referred to as "giving full attention to one another while practicing the suspension of judgment" (p. 7). This type of listening facilitated in paving the way to greater

understanding and awareness. Having the opportunity to engage in various aspects of the race conversation allowed participants to freely open up about their experiential realities without the fear of reprisal. It also created a trusting and authentic environment between the researcher and the participants that supported self-directed learning through reflective and constructive conversations.

## CHAPTER FOUR – PHASE I (QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS)

The purpose of this study is to examine if there is a linkage between the perception of racial microaggressions and the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers, and if so, what influence it plays in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. In this chapter, results from the statistical analyses will be presented and will include descriptive statistics as well as inferential statistics and a summary of the findings.

To address the study's purpose, the following three research questions were explored: (i) What role does the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers play in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship?, (ii) What role does the perception of racial microaggressions of Black frontline workers play in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship?, and (iii) How does the perception of racial microaggressions influence the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship? The hypothesis for each of the three research questions is as follows: (i) It was expected that the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers will play a role<sup>10</sup> in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship, (ii) It was expected that the perception of racial microaggressions of Black frontline workers will play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship, and (iii) It was expected that the perception of racial microaggressions will influence<sup>11</sup> the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

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<sup>10</sup> The phrase "will play a role" refers to either a positive or negative association in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

<sup>11</sup> The phrase "will influence" refers to either a positive or negative association in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

### *Data Analysis*

All the data was entered into STATA/MP 14 statistical analysis system utilizing a standard multiple regression model to analyze the Racial Microaggressions Scale (RMAS) and the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI). This facilitated the researcher's ability to analyze the dependent variables and the independent variables referenced in the three tables below. It has been suggested that in a standard multiple regression model:

All IVs are entered into the analysis simultaneously. The effect of each IV on the DV is assessed as if it had been entered into the equation after all other IVs had been entered. Each IV is then evaluated in terms of what it adds to the prediction of the DV, as specified by the regression equation (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

A standard multiple regression model can be defined as “ methods of explaining or predicting variability of a dependent variable using information about one or more independent variables” (Vogt, 1999, p. 240). This regression model postulates the relationship between a continuous dependent variable, and independent variable or variables, and an error term (Id., p. 242). In addition, a multicollinearity analysis was conducted to see if there was a correlational relationship between any of the variables.

### *Racial Microaggressions Scale*

Utilizing the typology of several themes identified by Sue et al (2007), Torres-Harding et al (2012) developed the Racial Microaggressions Scale to assess the themes and categories of racial microaggressions presented and discussed in the literature. Specific themes within the larger categories of microinsults and microinvalidations were used as the underlying basis for the Racial Microaggressions Scale. The researcher

utilized the same themes and categories that Torres-Harding et al (2012) referenced in their study. The perceived microaggression subscales were computed by using the (a) part of each item, the first part assessed the participants' perception of how often or frequently a given microaggression was experienced. For the occurrence/frequency subscale, the mean was computed for the following items:

- Foreigner/Not Belonging subscale:  $\frac{1a+2a+3a}{3}$
- Criminality subscale:  $\frac{4a+5a+6a+7a}{4}$
- Sexualization subscale:  $\frac{8a+9a+10a}{3}$
- Low-Achieving/Undesirable Culture subscale:  $\frac{11a+12a+13a+14a+15a+16a+18a+19a+20a}{9}$
- Invisibility subscale:  $\frac{17a+21a+22a+23a+29a+30a+31a+32a}{8}$
- Environmental subscale:  $\frac{24a+25a+26a+27a+28a}{5}$

Subscale A (occurrence/frequency) was measured on a 4-point Likert scale:

- 1 = Never
- 2 = A little/rarely
- 3 = Sometimes/a moderate amount
- 4 = Often/frequently

The distress subscales were computed using the (b) items, the second part of each item assessed the participants' level of distress or stress suggested by the item. The distress scales computed the mean of the (b) items answered in a given subscale.

However, if the (a) item was coded as a zero, then the (b) item was also coded as a zero.

The mean was computed for the following items:

- Foreigner/Not Belonging Distress: 1b, 2b, 3b
- Criminality Distress: 4b, 5b, 6b, 7b
- Sexualization Distress: 8b, 9b, 10b
- Low-Achieving/Undesirable Culture Distress: 11b, 12b, 13b, 14b, 15b, 16b, 18b, 19b, 20b
- Invisibility Distress: 17b, 21b, 22b, 23b, 29b, 30b, 31b, 32b

- Environmental Distress: 24b, 25b, 26b, 27b, 28b

Subscale B (level of distress or stress evoked by the item) was measured on a 5-point

Likert scale:

- 1 = This has never happened to me
- 2 = Not at all
- 3 = A little
- 4 = Moderate level
- 5 = High level

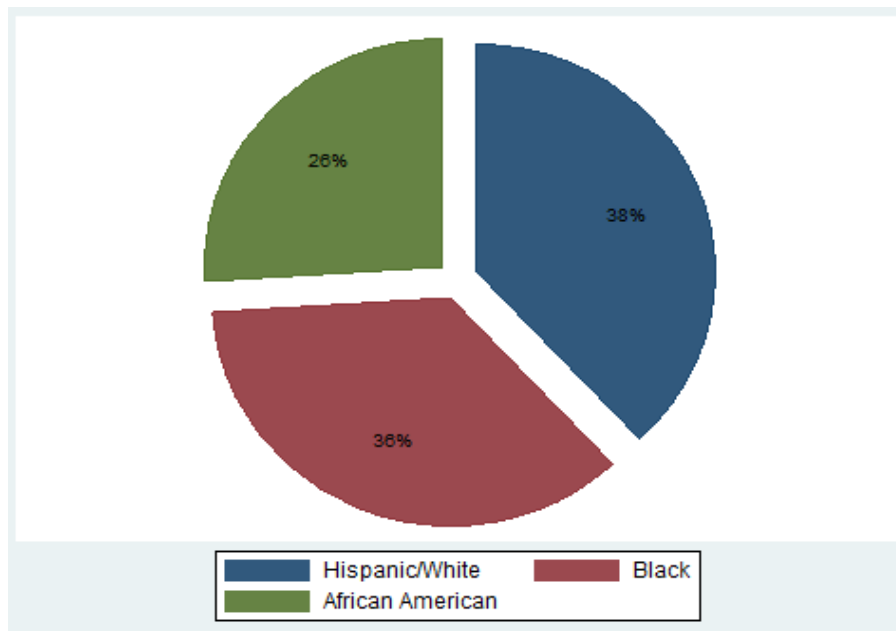
### *Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity*

The researcher utilized the same dimensions derived from the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI) that was developed by Sellers et al (1998). The MIBI measured the significance of race and the qualitative meanings attributed to being members of that racial category. The researcher modified the MIBI from its original version of 56 questions to 36 questions to address the length of time that participants would utilize completing the questionnaire. In each of the thematic headings, the researcher made the decision to not include those questions that were similar in nature. As a result of this decision, the only question that was included in the modified version that had to be reverse coded was question #10. In addition to question #10 being reverse coded, the researcher decided that questions #30, #35 and #36 also needed to be reverse coded to capture the accurate level of agreement to the participant's responses. The level of agreement responses were coded on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from: strongly disagree to strongly agree.

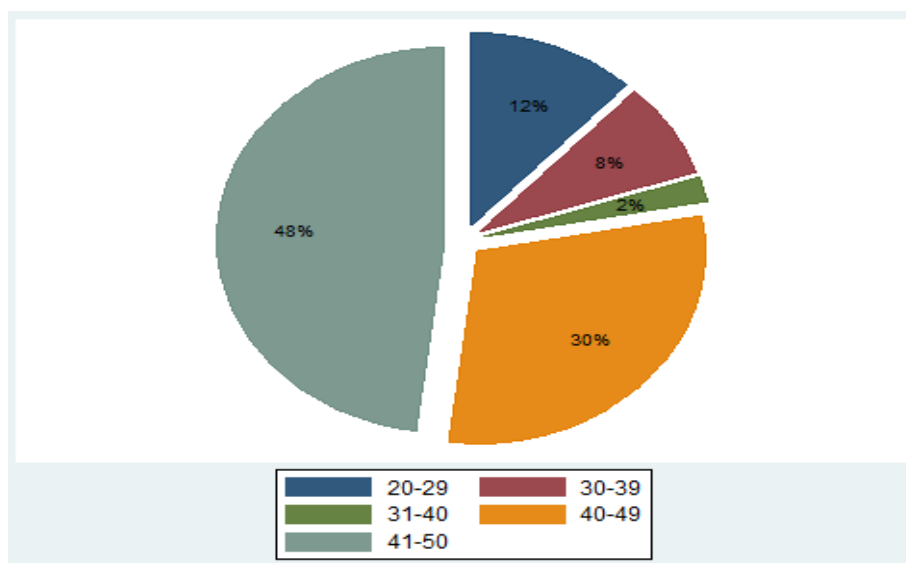
### *Demographic Variables*

The referenced graphs below provide descriptive statistics for all the independent and dependent variables used in this study.

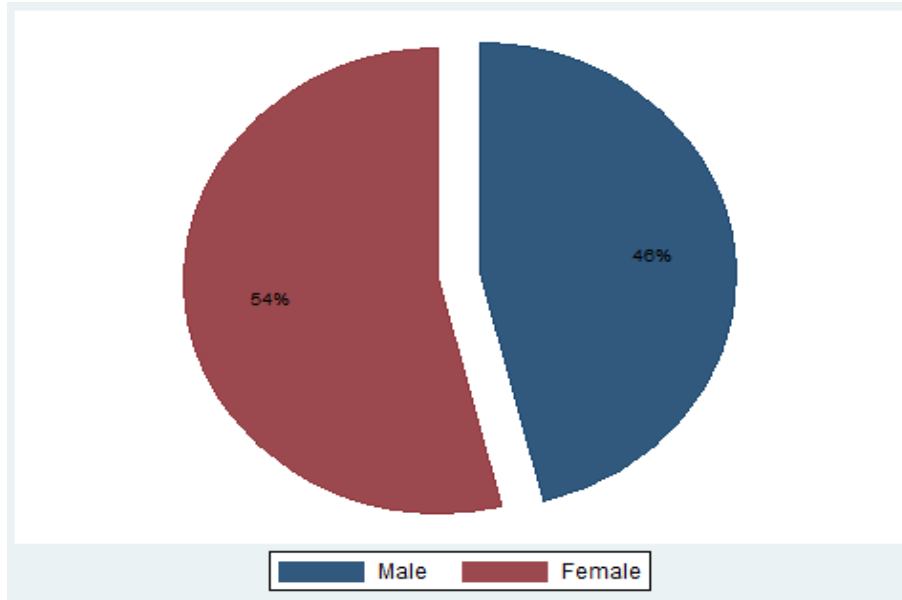
#### Racial Identification of Participants



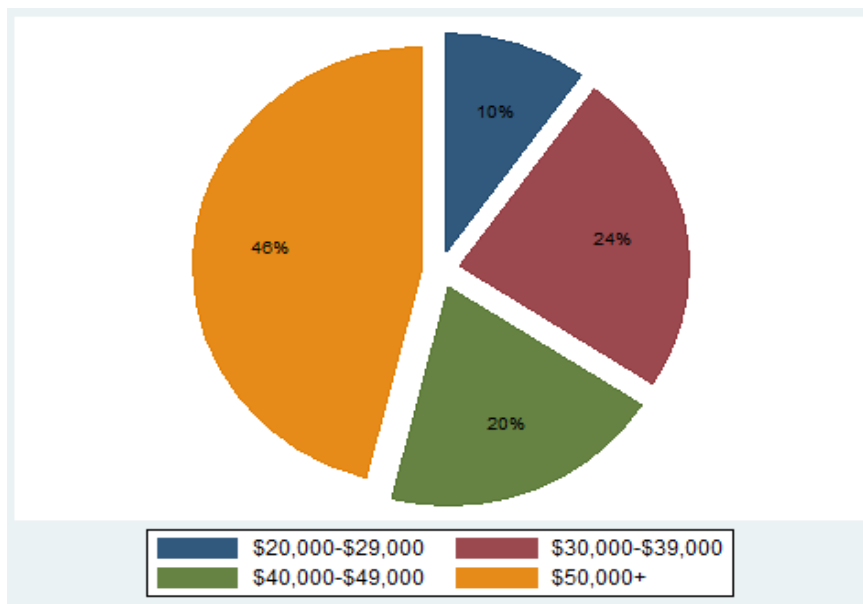
#### Age of Participants:



Gender of Participants:

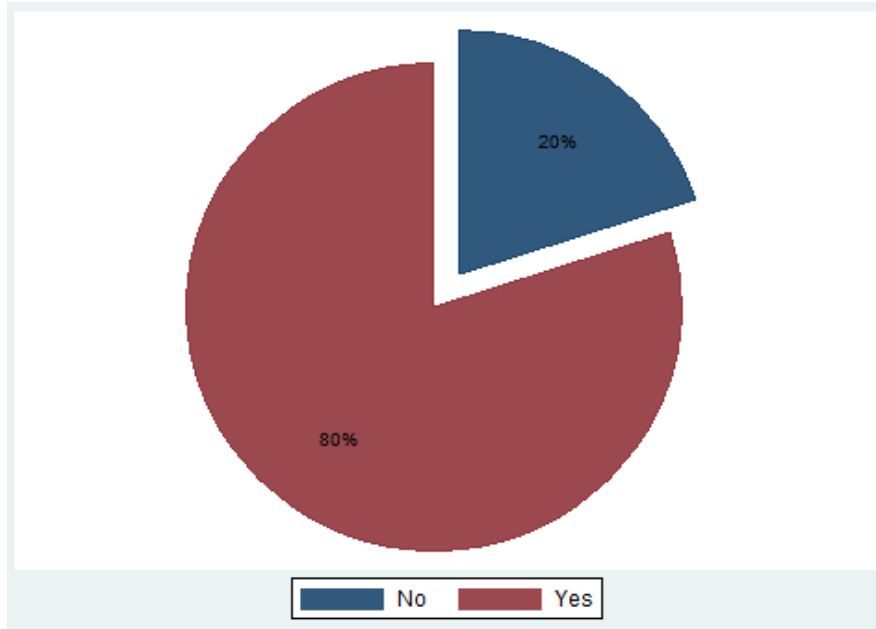


Income Level of Participants (SES):

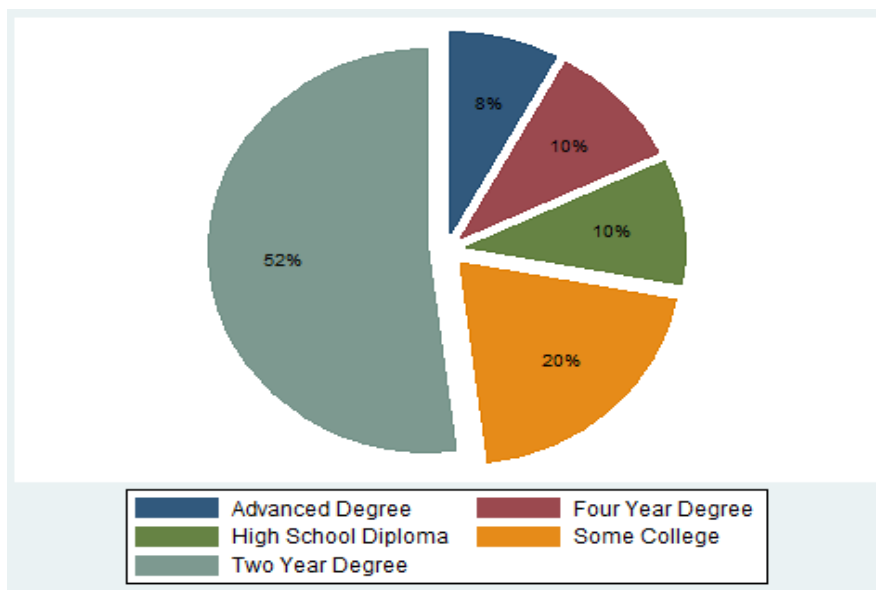




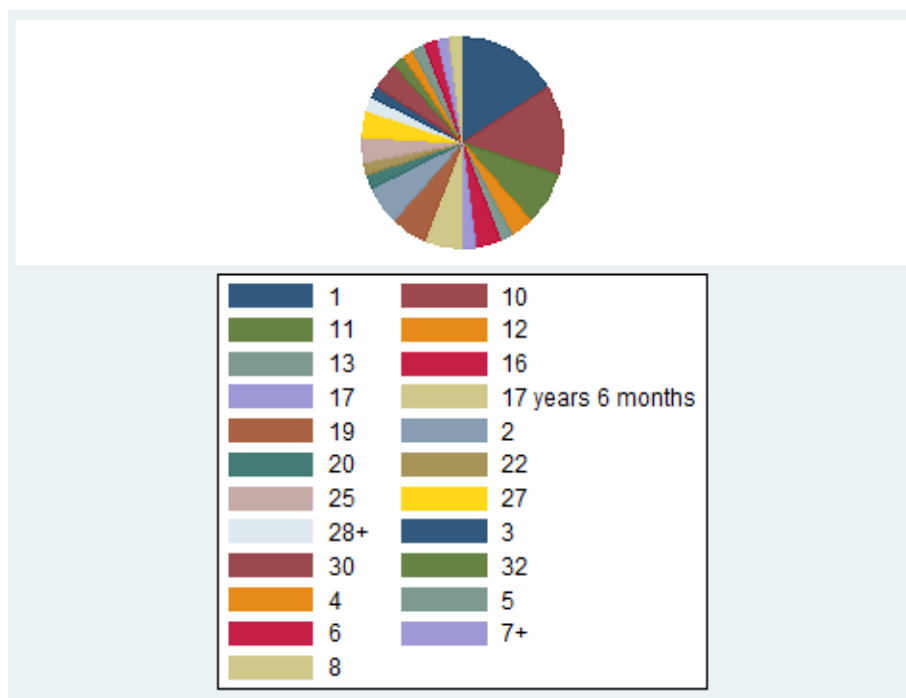
U.S. Born:



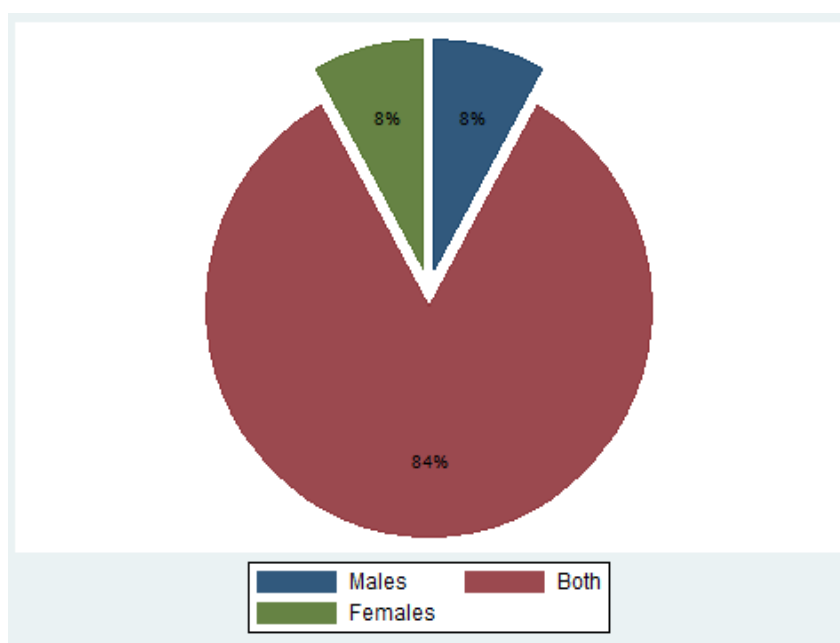
Educational Level of Participants:



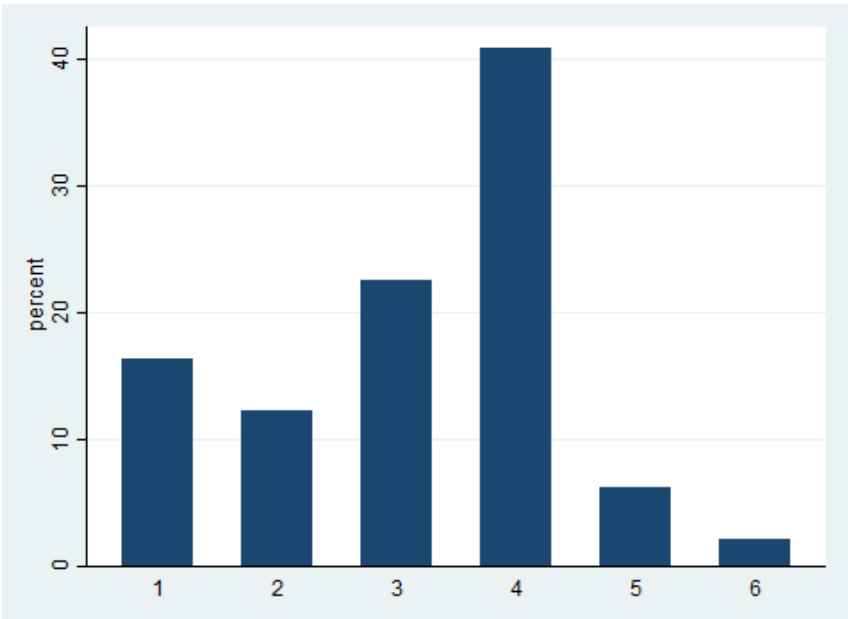
Years Participants Employed as a Substance Abuse or Mental Health Counselor:



Gender of Client:



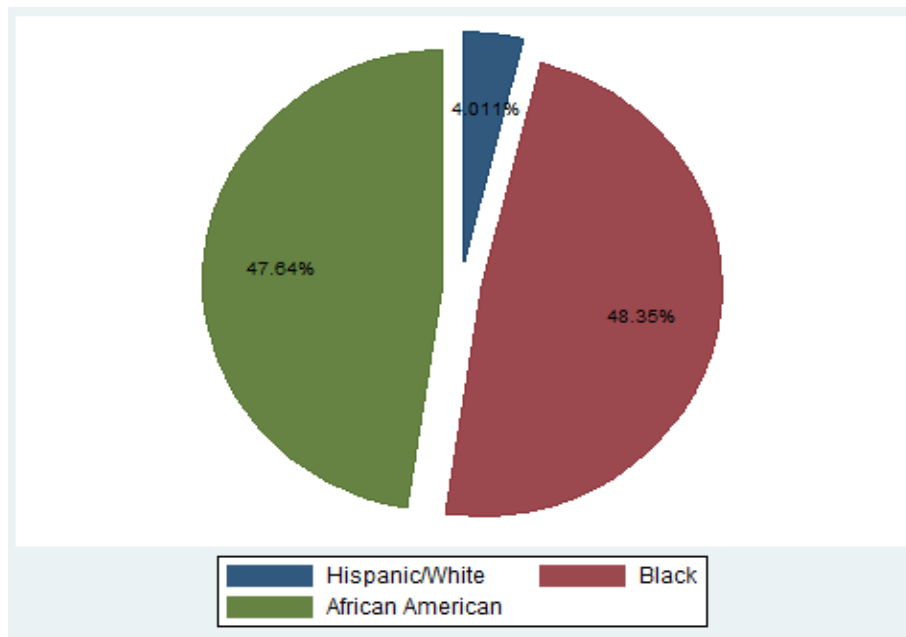
*Reported Party Affiliation of Participants:*



Very Liberal			Netural		Very Conservative	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.33%	12.24%	22.45%	40.82%	6.122%	2.041%	0%

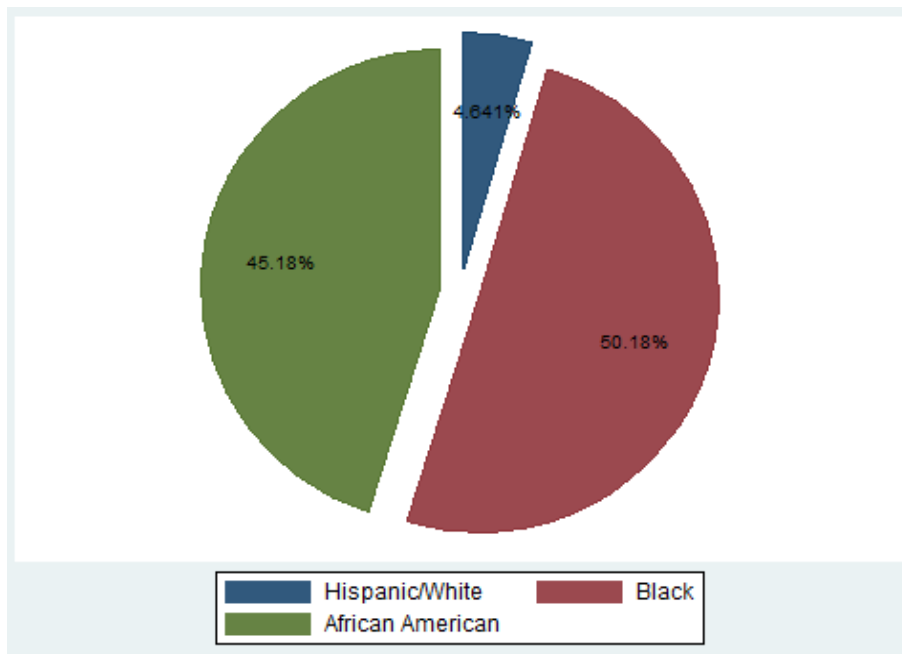
Based on the participant's self-identified racial category, the graph below represents how often incidents of racial microaggressions were experienced. For further details and explanations, see (*Table A*).

*Subscale A: Reported Occurrence/Frequency of Racial Microaggressions*



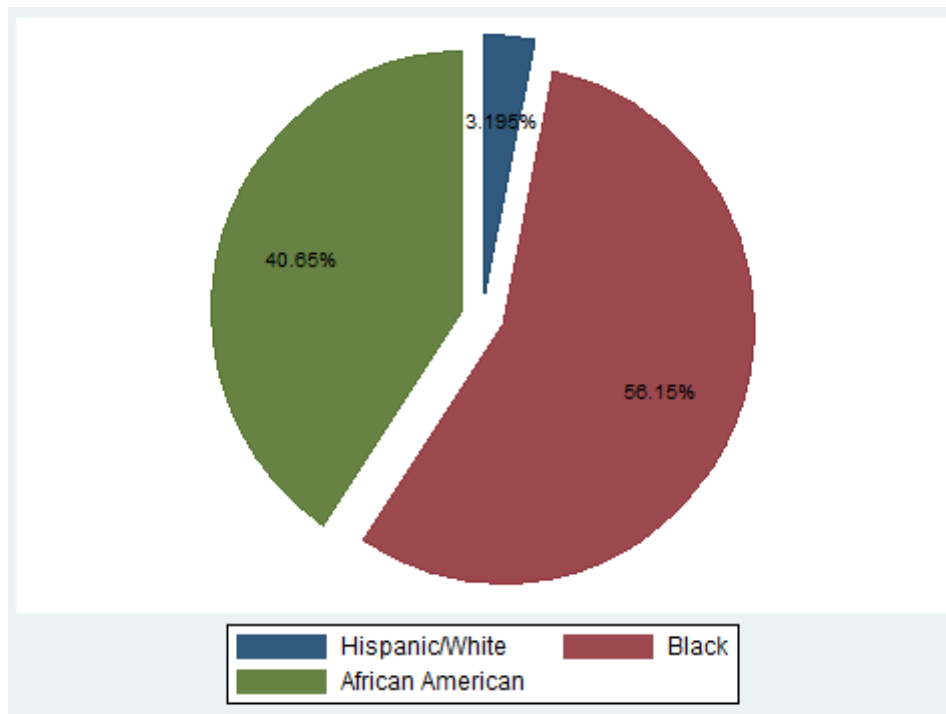
Based on the participant's self-identified racial category, the graph below represents the level of distress elicited by incidents of racial microaggressions. For further details and explanations, see *(Table B)*.

*Subscale B: Reported Distress Elicited by Incidents of Racial Microaggressions*



Based on the participant's self-identified racial category, the graph below represents the significance placed on race and the qualitative meanings attributed to being members of that racial category. For further details and explanations, see *(Table C)*.

*Participants' Responses to the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI):*



**Table A**  
**Analysis of Racial Microaggressions Subscale A**  
**(measured the occurrence/frequency)**

	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7
	aa	afrgn	acrim	asex	alowa	ainvs	aeniv
Racial Identif. - Black	-.323 (.588)	-1.036 (.919)	.616 (.898)	.374 (1.003)	-.324 (.712)	-.276 (.824)	<b>-1.878**</b> (.761)
- African American	-.048 (.550)	-.603 (.860)	1.187 (.840)	.700 (.939)	-.160 (.666)	.099 (.771)	<b>-1.503**</b> (.712)
Age	.061 (.094)	-.035 (.146)	.195 (.143)	.067 (.160)	.191 (.113)	.074 (.131)	-.107 (.121)
Gender	-.143 (.222)	-.330 (.347)	-.262 (.339)	.186 (.379)	.007 (.269)	-.151 (.311)	-.380 (.287)
SES	-.015 (.123)	.328 (.193)	-.064 (.188)	-.150 (.210)	-.154 (.149)	-.028 (.173)	.0111 (.159)
US Born	.080 (.259)	<b>-1.520***</b> (.405)	.273 (.396)	.119 (.443)	<b>.690**</b> (.314)	.013 (.364)	.075 (.336)
Education	.143 (.096)	.009 (.150)	-.010 (.147)	.023 (.163)	<b>.250**</b> (.116)	.146 (.135)	.165 (.124)
Years as a substance abuse counselor (SAC)	-.015 (.018)	-.042 (.029)	.016 (.028)	-.026 (.031)	-.015 (.022)	-.012 (.026)	-.022 (.024)
Gender of Client (GofC) - Both	-.018 (.301)	-.417 (.470)	.108 (.459)	.351 (.513)	.156 (.364)	-.284 (.422)	.033 (.389)
- Females	-.039 (.395)	-.098 (.618)	.084 (.604)	-.056 (.675)	.259 (.479)	-.296 (.555)	-.005 (.512)
Party Affiliation	.087 (.080)	.132 (.125)	.050 (.122)	-.009 (.136)	.033 (.097)	.080 (.112)	<b>.225**</b> (.103)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.338	0.666	0.407	0.186	0.405	0.270	0.575

Standard errors in parentheses

p<0.1 = \*

p<0.05 = \*\*

p<0.01 = \*\*\*

**Key:**

- afrgn = Foreigner/Not Belonging

- acrim = Criminality

- asex = Sexualization

- alowa = Low Achieving/Undesirable Culture

- ainvs = Invisibility

- aeniv = Environmental

Table A represents the data analysis derived from the Racial Microaggressions Scale – Subpart A, which measured how often participants’ experienced racial microaggressions and the independent variables associated with the demographic

characteristics of the participants. A significant relationship was shown to exist between the following independent and dependent variables, respectively: (i) Black racial self-identification and the *aeniv* (Environmental Subscale), (ii) African American racial self-identification and the *aeniv* (Environmental Subscale), (iii) U.S. Born and the *afrgn* (Foreigner/Not Belonging Subscale), (iv) U.S. Born and the *alowa* (Low-Achieving/Undesirable Culture Subscale), (v) Education and the *alowa* (Low-Achieving/Undesirable Culture Subscale), and (vi) Party Affiliation and the *aeniv* (Environmental Subscale). A multicollinearity analysis was conducted on several of the independent variables (i.e., Black<sup>12</sup>, African American<sup>13</sup>, and U.S. Born) to see if a correlational relationship existed, the results showed that the variables are not strongly correlated to each other.

#### *Definition of Dependent Variables*

The following dependent variables referenced in this study were defined as:

- *afrgn* - (Foreigner/Not Belonging) refers to the perceptions “that one is treated as a foreigner, is not a “true” American, or is made to feel as if he/she does not fully belong or is an outsider.” (Sue, Capodilupo, et al, 2007).
- *acrim* - (Criminality/Assumption of Criminal Status) refers to “incidents in which one is treated as dangerous, aggressive, or likely to engage in criminal behavior.” (Constantine & Sue, 2007; Sue, Capodilupo, et al, 2007).

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<sup>12</sup> The term Black was used as an ambiguous category and refers to the individuals’ phenomenological point of view regarding the make-up of their referenced group.

<sup>13</sup> The term African American refers to those individuals of African descent who received the majority of their socialization in the U.S.



- asex- (Sexualization) refers to being viewed as overly sexualized/eroticized because of one's racial background (Sue, Bucci, et al, 2007).
- alowa – (Low Achieving/Undesirable Culture) refers to “being treated as intellectually inferior, as if others expect one to have low intellectual abilities, and the assumption that one is either intellectually gifted or intellectually deficient.” (Rivera et al, 2010; Soloranzo et al., 2000; Sue et al, 2008; Sue, Capodilupo, et al, 2007; Yosso et al, 2009).
- ainvs – (Invisibility) refers to “being treated as if one is not visible, and being dismissed, devalued, ignored, and delegitimized by others because of one's race (Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 2000).
- aeniv – (Environmental) refers to the perception of negative environmental messages derived from the absence of people from one's racial background in either school or work settings; where an individual is the “only person of color,” and observing visible or powerful roles in one's community that do not include people from one's own racial background (Sue et al, 2008; Sue, Capodilupo, et al, 2007; Yosso et al, 2009).

### *Definition of Independent Variables*

The independent variables in Table A represent the demographic characteristics obtained from the Participant Demographic Questionnaire, which are standard types of demographic characteristics that the researcher chose for this study. Characteristics such as race, age, gender of participants and gender of clients, income level, citizenship, educational attainment, years associated with profession, and party affiliation were analyzed.

### *Findings*

Table A represents the data analysis derived from the Racial Microaggressions Scale – Subpart A. A significant relationship was shown to exist between the following independent and dependent variables, respectively: (i) Black racial self-identification and the *aeniv* (Environmental Subscale), (ii) African American racial self-identification and the *aeniv* (Environmental Subscale), (iii) U.S. Born and the *afrgn* (Foreigner/Not Belonging Subscale), (iv) U.S. Born and the *alowa* (Low-Achieving/Undesirable Culture Subscale), (v) Education and the *alowa* (Low-Achieving/Undesirable Culture Subscale), and (iv) Party Affiliation and the *aeniv* (Environmental Subscale). The hypothesis for each of the three research questions implied the following: (i) It was expected that the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers will play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship, (ii) It was expected that the perception of racial microaggressions of Black frontline workers will play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship, and (iii) It was expected that the perception of racial microaggressions will influence the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. The expectation of all three hypotheses was implied amongst the significant results presented in Table A. An explanation of the findings and their associated relationship is described below:

#### *Black racial self-identification and the Environmental Subscale*

A standard multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine if the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers and their perception of negative environmental messages play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. Results presented in Table A significantly indicated ( $-1.878 = p < 0.05$ ) the likelihood that

frontline workers who racially self-identify as Black and their perception of negative environmental messages decrease and has less of an influence on them. Thus, the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers and their perception of negative environmental messages and will most likely not play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

*African American racial self-identification and the Environmental Subscale*

A standard multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine if the racial self-identification of African American frontline workers and their perception of negative environmental messages play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. Results presented in Table A significantly indicated ( $-1.503 = p < 0.05$ ) the likelihood that frontline workers who racially self-identify as African American and their perception of negative environmental messages decrease and has less of an influence on them. Thus, the racial self-identification of African American frontline workers and their perception of negative environmental messages and will most likely not play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

*U.S. Born and the Foreigner/Not Belonging Subscale*

A standard multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine if the perception of U.S. born Black frontline workers' view of foreigners as perpetual foreigners, not being "true" Americans or not belonging play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. Results presented in Table A significantly indicated ( $-1.520 = p < 0.01$ ) the likelihood that the perception of U.S. born Black frontline workers

regarding foreigners decrease and has less of an influence on them. Thus, the perception of U.S. born Black frontline workers' view of foreigners as perpetual foreigners, not being "true" Americans, or made to feel as if they don't belong will most likely not play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

*U.S. Born and Low-Achieving/Undesirable Culture Subscale*

A standard multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine if U.S. born Black frontline workers treated intellectually inferior or intellectually gifted play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. Results presented in Table A significantly indicated ( $.690 = p < 0.05$ ) the likelihood that U.S. born Black frontline workers being treated intellectually inferior or intellectually gifted increase and has more of an influence on them. Thus, U.S. born Black frontline workers treated intellectually inferior or intellectually gifted will most likely play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

*Education and Low-Achieving/Undesirable Culture Subscale*

A standard multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine if the educational level of Black frontline workers and being treated intellectually inferior or intellectually gifted play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. The results presented in Table A significantly indicated ( $.250 = p < 0.05$ ) the likelihood that the educational level and being treated intellectually inferior or intellectually gifted increase and has more of an influence on Black frontline workers. Thus, the educational level of

Black frontline workers and being treated intellectually inferior or intellectually gifted will most likely play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

*Participant's Party Affiliation and the Environmental Subscale*

A standard multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine if the party affiliation of Black frontline workers and their perception of negative environmental messages play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. Results presented in Table A significantly indicated ( $.225 = p < 0.05$ ) the likelihood that party affiliation and the perception of negative environmental messages increase and has more of an influence on Black frontline workers. Thus, the party affiliation of Black frontline workers and their perception of negative environmental messages will most likely play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

**Table B**  
**Analysis of Racial Microaggressions Subscale B**  
**(measured distress)**

	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7
	bb	bfrgn	bcrim	bsex	blowa	binvs	beniv
Racial Identif. - Black	-.546 (.662)	<b>-1.139**</b> (.655)	.885 (1.005)	.570 (.858)	-.764 (.841)	-.826 (.906)	<b>-2.474**</b> (.788)
- African American	-.459 (.614)	-.906 (.613)	1.034 (.940)	.602 (.803)	-.925 (.787)	-.544 (.848)	<b>-2.035**</b> (.737)
Age	-.064 (.105)	-.026 (.104)	.140 (.160)	.013 (.137)	-.056 (.134)	-.051 (.144)	-.184 (.125)
Gender	-.243 (.250)	-.365 (.247)	-.314 (.379)	.221 (.324)	-.445 (.317)	-.144 (.342)	-.193 (.297)
SES	.018 (.139)	.148 (.137)	-.034 (.210)	-.124 (.180)	-.058 (.176)	.071 (.190)	.070 (.165)
US Born	.093 (.292)	<b>-1.330***</b> (.289)	.168 (.443)	-.091 (.379)	.529 (.371)	.150 (.400)	.526 (.348)
Education	.129 (.108)	-.042 (.107)	.037 (.164)	.095 (.140)	.172 (.137)	.149 (.148)	.092 (.129)
Years as a substance abuse counselor (SAC)	-.012 (.021)	-.010 (.020)	.005 (.031)	-.012 (.027)	-.017 (.026)	-.016 (.028)	-.017 (.024)
Gender of Client (GofC) - Both	.022 (.339)	-.210 (.335)	.035 (.514)	.258 (.439)	.183 (.430)	-.325 (.463)	-.144 (.403)
- Females	-.020 (.456)	-.052 (.441)	-.064 (.676)	-.048 (.578)	.131 (.566)	-.292 (.610)	-.209 (.530)
Party Affiliation	.076 (.090)	.015 (.089)	.153 (.136)	-.021 (.116)	.059 (.114)	.110 (.123)	.077 (.107)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.236	0.723	0.251	0.122	0.281	0.271	0.543

Standard errors in parentheses

p<0.1 = \*

p<0.05 = \*\*

p<0.01 = \*\*\*

**Key:**

- afrgn = Foreigner/Not Belonging

- acrim = Criminality

- asex = Sexualization

- alowa = Low Achieving/Undesirable Culture

- ainvs = Invisibility

- aeniv = Environmental

Table B represents the data analysis derived from the Racial Microaggressions Scale – Subpart B, which measured the level of distress elicited by the racial microaggressive incident and the independent variables associated with the demographic characteristics of the participant. A significant relationship was shown to exist between

the following independent and dependent variables, respectively: (i) Black racial self-identification and the bfrgn (Foreigner/Not Belonging Distress), (ii) Black American racial self-identification and the beniv (Environmental Distress), (iii) African American racial self-identification and the beniv (Environmental Distress, and (iv) U.S. Born and the bfrgn (Foreigner/Not Belonging Distress). A multicollinearity analysis was conducted on several of the independent variables (i.e., Black<sup>14</sup>, African American<sup>15</sup>, and U.S. Born) to see if a correlational relationship existed, the results showed that the variables are not strongly correlated to each other. The hypothesis for each of the three research questions implied the following: (i) It was expected that the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers will play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship, (ii) It was expected that the perception of racial microaggressions of Black frontline workers will play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship, and (iii) It was expected that the perception of racial microaggressions will influence the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. The expectation of all three hypotheses was implied amongst the significant results presented in Table B. An explanation of the findings and their associated relationship is described below:

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<sup>14</sup> The term Black was used as an ambiguous category and refers to the individuals' phenomenological point of view regarding the make-up of their referenced group.

<sup>15</sup> The term African American refers to those individuals of African descent who received the majority of their socialization in the U.S.

### *Definition of Dependent Variables*

The following dependent variables referenced in this study were defined as:

- bfrgn - (Foreigner/Not Belonging Distress) refers to the amount of distress elicited by incidents of racial microaggressions, such as one being treated as a foreigner, viewed as not a being a “true” American, or made to feel as if he/she does not fully belong or is an outsider (Sue, Capodilupo, et al, 2007). In other words, how stressful, upsetting, or bothersome is the racial microaggressive incident.
- bcrim - (Criminality/Assumption of Criminal Status) refers to the amount of distress elicited by incidents of racial microaggressions, such as one being treated as dangerous, aggressive, or likely to engage in criminal behavior (Constantine & Sue, 2007; Sue, Capodilupo, et al, 2007). In other words, how stressful, upsetting, or bothersome is the racial microaggressive incident.
- bsex- (Sexualization) refers to the amount of distress elicited by incidents of racial microaggressions, such as being viewed as overly sexualized/eroticized because of one’s racial background (Sue, Bucceri, et al, 2007). In other words, how stressful, upsetting, or bothersome is the racial microaggressive incident.
- blowa – (Low Achieving/Undesirable Culture) refers to the amount of distress elicited by incidents of racial microaggressions, such as “being treated as intellectually inferior, as if others expect one to have low intellectual abilities, and the assumption that one is either intellectually gifted or intellectually deficient.” (Rivera et al, 2010; Soloranzo et al, 2000; Sue et al, 2008; Sue,



Capodilupo, et al, 2007; Yosso et al, 2009). In other words, how stressful, upsetting, or bothersome is the racial microaggressive incident.

- binvs – (Invisibility) refers to the amount of distress elicited by incidents of racial microaggressions, such as “being treated as if one is not visible, and being dismissed, devalued, ignored, and delegitimized by others because of one’s race (Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 2000). In other words, how stressful, upsetting, or bothersome is the racial microaggressive incident.
- beniv – (Environmental) refers to the amount of distress elicited by incidents of racial microaggressions, such as the perception of negative environmental messages derived from the absence of people from one’s racial background in either school or work settings; where an individual is the “only person of color,” and observing visible or powerful roles in one’s community that do not include people from one’s own racial background (Sue et al, 2008; Sue, Capodilupo, et al, 2007; Yosso et al, 2009). In other words, how stressful, upsetting, or bothersome is the racial microaggressive incident.

### *Definition of Independent Variables*

The independent variables in Table B represent the demographic characteristics obtained from the Participant Demographic Questionnaire, which are standard types of demographic characteristics that the researcher chose for this study. Characteristics such as race, age, gender of participants and gender of clients, income level, citizenship, educational attainment, years associated with profession, and party affiliation were analyzed.

### *Findings*

Table B represents the data analysis derived from the Racial Microaggressions Scale – Subpart B. The hypothesis for each of the three research questions implied the following: (i) It was expected that the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers will play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship, (ii) It was expected that the perception of racial microaggressions of Black frontline workers will play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship, and (iii) It was expected that the perception of racial microaggressions will influence the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. The expectation of all three hypotheses was implied amongst the significant results presented in Table B. An explanation of the findings and their associated relationship is described below:

#### *Black racial self-identification and Foreigner/Not Belonging Distress*

A standard multiple regression analysis was calculated to determine if the level of distress elicited by foreign born Black frontline workers viewed as either perpetual foreigners, not a “true” American, or made to feel as if they don’t belong play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. Results presented in Table B significantly indicated ( $-1.139 = p < 0.05$ ) the likelihood that foreign born Black frontline workers viewed as perpetual foreigners, not a “true” American, or made to feel as if they don’t belong decrease and cause less distress on them. Thus, the perception of foreign born Black frontline workers viewed as either perpetual foreigners, not a “true” American, or made to feel as if they don’t belong will most likely not play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

*Black racial self-identification and Environmental Distress*

A standard multiple regression statistical analysis was conducted to determine if the level of distress elicited by the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers and their perception of negative environmental messages play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. Results presented in Table B significantly indicated ( $-2.474 = p < 0.05$ ) the likelihood that frontline workers who racially self-identify as Black and their perception of negative environmental messages decrease and cause less distress on them. Thus, the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers and their perception of negative environmental messages will most likely not play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

*African American racial self-identification and Environmental Distress*

A standard multiple regression statistical analysis was conducted to determine if the level of distress elicited by the racial self-identification of African American frontline workers and their perception of negative environmental messages play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. Results presented in Table B significantly indicated ( $-2.035 = p < 0.05$ ) the likelihood that frontline workers who racially self-identify as African American and their perception of negative environmental messages decrease and cause less distress on them. Thus, the racial self-identification of African American frontline workers and their perception of negative environmental messages and will most likely not play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

*U.S. Born and Foreigner/Not Belonging Distress*

A standard multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine if the perception of U.S. born Black frontline workers' view of foreigners as perpetual foreigners, not being "true" Americans or not belonging, elicit a level of distress that play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. Results presented in Table B significantly indicated ( $-1.330 = p < 0.01$ ) the likelihood that the perception of U.S. born Black frontline workers regarding foreigners decrease and cause less distress on them. Thus, the perception of foreign born Black frontline workers as either perpetual foreigners, not a "true" American, or made to feel as if they don't belong will mostly likely not play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

**Table C**  
**Analysis of Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity**  
**(measured how participant racially identified)**

	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8
	ii	ics	iprivs	ipubrs	ias	ihs	ioms	ins
Racial Identif.								
- Black	-.588 (.623)	-.613 (1.173)	-.894 (1.023)	.707 (1.204)	-1.077 (.962)	.432 (1.151)	.044 (1.635)	-.184 (.894)
- African American	-.573 (.583)	-.325 (1.097)	-1.261 (.957)	.378 (1.127)	-.834 (.900)	.051 (1.077)	-.698 (1.530)	-.414 (.836)
Age	-.039 (.099)	.009 (.187)	.194 (.163)	-.249 (.192)	-.233 (.153)	.223 (.183)	-.171 (.261)	-.133 (.142)
Gender	<b>-.441***</b> (.235)	-.583 (.443)	-.253 (.386)	<b>-1.019***</b> (.454)	-.399 (.363)	-.438 (.434)	-.170 (.617)	-.474 (.337)
SES	-.047 (.131)	-.204 (.246)	-.115 (.214)	-.308 (.252)	-.107 (.201)	-.101 (.241)	.113 (.342)	-.042 (.187)
US Born	.274 (.275)	.538 (.517)	<b>.946***</b> (.451)	-.822 (.531)	.113 (.424)	<b>-.987***</b> (.508)	-.011 (.721)	.158 (.394)
Education	-.021 (.102)	.033 (.191)	.158 (.167)	-.060 (.197)	-.121 (.157)	.112 (.188)	-.051 (.267)	.027 (.146)
Years as a substance abuse counselor (SAC)	.020 (.019)	.014 (.036)	-.008 (.032)	<b>.099***</b> (.037)	.042 (.030)	-.011 (.036)	-.040 (.051)	.009 (.028)
Gender of Client (GofC)								
- Both	.121 (.319)	.021 (.600)	.419 (.523)	-.753 (.616)	<b>.799***</b> (.492)	.116 (.589)	-.063 (.837)	.191 (.457)
- Females	.071 (.419)	.242 (.789)	-.444 (.688)	-1.399 (.811)	1.224 (.647)	.865 (.775)	.218 (1.101)	.275 (.601)
Party Affiliation	.069 (.085)	.063 (.159)	.038 (.139)	.125 (.163)	.016 (.131)	.191 (.156)	.177 (.222)	.109 (.121)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.297	0.251	0.408	0.587	0.327	0.374	0.246	0.182

Standard errors in parentheses

p<0.1 = \*

p<0.05 = \*\*

p<0.01 = \*\*\*

**Key:**

- ics = Centrality Scale

- ipubrs = Public Regard Subscale

- ihs = Humanist Subscale

- ins = Nationalist Subscale

- iprivs = Private Regard Subscale

- ias = Assimilation Subscale

- ioms = Oppressed Minority Subscale

Table C represents the data analysis derived from the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI), which measured the significance of race and the qualitative meanings attributed to being members of that racial category and the independent

variables associated with the demographic characteristics of the participants. A significant relationship was shown to exist between the following independent variables and dependent variables, respectively: (i) Gender and the significance of race and the qualitative meanings attributed to being a member of that racial category, (ii) Gender and the ipubrs (Public Regard Subscale), (iii) U.S. born and the iprivs (Private Regard Subscale), (iv) U.S. born and the ihs (Humanist Subscale), (v) Years as a substance abuse counselor (SAC) and the ipubrs (Public Regard Subscale) and (vi) Gender of Client (GofC) – Females and the ias (Assimilation Subscale). A multicollinearity analysis was conducted on several of the independent variables (i.e., Black<sup>16</sup>, African American<sup>17</sup>, and U.S. Born) to see if a correlational relationship existed, the results showed that the variables are not strongly correlated to each other. The hypothesis for each of the three research questions implied the following: (i) It was expected that the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers will play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship, (ii) It was expected that the perception of racial microaggressions of Black frontline workers will play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship, and (iii) It was expected that the perception of racial microaggressions will influence the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. The expectation of all three hypotheses was implied amongst the significant results presented in Table C. An explanation of the findings and their associated relationship is described below:

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<sup>16</sup> The term Black was used as an ambiguous category and refers to the individuals' phenomenological point of view regarding the make-up of their referenced group.

<sup>17</sup> The term African American refers to those individuals of African descent who received the majority of their socialization in the U.S.

### *Definition of Dependent Variables*

In order to operationalize the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI), Sellers, et al (1998), developed the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI), which adapted items from previous identity scales as well as developed items on their own. The MIBI is comprised of 3 scales that measure the centrality, ideology, and regard dimensions. The researcher utilized the same 3 scales that Sellers et al (1998) referenced in their study. The following dependent variables referenced in this study were defined as:

- ics – (Racial Centrality) refers to the degree to which an individual normatively defines himself or herself with regard to race (p. 25).
- iprivs – (Private Regard) refers to “the extent to which individuals feel positively or negatively towards African Americans as well as how positively or negatively they feel about being an African American” (Id.). The Private Regard is a part of the Regard dimension.
- ipubrs – (Public Regard) refers to “the extent to which individuals feel that others view African Americans positively or negatively. It is the individual’s assessment of how his group is viewed (or valued) by the broader society” (Id.). The Public Regard is a part of the Regard dimension.
- ias – (Assimilationist Ideology) refers to the characterization by which an emphasis is placed on “the similarities between African Americans and the rest of American society. A person with an assimilationist ideology acknowledges his or her status as an American and attempts to enter, as much as possible, into the mainstream (Id., p. 28).

- ihs – (Humanist Ideology) refers to the “similarities among all humans. Persons with a humanist viewpoint do not think in terms of race, gender, class, or other distinguishing characteristics. They are likely to view everyone as belonging to the same race – the human race” (Id.).
- ioms – (Oppressed Minority) refers to the “similarities between the oppression that African Americans face and that of other groups (Id., p. 27).
- ins – (Nationalist Ideology) refers to the “uniqueness of being Black . . . and views the African American experience as being different from that of any other group” (Id.).

#### *Definition of Independent Variables*

The independent variables in Table C represent the demographic characteristics obtained from the Participant Demographic Questionnaire, which are standard types of demographic characteristics that the researcher chose for this study. Characteristics such as race, age, gender of participants and gender of clients, income level, citizenship, educational attainment, years associated with profession, and party affiliation were analyzed.

#### *Findings*

Table C represents the data analysis derived from the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity. It was expected that the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers will play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. The expectation of this hypothesis was implied amongst the significant results presented in



Table C. An explanation of the findings and their associated relationship is described below:

*Gender, significance of race, and qualitative meanings attributed to being a member of that racial category*

A standard multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine if the gender of Black frontline workers, the significance of race, and the qualitative meanings attributed to being a member of that racial category play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. Results presented in Table C significantly indicated ( $-.441 = p < 0.05$ ) the likelihood that the gender of Black frontline workers, the significance of race, and the qualitative meanings attributed to being a member of that racial category decrease and have less of an influence on them. Thus, gender of Black frontline workers, significance of race, and qualitative meaning attributed to being a member of that racial category will most likely not play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

*Gender and the Public Regard Subscale*

A standard multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine if the gender of Black frontline workers and the extent to which they feel others view their racial category as positive or negative play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. Results presented in Table C significantly indicated ( $-1.019 = p < 0.05$ ) the likelihood that the gender of Black frontline workers and the extent to which they feel others view their racial category as positive or negative decrease and have less of an influence on them. Thus, the gender of Black frontline workers and the extent to which

they feel others view their racial category as positive or negative will most likely not play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

*U.S. born and the Private Regard Subscale*

A standard multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine if U.S. born Black frontline workers' feel positive or negative towards other Blacks, as well as how they feel about being a member of that racial category play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. Results presented in Table C significantly indicated ( $.946 = p < 0.05$ ) that the likelihood of U.S. born Black frontline workers' feeling positive or negative towards other Blacks, as well as how they feel about being a member of that racial category increase and has more of an influence on them. Thus, U.S. born Black frontline workers and the extent to which they feel positive or negative towards other Blacks, as well as how they feel about being a member of that racial category will most likely play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

*U.S. born and the Humanist Subscale*

A standard multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine if U.S. born Black frontline workers' view of everyone belonging to the same race – the human race, plays a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. Results presented in Table C significantly indicated ( $-.987 = p < 0.05$ ) that the likelihood of U.S. born Black frontline workers viewing everyone belonging to the same race – the human race decrease and has less of an influence on them. Thus, U.S. born Black frontline workers viewing everyone belonging to the same race – the human race will most likely not play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

*Years employed as a substance abuse counselor and the Public Regard Subscale*

A standard multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine if the years employed as a substance abuse counselor and the extent to which Black frontline workers' feel others view their racial category as positive or negative play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. Results presented in Table C significantly indicated ( $.099 = p < 0.05$ ) that the likelihood of the years employed as a substance abuse counselor and the extent to which Black frontline workers feel others view their racial category as positive or negative increase and has more of an influence on them. Thus, the Black frontline worker's years employed as a substance abuse counselor and the extent to which they feel others view their racial category as positive or negative can influence how they see themselves, their associated years of employment and their employment role, all of which, will most likely play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

*Gender of Client (GofC) – Females and the Assimilation Subscale*

A standard multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine if Black frontline workers, their female clients, and the similarities between Blacks and the rest of American society play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. Results presented in Table C significantly indicated ( $1.224 = p < 0.05$ ) that the likelihood that Black frontline workers acknowledge their status as Americans and attempt to enter, as much as possible, into the mainstream increase and has more of an influence on them. As such, Black frontline workers believe that their female clients need to also make attempts to enter, as much as possible, into the mainstream. Thus, Black frontline workers, their female clients, and the similarities between Blacks and the rest of

American society will most likely play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

### *Summary*

#### *Table A Summary: Frequency/Occurrence*

The Racial Microaggressions Scale – Subpart A measured how often participants' experienced racial microaggressions. A summary of each referenced theme as it relates to microinsults or microinvalidations is discussed below.

According to Sue (2010a) microinsults are:

Characterized by interpersonal or environmental communications that convey stereotypes, rudeness, and insensitivity and that demean a person's racial, gender, or sexual orientation, heritage, or identity. Microinsults represent subtle snubs, frequently outside the conscious awareness of the perpetrator, but they convey an oftentimes hidden insulting message to the recipient of these three groups (p. 31).

Sue (2010a) characterized microinvalidation as:

Communications or environmental cues that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of certain groups, such as people of color, women, and LGBTs. In many ways, microinvalidations may potentially represent the most damaging form of the three microaggressions because they directly and insidiously deny the racial, gender, or sexual-orientation reality of these groups (p. 37).

The first and second themes focused on environmental invalidations (i.e., negative environmental messages) and the racial self-identification of Black and African American frontline workers. This theme represents a microinvalidation where the message is oftentimes unconsciously conveyed. Studies conducted (Sue et al, 2008; Sue, Capudilupo, et al, 2007; Yosso et al, 2009) suggests that negative environmental messages refer to the absence of people from the individual's racial background in either

school or work settings or observing visible or powerful roles in the individual's community that do not include people from their own racial category. Despite the experiential experiences of these types of messages, Black and African American frontline workers will not likely allow their experiences to come into play during the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

The third theme also focused on environmental invalidations (i.e., negative environmental messages) and the party affiliation of Black frontline workers. This theme represents a microinvalidation where the message is oftentimes unconsciously conveyed. Extensive studies have been conducted that examined people's beliefs about governmental race-conscious policies. The studies revealed that racialized beliefs influence the way in which people discuss and disseminate programs such as affirmative action and welfare (Hudson, 1999; Reyna et al, 2006; Sears et al, 1996). Bonilla-Silva and Forman (2000) further this discussion by suggesting that the use of coded language can be used in varied forms of discourse interaction that support racial judgments. The experiential experiences of negative environmental messages coupled with the underlying beliefs associated with the party affiliation of Black frontline workers will likely come into play during the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

The fourth theme focused on U.S. born Black frontline workers' perception of foreigners as alien in own land (foreigner/not belonging). This theme represents a microinvalidation where the message is oftentimes unconsciously conveyed. The foreigner/not belonging theme refers to the perception of foreigners being viewed as perpetual foreigners, not a "true" American, not fully belonging, or as an outsider (Sellers et al, 1998, p. 155). Although U.S. born Black frontline workers' perception of

foreigners can sometimes be skewed; having a normative perception of self with regard to race affords them the opportunity to tap into their feelings of belonging (Id., p. 25). As such, those perceptions will most likely not play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

The fifth theme focused on U.S. born Black frontline workers and the ascription of intelligence (low achieving/undesirable). This theme represents a microinsult where the message oftentimes is unconsciously conveyed. This theme refers to the degree of intelligence that is assigned to a person of color based on their race (Sue, 2010a, p. 29). U.S. born Black frontline workers who do not have a normative perception of self with regard to race and have not developed a sense of belonging will most likely allow the perception of their degree of intelligence (i.e., intellectually inferior or intellectually gifted) to play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

The sixth theme also focused on ascription of intelligence (low achieving/undesirable) and the educational attainment of Black frontline workers. This theme represents a microinsult where the message is oftentimes unconsciously conveyed. The educational level of attainment of Black frontline workers represents in part, who they are and as such, being treated as intellectually inferior or intellectually gifted will most likely play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

*Table B Summary: Level of Distress*

The Racial Microaggressions Scale – Subpart B measured the level of distress elicited by the racial microaggressive incident. A summary of each referenced theme as it relates to microinsults or microinvalidations is discussed below.

The first theme focused on alien in own land (foreigner/not belonging) and the racial self-identification of foreign born Black frontline workers. This theme represents a microinvalidation where the message is oftentimes unconsciously conveyed. The foreigner/not belonging theme refers to the perception of foreigners being viewed as perpetual foreigners, not a “true” American, not fully belonging, or as an outsider (Sellers et al, 1998, p. 155). Oftentimes the unconscious conveyance of the perception of foreigners will elicit a level of distress in foreign born Black frontline workers. However, having a normative perception of self with regard to race and developing a sense of belonging facilitates foreign born Black frontline workers in defining themselves. As such, their perception will likely not play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

The second and third themes focused on environmental invalidations (i.e., negative environmental messages) and the racial self-identification of Black and African American frontline workers. This theme represents a microinvalidation where the message is oftentimes unconsciously conveyed. Studies conducted (Sue et al, 2008; Sue, Capudilupo, et al, 2007; Yosso et al, 2009) suggests that negative environmental messages refer to the absence of people from the individual’s racial background in either school or work settings or observing visible or powerful roles in the individual’s community that do not include people from their own racial category. Despite the level of distress elicited from these types of messages, Black and African American frontline workers will not likely allow their experiences to come into play during the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

The fourth theme also focused on alien in own land (foreigner/not belonging) and U.S. born Black frontline workers. This theme represents a microinvalidation where the message is oftentimes unconsciously conveyed. As previously suggested, oftentimes the unconscious conveyance of the perception of foreigners will elicit a level of distress in U.S. born Black frontline workers. However, having a normative perception of self with regard to race and developing a sense of belonging facilitates U.S. born Black frontline workers in defining themselves. As such, their perception will likely not play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

*Table C Summary: Significance of race and the qualitative meanings attributed to being members of that racial category*

The Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity measured the significance of race and the qualitative meanings attributed to being members of that racial category. A summary of each referenced subscale is discussed below.

The first scale looked at gender and the significance of race and the meanings attributed to being a member of that racial category. The Black frontline worker's race is a relevant part of their self-concept. Having a developed normative perception of self with regard to one's racial category along with a developed sense of belonging instills a well-balanced sense of identity and confidence. The judgments of behavior and/or the impression derived depend on the extent to which the level of significance and meaning is attached to their definition of self-concept (Sellers et al, 1998, pp. 24-25).

The second subscale focused on the gender of the Black frontline worker and public regard, which refers to the extent to which they feel others view their racial category as positive or negative. Additionally, how the role of gender is perceived by the



individual and others is also a relevant part of one's self-concept. As such, within public organizational settings, there are well-intentioned male counterparts who believe in gender equality, however, many unknowingly engage in behaviors that place women at a disadvantage, infantilize or stereotype them, and even treat them in ways that deny equal access or opportunities (Sue, 2010a, p. 12). Thus, the Black frontline worker's gender, the significance that they place on their racial category and the associated meaning attributed to being a member of that racial category will most likely play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

The third subscale focused on U.S. born Black frontline workers and the private regard, which refers to the extent to which Black frontline workers feel positively or negatively towards Blacks, as well as how positively or negatively they feel about being a member of that racial category (Sellers et al, 1998, p. 26). Again, the extent to which the individual feels positive or negative towards Blacks and their membership in that racial category is significant to their self-concept. As such, U.S. born Black frontline workers and private regard will most likely play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

The fourth subscale focused on U.S. Black frontline workers and the humanist ideology, which refers to the similarities among all humans. Everyone is likely to be viewed as belonging to the same race – the human race. Individuals with a humanist ideology see race as being slightly important with regard to the way they lead their lives. As a result of this viewpoint, individuals are more likely to emphasize the characteristics of the individual person, regardless of race (Id., p. 25). Therefore, Black frontline

workers' viewpoint that everyone belongs to one race – the human race will most likely not play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

The fifth subscale focused on years employed as a substance abuse counselor and the public regard subscale, which again refers to the extent to which Black frontline workers feel others view their racial category as being positive or negative. Utilizing this same rationale, one could surmise that the numbers of years employed as a substance abuse counselor and the public regard subscale, could also refer to the extent to which Black frontline workers feel others view their years employed as a substance abuse counselor as either positive or negative. Just as an individual's educational level of attainment represents in part, who they are, so too, is an individual's associated years on the job and their employment role. It also represents their accomplishments and is a source of their pride. If the Black frontline worker's perception that others view their racial category positive, then, this perception will most likely have a positive influence on how they see themselves, their associated years of employment and employment role. However, if the Black frontline worker's perception is that others view their racial category negative, then, this perception will most likely have a negative influence on how they see themselves, their associated years of employment and employment role.

The sixth subscale focused on the female clients of Black frontline workers and the assimilation ideology and. The assimilation ideology emphasizes the similarities between African Americans and the rest of American society. A person with an assimilationist ideology acknowledges their status as a American and attempts to enter, whenever possible, into the mainstream. An assimilationist ideology does not necessarily imply the importance of being Black/African American, nor does it necessarily imply that

a lack of recognition of racism in America exists. A person with an assimilationist ideology can be an activist for social change; however, they are likely to feel that Black/African Americans need to work within the system to change it (Id., p. 28). Therefore, Black frontline workers who embrace the assimilationist ideology believe that their female clients need to make attempts to enter, whenever possible, into the mainstream. As such, their perspective will most likely play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

To conclude, this section of the dissertation sought to understand if there was a linkage between the perception of racial microaggressions and the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers, and if so, what influence it plays in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. Results derived from the standard multiple regression analysis of the Racial Microaggressions Scale and the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity provide some preliminary evidence that the perception of racial microaggressions and the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers, to some extent, play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. The empirical data collected in this chapter served to enhance the qualitative data analyzed and discussed in Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

## CHAPTR FIVE - PHASE II (QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS)

### *Sample Characteristics*

This chapter reports on information gathered from face-to-face, semi-structured interviews that were conducted over five weeks with seven participants who self-identified as either Black or African American. The interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes and took place at either the participant's place of employment or at Rutgers University-Newark in a private room. The goal of conducting the interviews was to obtain information that further elucidated the participant's perception of racial microaggressions, the significance of their race, and the meaning attributed to being members of that racial category. The transcripts of each participant's experiences provided an authentic perspective of their lived experiential realities.

After the interviews were transcribed, the researcher carefully reviewed the transcripts over the course of several weeks and excerpted and codified them using whole text analysis. Utilizing a line-by-line approach, the researcher arranged in a systematic order, excerpted sections of information that addressed specific aspects of the research phenomenon. The researcher then, assigned appropriate labels to those codes that expressed unambiguous and/or suggested meanings for further development. For those excerpts that had copious amounts of narrative, the researcher utilized simultaneous coding<sup>18</sup> and assigned more than one code to each excerpt as a means of capturing the participant's experience. Throughout the coding process, the researcher maintained an analytic memo<sup>19</sup> to document and reflect on varied feelings, ideas, and thoughts that

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<sup>18</sup> "Simultaneous Coding is appropriate when the data's content suggests multiple meanings that necessitate and justify more than one code. . . ." (Glesne, 2006, p. 150).

<sup>19</sup> Similar to journal entries, analytic memos are "sites of conversation with ourselves about our data" (Clarke, 2005, p. 202).

facilitated in the process of inquiry taking shape. Next, the codes were contrasted for similarities and distinctions and were then placed into specified categories to capture the overall meaning of each code. After which, each category received an assigned label resulting in more defined and narrowed categories being generated. If any of the categories revealed similar features of the research phenomenon, they were combined. The last step involved revisions being made and redundant categories being collapsed together, which ultimately allowed five clear and succinct themes to emerge.

### *Findings*

As will be discussed below, five themes emerged from the analysis of the interviews. Quotes, narratives, reflections, and the experiential realities from each identified theme facilitated in elucidating the participant's perception of racial microaggressions, the significance of their race, and the self-concept of their racial identity. The emerging themes gleaned from the interviews centered on the following: (i) Ascription of Intelligence, (ii) Criminality, (iii) Colorblindness, (iv) Colorism, and (v) Myth of Meritocracy. The process of understanding and facilitating difficult dialogues on race begins by having open and honest race conversations, such as were had between the participants and the researcher. Instead of avoiding these contentious and complex dialogues, engaging in them will start the progression towards dismantling the wall of fear, stop the reproduction of racism, and close the door on the conspiracy of silence. As Sue (2015) so intuitively put forth:

Unspoken social rules determine much of what we say and do at home, at school, and at work with clients and coworkers. Often, these rules are good for society – they allow us to get along with one another in the world. But occasionally, these hidden rules have a detrimental impact,

and in those situations the rules must be brought to light and eliminated (front flap).

*Defining Microaggressions:*

Microaggressions, as defined by Sue et al (2007a) are insidious, subtle, and implicit forms of expressions that are conveyed on a daily basis to people of color. These forms of expressions can be verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities that are either overt or covert in nature, and communicate hostile, derogatory, and/or racial slights (p. 271). Regardless of whether microaggressions fall into the category of microassaults, microinsults, or microinvalidations, each are damaging to the well-being and standard of living for disenfranchised members of our society. Microaggressions are a constant and continuing reality that holds power over both the perpetrator(s) and the intended target(s) because of their everyday invisible nature (Id., p. 39). In many ways, as suggested by Sue (2010a) all of us have been both perpetrators and targets. He goes on to further state:

With respect to the former, we have been guilty of having delivered microaggressions, whether they are racial, gender, sexual-orientation, ability, religious, or class based. Microaggressions are harmful to marginalized groups because they cause psychological distress and create disparities in health care, employment, and education (p. 39).

Because of the invisible nature of microaggressions, the perspective perpetrator is not consciously aware or in control, and as such, the incident(s) can happen impulsively and without any type of checks and balances in personal, social, and work-related exchanges. These manifestations can happen amongst and between family members, neighbors, coworkers, teacher-student, healthcare provider-patient, therapist-client, and employer-employee relationships (Id., p. 40).

*Defining Colorism and Its Synergistic Relationship to Black Racial Identity*

The ideology behind the concept of colorism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century lives on and is just as viable and relevant as it historically has been. Research has shown that both Blacks and Whites have continued to give meaning and validation to skin color. Hunter (1998) postulated that:

Because skin color stratification is the manifestation of a racialized ideology, it is not self-sustaining and must be reinforced and recreated on a daily basis in order to continue. . . . Ideologies and the systems created from them do not stand alone, but must be deliberately perpetuated to remain intact. Ideologies about race, racial groups, and skin color then evolve as a complex method of everyday interaction (p. 521).

The process of understanding the issue of colorism begins with the understanding of racial identity (Hochschild, 2007, p. 648). Russell et al. (1992) have suggested that:

Black identity is a multifaceted and in some ways nebulous concept. Being Black affects the way a person walks and talks, his or her values, culture, and history, how that person relates to others and how they relate to him or her. It is governed by one's early social experience, history and politics, conscious input and labeling, and the genetic accident that dictates external appearance (p. 62).

Racist occurrences perpetrated by individuals outside of their ethnic/racial group have been well documented to illustrate the profound effects it has on victims' psychological lives (Daniel, 2000). In addition, studies have also shown that intraracial disparities involving issues of colorism are just as detrimental as those disparities that have been traditionally associated with racial divisions (Ware, 2013, p. 3).

## *Results*

### *Ascription of Intelligence*

The first theme that emerged was Ascription of Intelligence. This microinsult is usually related to various aspects of intellect, competence, and capabilities with regard to persons of color or women based on their race/gender (Sue, 2010b, p. 32). Several of the participants discussed their experiences of being treated intellectually inferior by a white person and/or a person of color and how that experience made them feel. Participant #10 talked about her experience working in healthcare settings, in particular, hospitals:

I'm going to always refer back to my employment because of my time working in hospitals in upper and senior management. There were very few persons of color at the table. I was one of a few and held many titles that belied the capabilities of my intellect and my responsibilities. Oftentimes when I would walk into the room 95% or maybe 98% of my colleagues were white. Invariably, once my colleagues realized that I was the individual that held the position; a person of color, it became a game changer. It was like let's see what she knows or don't know. You get that type of upfront racism and then you begin the process of breaking down those preconceived barriers. It's just like my mama always said: "People will perceive you before they receive you." I deal with it every day, whether I'm going to a conference or sitting in a board meeting. You just learn how to deal with it. You identify it for what it is. You don't take it personal, and you just keep it moving.

Participant #11 talked about her experience as an undergrad student at New Jersey City University (NJCU):

When I used to travel back and forth on the train and bus from Penn Station, I would see the Caucasian girls with their Rutgers or their New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) hoodies on and then here I am with my NJCU on and the girls would be like: "Oh, you went to NJCU." Just the tone of their voice and their vocal inflection made me ask: "What is that supposed to mean?" I felt as they were saying that NJCU is less than their Rutgers or NJIT education and that I was not intellectually capable of getting into either school.



Participant #24 talked about her experience working at Applebee's and going to grad school:

I worked at Applebee's because I had to try to make a living while I was in grad school. People would just come there to get their food and leave. Because it's cheap food, they associated and treated me like "oh, she's gotta be just the average Black girl that doesn't have anything going for her" and then when I would talk to them, that's when their whole attitude changed. They would be like, "oh, you have an education." "You're going for your masters." I guess just kind of treating me less than until I guess something in me tells me to speak up for myself brought about this change. They would be like, "oh, okay. I won't treat her with disrespect." "I won't treat her like she's no good or anything like that."

The participants referenced below discuss their experiences of being treated intellectually inferior by a person of color and how that experience made them feel. For instance, participant #11 talked about an experience she had with her mentor:

My mentor went to boarding school, then went to Syracuse University. During my interactions with her, she would say things like: "I have to keep remembering that not everyone had an ivy league education as myself." I asked her: "What do you mean by that?" She said, "Oh certain things that I say, people just don't understand and I have to remember that." My comment to her was: "Well not everybody has the same experience. Not everybody you know had the opportunities to have a boarding school education or graduate from Syracuse."

Participant #11 went on to further state that the experience made her feel like she needed to do more:

I needed to do more. I didn't feel bad, it felt like: "Damn, I'm not doing enough, because here she is a Syracuse graduate and I'm missing out in my life. You know, I'm missing something and I need to really in a sense step my game up."

Participant #12 talked about an experience she had at a family gathering at her sister's home:

I went to a Christmas dinner at my sister's home. She lives in an upper suburban area in New Jersey. My sister told me that the gathering was for me, for receiving my MSW. At the dinner table, she proceeded to tell my

ex-sister-in-law that: “I received my “little” master’s degree.” The comment baffled me because I didn’t understand how she put the word “little” next to the word “master,” in the same sentence. When I brought it to her attention, my sister said: “Aw, you know, sometimes I say things without thinking.” Of course, I didn’t believe her because it was the underlying tone that came out insinuating that I still didn’t meet up to her standards. It was hurtful!

Although, participant #18 did not remember the experience because it was a while ago, he did remember the feeling he had:

It bewildered me and made me feel less than. I can’t quite grasp why a person of my same nationality would look at me any different than they do. But I think that comes from their ignorance, just being ignorant. However, it made me more motivated to do better. I was not going to live in the shadows of their thoughts of me: “You ain’t nothing.” “You ain’t nobody.” “You ain’t gonna be nobody.” That was the perpetuating factor that I needed, to strive to be a better person.

Participant #24 stated that she has never had an experience where a person of color treated her as having a lesser degree of intelligence. Her take on that was:

I have never had that experience. Most of the people that, unfortunately, from where I’m from, they have less education and degrees than I do. So, since they’re less, they don’t look at me that way.

Participant #32 talked about her experiences within the addiction profession, in particular she talked about her experiences within her agency:

Having conversation with the “Higher-ups.” I felt left out, like I was less than. It always hits me a little bit harder from people of color, of my nationality, of my culture when I am perceived as having a lesser degree of intelligence. It feels like a punch in the stomach. I feel like we should all work together to help one another. I actually feel like I’m being treated as if I am “the house nigger, and they’re not.” I hate to say that but that’s exactly how I feel.

The narratives represented above, are reflective of the belief, that Blacks/African Americans are intellectually inferior, which is actually a common occurrence (Jones, 1997; Smedley & Smedley, 2005). What these narratives reflect is that although, both

Whites and Blacks engage in this type of microinsult more times than not, it is the experience with the Black person that has more of an emotional impact on the participant.

### *Criminality/Assumption of Criminal Status*

The second theme to emerge was Criminality/Assumption of Criminal Status.

This microinsult is usually race specific and relates to the belief that a person of color is presumed to be either dangerous, a potential criminal, likely to break the law, or is antisocial. Women and LGBTs are unlikely to experience this form of microinsult (Sue, 2010a, p. 36). Several of the participants discussed their experiential realities with this form of microinsult. Participant #10 stated that:

When I'm out shopping and I walk into a store, say I'm in Nordstrom, you know they follow you through the store. I guess they think that you're gonna steal something or whatever, and they continue to follow and then they finally ask "Can I help you?" And I say: "No, I'm okay" That bothers me because I have money. You don't know how I look, you don't know me, you're perceiving me to be a thief or whatever. That just ticks me off. And our own people do it too. You know if you're in establishments and they're the supervisor or the manager the same thing occurs, and in both instances it's a very uncomfortable feeling. You know that perception that is in people's head, that persons of color shouldn't be in this environment, shouldn't be in the store, maybe they don't have the money. That's really disheartening to me and I don't appreciate it.

Participant #11 stated that:

My most recent experience was when I was leaving Kearny. I had just crossed 21 and as soon as I got out of Kearny, here come the police pulling up behind me and I'm like "Well I know what the speed is. You know I stopped at the red light." You know that I wasn't doing anything. He asked for my license and registration and I'm like, "What happened?" I was driving my mom's vehicle and she has the handicapped license plate. So he was like, "I just want to verify you are who you are." I was like, "Well this isn't my vehicle, this is my mom's vehicle." So I guess he went into the system and looked, we have the same last name and he's like, "Oh, okay you can go." It was like, "Well you know what that was about" So I didn't fight with him, I didn't do anything like that because as

you know stuff happens like on the news. I was angry, however, I maintained my composure. I was pulled over for no reason. I didn't break any laws. I didn't run the light, I wasn't speeding, I wasn't doing anything.

Participant #12 stated that:

Well, I could remember when I went before a judge for possession CDS (controlled dangerous substance) charges. This White judge told me that I wasn't gonna be able to go home and I felt really bad, not because of the time but allowing myself to lose control. I felt powerless. I felt that the judge saw me as a deviant instead of someone needing help. I vowed to myself that when I completed my time, I would turn my life around and I have. I can remember another time when I got a job doing paralegal work for an attorney. Somebody broke into his law office, and they associated myself with setting up that law firm. And I felt really, really bad, because I had nothing to do with anybody breaking into the law firm at all. But I thought that because I had associated with certain people, that they automatically tied me into that mess. I really had nothing to do with it and I felt really bad.

Participant #18 stated that:

Well, a long time ago, when I was growing up, you know, any time you get arrested, you were the villain. Even before you even get found out if you did the crime, you were belittled and made to feel real bad, and put in a cage in a heartbeat. As a Black man, it made you feel uncomfortable. Why do you wanna look at me in that manner?

Although, women and LGBTs are unlikely to experience this form of microinsult (Sue, 2010a, p. 36), based on the above-referenced narratives, the female participants felt that this form of microinsult was experienced on a regular basis regardless of their gender. They felt that gender had nothing to do with it; it was indeed based solely on their skin color.

### *Colorblindness*

The third theme to emerge was Colorblindness. This microinvalidation is usually related to the refusal to recognize or even admit to seeing race, gender or sexual

orientation. Colorblindness is one of the most regularly delivered microvalidations towards people of color (Sue, 2010a, p. 38). Several of the participants discussed their experiences of being told by a white person and/or person of color that they don't see color. For instance, participant #10 discusses her views on the concept of colorblindness:

In my opinion, if any person regardless of if they were White or Black told me that they were colorblind and that they did not see color, I would immediately say that person is lying. It just sounds so false because of the fact that you're a human being and you live around, work around, and interact with others. Unless you live in a bubble or in a community where it was just all one, yeah, then I would say you're colorblind to that particular sector if you haven't been exposed to persons of color. When I do hear that, I'm like that's not a reality to me because you don't live in a bubble. Even if you grew up and went to an all-White school or went to a school that was all-Black, when you venture from that environment and meet someone different than yourself, you're gonna have a perception of the difference. So to say you're colorblind in America, to me that's a lie

Participant #11 stated that she has never heard anyone say that they were colorblind and if she did, it would not affect her because:

I don't see color. I've never had a conversation with anyone who stated that they are colorblind. All I know is that I am colorblind!

Participant #12 stated that she has never heard a Black person say that they were colorblind but she has heard Whites make that statement and her take on that is:

When someone says that, or when I hear it on social media or on the news, I know that that's just another way for Whites to placate Black people, to make Black people think that they don't see race. And my take on that is: "Why don't you see my race? I mean, I'm not invisible. I do matter. You should be able to see my race, my color, so why don't you?" That is always my question when I hear that.

Participant #22 echoes similar sentiments as participant #11:

Let me share my belief about that because that's kind of how I feel. Even though, yes, we all have different skin tones, I look at everybody the same. We're all the same. I don't care where you come from or how you got here. That's how I perceive the human race.

The narratives represented above, contain multiple and complex hidden messages. The messages ask the receiver not to bring the topic of race into the conversation or interaction. The messages also communicate to people of color that they should assimilate and acculturate (Sue, 2010a, p.38). On one hand, the messages are intended as defensive maneuvers so that the individual does not appear racist (Apfelbaum, Sommers, & Norton, 2008), and on the other hand, the messages serve as a denial of the racial experiences of people of color (Bonilla-Silva, 2005). Sue (2010a) postulates that the denial of color is really a denial of differences. . . . (p. 38). What these narratives reflect is that Whites and Blacks engage in this type of microinvalidation, and as evinced by the narratives was frequently espoused by the participants.

### *Colorism*

The fourth theme to emerge was Colorism. Although colorism is not one of the themes discussed in the microaggression literature, it is the researcher's belief that it is correlated and has an interrelated relationship with colorblindness and Black identity theory. As such, for the purposes of this study, colorism will be viewed as a microinvalidation. The term colorism has been defined as the prejudicial process whereby lighter-skinned people of color are afforded opportunities and privileges that their darker-skinned counterparts are not (Hunter, 2005). Jackson-Lowman (2013) postulated that colorism is a kind of oppression that is conveyed through the disproportionate treatment of individuals and groups based on their skin color. While lighter-skinned individuals are usually given preferential treatment, darker-skinned individuals experience rejection and mistreatment (The Association of Black Psychologists, 2013). Russell et al (1992) have

suggested that colorism is a psychological obsession about skin color and physical characteristics (e.g., hair texture, broad nose, eye color, and fuller lips) that have resulted in Blacks discriminating against one another (p. 2). Several of the participants discussed their experiences of difference based on skin color. For instance,

Participant #10 stated that:

In my family as an African American, there's many shades of color. We have dark skin, light skin. We have Filipinos and Black, and Puerto Rican and Black in our family; we're just a multicultural tree. But in our family, there's the segregation. Now the darker skin, my grandmother and my father were all dark skin. But on my mother's side they're lighter skinned. So you know, my grandma's side that was light skinned was haughty-tawty and they acted like they were better than the darker side of the family. The darker side of the family was just a confident because if my grandmother felt that someone was treating her less than because of her darker skin, she came at you even harder. So she raised us and taught us to feel comfortable in our skin, feel comfortable with our full lips, feel comfortable with our wide nose, feel comfortable with our curly, feel comfortable with who, we are.

Participant #11 stated that:

Personally, I have a preference for lighter skinned guys and actually my fiancé is light. I don't know why, I don't know why it is like that but that's what I like. I guess as a child growing up, I know that in school the boys used to like the lighter skinned girls, yeah, the lighter skinned girls, the Hispanics. Like I wasn't given a chance. That I was I guess X'd out in a sense because of my skin complexion.

Participant #12 stated that:

Growing up, my mother was kind of colorstruck because of her light skin. She was always saying things like "Look at that Black lady over there." I've even experienced it from other people that may be darker than myself, and they would say, "Oh, you think you better than us." I try not to do it – I try to see people for who they are, and not based upon the complexion or darkness of their skin. Because, you know, dark people are beautiful, too. I believe so.

Participant #18 stated that:

How can I say this – I never really see a difference in the Black person, light or dark. But I have read about stuff of that nature, but it never affected me personally. We all come from the same place, it just so happens that your pigmentation just happens to be a different shade doesn't make you a different person.

Participant #22 stated that:

My mother is dark skinned and my father is Caucasian. My father and his mother immigrated to this country from South America when he was seven. During the time my father and mother married, the Census was paper based and on it he was as identified as White. I know this because I have those Census reports. My grandfather was Jewish and my grandmother was Dutch and they both identified as White. By the time my father married my mother, his father was deceased, and his mother was still alive but he identified himself on the marriage certificate as Black. As a product of biracial parents, my father was accepting of all and that is how I am. I accept people for who they are. I don't look at them as dark skinned or light skinned or nappy hair, or you know; I just don't.

Participant #24 stated that:

I've seen it happen with some of my clients where they have darker skin and their parents show them that your darker skin isn't pretty. I don't like you, you remind me of this person; I'm going to be mean to you. I've had clients that have been abused and neglected because they're different. The look different from their siblings, because they are darker and it's really sad because no one should be treated differently; treated that way because of the skin color – especially when it comes from inside the family. Like being treated differently because all my siblings are light and I'm the darker one so I'm going to be treated like crap because of it. So, I've witnessed it in that sense. I also had another experience with my fiancé's family because they are White. It was something that my fiancé's mother said: "Oh, why couldn't she have been White?" Although I am light skinned and my fiancé is White, I guess I'm not White enough. It was disheartening and I get it, but then again, I look at the other side. I like get sometimes that it's not as important if someone says you can't be colorblind, but then again, it is important.

As the above referenced narratives highlight regardless of one's skin tone, the issue of colorism is experienced on every level of society. According to the 1995 Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, it was determined that:



Color-based differences are inescapable but nobody likes to talk about them. . . . Though it is mostly covert, our society has developed an extremely sophisticated, and often denied, acceptability index based on gradation in skin color. . . . It is applied to African Americans, to American Indians, to Asian and Pacific Islander Americans, and to Hispanic Americans [(Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995): 29, emphasis in original]; see also (Zweigenhaft and Domhoff, 1998)].

In addition, the problem of intra-familial colorism was laced throughout several of the referenced narratives. Clinicians (Boyd-Franklin, 1993; Fortes De Leff, 2002; Williams, 1996) have discussed the problem of intra-familial colorism, where skin color is used as a way of either demeaning or idealizing family members because of their darker-skinned or lighter-skinned tones (Tummala-Narra, 2007, p. 262). Color-based differences are inescapable and nobody likes to talk about it. However, providing a safe environment to engage in open and honest dialogue, the participants welcomed and were glad to give their true perspective on this issue.

### *Myth of Meritocracy*

The fifth theme to emerge was Myth of Meritocracy. This microinvalidation asserts that race, gender, and sexual orientation do not play a role in the successes one experiences in their life. It is alleged that everyone has the same opportunities to be successful in life and if not successful, it is the individual's fault, not society or circumstances. Participant #10 stated that:

Again, that's not been my reality, and when I do hear that, I just feel like they have formed their opinion based on what they have been exposed to, and I respect it. Not that I agree with it, but I respect it and I don't believe it. Probably because of what they've been exposed to, they have identified and formed an opinion, which is their reality. But from an African American's point of view, that is simply not the case.

Participant #11 stated that:

For people of color, it will be like you know we don't have the same opportunities because when people see you, they see your race first. Then when they see your race, they automatically put you in a box and they judge you so we don't have the same opportunities.

Participant #12 stated that:

I've never personally experienced that, but I've definitely heard the conversation piece surrounding that. And I feel as though, we all didn't start out on the same playing field and we have had to pull ourselves up by the bootstraps – you've knocked us down so far, so why wouldn't you wanna help us up, now? I've also heard that because I am a Black woman -- that because of the color of my skin, there's certain doors that perhaps may close, whereas they would open for a White person.

The narratives represented above, convey the message that racism and sexism play no part in the life successes of people of color and as such, society blames the individual for their failures. A blaming the victim mentality is the outcome of this microinvalidation and because of it, has far reaching implications on the individual's psyche. The cumulative effects of racism and discrimination coupled with the detrimental consequences on the physiological and psychological well-being of the person of color contributes to low self-esteem, paranoia, and apathy towards one's life and personal goals (Chakraborty & McKenzie, 2002; Sue et al, 2007a).

### *Conclusion*

In sum, four of the five themes (i.e., Ascription of Intelligence, Criminality/Assumption of Criminal Status, Colorblindness, and Myth of Meritocracy) were part of the initial typology identified by Sue and his colleagues in 2007. The participants' experiential realities with these forms of racial microaggressions are

experienced on a continual and almost daily basis. However, as referenced throughout the narratives, the participants have learned to cope with it, deal with it, or use the microaggressive incident as a motivating factor to improve their lives so as not to validate the perception of others through their use of verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities. The fifth theme of colorism has deeper implications with regard to intra-racial color discrimination and internalized oppression. Specifically, the problem of intra-familial colorism was laced throughout several of the referenced narratives.

Pinkney (2012) has suggested that:

Intra-racial color discrimination is a controversial subject within the black community. Some people prefer not to discuss it while others contend skin color bias no longer exists since it is an ugly truth no one wants to readily admit occurs in our culture. Still the truth remains that black people discriminate against each other based on skin color, hair texture, and facial features. This prejudice based on one's skin and features in what's known as a color complex. Traditionally the complex involved light-skinned blacks' rejection of dark-skinned blacks. However, this complex is not one-sided. The color complex occurs in the form of the dark-skinned spurning the light-skinned for not being "black enough." This internalized oppression is a barrier to progression in the black community and the human race as a whole (p. 94).

Further research needs to be conducted to ferrate out underlying rationales for its seemingly continued perpetuation and impact on the Black community.

The participants by way of their narratives reflected an openness and willingness to engage in a thought provoking race conversation. Throughout the discourse of dialogue, the process of sharing provided a new and deeper understanding and appreciation of the participant's worldviews. Having the opportunity to engage in various aspects of the race conversation allowed participants to freely open up about their experiential realities regarding microaggressions (i.e., microinsults and

microinvalidations) and their racial self-concept without the fear of reprisal. It also created a trusting and authentic environment between the researcher and the participants that supported self-directed learning through reflective and constructive conversations. Sue (2015) posits that learning to talk about race is crucial if we hope to achieve the equal society that has long been part of the American mythos. Each one of us through our everyday interactions with each other . . . , can contribute to this hallmark of social justice.

Although racial microaggressions impact the experiential realities of Black frontline workers, those experiences are not brought into the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

## **CHAPTER SIX – DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION**

This study was designed to augment current knowledge by examining if there is a linkage between the perception of racial microaggressions and the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers, and if so, what influence it plays in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. A mixed methodological content analysis using a phenomenological two-phase sequential design that is also exploratory in nature was chosen to facilitate the researcher with addressing this research phenomenon. The integration of transformative learning and the advocacy/participatory approach was employed to guide and shape this dissertation. Utilization of both theoretical perspectives provide a holistic worldview that focuses on the needs of those groups and individuals that historically have been and continue to be marginalized and/or disenfranchised in society (Creswell, 2009, p. 9). To start the process of transformative learning from an advocacy/participatory perspective, the study applied and integrated the Racial Microaggression Scale (RMAS) and the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI) as evaluating instruments for Phase I. Phase II of the study incorporated whole text qualitative analysis to process and understand the participant's lived experiential realities as it related to their perceptions of racial microaggressions and as being members of a racial category.

To address the study's purpose, three research questions were explored: (i) What role does the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers play in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship?, (ii) What role does the perception of racial microaggressions of Black frontline workers play in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship?, and (iii) How does the perception of racial microaggressions influence the

racial self-identification of Black frontline workers in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship? The hypothesis for each of the three research questions were: (i) It was expected that the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers will play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship, (ii) It was expected that the perception of racial microaggressions of Black frontline workers will play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship, and (iii) It was expected that the perception of racial microaggressions will influence the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

A standard multiple regression analysis was conducted on the participants' responses to the Racial Microaggressions Scale (RMAS) and the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI). Specific themes within the larger categories of microinsults and microinvalidations were used as the underlying basis for the RMAS. The researcher utilized the same themes and categories that Torres-Harding et al (2012) referenced in their study. The perceived microaggression subscales were computed by using the (a) part of each item, the first part assessed the participants' perception of how often or frequently a given microaggression was experienced. The distress subscales were computed using the (b) items, the second part of each item assessed the participants' level of distress or stress suggested by the item. The researcher utilized the same dimensions derived from the MIBI that was developed by Sellers et al (1998). The MIBI measured the significance of race and the qualitative meanings attributed to being members of that racial category. A table of the analysis was created for each of the subscales identified in the RMAS, as well as the MIBI.

Phase I results derived from the standard multiple regression analysis of the RMAS and the MIBI provide some preliminary evidence that the perception of racial microaggressions and the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers, to some extent, play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. In particular, the RMAS Subparts A and B showed that how one racially self-identifies will most likely not play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. However, ascription of intelligence, educational level, and negative environmental messages linked to one's party affiliation were shown to play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. According to Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, (1999) an individuals' racial and ethnic identity are integral parts of the overall framework of individual and collective identity, which for people of color is oftentimes manifested by conflicting social and cultural influences. Not having a developed normative perception of self with regard to one's racial category and not having a developed sense of belonging can impact the Black frontline worker. Deep conscious immersion into cultural traditions and values through religious, familial, neighborhood, and educational communities instills a well-balanced sense of identity and confidence. In contrast, individuals on a regular basis must filter their racial and ethnic identity through deleterious treatment and media messages regarding their race and ethnicity. These messages suggest that people of color have a different ethnic make-up that is considered to be less than within mainstream society (p. 39).

Furthermore, the theoretical manifestations of racial identity are socially constructed whereby a sense of group or collective identity is based on one's perception that there is a mutuality of shared heritage with a particular racial group (Helms, 1993, p.

3). However, racial identity oftentimes appears to be utilized as a means of categorizing others based on their skin color (O'Hearn, 1998). Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, and Mallory (1996) have suggested that the use of skin-color as a labeling tool affords individuals and groups the opportunity to distance themselves from those that they consider different.

The racial development of Black frontline workers coupled with the varied forms of racial microaggressions referenced-above suggest that: (i) the perception that people of color are generally not as intelligent as Whites can impact the Black frontline worker's psyche, (ii) the educational level of attainment of Black frontline workers represents in part, who they are. It represents their accomplishments and is a source of pride.

However, the perception that they may not be as intelligent as Whites is insulting and offensive and sends a denigrating hidden message that the individual is seen as inferior, and (iii) the racialized beliefs that influence the way in which race based policies are discussed and disseminated through varied programs in conjunction with coded language that support racial judgments influence negative environmental messages linked to one's party affiliation. Because these cogent negative messages reflect the dominant ideology in school and work settings, they can have an impact on Black frontline workers.

The findings of the MIBI revealed that public regard, which refers to the extent to which individuals feel others view Blacks as positively or negatively and the humanist ideology, which views all humans as belonging to the same race – the human race will most likely not play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

However, U.S. born and private regard, which refers to the extent to which individuals feel positively or negatively towards Blacks as well as how positively or negatively they feel about being Black, years as a substance abuse counselor and public regard, which



refers to the extent to which individuals feel others view Blacks as positively or negatively, and gender of client and assimilation ideology, which refers to the similarities between Blacks and the rest of American society were shown to play a role in the interracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

To begin, race is a relevant part of an individual's self-concept. The judgments of behavior and/or the impression derived depend on the extent to which the level of significance and meaning is attached to their definition of self-concept. Additionally, how the role of gender is perceived is also a relevant part of one's self-concept. As such, within public organizational settings there are well-intentioned male counterparts who believe in gender equality, however, many unknowingly engage in behaviors that place women at a disadvantage, infantilize or stereotype them. Per se, the gender of Black frontline workers and the extent to which the level of significance and meaning is attached to their definition of self-concept can impact them.

The next subscale is private regard, which refers to the extent to which Blacks feel positively or negatively towards other Blacks, as well as how positively or negatively they feel about being a member of that racial category. As previously stated, an individual's racial and ethnic identity are integral parts of the overall framework of individual and collective identity, which for people of color is oftentimes manifested by conflicting social and cultural influences (Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999, p. 39). Within these identities (i.e., individual and collective), a sense of group or collective identity is based on one's perception that there is a mutuality of shared heritage with a particular racial group (Helms, 1993, p. 3). In other words, one's racial identity is a surface-level manifestation that is "based on what we look like yet has deep implications in how we are

treated” (Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999, p. 39). As such, the intersection between the racial perceptions of others (racism) and the racial perception of self (racial development) (Id., p. 42), can have an impact on Black frontline workers.

Years employed as a substance abuse counselor and the public regard subscale, which again refers to the extent to how Black frontline workers feel others view their racial category as either positive or negative. Utilizing this same rationale, one could surmise that the numbers of years employed as a substance abuse counselor and the public regard subscale, could also infer how Black frontline workers feel others view their years employed as a substance abuse counselor as either positive or negative. Just as an individual’s educational level of attainment represents in part, who they are, so too, is an individual’s associated years on the job and their employment role. It also represents their accomplishments and is a source of their pride. If the Black frontline worker’s perception that others view their racial category positive, then, this perception will most likely have a positive influence on how they see themselves, their associated years of employment and their employment role. However, if the Black frontline worker’s perception is that others view their racial category negative, then, this perception will most likely have a negative influence on how they see themselves, their associated years of employment and their employment role. As suggested by Markus and Nurius (1986) a working self-concept contains a set of self-conceptions that are presently active in thought and memory. The identity within the working self-concept can at any given moment be determined by the core identity and the immediate social context.

Finally, the female clients of Black frontline workers and assimilation ideology emphasize the similarities between African Americans and the rest of American society.

A person with an assimilationist ideology acknowledges their status as an American and attempts to enter, whenever possible, into the mainstream. An assimilationist ideology does not necessarily imply the importance of being Black/African American, nor does it necessarily imply that a lack of recognition of racism in America exists (Sellers et al, 1998, p. 28). Therefore, Black frontline workers who embrace the assimilationist ideology will most likely believe that their female clients need to make attempts to enter, whenever possible, into the mainstream.

Implications of the findings with regard to the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship indicate that it is vitally important for public service organizations, public administrators, and frontline workers (especially Black frontline workers) to understand the culturally constructed nature of educational environments (e.g., personal, social, professional). In addition, there is also a need to develop a level of awareness that effectuates an understanding of one's own racially defined sense of self in conjunction with the learning and educational environments (Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999, p. 44). More times than not, racial manifestations imbedded within the learning and educational environments are usually unconsciously applied by educators, public service organizations, and public service administrators, thus, making the racist manifestations difficult to identify, examine and modify. It is for this reason that educators, public service organizations, and public service administrators in their varied roles, make the invisible visible (Id.), thereby moving to a more culturally competent system of care.

Phase II findings showed that four of the five identified themes were part of the initial typology defined by Sue et al (2007). As previously stated, the participants' experiential realities with these forms of racial microaggressions are experienced on a

continual and almost daily basis. However, as referenced throughout the narratives, the participants have learned to cope with it, deal with it, or use the microaggressive incident as a motivating factor to improve their lives so as not to validate the perception of others through their use of verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities. The fifth theme of colorism has deeper implications, as it shows that regardless of one's skin tone, the issue is experienced on every level of society. It is deeply entrenched in the mindset and the lived experiences of both Blacks and Whites. The problem of intra-familial colorism, more specifically, intraracial color discrimination still exists within the Black community. The implications of these findings reveal that colorism and intraracial discrimination is both a form of internalized racial oppression that contribution to the reproduction of racism and racial inequality. Internalized racism remains one of the most neglected and misunderstood components of racism (Pyke, 2010, p. 551). As such, research needs to be conducted to ferrate out underlying rationales for its continued perpetuation, its relevance, and the impact on the Black community's psyche. It is also suggested that the hidden injuries of racism and the subtle mechanisms that sustain White privilege (Id.) be researched as well as with regard to this issue.

The participants by way of their narratives reflected an openness and willingness to engage in a thought provoking race conversation. Throughout the discourse of dialogue, the process of sharing provided a new and deeper understanding and appreciation of the participant's worldviews. Having the opportunity to engage in various aspects of the race conversation allowed participants to freely open up about their experiential realities regarding microaggressions (i.e., microinsults and microinvalidations) and their racial self-concept without any fear of reprisal. It also

created a trusting and authentic environment between the researcher and the participants that supported self-directed learning through reflective and constructive conversations.

### *Benefits of Mixed Methods Research*

As previously stated, this dissertation utilized a mixed methodological content analysis with a phenomenological two-phase sequential design that was also exploratory in nature. The benefits derived from utilizing a mixed methods research design facilitated in bringing about an awareness and understanding of racial microaggressions and the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers in intraracial therapeutic counseling relationships. It also provided an opportunity to address the gaps in the literature regarding the role that racial microaggressions and racial self-identification play in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. Additionally, exploring mixed methods research offered an explicit framing of inquiry of two worldviews. Each worldview remained distinct and offered the opportunity to tell a different piece of the story through the integration of material that created larger frameworks for discussion.

### *Significance of Study to Public Administration*

As previously stated, the significance of this study to public administration is to bring awareness and understanding to Black frontline workers about the racial microaggressions that they themselves experience every day. In addition, how they racially self-identify coupled with the experiences of racial microaggressions may influence and play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. This awareness can better assist them in acquiring the necessary tools to understand their own

reactions and dilemmas, thereby moderating harmful effects during this type of service interaction. Also, from an organizational standpoint, it is essential that public service organizations (i.e., substance abuse and mental health facilities) begin to systematically acknowledge, understand, and unmask the dynamics, power, and impact of perceived racial microaggressions at both the macro (institution) and micro (individual) levels. As such, interventional strategies can be developed and/or enhanced as a contribution to the overall effectiveness and delivery of responsive and tangible services.

Addressing this gap in the literature illuminates the intrinsic value derived from a study such as this by adding to the cultural competency and social equity discourse in public administration and the cultural competency discourse in the field of addiction counseling education. “Understanding the diverse nature of the population sets the stage for discussions of representative bureaucracy, discrimination, civil rights, affirmative action, and civic engagement” (Norman-Major & Gooden, 2012, p. 3). In addition, bringing awareness and understanding of the lived experiences of Black frontline workers is of interest as it can inform about additional variables that may surface in this type of therapeutic counseling relationship.

### *Limitations of the Study*

There were several limitations in this study. First, the most notable being the modest sample size of the study ( $n = 32$  self-identified Black/African American frontline workers). Of the 50 recruited participants, 32 self-identified as being Black or African American and 18 self-identified as being either Hispanic or White. Only the data of those participants who self-identified as either Black or African American were analyzed. The

study focused on the the perception of racial microaggressions and the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers (i.e., substance abuse and mental health counselors) in intraracial therapeutic counseling relationships. Due to the nature of the participant's profession and their daily interaction with substantiating abusing clients with or without mental health issues, puts them in a unique situation. At any given time, the frontline worker can be faced with an emergency involving their client, coupled with the daily tasks that must be performed, impacts their hours of availability. Thus, the recruitment was greatly impacted because of the participant's limited hours of availability and/or scheduling conflicts. In a related issue, the sample size also posed limitations with regard to the generalizability of the findings to the larger population. As a result of the sample size, the findings of the study are only generalizable to the study population. There may be other mitigating factors not identified by the researcher that may have influenced the findings.

Another possible limitation is the generalizability of the findings with regard to the participants' responses during the semi-structured interviews. Although semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to gain an understanding of the participants' experiential realities regarding their perception of racial microaggressions and how they racially self-identified, the participants' reflective accounts of these microaggressive incidents may to some degree, be skewed because participants were asked to recall and describe events that occurred before the interviews were conducted<sup>20</sup>.

Another possible limitation of the study was the researcher's reliance on interview transcripts. The participants' vocal inflections or articulations that presented itself during

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<sup>20</sup> In their discussion of possible limitations regarding their study, Constantine & Sue (2007) highlighted several limitations that the researcher reframed and utilized in this study (i.e., retrospective accounts of microaggressive incidents) (p. 150).

discussions on racial microaggressions and how participants' racially self-identified were not accounted for in the analysis of the data. The vocal inflections or articulations might have provided even more information about the role racial microaggressions and racial self-identification plays in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship<sup>21</sup>.

Finally, another possible limitation of the study was the study itself. Given the controversial nature of the research study phenomenon, it is the belief of the researcher, that some of the perspective participants were reluctant to freely and openly discuss their experiential realities about racial microaggressions and even less inclined to openly discuss their feelings about how they racially self-identified. As a result, many chose not to be a part of this study. With respect to engaging in race conversations, which Gooden (2014) has suggested is a "nervous area of government, the emotions associated with having these types of conversations is connected to the reason why individuals avoid it. Also, how one racially self-identifies is closely connected to the concept of colorism and as Russell et al (1993) postulated because the color complex has long been considered unmentionable, it has been called the last taboo among communities of color (p. 2). Despite these possible limitations, the current study suggests that there is a correlational relationship between the perception of racial microaggressions and the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers, which plays a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

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<sup>21</sup> In their discussion of possible limitations regarding their study, Constantine & Sue (2007) highlighted several limitations that the researcher reframed and utilized in this study (i.e., reliance on transcripts with regard to verbal inflections or articulations) (p. 150).



*Direction of Future Research*

There have been studies conducted that examined racial microaggressions from the perspective of White and Black counselors involved in cross-racial dyads and studies conducted that examined racial microaggressions from the perspective of clients of color. However, this is the first study that focused on the perception of racial microaggressions and racially self-identified Black frontline workers in intraracial therapeutic counseling relationships. The study focused on Black frontline workers employed as counselors at substance abuse treatment facilities and/or mental health treatment facilities in Essex County, New Jersey. Because of the dearth published studies that explore perception of racial microaggressions and racially self-identified frontline workers in intraracial therapeutic counseling relationships, studies need to be conducted to understand those issues that may arise in these types of therapeutic counseling relationships. Additionally, studies need to also be conducted to understand those issues associated with other varied forms of microaggressions that may arise in other engagement interactions.

These types of studies can facilitate in bringing awareness and understanding to Black frontline workers about the racial microaggressions that they themselves experience every day. In addition, how they racially self-identify coupled with the experiences of racial microaggressions may influence and play a role in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship. This awareness can better assist them in acquiring the necessary tools to understand their own reactions and dilemmas, thereby moderating harmful effects during this type of service interaction. Additionally, these studies could facilitate public service organizations in the addiction and mental health fields with understanding the experiential realities of the Black frontline worker. Understanding the

population that is doing the servicing internally is essential to public service organizations and public service administrators carrying out their mission of servicing the public and/or community as a whole (Norman-Major & Gooden, 2012, p. 8). Developing better internal culturally competent skills is part and parcel to providing external tangible and responsive services. Listed below are several areas of study that need to be considered for future research.

The first study to be considered is the current study. It should be duplicated with a larger sample size that examines several counties within New Jersey. For instance, Essex County could be examined with another urban or suburban county, comparing and contrasting the findings. The ultimate goal would be to conduct a state-wide study of all 21 New Jersey counties to assess the perception of racial microaggressions in cross-racial and intraracial therapeutic counseling relationships. A second study to be considered is a similar study that examines the perception of racial microaggressions and racially self-identified persons of color (e.g., Blacks, African Americans, and Hispanic) and Whites, and compare and contrast the findings. A third study to consider is a similar study that examines the perception of racial microaggressions and racially self-identified students of color (male and female) across all three of the Rutgers University campuses and compare and contrast the findings. A fourth study to be considered is a similar study examining all professoriate levels and doctoral students across all three of the Rutgers University campuses. Again, the study would focus on perception of racial microaggressions and racially self-identified persons of color. A fifth study to be considered are studies focusing on other socially devalued group microaggressions (i.e., International/Cultural, Sexual Orientation and Transgender, Disability, Class, and Religious) and compare and

contrast the findings of self-identified persons of color and Whites. The perspective population would come from any public bureaucratic organization. A sixth study to be considered is a study focusing on intraracial color discrimination and the effects of internalized oppression in communities of color. Finally, conducting similar studies utilizing various measures of microaggression experiences, for example: questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, or direct observations of task performance or action (e.g., work tasks or problem-solving tasks) or direct observation of interpersonal actions (e.g., level of friendliness) (Sue, 2010b, p. 320) could facilitate in identifying coping mechanisms used by persons of color experiencing these varied forms of microaggressions.

Conducting these types of studies will continue to bring: (i) awareness about these varied forms of microaggressions, and (ii) facilitate in having substantive conversations that ultimately will lead to self-directed learning through reflective and constructive discussions for all vested stakeholders (e.g., public service organizations, public service administrators, frontline workers, and the public). Additionally, these types of studies will hold vested stakeholders accountable towards continually pursuing a goal that always includes room for growth, even at the highest level of competence, thereby bringing social equity to public administration (Norman-Major & Gooden, 2012, pgs. 8-9).

### *Conclusion*

You never really understand a person until you consider things from  
his point of view -- until you climb inside of his skin and walk  
around in it (Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*)

This quote by Harper Lee (1960) epitomizes the underlying rationale for this research study. Before an individual's experiential realities are understood, the individual is already put into a box and judged. Studies have shown that racism is part and parcel of the foundation and cultural psyche of U.S. societal norms and institutions. In many ways, as suggested by Sue (2010a) we all have been both perpetrators and targets. In spite of established professional standards and ethics; racial microaggressions still exist and function within public service organizations (e.g., substance abuse and mental health facilities). The existence of racial microaggressions within public service organizations can adversely impact the quality of services provided, the organizational climate, and an employee's job satisfaction and morale. Because public service organizations are not immune to deeply rooted societal inequalities, beginning the process of evaluating organizational cultural values that breed this type of inequity within, would facilitate in bringing about an awareness and sense of inclusiveness, instead of exclusiveness. Understanding the population doing the servicing is equally as important as understanding the population that is being serviced.

Vested stakeholders such as public service organizations, public service administrators, and frontline workers must develop or enhance their culturally competent skill sets at both the micro and macro levels. Having the willingness to listen, the ability to empathize and acknowledge the individual's pain and suffering as a result of racism and oppression, and engaging in those difficult race conversations facilitates vested

stakeholders to rid itself of cultural discomforts or cultural discontinuities (Uttal, 2006). Cross et al (1989) defined a developmental continuum where agencies can assess the type of agency they are and their ability to deal effectively with cultural differences in their clients (p. 19). The ability to move from one stage to the next stage requires significant effort. It requires persistent reorganizing of “agency attitudes, policies, and practices; the implementation of skill development for all staff; and the serious involvement of all agency personnel; board members, policymakers, administrator, practitioners, and consumers alike” (Diller, 2015, 2011, 2007, p. 21).

Cross et al (1989) also defined cultural competence skill areas for individual practitioners. These five basic skill areas are necessary for the effectuation of cross-cultural service delivery and must be taught, supported and introduced as underlying dimensions of everyday functioning within agencies (Diller, 2015, 2011, 2007, p. 21). Utilizing the agency and individual cultural competent continuums require a commitment to accepting and embracing those cultural differences that exist in values, styles of communication, perception of time, how health is defined, and community (Id.). Acquiring the necessary skills to work with clients from other cultures, acknowledging and looking at differences are just as important as the similarities (Id.).

Vested stakeholders have a shared responsibility to serve all individuals of the community and to acknowledge the diverse makeup of the population and the differing needs of the community being serviced (Norman-Major & Gooden, 2012, p. 3). Although, the historical evolution of the United States has been shown to encompass individuals with a multitude of varying characteristics; the fact of the matter is that the public sector has not always acknowledged those differing needs of the communities,

which has led to programs being designed that represent a one size fits all (Id., p. 4).

Norman-Major & Gooden (2012) go on to further state that:

This lack of recognition of cultural differences often leads to development and implementation of ineffective, inefficient, and inequitable public services. Instead of serving the community as a whole or being open to all persons, programs and policies that lack of recognition of cultural difference often leave part of the public out of public service (Id.).

Understanding the population that is being serviced (internally and externally) is paramount when providing tangible and responsive services. Additionally, instead of avoiding contentious and complex race conversations, engaging in them will start the progression towards dismantling the wall of fear, stopping the reproduction of racism, and closing the door on the conspiracy of silence.

Moreover, the effects of internalized oppression as a result of intraracial color discrimination must also be addressed at both the micro and macro levels. The ideology that being or acting White was better than being Black became imbedded into the Black psyche as a result of this treatment (Eyerman, 2002). In this so-called post-racial era of Obama, the underlying beast of the belly still reveals that the time in American society for being post-racial has not yet arrived and the issue of interracialism and intraracism are still alive and thriving. The process of understanding and facilitating difficult dialogues on race begins by having open and honest race conversations and self-directed learning about one's self. This awareness can better assist Black frontline workers in acquiring the necessary tools to understand their own reactions and dilemmas, thereby moderating harmful effects during this type of service interaction. In sum, it is hoped that the findings of this research study will have a significant impact on public service

organizations, public service administrators and, most importantly, on the lives of Black frontline workers.

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**Table I<sup>22</sup>**  
**Examples of Racial Microaggressions**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Microaggression</b>	<b>Message</b>
<b>Alien in own land</b> When Asian Americans and Latino Americans are assumed to be foreign-born (Sue, Capodilupo, et als, 2007).	<p>“Where are you from?” (Id.).  “Where were you born?” (Id.).  “You speak good English” (Id.).</p> <p>A person asking as Asian American to teach them words in their native language (Id.).</p>	<p>You are not American (Id.).</p> <p>You are a foreigner (Id.).</p>
<b>Ascription of intelligence</b> Assigning intelligence to a person of color on the basis of their race (Id.).	<p>“You are a credit to your race” (Id.).</p> <p>“You are so articulate” (Id.).</p> <p>Asking an Asian person to help with a math or science problem (Id.).</p>	<p>People of color are generally not as intelligent as Whites (Id.).</p> <p>It is unusual for someone of your race to be intelligent (Id.).</p> <p>All Asians are intelligent and good in math/sciences (Id.).</p>
<b>Color blindness</b> Statements that indicate that a White person does not want to acknowledge race (Id.).	<p>“When I look at you, I don’t see color” (Id.).</p> <p>“American is a melting pot” Id.).</p> <p>“There is only one race, the human race” (Id.).</p>	<p>Denying a person of color’s racial ethnic experiences (Id.).</p> <p>Assimilate/acculturate to the dominant culture (Id.).</p> <p>Denying the individual as a racial/cultural being (Id.).</p>

<sup>22</sup> Table I provides samples of comments or situations that may potentially be classified as racial microaggressions and their accompanying hidden assumptions and messages (Sue, Capodilupo, et als., 2007).

<p><b>Criminality/assumption of criminal status</b> A person of color is presumed to be dangerous, criminal, or deviant on the basis of their race (Id.).</p>	<p>A White man or woman clutching their purse or checking their wallet as a black or Latino approaches or passes (Id.).</p> <p>A store owner following a customer of color around the store (Id.).</p> <p>A White person waits to ride the next elevator when a person of color is on it</p>	<p>You are a criminal (Id.).</p> <p>You are going to steal/You are poor/You do not belong (Id.).</p> <p>You are dangerous (Id.).</p>
<p><b>Denial of individual racism</b> A statement made when Whites deny their racial biases (Id.).</p>	<p>“I’m not racist. I have several Black friends” (Id.).</p> <p>“As a woman, I know what you go through as a racial minority” (Id.).</p>	<p>I am immune to racism because I have friends of color (Id.).</p> <p>Your racial oppression is so different than my gender oppression. I can’t be a racist. I’m like you (Id.).</p>
<p><b>Myth of meritocracy</b> Statements which assert that race does not play a role in life successes (Id.).</p>	<p>“I believe the most qualified person should get the job” (Id.).</p> <p>“Everyone can succeed in this society, if they work hard enough” (Id.).</p>	<p>People of color are given extra unfair benefits because of their race (Id.).</p> <p>People of color are lazy and/or incompetent and need to work harder (Id.).</p>
<p><b>Pathologizing cultural values/communication styles</b> The notion that the values and</p>	<p>Asking a Black person: “Why do you have to be so loud/animated? Just calm down” (Id.).</p>	<p>Assimilate to dominant Culture (Id.).</p>

communication styles of the dominant/White culture are ideal (Id.).	<p>To an Asian or Lation person: “Why are you so quiet? We want to know what you think. Be more verbal.” Speak up more” (Id.).</p> <p>Dismissing an individual who brings up race/culture in work/school setting</p>	<p>Leave your cultural baggage Outside (Id.).</p>
<p><b>Second-class citizen</b> Occurs when a White person is given preferential treatment as a consumer over a person of color (Id.).</p> <p>Occurs when a White person is given preferential treatment as a consumer over a person of color (Id.).</p>	<p>Person of color mistaken for a service worker (Id.).</p> <p>Having a taxi cab pass a person of color and pick up a White passenger (Id.).</p> <p>Being ignored at a store counter as attention is given to the White customer behind you (Id.).</p> <p>“You people. . . ” (Id.).</p>	<p>People of color are servants to Whites. They couldn’t possibly occupy high-status positions (Id.).</p> <p>You are likely to cause trouble and/or travel to a dangerous neighborhood (Id.).</p> <p>Whites are move valued customers than people of color (Id.).</p> <p>You don’t belong. You are a lesser being (Id.).</p>
<p><b>Environmental microaggressions</b> Macro-level microaggressions, which are more apparent on systemic and environmental levels (Id.).</p>	<p>A college or university with buildings that are all named after White heterosexual upper class males (Id.).</p> <p>Television shows and movies</p>	<p>You don’t belong/You won’t succeed here. There is only so far you can go (Id.).</p> <p>You are an outsider/You don’t</p>

	<p>that feature predominantly white people, without representation of people of color (Id.).</p> <p>Overcrowding of public schools in communities of color (Id.).</p> <p>Overabundance of liquor stores in communities of color (Id.).</p>	<p>exist (Id.).</p> <p>People of color don't/shouldn't value education (Id.).</p> <p>People of color are deviant (Id.).</p>
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**Table II<sup>23</sup>**  
**Racial Microaggression Scale (RMAS)**

The following questions ask whether you feel that you have been treated a certain way by others because of your race. For each question, please mark how often you feel you have experienced the event described, and whether the incident caused you to feel stressed, upset, offended, or frustrated. If you have never noticed or experienced the interaction listed, please circle 'never' and go on to the next question. If you are multiracial, please think about whether people treat you as described below because of your mixed or multiple racial backgrounds.

	A. HOW OFTEN does this happen to you?				B. IF THIS DOES HAPPEN TO YOU, how stressful, upsetting, or bothersome is this for you?				
	Never	A little/ rarely	Sometimes/a moderate amount	Often/ frequently	This has never happened to me	Not at all	A little	Moderate level	High level
1. Because of my race, other people assume that I am a foreigner.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
2. Because of my race, people suggest that I am not a 'true' American.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
3. Other people often ask me where I am from, suggesting that I don't belong.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
4. Other people treat me like a criminal because of my race.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
5. People act like they are scared of me because of my race.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
6. Others assume that I will behave aggressively because of my race.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
7. I am singled out by police or security people because of my race.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
8. People suggest that I am 'exotic' in a sexual way because of my race.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
9. Other people view me in a overly sexual way because of	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3

<sup>23</sup> The Racial Microaggressions Scale was developed by Torres-Harding, et al., (2012).

my race.									
10. Other people hold sexual stereotypes about me because of my racial background.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
11. Other people act as if they can fully understand my racial identity, even though they are not of my racial background.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
12. Other people act as if all of the people of my race are alike.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
13. Others suggest that people of my racial background get unfair benefits.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
14. Others assume that people of my background would succeed in life if they simply worked harder.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
15. Other people deny that people of my race face extra obstacles when compared to Whites.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
16. Other people assume that I am successful because of affirmative action, not because I earned my accomplishments.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
17. Others prefer that I assimilate to the White culture and downplay my racial background.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
18. Others hint that I should work hard to prove that I am not like other people of my race.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
19. Others suggest that my racial heritage is dysfunctional or undesirable.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
20. Others focus only on the negative aspects of my racial background.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
21. I am mistaken for being a service worker or lower-status worker simply because of my race.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
22. I am treated like a second-class citizen because of my race.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3

23. I receive poorer treatment in restaurants and stores because of my race.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
24. When I interact with authority figures, they are usually of a different racial background.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
25. I notice that there are few role models of my racial background in my chosen career.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
26. Sometimes I am the only person of my racial background in my class or workplace.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
27. Where I work or go to school, I see few people of my racial background.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
28. I notice that there are few people of my racial background on TV, in books, and in magazines.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
29. Sometimes I feel as if people look past me or don't see me as a real person because of my race.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
30. I feel invisible because of my race.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
31. I am ignored in school or work environments because of my race.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
32. My contributions are dismissed or devalued because of my racial background.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
33. Other people make assumptions about my intelligence and abilities because of my race.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
34. Other people assume that I am knowledgeable about multicultural issues, simply because I am a member of a racial minority group.	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3
35. Others ask me to serve as a "spokesperson" for people	0	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	3

in my racial group.									
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**Table III<sup>24</sup>**  
**Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI)**

Centrality Scale:

1. Overall, being Black has very little to do with how I feel about myself. (R)
2. In general, being Black is an important part of my self-image.
3. My destiny is tied to the destiny of other Black people.
4. Being Black is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am. (R)
5. I have a strong sense of belonging to Black people
6. I have a strong attachment to other Black people.
7. Being Black is an important reflection of who I am.
8. Being Black is not a major factor in my social relationships. (R)

Regard Scale:

Private Regard Subscale

1. I feel good about Black people.
2. I am happy that I am Black.
3. I feel that Blacks have made major accomplishments and advancements.
4. I often regret that I am Black. (R)
5. I am proud to be Black.
6. I feel that the Black community has made valuable contributions to this society.

Public Regard Subscale

1. Overall, Blacks are considered good by others.
2. In general, others respect Black people.
3. Most people consider Blacks, on the average to be more ineffective than other racial groups. (R)
4. Blacks are not respected by the broader society. (R)
5. In general, other groups view Blacks in a positive manner
6. Society views Black people as an asset.

**(R) items should be reverse coded.**

Assimilation Subscale:

1. Blacks who espouse separatism are as racist as White people who also espouse separatism.
2. A sign of progress is that Blacks are in the mainstream of America more than ever before.
3. Because America is predominantly White, it is important that Blacks go to White schools so that they can gain experience interacting with Whites.
4. Blacks should strive to be full members of the American political system.
5. Blacks should try to work within the system to achieve their political and economic goals.
6. Blacks should strive to integrate all institutions which are segregated.

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<sup>24</sup> The Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI) was developed by Sellers, et al. (1998) to operationalize the MMRI that was also developed by Sellers, et al. (1998).

7. Blacks should feel free to interact socially with White people.
8. Blacks should view themselves as being Americans first and foremost.
9. The plight of Blacks in America will improve only when Blacks are in important positions with the system.

Humanist Subscale:

1. Black values should not be inconsistent with human values.
2. Blacks should have the choice to marry interracially.
3. Blacks and Whites have more commonalities than differences.
4. Black people should not consider race when buying art or selecting a book to read.
5. Blacks would be better off if they were more concerned with the problems facing all people than just focusing on Black issues.
6. Being an individual is more important than identifying oneself as Black.
7. We are all children of a higher being, therefore, we should love people of all races.
8. Blacks should judge Whites as individuals and not as members of the White race.
9. People regardless of their race have strengths and limitations.

Oppressed Minority Subscale:

1. The same forces which have led to the oppression of Blacks have also led to the oppression of other groups.
2. The struggle for Black liberation in America should be closely related to the struggle of other oppressed groups.
3. Blacks should about the oppression of other groups.
4. Black people should treat other oppressed people as allies.
5. The racism Blacks have experienced is similar to that of other minority groups.
6. There are other people who experience racial injustice and indignities similar to Black Americans.
7. Blacks will be more successful in achieving their goals if they form coalitions with other oppressed groups.
8. Blacks should try to become friends with people from other oppressed groups.
9. The dominant society devaluess anything not White male oriented.

Nationalist Subscale:

1. It is important for Black people to surround their children with Black art, music and literature.
2. Black people should not marry interracially.
3. Blacks would be better off if they adopted Afro-centric values.
4. Black students are better off going to schools that are controlled and organized by Blacks.
5. Black people must organize themselves into a separate Black political force.
6. Whenever possible, Blacks should buy from other Black businesses.
7. A thorough knowledge of Black history is very important for Blacks today.
8. Blacks and Whites can never live in true harmony because of racial differences.
9. White people can never be trusted where Blacks are concerned.

**Note: Response scale ranges from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree).**

**Table IV<sup>25</sup>**  
**Modified Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MMIBI)**

	1 = Strongly disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Somewhat disagree	4 = Neither agree or disagree	5 = Somewhat agree	6 = Agree	7 = Strongly agree
1. In general, being Black is an important part of my self-image.							
2. My destiny is tied to the destiny of other Black people.							
3. I have a strong attachment to other Black people.							
4. Being Black is not a major factor in my social relationships.							
5. I am happy that I am Black.							
6. I feel that Blacks have made major accomplishments and advancements.							
7. I am proud to be Black.							
8. I feel that the Black community has made valuable contributions to this society.							
9. Overall, Blacks are considered good by others.							
10. Most people consider Blacks, on the average, to be more ineffective than other							

<sup>25</sup> For the purposes of time management, the MIBI developed by Sellers et al. (1998) was modified by the researcher from its original 56 questionnaire version to a 36 questionnaire version by combining those questions that were similar in nature.

racial groups.							
11. In general, other groups view Blacks in a positive manner.							
12. Blacks who espouse separatism are as racist as White people who also espouse separatism.							
13. A sign of progress is that Blacks are in the mainstream of America more than ever before.							
14. Because America is predominantly White, it is important that Blacks go to White schools so that they can gain experience interacting with Whites.							
15. Blacks should strive to be full members of the American political system.							
16. Blacks should strive to integrate all institutions which are segregated.							
17. Blacks should feel free to interact socially with White people.							
18. The plight of Blacks in America will improve only when Blacks are in important positions within the system.							
19. Black values should not be inconsistent with human values.							
20. Blacks and Whites have							



more commonalities than differences.							
21. Blacks would be better off if they were more concerned with the problems facing all people than just focusing on Black issues.							
22. Being an individual is more important than identifying oneself as Black.							
23. We are all children of a higher being, therefore, we should love people of all races.							
24. Blacks should judge Whites as individuals and not as members of the White race.							
25. People regardless of their race have strengths and limitations.							
26. Blacks should learn about the oppression of other groups.							
27. There are other people who experience racial injustice and indignities similar to Black Americans.							
28. The dominant society devalues anything not White male oriented.							
29. It is important for Black people to surround their children with Black art, music, and literature.							
30. Black people should not							

marry interracially.							
31. Blacks would be better off if they adopted Afrocentric values.							
32. Black students are better off going to schools that are controlled and organized Blacks.							
33. Whenever possible, Blacks should buy from other Black businesses.							
34. A thorough knowledge of Black history is very important for Blacks today.							
35. Blacks and Whites can never live in true harmony because of racial differences.							
36. White people can never be trusted where Blacks are concerned.							

**Table V<sup>26</sup>**  
**Summary of Gaps in Existing Racial Microaggressions' Literature**

Conceptual gaps	Consequences yet to be explored	Methodological gaps
Microassaults in one type of microaggressions that seems to overlap with overt racism. Therefore, how do racial microaggressions conceptually differ from overt racism when microassaults are delivered by definition? (Wong et al., 2014, p. 191).	Psychological and physical health outcomes of racial microaggressions, specifically long-term effects. (Id.).	The initial wave of racial microaggressions researchers used are qualitative methods. Therefore, limitations of qualitative approaches need to be addressed for racial microaggressions research. (Id.).
The racial microaggressions themes of different racial groups have broadened from Sue et. al's original conceptualization. Therefore, is there an overarching taxonomy of microaggressions for all POC, or should taxonomies be developed for different racial groups? (Id.).	In regards to the microaggression process model, the immediate reaction phase still needs to be explored. (Id.).	Quantitative scales of racial microaggressions rely on self-report and recall which makes it difficult to determine the immediate and proximal effects of microaggressions. (Id.).
Do members of the non-invisible racial and ethnic minorities experience racial microaggressions differently, or even experience them at all? (Id.).	The cumulative effect of racial microaggressions across one's life. (Id.).	The clinical utility of existing racial microaggression scales requires investigation. (Id.).
Do racial microaggression experiences vary across immigrant and non-immigrant groups? (Id.).	Consequences of racial microaggressions perpetrated between and within groups of racial and ethnic minority status. (Id.).	There is a need for more experimental and longitudinal designs. (Id.).
How does internalized oppression play a role in the recognition and experience of racial microaggressions? (Id.).	How, and to what degree, do preferred coping mechanisms, like spirituality, mitigate the effects of racial microaggressions? What is the inverse relationship between racial microaggressions and coping mechanisms? (Id.).	

<sup>26</sup> Summary of gaps in existing racial microaggressions literature was compiled by Wong et al., 2014, p. 191.

How do racial microaggressions differ from, relate to, or fit in with other theoretical models of discrimination? (Id.).		
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**Table VI<sup>27</sup>**  
**Descriptive Information about Existing Racial Microaggressions' Literature**

References	Nature of article		Methods		Sample Characteristics		Setting/ Context	Contributions
	Theory/ conceptual	Data driven	Qualitative	Quantitative	N <sup>a</sup>	Demographics		
Sue et al (2007a,b)	X							Taxonomy of Microaggressions; call for research
Constantine (2007)		X	X		24	Black clients, white therapists	University	Negative relationship between perceived racial MAs by the client therapy and working alliance as well as treatment satisfaction was found
Constantine & Sue (2007)		X	X		10	White supervisors, black supervisees	University	7 themes identified: invalidating racial-cultural issues, stereotypical assumptions about supervisees and clients, blaming clients, suggesting culturally inappropriate interventions.
Ruiz-Mesa (2007)		X		X	439		University	The stronger sense of cultural identity a student has, the more they are to interpret a negative learning environment, and the more negatively the student perceives the environment, the more likely they will perceive racial MAs.
Sue & Constantine	X					White students	University	Some of the fears of white students related to race are

<sup>27</sup> Wong et al (2013) reviewed 73 (two reviewed articles were duplicated) racial microaggressions articles utilizing several databases (i.e., PsycINFO, PsycArticles, Behavioral Sciences Collection, and ProQuest LLC Dissertations and Theses database). Most of the studies that were reviewed utilized the taxonomy of racial microaggressions developed by Sue et al (2007a, b) as the framework for interpreting their data.

(2007)								discussed: appearing racist, realizing they are racist, recognizing culpability, and acknowledging white privilege.
Constantine et al (2008)		X	X		12	Black faculty	University	7 themes were identified: invisibility-hypervisibility, questioning credentials, lack of mentorship, extra service work, attributional ambiguity, constant cognizance of appearance.
Goodstein (2008)	X							In response to Sue et al (2007a, b), the author argues that the concept of racial MAs is limited and should be expanded to cultural MAs.
Harris (2008)	X							In response to Sue et al (2007a, b), the author offers alternative explanations other than race for the types of MAs discussed in Sue et al.
Nadal (2008a)		X		X	448	Chinese & Filipino	Community	Both groups reported unique experiences of racial MAs based on phenotype.
Nadal (2008b)	X							Offers suggestions for learning about and dealing with MAs in personal and professional contexts.
Schact (2008)	X							In response to Sue et al (2007a, b), the author asserts tht not all microinteractions are negative and that when a relationship is detrimental, both parties are to blame.
Shah (2008)		X	X		10	Visible minorities female students	University	The most common form of racism reported was microaggressions, particularly invisibility, minimization of the importance of race,

								stereotypes, being asked to represent one's entire group, racist humor, and colorblindness.
Sue et al (2008a, b)		X	X		13	Black	University	5 domains related to the experience of MAs are identified: incident, perception, reaction, interpretation, and consequence.
Sue et al (2008a, b)	X					Black	University	The authors argue that the most incidents of MAs are likely to occur when the perpetrator occupies a position of power over the victim.
Sue et al (2008c)		X	X		13	Black	University	Sue et al's taxonomy is appropriate for this population. Identified themes include: assumption of intellectual inferiority & inferior status, criminality, assumption of the universality of black Americans, and the assumption of the superiority of white race & culture.
Thomas (2008)	X							In response to Sue et al (2007a, b), the author expresses concern for the focus on the negative aspects of race, rather than the positive. He also argues that the concept of racial MAs be broadened to include cultural considerations.
Cartwright et al (2009)		X	X			Black faculty	University	6 of the 7 themes identified by Constantine et al (2008) were validated and elucidated a new theme: unequal or different treatment.

Harris (2009)	X							Argues that Sue et al (2007a, b) place too much importance on race.
McCabe (2009)		X	X		82	Black, Latina/o, white students	University	Explored intersection of racial and gender MAs. Unique themes include: Black men are threatening, Latinas are exoticized, black women experience racial MAs in the classroom, white women experience MAs in male-dominated majors.
Sue (2009b) – on original Table information was duplicated	X							The author differentiates between externally labeled POC and subjectively labeled POC and suggests that racial reality of the two groups is different.
Sue et al (2009b) - on original Table information was duplicated		X	X		10	Asian American	University	Sue et al's (2007a,b) taxonomy is appropriate for this population. Specific themes identified include: attributional ambiguity, uncertainty about when and how to respond, and disappointment when the MA is perpetrated by someone whom the victim respects.
Sue et al (2009c)		X	X		8	White faculty	University	There was a general lack of training on dealing with difficult dialogues on race in the classroom.
Yosso et al (2009)		X	X		37	Latina/o students	University	Participants most frequently experienced interpersonal racial MAs in the form of racist jokes.
Allen (2010)		X	X		5	Black middle class students	Community	Parents providing opportunities for social and cultural experiences for children may mitigate



								negative psychological effects of racial MAs. Also documented are interracial MAs between minority groups.
Beaumont (2010)				X	180	White POC	Community	A negative correlation was found between perception of racial MAs by the clinician in supervision and working alliance as well as disclosure by the clinician.
Grier-Reed (2010)	X							Asserts that counterspace may serve as protective factors.
Hernandez et al (2010)		X	X		23	African, Asian, Hispanic & Kurdish decent mental health workers		Sue et al.'s (2007a, b) taxonomy is appropriate for these groups. Identified themes include: self-reflection and consultation, self-care, spirituality, challenging MAs, support from white allies, documenting MAs, and mentoring.
Johnston & Nadal (2010)	X					Multiracial		Proposed a taxonomy of MAs toward multiracial individuals based on Sue et al (2007a, b). Themes unique to this population: exclusion/inclusion, exoticization/objectification, assumption of monoracila identity or mistaken identity, denial of multiracial reality, and pathologizing.
Michael-Makri (2010)		X		X	187	POC students	University	There is no difference in the rate of racial MAs between racial and ethnic groups. The most common types include: being asked to represent one's entire group, being treated

								overly friendly, exoticization, infantilization, minimization, and invisibility.
Murphy-Shigematsu (2010)	X						Community	The author advocates personal reflection by supervisors to become more aware of their own biases about race.
Poon (2010)		X	X		25	Asian American students	University	Critical mass alone does not mitigate against experiencing racial MAs.
Rivera et al (2010)		X	X		11	Latina/o	Community	Sue et al's (2007a, b) taxonomy is appropriate. A unique type of MA identified was characteristics of speech.
Sauceda (2010)		X		X	309	Latina/o students	University	Strong ethnic identity is a protective factor against the negative psychological impact of MAs.
Sue et al (2010)		X	X		14	White students	University	The participants were not able to identify difficult dialogues, which indicates the students might have a decreased awareness of racial content. Also, this study validates Sue and Constantine's (2007) earlier findings that racial discourse makes white students anxious and uncomfortable.
Sue et al (2010a)	X							Argues that most of the discrimination that occurs in the workplace is the result of racial MAs and not overt forms of racism.
Sue et al (2010b)		X	X		14	POC students	University	Racial MAs often precipitate difficult dialogues on race in the classroom.
Torres et al (2010)		X	X	X	97 107	Black students	University	Sue et al's (2007a, b) taxonomy is appropriate for

								this population. The authors also found that the experience of racial MAs in the form of underestimation of personal ability may carry greater risk to psychological health than other forms.
Watkins et al (2010)		X	X		10	Black students	Univesity	Sue et al's (2007a, b) taxonomy is appropriate for this group. Black students devote a great deal of mental energy to determining whether or not an event was racially motivated. Also, the participants felt more comfortable with peers of color than with white students.
Balsam et al (2011)		X	X	X	117 900 1217	POC LGBT	Community	Development & initial validation of the LGBT People of Color Microaggressions Scale
Barnes (2011)		X	X	X	34	Black supervisors, white supervisees	University	A negative correlation exists between the perception of racial MAs by the supervisor in supervision and the working alliance.
Burdsey (2011)		X	X		12	British Asian athletes	Community	Racial MAs exist in this population, the most common of which is racial jokes.
Clark et al (2011)		X	X		10 blogs	American Indian	University	Sue et al's taxonomy is validated for American Indians. Unique themes for this group include: extinct or vanishing, sociopolitical dominance, adoration and grief.
Crawford (2011)		X		X	110	Black clients	University	Those who experience racial MAs are less likely to seek treatment.

De Oliveira Braga Lopez (2011)		X		X	16	Black immigrants to Portugal	Community	Sue et al's is appropriate for this population. Types of MAs include: unwelcoming environment, assumption of inferiority and criminality, denial of differences, & exoticization.
Doucette (2011)		X		X	137	White students	University	Participants were less aware of subtle forms of MAs than overt instances of racism.
Gomez et al (2011)		X	X		9	POC students	University	Sue et al's taxonomy is appropriate for teaching assistants of color. Identified themes include: undermining authority and questioning one's own ability.
Granger (2011)		X	X		5	Black students	University	A heuristic inquiry of racial MAs identified the following themes: anger, fear, hopelessness, hypervigilance, culture shock, and spirituality.
Henfield (2011)		X	X		5	Black students	Community	Sue et al.'s taxonomy is appropriate for this group.
Huber (2011)		X	X		20	Latina/o students	Community	Argues Sue et al's (2007a, b) taxonomy should be broadened to include racist nativist MAs. Experiences of these types of MAs are similar between US-born and immigrant individuals.
Hunter (2011)		X	X		20	POC employees	Community	Sue et al's (2007a, b) is appropriate for this group. Identified themes include: ascription of intelligence, colorblindness, criminality, denial of racism, myth of meritocracy, catholicizing & stereotyping. Racial MAs also have a negative impact on

								work performance.
Huynah (2012)		X	X	X	286	Asian American Latina/o	Community	Development & initial validation of the Ethnic Microaggressions Scale.
Lin (2011)		X	X	X	347	Asian	Community	Development & initial validation of the Asian American Racial Microaggressions Scale.
Mercer et al (2011)		X	X	X	385	Black students	University	Development & initial validation of the inventory of microaggressions against black individuals.
Mitchell (2011)		X	X		32	African American students	Community	Both homegrown and transfer students experience racial MAs, but homegrown (native to area) students report more distress.
Morton (2011)		X		X	19	White clinicians, black clients	University	Color blindness of the clinician predicts the perpetration of racial MAs, the most common of which are the avoidance of discussing race and culture and a minimization of the importance of race and culture.
Nadal (2011a)		X		X	443	African American, Asian American, Latina/o	Community	Development and initial validation of the Racial & Ethnic Racial Microaggressions Scale.
Nadal (2011b)	X							Offers practical strategies for coping with racial MAs in the workplace.
Nadal et al (2011a)	X							Discusses Sue et al's (2007a, b) taxonomy in relation to workplace settings.
Nadal et al (2011b)		X	X	X	9 262	Multiracial	University	Identifies types of racial MAs unique to multiracial individuals: exclusion from

								family, the racial ideal, & assumption of dysfunctional family dynamics.
Nnawulezi (2011)		X	X		14	POC	Community	Victims of domestic violence are reluctant to discuss racial MAs perpetrated by people in positions of authority over them.
Owen et al (2011)		X		X	215	African American, Asian American, Latina/o, multiracial clients	University	No difference in the rate at which participants experienced racial MAs in treatment. MAs have negative relationship to psychological well-being & treatment outcome.
Robinson (2011)		X	X		8	POC students	University	The most common form of MAs experienced are microinvalidations and microinsults, both of which has a negative impact on emotional, career, social, physical, psychological, personal & spiritual wellness.
Schoulte et al (2011)		X		X	146	POC	Community	Cultural MAs lead to levels of psychological distress in their victims similar to those who have suffered, betrayal, sexual abuse, & physical abuse
Smith et al (2011)		X		X	661	Black Male	University	Increased education is associated with increased psychological distress from racial MAs.
Sue et al (2011)		X	X		8	POC faculty	University	Difficult dialogues were often instigated by racial MAs delivered toward students of color and the instructor. All faculty experienced an internal struggle to balance their own beliefs with an

								attempt to remain objective.
Wang et al. (2011)		X		X	172 327	Asian American White	Community	Asian Americans are more likely to experience negative emotions than whites when an ambiguous event is interpreted as racially motivated.
Blume et al (2012)		X		X	178	African American, Asian American, Latina/o students	University	Racial MAs & self-efficacy are correlated with anxiety; MAs & self-efficacy are correlated with binge drinking; & MAs, self-efficacy & binge drinking are correlated with alcohol-related events.
Cappiccie et al (2012)	X						University	Suggests the use of Critical Race Theory to evaluate cartoon films as a way to teach about racial MAs in the classroom.
Hall & Fields (2012)	X							Introduces Sue et al's taxonomy to the Nursing establishment & makes suggestions for research and applications.
Torres-Harding et al (2012)		X	X	X	406	African American, Asian American, Latina/o multiracial	Community	The development & initial validation of the Racial Microaggressions Scale.

<sup>a</sup> If more than one number is listed, each number corresponds to a different component of the article

<sup>b</sup> The authors' own descriptions were used here. POC refers to people of color

**Table VII**  
**Schematic of Dilemmas and Phases of Racial Microaggressions**

<b>Dilemma 1: Clash of Racial Realities</b> – The racial authenticity of people of color is markedly different from that of White Americans (Astor, 1997). Many Whites give the impression that racism is no longer a problem that is worthy of attention (post-Obama race era), while many Blacks maintain that their lives are filled with never-ending and persistent experiences of prejudice and discrimination (Sue, 2010b, p. 11).	<b>Domain Examples</b>
<b>Phase One</b> - Incident: An event or situation experienced by the participant (Sue, 2010a, pp. 68-69).	“[The hostess] says, ‘Your table’s ready.’ And [my friend asks] ‘Is it in the main dining room?’ and the lady says ‘No.’ ‘Well, we want to sit in the main dining room.’ She’s like, ‘I wasn’t aware that you wanted the main dining room.’ My friend asks, ‘Is it because we’re Black and we’re young? You can’t seat us in the main dining room because we can’t afford the main dining room?’” (Sue, 2010a, pp. 68-69).
	“Sometimes they follow you, I mean, you go to Macy’s or Bloomingdale’s, I mean, especially as a black man, I mean every time I go in that place, somebody’s watching me, somebody’s walking behind me, trying to monitor me. They don’t want me out of their sight until I leave” (Id.).
<b>Dilemma 2: Invisibility of Unintentional Biases</b> - Socialization and ethnic conditioning brings about unconscious biases and misinformation about various disenfranchised groups who are on the outer edge of our society (Id., p. 14). Well-intentioned Whites truly believe that they are non-prejudiced, hold egalitarian values, and would never intentionally discriminate; yet, they are more than likely to foster unconscious biases that may result in discriminatory actions	



(Dovidio et al., 2009).	
<p><b>Phase Two</b> – Perception: Participant’s belief about whether or not the incident was racially motivated. Responses reflect: Yes/No/Unsure, Questioning (Sue, 2010a, pp. 68-69).</p>	<p>“Well, to me it’s almost one of those things where you actually have to admit to a level of paranoia. I mean, you are constantly asking ‘was that racist?’ Am I wrong? Times are I can tell one way or another . Other times it’s being constantly on guard. I have to now look at the state of my mental health.”</p>
	<p>“I don’t know, for me it’s hard because you’re taught to not try to attribute everything, everything that happens to racism. I mean, there’s still that kind of, well, is there a reason why it happened? Is it just me?” (Id.).</p>
<p><b>Dilemma 3: Perceived Minimal Harm</b> – In most instances, when the perpetrator is confronted with their microaggressive act, he or she usually believes that the person of color has overreacted and is being overly sensitive and/or petty. After all, even if it was an innocent racial gaffe, microaggressions are believed to have nominal negative impact (Sue et al, 2007, p. 278).</p>	
<p><b>Phase Three</b> – Reaction: Participant’s immediate response to the incident (Sue, 2010a, pp. 68-69).</p> <p>- <b>Cognitive:</b> A reaction that involves thought processes, whether spoken or internal.</p> <p>- <b>Behavioral:</b> A reaction that involves an action.</p> <p>- <b>Emotional:</b> A reaction that involves an emotion</p>	<p>“Or like – and I’m thinking, ‘What do you mean why do I work so hard? Am I not supposed to work hard?’ You know, I guess I had never been looked at negatively for working hard. Usually, it’s like, oh, you know, ‘Thanks for staying.’ But you know, like there was no praise for being a good worker.” (Id.).</p> <p>“I’m determined that I’m not going to allow racism to take my voice – which is how I see it, as opposed to being paranoid – is that I have people in my sphere of influence that I can call up and share my authentic feelings with.” (Id.).</p> <p>“I get so angry. What a racist! There it goes again. It’s this whole damn thing, and I’m thinking, ‘Oh my God! Over and over. I’m so</p>

	tired and exhausted”” (Id.).
<p><b>Dilemma 4: Catch-22 of Responding to Microaggressions</b> – Microaggressions, especially microinsults and microinvalidations, place socially undervalued group members in an undesirable position of (i) trying to discern the motivations behind the actions of perpetrators, and (ii) determining whether and how to respond (Sue, 2010b, p. 16).</p>	
<p><b>Phase Four</b> – Interpretation: The meaning the participant makes of the incident, answering such questions as: Why did the event occur? What were the person’s intentions? (Sue, 2010a, pp. 68-69).</p> <p><b>Phase Five</b> – Consequence for Individual : Behavioral, emotive, or thought processes which develop over time as a result of said incident (Id.).</p>	<p>“My date is looking for me to get a cab. But they keep passing. So it’s just constant humiliation. It’s just humiliation.” (Id.).</p> <p>“They treated me like the angry black woman and like afraid how I’m going to come back.” “But subtle, it’s more like they want to find out what I know and who I am before they trust me with it.” (Id.).</p> <p>“And I think I’ve learned in a lot of ways to sort of shield myself from any kind of, like, personal hurt that would come out of it. Like I don’t blame it on myself, it’s not like ‘What’s wrong with me?’ It’s like, ‘Oh, that’s that White unconsciousness tht they’re so well-trained in”” (Id.).</p>

**Table VIII<sup>28</sup>**  
**Examples of Racial, Gender, and Sexual-Orientation Microaggressions**  
**In Therapeutic Practice**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Microaggression</b>	<b>Message</b>
<b>Alien in One's Own Land</b> – When Asian Americans and Latino Americans are assumed to be foreign-born (Sue, 2010a, pp. 262-266).	A White client does not want to work with an Asian American therapist because she “will not understand my problem” (Id.).  A White therapist tells an American-born Latino client that he or she should seek a Spanish-speaking therapist (Id.).	You are not American (Id.).
<b>Ascription of Intelligence</b> – Assigning a degree of intelligence to a person of color or woman based on their race or gender (Id.).	A school counselor reacts with surprise when an Asian American student has trouble on the math portion of a standardized test (Id.).  A career counselor asks a Black or Latino student “Do you think you’re ready for college?” (Id.).  A school counselor reacts with surprise that a female student scored high on a math portion of a standardized test (Id.).	All Asians are smart and good at math (Id.).  It is unusual for people of color to succeed (Id.).  It is unusual for women to be smart and good in math (Id.).
<b>Color Blindness</b> – Statements that indicate that a White person does not want to acknowledge race (Id.).	A therapist says “I think you are being too paranoid. We should emphasize similarities, not people’s differences” when a client of color attempts to discuss her feelings about being the	Race and culture are not important variables that affect people’s lives (Id.).

<sup>28</sup> Table VIII encapsulates recurrent counseling/therapy microaggressions singled out as often transpiring in the therapeutic working alliance and directed toward clients of color, women, and LGBTs (Sue, 2010a, pp. 262-266).

	<p>only person of color at her job and feeling alienated and dismissed by her coworkers (Id.).</p> <p>A client of color expresses concern in discussing racial issues with her therapist. Her therapist replies, “When I see you, I don’t see color.” (Id.).</p>	<p>Your racial experiences are not valid (Id.).</p>
<p><b>Criminality/Assumption of Criminal Status</b> – A person of color is presumed to be dangerous, criminal, or deviant, based solely on their race (Id.).</p>	<p>When a Black client states that she was accused of stealing from work, the therapist encourages the client to explore how she might have contributed to her employer’s mistrust of her (Id.).</p> <p>A therapist takes great care to ask all substance-abuse questions in an intake with a Native American client, and is disbelieving of the client’s nonexistent history with substances (Id.).</p>	<p>You are a criminal (Id.).</p> <p>You are deviant (Id.).</p>
<p><b>Use of Sexist/Heterosexist Language</b> – Terms that exclude or degrade women and LGB groups (Id.).</p>	<p>During the intake session, a female client discloses that she has been in her current relationship for one year. The therapist asks how long the client has known her boyfriend (Id.).</p> <p>When an adult female client explains she is feeling isolated at work, her male therapist asks, “Aren’t there any girls you can gossip with</p>	<p>Heterosexuality is the norm (Id.).</p> <p>When speaking to an adult female, using language that often refers to an adolescent female; your problems are trivial (Id.).</p>

	there?” (Id.).	
<b>Denial of Individual Racism/Sexism/Heterosexism</b> – A statement made when a member of the power group renounces their biases (Id.).	<p>A client of color asks his or her therapist about how race affects their working relationship. The therapist replies, “Race does not affect the way I treat you.” (Id.).</p> <p>A client of color expresses hesitancy in discussing racial issues with his White female therapist. She replies “I understand. As a woman, I race discrimination, also.” (Id.).</p> <p>A therapist’s nonverbal behavior conveys discomfort when a bisexual male client is describing a recent sexual experience with a man. When he asks her about it, she insists she has “no negative feelings toward gay people” and says it is important to keep the conversation on him (Id.).</p>	<p>Your racial and/or ethnic experience is not important (Id.).</p> <p>Your racial oppression is no different from my gender oppression (Id.).</p> <p>I am incapable of homonegativity, yet I am unwilling to explore this (Id.).</p>
<b>Myth of Meritocracy</b> – Statements that assert that race or gender does not play a role in succeeding in career advancement or education (Id.).	<p>A school counselor tells a Black student that “if you work hard, you can succeed like everyone else.” (Id.).</p> <p>A female client visits a career counselor to share her concerns that a male coworker was chosen for a managerial position over her, despite the fact that she is better qualified and has been with the company longer. The counselor responds that</p>	<p>People of color/women are lazy and/or incompetent and need to work harder. If you don’t succeed, you have only yourself to blame (blaming the victim) (Id.).</p>

	“he must have been better suited for some of the job requirements.” (Id.).	
<b>Pathologizing Cultural Values/Communication Styles</b> – The notion that the values and communication styles of the dominant/White culture are ideal (Id.).	<p>A Black client is loud, emotional, and confrontational in a counseling session. The therapist diagnoses her with Borderline Personality Disorder (Id.).</p> <p>A client of Asian or Native American descent has trouble maintaining eye contact with his therapist. The therapist diagnoses him with a Social Anxiety Disorder (Id.).</p> <p>Advising a client, “Do you really think your problem stems from racism? (Id.).</p>	<p>Assimilate to dominant culture (Id.).</p> <p>Leave your cultural baggage outside</p>
<b>Second-Class Citizen</b> – Occurs when a member of the power group is given preferential treatment over a target group member (Id.).	<p>A male client calls and requests a session time that is currently taken by a female client. The therapist grants the male client the appointment without calling the female client to see if she can change times (Id.).</p> <p>Clients of color are not welcomed or acknowledged by receptionists (Id.).</p>	<p>Males are more valued than women (Id.).</p> <p>White clients are more valued than clients of color (Id.).</p>
<b>Culturally Insensitive/Antagonistic Treatment</b> – Occurs when ethnocentric definitions of counseling/therapy are imposed on clients (Id.).	A therapist refuses to play other roles but the traditional one of self-exploration (Id.).	There is only one way to be cured: the White, Western European way (Id.).
<b>Traditional Gender Role</b>	A therapist continually	Women should be

<p><b>Prejudicing and Stereotyping</b> – Occurs when expectations of traditional roles or stereotypes are conveyed (Id.).</p>	<p>asks the middle-aged female client about dating and “putting herself out there,” despite the fact that the client has not expressed interest in exploring this area (Id.).</p> <p>A gay male client has been with his partner for 5 years. His therapist continually probes his desires to meet other men and be unfaithful (Id.).</p> <p>A therapist raises her eyebrows when a female client mentions that she has had a one-night stand.</p>	<p>married, and dating should be an important topic/part of your life (Id.).</p> <p>Gay men are promiscuous. Gay men cannot have monogamous relationships (Id.).</p> <p>Women should not be sexually adventurous (Id.).</p>
<p><b>Sexual Objectification</b> – Occurs when women are treated like objects at men’s disposal (Id.).</p>	<p>A male therapist puts his hands on a female client’s back as she walks out of the session (Id.).</p> <p>A male therapist is looking at his female client’s breasts while she is talking (Id.).</p>	<p>Your body is not yours (Id.).</p> <p>Your body/appearance is for men’s enjoyment and pleasure (Id.).</p>
<p><b>Assumption of Abnormality</b> – Occurs when it is implied that there is something wrong with being LGBT (Id.).</p>	<p>When discussing her bisexuality, the therapist continues to imply that there is a “crisis of identity.” (Id.).</p> <p>The therapist of a 20-year-old lesbian inadvertently refers to her sexuality as a “phase.” (Id.).</p>	<p>Bisexuality represents confusion about sexual orientation (Id.).</p> <p>Your sexuality is something that is not stable (Id.).</p>

**Table IX**  
**Cross's Original and Revised Nigrescence Models**

Model	Stage	Identity
<b>1971 original model</b>	<b>Pre-Encounter</b> - individuals are not consciously aware of the impact that race and ethnicity have had on their life experiences. They tend to assimilate, seek acceptance by Whites, exhibit strong preferences for dominant cultural values, and even internalize negative stereotypes of their own group. (Diller, 2015, 2011, 2007, p. 197).	<b>Pro-White/Anti-Black</b> <b>Poor psychological functioning</b>
	<b>Encounter</b> – some event or experience shatters the individual's denial and sends him or her deep into confusion about his or her ethnicity. For the first time, the person must consciously deal with the fact of being different and what this difference means. At this stage, people of color often speak of waking up to reality, realizing that ethnicity is an aspect of self that must be dealt with the enormity of what must be confronted out in the world (Id.).	
	<b>Immersion-Emersion</b> – characterized by the individual immersing him/herself in all things ethnic while simultaneously avoiding all contact with Whites, the White world, and symbols of that world. The individual view everything that is Black as good and everything that is White as bad (Id.).	<b>Anti-White/Pro Black</b>
	<b>Internalization</b> – the individual becomes increasingly secure and positive in his or her Blackness and is able to consider other aspects of identity just as important as race (Id.).	<b>Humanist</b>



	<p><b>Internalization-Commitment</b> – represents a growing and maturing of the tendencies initiated in Stage 4. People of color at Stage 5 have found ways to translate their personal ethnic identities into an active sense of commitment to social justice and change (Id.).</p>	<p><b>Humanist</b>  <b>Social Activist</b>  <b>Healthy self-acceptance</b>  <b>Overall psychological well-being</b></p>
<b>1991 revised model</b>	<p><b>Pre-Encounter</b> – individuals do not believe that race is an important component of their identity. This may include an idealization of the dominant White society or simple placement of more emphasis on another identity component such as gender or religion (Sellers et al, 1998, p. 22).</p> <p><b>Encounter</b> – individuals are faced with a profound experience or a collection of events directly linked to their race. This experience encourages individuals to reexamine their current identity and find or then develop their Black identity. This experience can be either positive or negative (Id.).</p> <p><b>Immersion-Emersion</b> – described as being extremely pro-Black and anti-White. Externally, individuals are obsessed with identifying with Black culture, but internally they have not made the commitment to endorse all values and traditions associated with being Black (Id.).</p> <p><b>Internalization</b> – individuals with a Black Nationalist identity attitude emphasize the importance of the Afrocentric perspective on their everyday lived experiences as well as how they view themselves, others, and the world. The Black</p>	<p><b>Anti-Black</b>  <b>Assimilation</b></p> <p><b>Anti-White</b>  <b>Intense Black involvement</b></p> <p><b>Black Nationalist</b></p>

	<p>Nationalist continues to be involved in issues related to the Black community as well (Barnes, 2011, p. 50).</p> <p>The Biculturalist attitude reflects those individuals who navigate well between the two cultural by pursuing interests in the Black community and the mainstream culture. They also give equal importance and meaning to being Black or Afrocentric and being an American (Id.).</p> <p>The Multiculturalist combines the worldviews of other group orientations (e.g., ethnicity, gender, sexual preference, race). Multiculturalists continue to be involved in the issues that impact the Black communities but their perspective is multiculturally and they seek social justice for all oppressed groups (Id.).</p>	<p><b>Biculturalist</b></p> <p><b>Multiculturalist</b></p>
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**Table X<sup>29</sup>**  
**The People of Color Skin Color Identification Chart (POCSCIC)**



*The Intraracial Colorism Project, Inc.*

*POCSCIC Light Skin*

<input type="checkbox"/> L1	<input type="checkbox"/> L2	<input type="checkbox"/> L3	<input type="checkbox"/> L4	<input type="checkbox"/> L5
<input type="checkbox"/> L6	<input type="checkbox"/> L7	<input type="checkbox"/> L8	<input type="checkbox"/> L9	<input type="checkbox"/> L10
<input type="checkbox"/> L11	<input type="checkbox"/> L12	<input type="checkbox"/> L13	<input type="checkbox"/> L14	<input type="checkbox"/> L15
<input type="checkbox"/> L16	<input type="checkbox"/> L17	<input type="checkbox"/> L18	<input type="checkbox"/> L19	<input type="checkbox"/> L20
<input type="checkbox"/> L21	<input type="checkbox"/> L22	<input type="checkbox"/> L23	<input type="checkbox"/> L24	<input type="checkbox"/> L25

POCSCIC Light  
 ©2013 The Intraracial Colorism Project, Inc.  
<http://www.colorismproject.com>








<sup>29</sup> Dr. Culbreth in 2013 developed The People of Color Skin Color Identification Chart (POCSCIC). It is a skin color chart consisting of 75 skin colors in three skin color categories (i.e., light, medium, and dark). The chart was designed to help identify the skin tones of people of color belonging to varied racial groups with each skin color category consisting of 25 skin colors. Dr. Culbreth expanded the POCSCIC from an original chart that she developed in 2006 called the Black Skin Color Identification Chart (BSCIC) which consisted of three skin color categories (i.e., light, medium, and dark). Each skin color category contains 16 distinct skin colors for a total of 48 skin colors. (The Intraracial Colorism Project, Inc., 2009).



*The Intraracial Colorism Project, Inc.*

*POCSCIC Medium Skin*






<input type="checkbox"/> M1 	<input type="checkbox"/> M2 	<input type="checkbox"/> M3 	<input type="checkbox"/> M4 	<input type="checkbox"/> M5 
<input type="checkbox"/> M6 	<input type="checkbox"/> M7 	<input type="checkbox"/> M8 	<input type="checkbox"/> M9 	<input type="checkbox"/> M10 
<input type="checkbox"/> M11 	<input type="checkbox"/> M12 	<input type="checkbox"/> M13 	<input type="checkbox"/> M14 	<input type="checkbox"/> M15 
<input type="checkbox"/> M16 	<input type="checkbox"/> M17 	<input type="checkbox"/> M18 	<input type="checkbox"/> M19 	<input type="checkbox"/> M20 
<input type="checkbox"/> M21 	<input type="checkbox"/> M22 	<input type="checkbox"/> M23 	<input type="checkbox"/> M24 	<input type="checkbox"/> M25 





*The Intraracial Colorism Project, Inc.*

*POCSCIC Dark Skin*

<input type="checkbox"/> D1 	<input type="checkbox"/> D2 	<input type="checkbox"/> D3 	<input type="checkbox"/> D4 	<input type="checkbox"/> D5 
<input type="checkbox"/> D6 	<input type="checkbox"/> D7 	<input type="checkbox"/> D8 	<input type="checkbox"/> D9 	<input type="checkbox"/> D10 
<input type="checkbox"/> D11 	<input type="checkbox"/> D12 	<input type="checkbox"/> D13 	<input type="checkbox"/> D14 	<input type="checkbox"/> D15 
<input type="checkbox"/> D16 	<input type="checkbox"/> D17 	<input type="checkbox"/> D18 	<input type="checkbox"/> D19 	<input type="checkbox"/> D20 
<input type="checkbox"/> D21 	<input type="checkbox"/> D22 	<input type="checkbox"/> D23 	D24 	<input type="checkbox"/> D25 



**Table XI<sup>30</sup>**  
**Strengths and Weaknesses of Quantitative and Qualitative Research**

<b>Quantitative Strengths</b>	<b>Quantitative Weaknesses</b>
The testing and validating already constructed theories about how and to some degree why phenomena occur.	The researcher's categories that are used may not reflect local constituencies' understandings.
Testing hypotheses that are constructed before the data are collected. Can generalize the research findings when the data are based on random samples of sufficient size.	The researcher's theories that are used may not reflect local constituencies' understandings.
Research findings can be generalized when it has been replicated on many different populations and subpopulations.	The researcher may miss out on phenomena occurring because of the focus on theory or hypothesis testing rather than on theory or hypothesis generation (called the confirmation bias).
Useful for obtaining data that allow quantitative predictions to be made.	Knowledge produced may be too abstract and general for direct application to specific local situations, contexts, and individuals.
The researcher may construct a situation that eliminates the confounding influence of many variables, allowing one to more credibly assess cause-and-effect relationships.	
Data collection using some quantitative methods is relatively quick (e.g., telephone interviews).	
Provides precise, quantitative, numerical data.	
Data analysis is relatively less time consuming (using statistical software).	
The research findings are relatively independent of the researcher (e.g., effect size, statistical significance).	
It may have higher credibility with many people in power (e.g., administrators, politicians, people who fund programs).	
It is useful for studying large numbers of people.	

<sup>30</sup> The strengths and weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative research were identified by Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004), pp. 19-20..

**Table XI (continued)**

Qualitative Strengths	Qualitative Weaknesses
The data are based on the participants' own categories of meaning.	Knowledge produced may not generalize to other people or other settings (i.e., findings may be unique to the relatively few people included in the research study).
It is useful for studying a limited number of cases in depth.	It is difficult to make quantitative predictions.
It is useful for describing complex phenomena.	It is more difficult to test hypotheses and theories.
Provides individual case information.	It may have lower credibility with some administrators and commissioners of programs.
Can conduct cross-case comparisons and analysis.	It generally takes more time to collect the data when compared to quantitative research.
Provides understanding and description of people's personal experiences of phenomena (i.e., the "emic" or insider's viewpoint).	Data analysis is often time consuming
Can describe, in rich detail, phenomena as they are situated and embedded in local contexts.	The results are more easily influenced by the researcher's personal biases and idiosyncrasies.
The researcher identifies contextual and setting factors as they relate to the phenomenon of interest.	
The researcher can study dynamic process (i.e., documenting sequential patterns and change).	
The researcher can use the primarily qualitative method of "grounded theory" to generate inductively a tentative but explanatory theory about a phenomenon.	
Can determine how participants interpret "constructs" (e.g., self-esteem, IQ).	
Data are usually collected in naturalistic settings in qualitative research.	
Qualitative approaches are responsive to local situations, conditions, and stakeholder's needs.	
Qualitative researchers are responsive to changes that occur during the conduct of a study (especially during extended fieldwork) and may shift the focus of their studies as a result.	
Qualitative data in the words and categories	

of the participants lend themselves to exploring how and why phenomena occur.	
One can use an important case to demonstrate vividly a phenomenon to the readers of a report.	
Determine idiographic causation (i.e., determination of causes of a particular event).	



**Table XII<sup>31</sup>**  
**Definitions of Mixed Methods by Leaders in the Field**

<p><b>Pat Bazeley:</b>  I tend to distinguish between mixed methods and multimethods, although if I need a generic term, I used mixed methods. Multimethod research is when different approaches or methods are used in parallel or sequence but are not integrated until inferences are being made. Mixed methods research involves the use of more than one approach to or method of design, data collection or data analysis within a single program of study, with integration of the different approaches or methods occurring during the program of study, and not just at its concluding point. Note that I am not limiting this to a combination of qualitative and quantitative research only, but more broadly, combinations of any different approaches/methods/data/analyses.</p>
<p><b>Valerie Caracelli:</b>  A mixed method study is one that planfully juxtaposes or combines methods of different types (qualitative and quantitative) to provide a more elaborated understanding of the phenomenon of interest (including its context) and, as well, to gain greater confidence in the conclusions generated by the evaluation study.</p>
<p><b>Huey Chen:</b>  Mixed methods research is a systematic integration of quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study for purposes of obtaining a fuller picture and deeper understanding of a phenomenon. Mixed methods can be integrated in such a way that qualitative and quantitative methods retain their original structures and procedures (pure form mixed methods). Alternatively, these two methods can be adapted, altered, or synthesized to fit the research and cost situations of the study (modified form mixed methods).</p>
<p><b>John Creswell:</b>  Mixed methods research is a research design (or methodology) in which the researcher collects, analyzes, and mixes (integrates or connects) both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or a multiphase program.</p>
<p><b>Steve Currall:</b>  Mixed methods research involves the sequential or simultaneous use of both qualitative and quantitative data collection and/or data analysis techniques.</p>
<p><b>Marvin Formosa:</b>  Mixed methods research is the utilization of two or more different methods to meet the aims of a research project as best as one can. The research project may be conducted from either one or two paradigmatic standpoints (mixed methodology study).</p>
<p><b>Jennifer Greene:</b>  Mixed method inquiry is an approach to investigating the social world that ideally involves more than one methodological tradition and thus more than one way of knowing, along with more than one kind of technique for gathering, analyzing, and representing human phenomena, all for the purpose of better understanding.</p>
<p><b>Al Hunter:</b>  Mixed methods is a term that is usually used to designate combining qualitative and quantitative research methods in the same research project. I prefer the term multimethod research to indicate that different styles of research may be combined in the same research project. These need not be restricted to quantitative and qualitative; but may include, for example, qualitative participant observation with qualitative in-depth interviewing. Alternatively it could quantitative survey research with quantitative experimental research. And of course it would include quantitative with qualitative styles.</p>

<sup>31</sup> Johnson et al (2007) provide 19 definitions that were given by the participating methodologists. The unit of analysis is the definition of mixed methods research rather than the participant (pp. 118-121)

**Burke Johnson and Anthony Onwuegbuzie:**

Mixed methods research is the class of research where the researcher mixed or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study or set of related studies.

**Udo Kelle:**

Mixed methods means the combination of different qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and data analysis in one empirical research project. This combination can serve for two different purposes: it can help to discover and to handle threats for validity arising from the use of qualitative or quantitative research by applying methods from the alternative methodological tradition and can thus ensure good scientific practice by enhancing the validity of methods and research findings. Or it can be used to gain a fuller picture and deeper understanding of the investigated phenomenon by relating complementary findings to each other which result from the use of methods from the different methodological traditions of qualitative and quantitative research.

**Donna Mertens:**

Mixed methods research, when undertaken from a transformative stance, is the use of qualitative and quantitative methods that allow for the collection of data about historical and contextual factors, with special emphasis on issues of power that can influence the achievement of social justice and avoidance of oppression.

**Steven Miller:**

Mixed methods is a form evolving methodological inquiry, primarily directed to the human sciences, which attempts to combine in some logical order the differing techniques and procedures of quantitative, qualitative and historical approaches. At present mixed methods must devote itself to resolving a set of issues, both epistemological and ontological. The first must devote itself to what Miller and Gatta (2006) call the “epistemological link,” that is the rules and rationales which “permit” one to proceed mixed methodologically. The second must adhere to some form of “minimal realist” ontology, where either social reality is “One” but can be accessed by different methods separately or working in conjunction, or social reality is multiple in nature and can ONLY be accessed through mixed methods. Present day attempts to couch mixed methods within some broad notion of pragmatism are not satisfactory.

**Janice Morse:**

A mixed method design is a plan for a scientifically rigorous research process comprised of a qualitative or quantitative core component that directs the theoretical drive, with qualitative or quantitative supplementary component(s). These components of the research fit together to enhance description, understanding and can either be conducted simultaneously or sequentially.

**Isadore Newman:**

Mixed methods research is a set of procedures that should be used when integrating qualitative and quantitative procedures reflects the research question(s) better than each can independently. The combining of quantitative and qualitative methods should better inform the researcher and the effectiveness of mixed methods should be evaluated based upon how the approach enables the investigator to answer the research question(s) embedded in the purpose(s) (why the study is being conducted or is needed; the justification) of the study. (see Newman, Ridenour, Newman & DeMarco, 2003).

**Michael Q. Patton:**

I consider mixed methods to be inquiring into a question using different data sources and design elements in such a way as to bring different perspectives to bear in the inquiry and therefore support triangulation of the findings. In this regard, using different methods to examine different questions in the same overall study is not mixed methods.

**Hallie Preskill:**

Mixed methods research refers to the use of data collection methods that collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Mixed methods research acknowledges that all methods have inherent biases and weaknesses; that using a mixed method approach increases the likelihood that the sum of the data collected will be richer, more meaningful, and ultimately more useful in answering the

research question.

**Margarete Sandelowski:**

First, I think of this in terms of either a single primary research study or as a program of research. Then, I see mixed methods as something of a misnomer as mixing implies blending together. Mixed methods research, though, is more the use of different methodological approaches TOGETHER in a single study or single program of research. One cannot blend methods in the sense of assimilating one into the other. I use methods here to refer to larger inquiry approaches (e.g., experiments and grounded theory) which are themselves based in distinctive theoretical perspectives. Yet this sets up a problem too, as grounded theory, for example, can be “positivist” (a la Strauss & Corbin), “constructivist” (a la Charmaz), or “postmodern” (a la Clarke) in sensibility or influence. So, if a researcher is doing grounded theory (positivist style) and an experiment (positivist influence), are any methods actually being mixed? In other words, mixed methods research can be defined at the technique level as the combination of, e.g., purposeful and probability sampling, open-ended and closed-ended data collection techniques, and narrative and multivariable analyses – i.e., in which anything can be used together (linked or assimilated into each other) – or it can be defined at a larger theoretical/paradigmatic level as using divergent approaches to inquiry together. I would not define mixed methods research as constituting ANY combination of 2 or more things, as any research involves the use of 2 or more of something and the use of experiment and survey is 2 things, but they are informed by one mind (typically positivist/objectivist/realist). We get tangled in words, do we not?

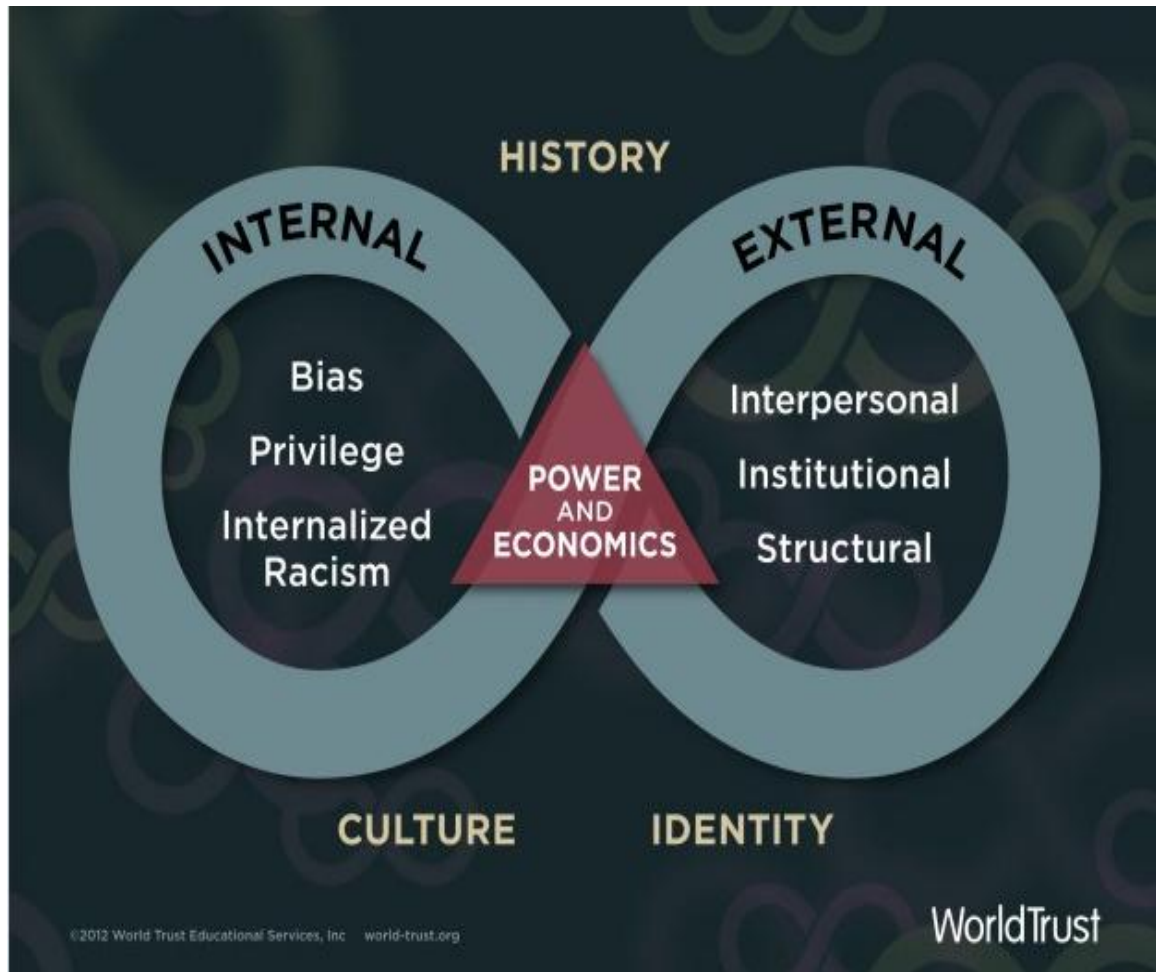
**Lyn Shulha:**

By collaborative mixed method research, we will mean the purposeful application of a multiple person, multiple perspective approach to questions of research and evaluation. Decisions about how methods are combined and how analyses are conducted are grounded in the needs and emerging complexity of each project rather than in preordinate methodological conventions . . . . Within this context, methods can be “mixed” in a variety of ways. Sometimes, one method serves another in validating and explicating findings that emerge from a dominant approach. On other occasions, different methods are used for different parts of the issues being investigated, and in an independent way. In more complex cases, the methods and perspectives are deliberately mixed from the beginning of the process. The resulting interaction of problem, method, and results produce a more comprehensive, internally consistent, and ultimately, more valid general approach. What sets the most complex forms of collaborative mixed method research apart from other forms of inquiry is that findings depend as much on the researchers’ capacities to learn through joint effort and to construct joint meaning as on their expertise in conventional data collection and analysis techniques.

**Abbas Tashakkori and Chares Teddlie:**

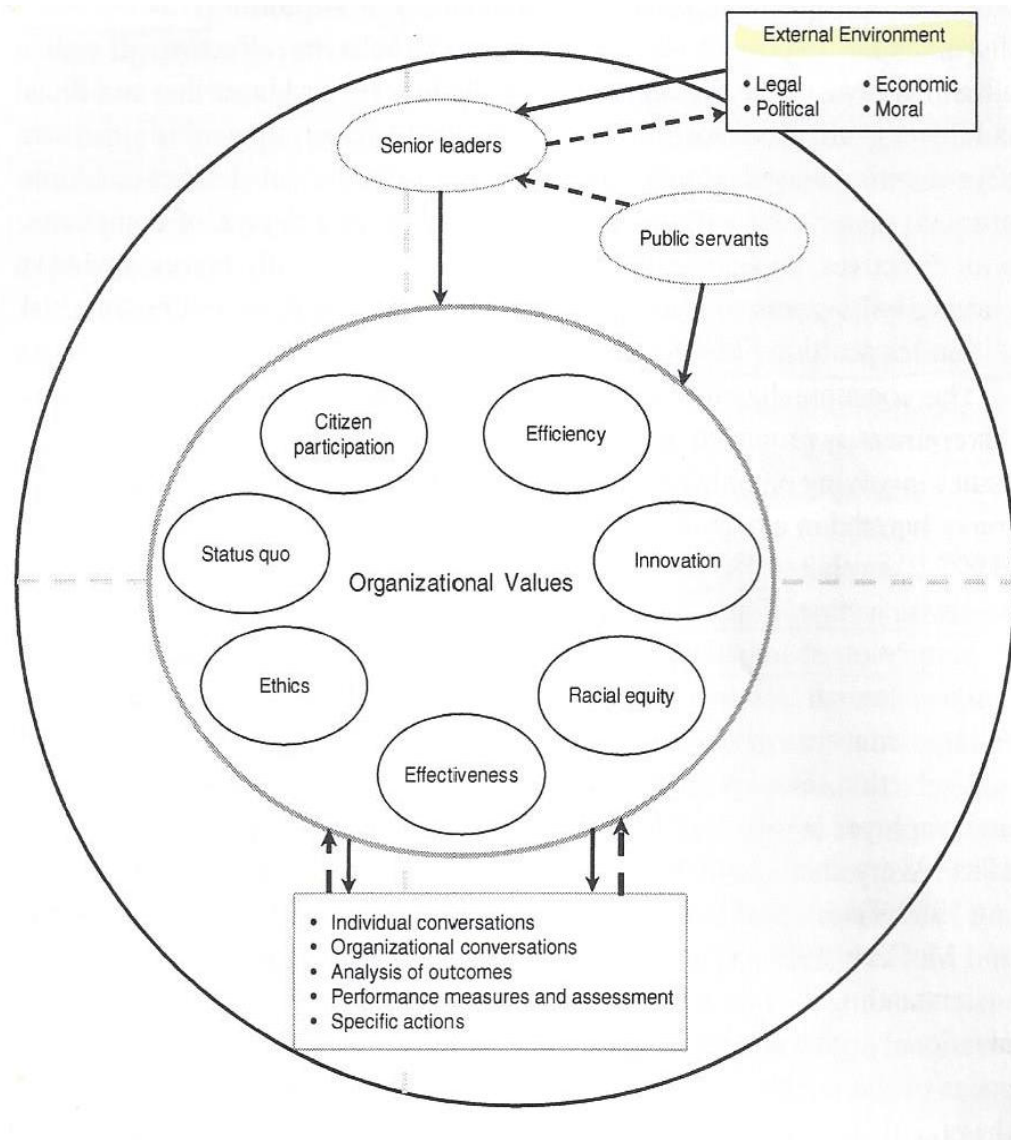
Mixed methods research is a type of research design in which QUAL and QUAN approaches are used in type of questions, research methods, data collection and analysis procedures, or in inferences.

**Figure I<sup>32</sup>**  
**The System of Inequity**



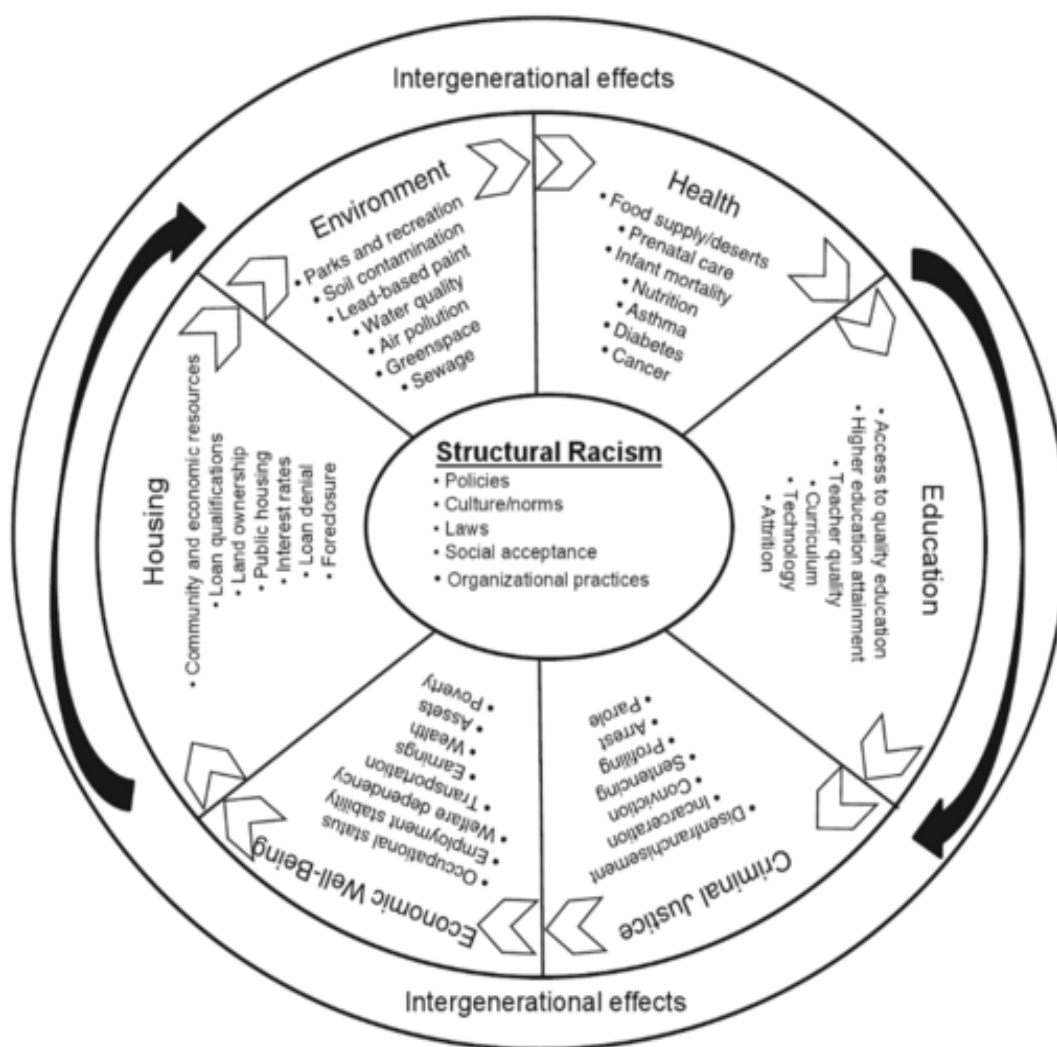
<sup>32</sup> *Figure I* provides a visual representation of a holistic frame developed by Word Trust that shows the continual interaction between the internal (personal) and the external (interpersonal, structural/institutional) manifestations of bias (World Trust Educational Services, Inc., 2012).

**Figure II<sup>33</sup>**  
**Conceptual Model of the Nervous Area of Government**



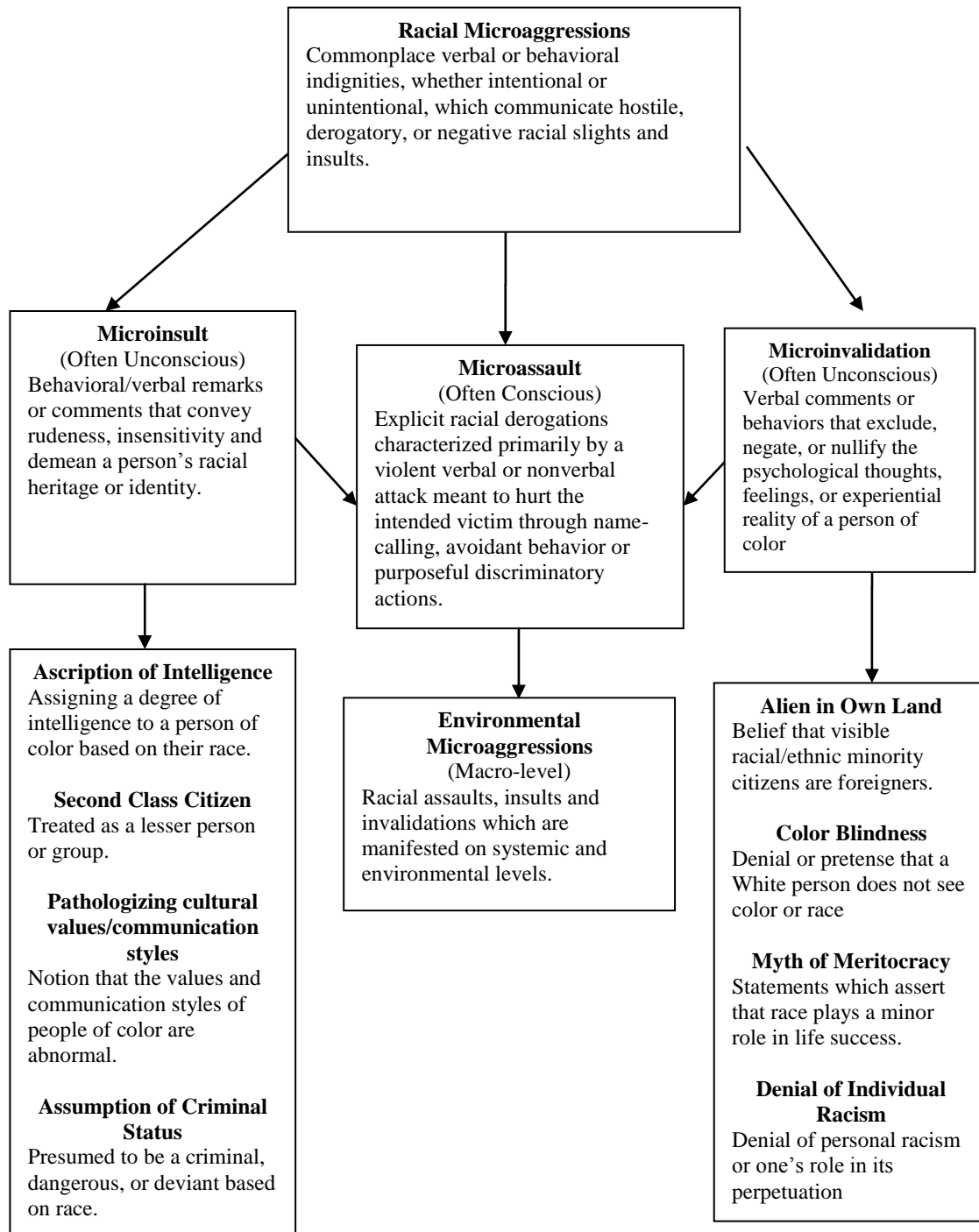
<sup>33</sup> Figure II depicts the nervous area of government is conceptualized by a structural approach that includes both internal and external dimensions. Understanding how the organization effectively or ineffectively provides public justice requires an examination of four core areas (i.e., external environment; senior public administrators; public servants; and organizational values) that operate within a context characterized by nervousness when racial equity is the focus. All four core areas exist within an overall context of nervousness and influence its intensity within an organization (Gooden, 2014, pp. 5-6).

**Figure III<sup>34</sup>**  
**Conceptual Model of Saturation of Racial Inequities**



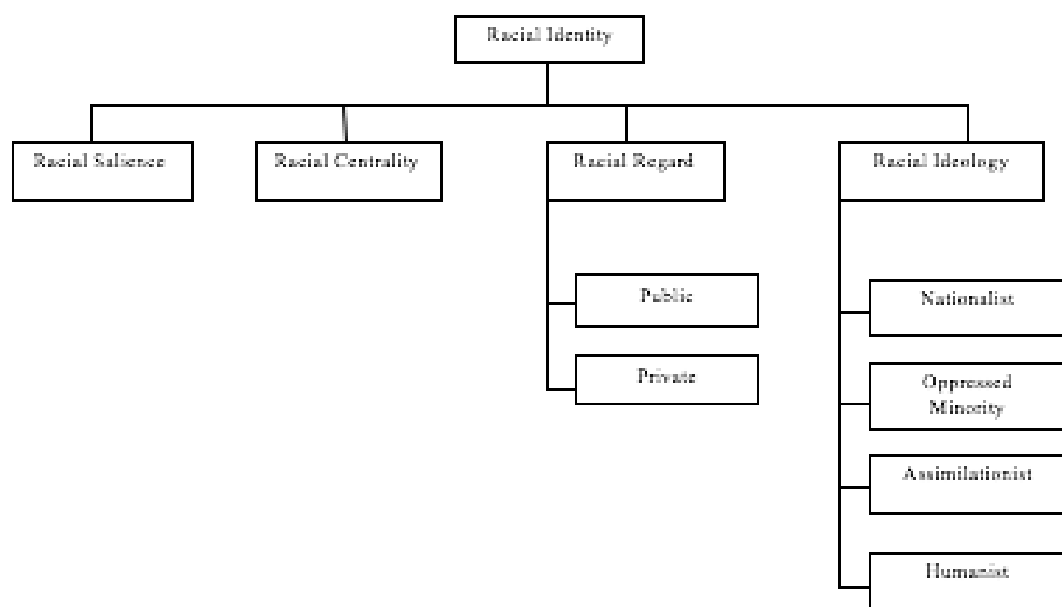
<sup>34</sup> Figure III depicts three policy areas (i.e., housing, education, and the environment). The intent of the author was to briefly highlight examples of the structural inequities that undergird present-day development and delivery of U.S. policy in each of the three policy areas. While these policy areas are oftentimes considered in isolation, there are important cumulative racial-inequity effects that result in a saturation of racial inequities across a myriad of public policies. This saturation pervades both within and across various policy contexts, which result in a conditional structure of racial inequities (Gooden, 2014, pp. 22-23).

**Figure IV<sup>35</sup>**  
**Categories of and Relationships among Racial Microaggressions**



<sup>35</sup> Figure II reflects the three large classes of microaggressions, the classifications of the themes under each category, and their relationship to one another (Sue, Capodilupo, et als, 2007).

**Figure V<sup>36</sup>**  
**Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI)**

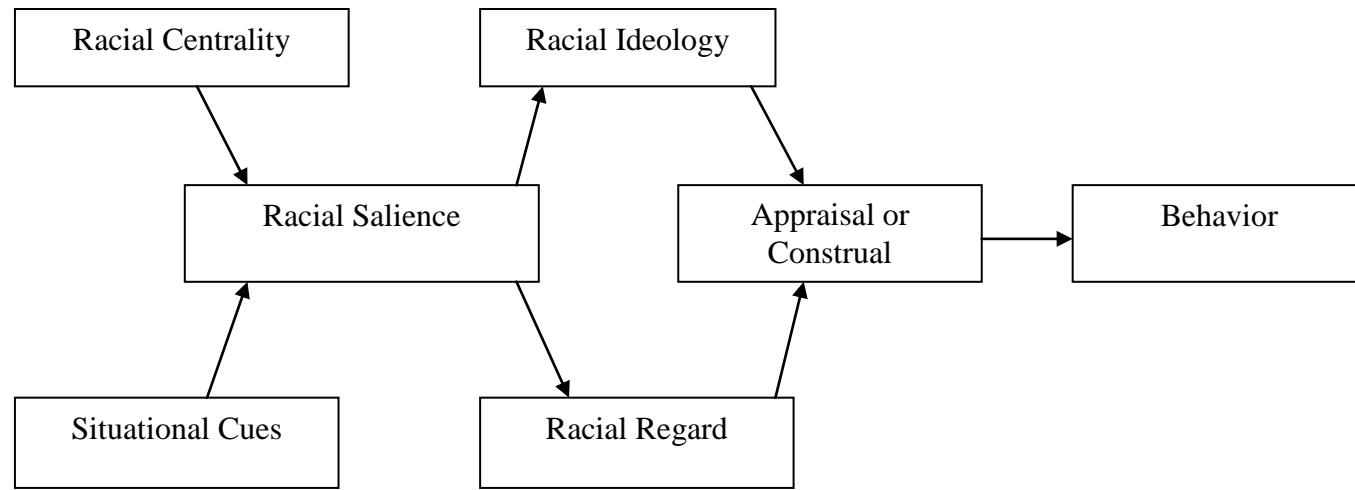


The MMRI suggests four dimensions of racial identity that address both the significance and the qualitative meaning of race in the self-concepts of African Americans. These four dimensions consist of: racial salience, the centrality of the identity, the regard in which the person holds the group associated with the identity, and the ideology associated with the identity. Racial salience and centrality refer to the significance that individuals attach to race in defining themselves; while racial regard and ideology refer to the individuals' perceptions of what it means to be Black (Sellers et al, 1998, p. 24).

<sup>36</sup> The Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI) was developed by Sellers, et al, (1998).



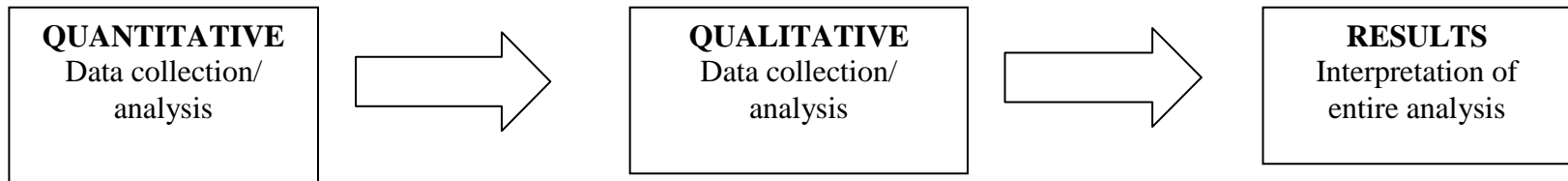
**Figure VI**  
**Schematic Representation of How Racial Identity Influences Behavior**



An individual's beliefs regarding the meaning and significance of race can influence the way in which they appraise and behave in specific events (Sellers et al, 1998, p. 29)

**Figure VII<sup>37</sup>**  
**Schematic Notation of Mixed Methodology**

This study utilized a mixed methodological content analysis with a phenomenological two-phase sequential design that is also exploratory in nature.



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<sup>37</sup> Schematic notation of mixed methodology described by Creswell (2009).

## Appendix A Interview Protocol

### **Racial Microaggressions:**

1. Have you in any way ever discriminated against another person? How did the experience make you feel? Have you in any way ever discriminated against another person of color? How did the experience make you feel?
2. Tell me about a time when you witnessed a discriminatory incident (e.g., name-calling, avoidant behavior, purposeful discriminatory actions, offensive or insulting incident). How did the incident make you feel? Now, tell me about a time when you experienced a discriminatory incident (e.g., name-calling, avoidant behavior, purposeful discriminatory actions, or offensive or insulting incident) by a person of color. How did the experience make you feel?
3. Tell me about a time when you were made to feel devalued, ignored, or delegitimized. How did the experience make you feel? Now, tell me about a time when you were made to feel devalued, ignored, or delegitimized by a person of color. How did the experience make you feel?
4. Tell me about a time when you were perceived as having a lesser degree of intelligence. How did the experience make you feel? Now, tell me about a time when you were perceived as having a lesser degree of intelligence by a person of color. How did the experience make you feel?
5. Tell me about a time when you were perceived to be a criminal, dangerous, or deviant. How did the experience make you feel? Now, tell me about a time when you were perceived to be a criminal, dangerous, or deviant by a person of color. How did the experience make you feel?
6. Tell me about a time when you were treated as a second-class citizen. How did the experience make you feel? Now, tell me about a time when you were treated as a second-class citizen by a person of color. How did the experience make you feel?
7. Tell me about a time when you ever felt less valued or unwelcomed. How did the experience make you feel? Now, tell me about a time when you felt less valued or unwelcomed by a person of color. How did the experience make you feel?
8. Tell me about a time when you were told by another person that they are colorblind when it comes to race, they don't see race, nor do they play a role in the perpetuation of racism. How did the experience make you feel? Now, tell me about a time when you were told by a person of color that they are colorblind when it comes to race, they don't see race, nor do they play a role in the perpetuation of racism. How did the experience make you feel?
9. Tell me about a time when you were told by another person that race plays a miniscule role in being successful in life, "everyone has to same opportunity to be a success." How did the experience make you feel? Now, tell me about a time when you were told by a person of

color that race plays a miniscule role in being successful in life, “everyone has to same opportunity to be a success.” How did the experience make you feel?

10. Tell me about a time when you were told that your cultural background and communication style are either dysfunctional or less valued than those of the White culture. How did the experience make you feel? Now, tell me about a time when you were told by a person of color that your cultural background and communication style are either dysfunctional or less valued than those of the White culture. How did the experience make you feel?

**Black Identity/Colorism:**

11. Do you racially self-identify as a Black or African American? Tell me about your experiences of being a member of this racial group.

12. How important is race in your perception of self? Explain. How important is race in your professional development? Explain.

13. Tell me about your socialized racial journey<sup>38</sup> through various institutions (e.g., family, schools, peers, co-workers, employers).

14. Give me your thoughts on colorism (e.g., darker skin or lighter skin). Have you personally or professionally experienced colorism? How did the experience make you feel?

15. How do you feel when you see or hear about a person of color being discriminated? How do you feel when you see or hear about a person of color being discriminated by another person of color?

**Closing questions:**

16. Do you believe subtle discrimination in the form of racial microaggressions exists? Explain

17. How serious do you think the issue of racial microaggressions is?

18. What do you think can be done about the issue of racial microaggressions?

19. Is there anything that I did not ask you about racial microaggressions that you would like to add?

20. Do you have any questions for me.

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<sup>38</sup> Socialized racial journey refers to those ways (inferred or implied) an individual is socialized to differentiate groups of people on the basis of physical characteristics.

**Appendix B**  
**Participant Consent Form**  
**Phase I**

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled: A Phenomenological Examination of Racial Microaggressions in Intraracial Therapeutic Counseling Relationships that is being conducted by Audrey Redding-Raines, a doctoral candidate, in the School of Public Affairs and Administration. The purpose of this research is to determine if there is a linkage between the perception of racial microaggressions and the racial self-identification of Black frontline workers working as substance abuse and/or mental health counselors, and if so, what role does this linkage play in the intraracial therapeutic counseling relationship.

Participants for the study will be 21 years of age or older, and have been employed as a counselor at a substance abuse treatment facility and/or a mental health treatment facility in Essex County, New Jersey for a period of not less than one year.

In Phase I of the study, you will be given the Participant Consent Form and the Participant Demographic Questionnaire to complete. Completion of the 2 forms should take approximately 15 minutes. You will be given the option of completing 2 questionnaires by: (i) completing both questionnaires at the time of consent, or (ii) receiving a code to access the 2 questionnaires securely online using a computer application that is accessible through Rutgers University. Participants who choose the first option will be given a numbered envelope (this number will be used to identify the participant throughout the study) containing the 2 questionnaires to complete.

The research is confidential. Confidential means that the research records will include some information about you and this information will be stored in such a manner that some linkage between your identity and the response in the research exists. Some of the information collected about you includes (e.g., your name, email address, phone number, and name of the SAI and/or BHI substance abuse treatment facility you are employed at). Please note that this information will be kept confidential by limiting individual's access to the research data and keeping it in a locked and secured cabinet located in the researcher's office at Rutgers University – Newark. Digital and electronic data will be stored on a password encrypted computer of the researcher.

The researcher, the Dissertation Committee, and the Institutional Review Board at Rutgers University are the only parties that will be allowed to see the data, except as may be required by law. If a report of this study is published, or the results are presented at a professional conference, only group results will be stated. All study data will be kept for three (3) years after the completion of the study. The researcher will delete all digital and electronic data from the computer system. All physical notes, letters, consent forms, and questionnaires will be shredded.

\_\_\_\_\_ Participant's Initials

Participants in this study may become uncomfortable when responding to race-related questions. In addition, they may experience a variety of feelings when thinking about previous experiences, especially if the experience was a negative one. If at any time during the course of this study you feel that you are experiencing psychological distress; the researcher will provide you with contact information for mental health service providers at East Orange General, Newark Beth Israel, St. Barnabas, St. Michaels, and University Behavioral HealthCare.

Participation is voluntary and you may end your participation at any time during the study without penalty. If you decide to withdraw from the study, it will not affect you in any way. You can request that any of your data, which has been collected be destroyed. You will not receive any type of compensation for participating in this phase of the study.

If you have any questions about the study procedures, you can contact either Audrey Redding-Raines at 973/353-5145 or aredding@andromeda.rutgers.edu or Dr. Norma Riccucci, Distinguished Professor, at 973/353-5504 or riccucci@rutgers.edu. If there are any questions about your rights as a research subject, you can contact the Sponsored Programs Administrator at Rutgers University at:

Rutgers University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects  
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs  
3 Rutgers Plaza  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8559  
Telephone: 848-932-4058  
Email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu

This informed consent form was approved by the Rutgers University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects on 6/6/2015; approval of this form expires on 6/5/2016.

You will be given a copy of this consent form for your records. Sign below if you agree to participate in Phase I of the research study that has been described to you by the principal investigator, Audrey Redding-Raines:

Participant's Name  
(Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

### Participant Consent Form

#### Phase II

Thank you for agreeing to take part in Phase II of this research study entitled: A Phenomenological Examination of Racial Microaggressions in Intraracial Therapeutic Counseling Relationships conducted by Audrey Redding-Raines, a doctoral candidate, in the School of Public Affairs and Administration. The purpose of this phase of the study is to obtain information that will further elucidate your perception of racial microaggressions, as well as, the shaping of your racial identity. The researcher will conduct a private, face-to-face interview with you that will last approximately 90 minutes. The same number that was initially assigned to you will be affixed to the transcribed interview. Your name will not appear anywhere in the interview notes or listed in the completed dissertation. There will be no public link between you and your responses.

The research is confidential. Confidential means that the research records will include some information about you and this information will be stored in such a manner that some linkage between your identity and the response in the research exists. Some of the information collected about you includes (e.g., your name, email address, phone number, and name of the substance abuse treatment facility you are employed at). Please note that this information will be kept confidential by limiting individual's access to the research data and keeping it in a locked and secured cabinet located in the researcher's office at Rutgers University – Newark. Digital and electronic data will be stored on a password encrypted computer of the researcher.

The researcher, the Dissertation Committee, and the Institutional Review Board at Rutgers University are the only parties that will be allowed to see the data, except as may be required by law. If a report of this study is published, or the results are presented at a professional conference, only group results will be stated. All study data will be kept for three (3) years after the completion of the study. The researcher will delete all digital and electronic data from the computer system. All physical notes, letters, consent forms, and questionnaires will be shredded.

Participants in this study may become uncomfortable when responding to race-related questions. In addition, they may experience a variety of feelings when thinking about previous experiences, especially if the experience was a negative one. If at any time during the course of this study you feel that you are experiencing psychological distress, the researcher will provide you with contact information for mental health service providers at East Orange General, Newark Beth Israel, St. Barnabas, St. Michaels, and University Behavioral HealthCare.

\_\_\_\_\_ Participant's Initials

Participation is voluntary and you may end your participation at any time during the study without penalty. If you decide to withdraw from the study, it will not affect you in any way. You can request that any of your data, which has been collected be destroyed. You will not receive any type of compensation for participating in this phase of the study.

If you have any questions about the study procedures, you can contact either Audrey Redding-Raines at 973/353-5145 or aredding@andromeda.rutgers.edu or Dr. Norma Riccucci, Distinguished Professor, at 973/353-5504 or riccucci@rutgers.edu. If there are any questions about your rights as a research subject, you can contact the Sponsored Programs Administrator at Rutgers University at:

Rutgers University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects  
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs  
3 Rutgers Plaza  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8559  
Telephone: 848-932-4058  
Email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu

This informed consent form was approved by the Rutgers University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects on 6/6/2015; approval of this form expires on 6/5/2016.

You will be given a copy of this consent form for your records. Sign below if you agree to participate in Phase II of the research study that has been described to you by the principal investigator, Audrey Redding-Raines:

Participant's Name  
(Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**Appendix D**  
**Audio Consent Form**  
**Phase II**

You have agreed to participate in Phase II of this research study entitled: A Phenomenological Examination of Racial Microaggressions in Intraracial Therapeutic Counseling Relationships conducted by Audrey Redding-Raines, a doctoral candidate, in the School of Public Affairs and Administration. I am asking for your permission to allow me to audiotape the interview as part of the research study.

The recording(s) will be used for transcribing and analyzing the interview. The recordings will include your name and the number assigned to you and your voice. No other identifying information will be used. If you say anything that you believe at a later point may be hurtful and/or damage your reputation, then you can ask the interviewer to rewind the recording and record over such information OR you can ask that certain text be removed from the dataset/transcripts.

The recording(s) will be stored in a locked and secured file cabinet located in the researcher's office at Rutgers University – Newark. Digital and electronic data will be stored on a password encrypted computer of the researcher. The researcher, the Dissertation Committee, and the Institutional Review Board at Rutgers University are the only parties that will be allowed to see the data, except as may be required by law. If a report of this study is published, or the results are presented at a professional conference, only group results will be stated. All study data will be kept for three (3) years after the completion of the study. The researcher will delete all digital and electronic data from the computer system. All physical notes, letters, consent forms, and questionnaires will be shredded.

Your signature on this form grants the researcher, Audrey Redding-Raines, permission to record you as described above during participation in the referenced study. The researcher will not use the recording(s) for any other reason than those stated in the consent form without your permission. If for any reason, you do not feel comfortable signing the Audio Consent Form because you do not wish to be audiotaped, you will still be able to participate in this phase of the study. The researcher will utilize handwritten notes to facilitate with the transcription and analysis of the interview.

\_\_\_\_\_ Participant's Initial

If you have any questions about the study procedures, you can contact Audrey Redding-Raines at 973/353-5145 or aredding@andromeda.rutgers.edu or Dr. Norma Riccucci, Distinguished Professor, at 973/353-5504 or riccucci@rutgers.edu. If there are any questions about your rights as a research subject, you can contact the Sponsored Programs Administrator at Rutgers University at:

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Email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu

You will be given a copy of this consent form for your records.

Participant's Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix E**  
**Participant Demographic Questionnaire**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Male  
\_\_\_\_\_ Female

2. What is your age?

20- \_\_\_\_\_

21 – 30 \_\_\_\_\_

31 – 40 \_\_\_\_\_

41 – 50 \_\_\_\_\_

51+ \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your income level?

\$20,000 – \$29,999 \_\_\_\_\_

\$30,000 – \$39,999 \_\_\_\_\_

\$40,000 – \$49,999 \_\_\_\_\_

\$50,000+ \_\_\_\_\_

4. How do you racially self-identify?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. In your opinion, what race do White people perceive you to be?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. What is your ethnicity?

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Were you born in the United States? (**If a no response is given, please make sure to answer #7a and #7b**)

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_\_\_ No

7a. If you were **not** born in the United States, where were you born?

\_\_\_\_\_

7b. At what age did you come to the United States?

\_\_\_\_\_

8. What is the highest educational level attained?

High School Diploma \_\_\_\_\_

Some College \_\_\_\_\_

Two Year Degree \_\_\_\_\_

Four Year Degree \_\_\_\_\_

Advanced Degree \_\_\_\_\_

9. Please circle where you fall on the continuum with regard to your political party affiliation:

Very Liberal				Netural				Very Conservative
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		

10. How many years have you been a substance abuse counselor (**please use whole numbers**)?

\_\_\_\_\_

11. Please provide the name of the current treatment facility you are employed at:

---

12. What level of care are your clients involved in (**mark all applicable choices**)?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Intensive Outpatient (IOP)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Methadone Intensive Outpatient
- \_\_\_\_\_ Outpatient (OP)
- \_\_\_\_\_ OPIOD Maintenance-Outpatient
- \_\_\_\_\_ Partial Care
- \_\_\_\_\_ Residential (Long-term)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Residential (Short-term)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sub-Acute Residential Detoxification
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

13. Are the clients that you counsel (**mark all applicable choices**):

- \_\_\_\_\_ Males
- \_\_\_\_\_ Females
- \_\_\_\_\_ Both

14. Phase II of the research study will involve the participant taking part in a private, face-to-face interview, which will last approximately 60 - 90 minutes. If you would be interested in participating in Phase II of the research study, please check the box below and you will be contacted at a later date.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I am interested in participating, please contact me

\_\_\_\_\_ No, I am not interested in participating

**Appendix F**  
**Executive Director Initial Phone Contact Script**

Hello, my name is Audrey Redding-Raines, and I am a doctoral candidate, in the School of Public Affairs and Administration at Rutgers University – Newark. I am calling to discuss the possibility of you allowing me to come to your agency to ask some of your clinical staff if they would like to participate in a research study that I am conducting. Specifically, this study will examine the perception of racial microaggressions in intraracial therapeutic counseling relationships. Would you be able to schedule a time to meet with me to further discuss the study? Thanking you in advance for your time and consideration.

**Appendix G**  
**Participating Agencies - Essex County**

<b>Name of Agency</b>	<b>City and State</b>
<b>American Habitare and Counseling</b>	Newark, NJ
<b>Bethel Counseling Services</b>	Newark, NJ
<b>COPE Center, Inc.</b>	Montclair, NJ
<b>East Orange Substance Abuse Treatment</b>	East Orange, NJ
<b>Integrity, Inc.</b>	Newark, NJ
<b>Newark Renaissance House</b>	Newark, NJ
<b>New Directions Behavioral Health Center</b>	Newark, NJ
<b>New Hope Baptist Church - CDC</b>	Newark, NJ
<b>New Hope Behavioral Health Center</b>	Irvington, NJ
<b>New Horizon Behavioral Healthcare Centers</b>	Newark, NJ
<b>Renaissance Challenge Conquerors Training Center, Inc. - Teens</b>	Newark, NJ
<b>Rutgers University Behavioral Health Center (UBHC)</b>	New Brunswick, NJ – <b>Note – although this facility is not located in Essex County, NJ, it was included in the study as Rutgers University has a UBHC facility in Newark, NJ.</b>
<b>St. Michael's Behavioral Outpatient Services</b>	Newark, NJ
<b>Sunrise Clinical Services</b>	Irvington, NJ