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# The Lived Race Relation Experiences of Black Male Counselor Educators

Timothy Irving  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Health

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Timothy Irving Jr.

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Review Committee

Dr. Katarzyna Peoples, Committee Chairperson, Counselor Education and Supervision  
Faculty

Dr. Chandra Johnson, Committee Member, Counselor Education and Supervision Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost  
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University  
2024

Abstract

The Lived Race Relation Experiences of Black Male Counselor Educators

by

Timothy Irving Jr.

Ed.S, University of Mississippi, 2018

MA, Georgia State University, 2015

BA, Georgia State University, 2013

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Counselor Education and Supervision

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## Abstract

Cultural competence is a key metric in the accreditation of U.S. counseling education and supervision (CES) programs, with diversity among faculty members in counselor training programs a key consideration. However, there are very few Black men in CES faculty roles, especially at higher academic ranks. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore how Black male faculty experience race relations in counselor education programs at predominantly White institutions (PWIs). In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with six Black men who were current or previous CES faculty. Heidegger's theory of hermeneutic phenomenology and the critical race theory were used to analyze qualitative data from six Black men using the inclusion criteria that they must be a Black male, be currently or formerly employed in a CACREP accredited CES program as faculty at a PWI, be available and willing to participate and have the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reactive manner. Analysis of the data revealed four themes: (a) negative implications of navigating race relations, (b) awareness used as a tool to navigate negative race relations, (c) shifting behavior to adjust to PWI environment, and (d) seeing racial disparity in hiring and promotion process . Recruiting more Black men into CES positions throughout the United States may foster positive social change by bringing their unique experiences and views to support the multicultural competence .

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Understanding and exploring diversity are two tenets of the American Counseling Association's (ACA, 2014) mission. For some researchers, engaging with these tenets has meant exploring the experiences and perceptions of marginalized populations. In this study, I focused on how Black male counselor educators experienced race relations in counselor education and supervision (CES) programs. The importance of this study is reflected in the literature, which indicates that minoritized counselor educators experience adversity in many forms such as feeling invalidated, isolated, invisible, tokenized, pressured, disconnected, and underrepresented in their professional environments (Thacker & Minton, 2021). These concerns are particularly compelling for Black male counselor educators, as they make up less than 4% of counselor educator faculty. Job satisfaction and retention problems were cited as being significantly related to their perceptions of the campus' racial climate (Brooks & Steen, 2010; Dollarhide et al., 2018; Hannon et al. 2019). The paucity of Black male counselors and counselor educators has a negative impact on Black men's participation in counseling services and the degree to which they pursue careers in the counseling profession, research shows (Branch, 2018).

Earlier studies showed that Black CES graduate students frequently experienced feelings of isolation and a strong need for a faculty of their race (Lewis et al., 2004). In 2016, Black men made up 4.3% of the total doctoral degree student population enrolled in Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs- (CACREP-) accredited programs, although they comprised nearly 13% of the general

U.S. population (CACREP). The limited representation is problematic because Black clients who see Black therapists have a greater understanding of the reason for therapy, greater acceptance of therapeutic intervention, and greater perceived benefits from therapy (Taliaferro et al., 2013). With an underrepresented number of Black men filtering into the profession, Black men are less likely to receive mental health support due to the concerns of racial bias, lack of culture specific approaches among therapists offering services, and moderate to high levels of cultural mistrust between themselves and non-Black clinicians (Owens et al., 2016; Whaley, 1998, 2001).

In this chapter, I present background information on race relation concerns in CES programs. The study's theoretical framework is briefly discussed; more in-depth information is provided in Chapter 2. Finally, the problem statement, purpose, significance, and research question are presented, followed by the limitations, delimitations, assumptions, and definitions of the study.

### **Background**

As revealed in prior research, Black people in the United States have historically experienced high levels of racial discrimination in the workplace. This racial discrimination includes exclusion from critical social networks, wage disparities, and hiring disadvantages (Wingfield & Chavez, 2020). Oppression and marginalization readily manifest across varying levels of academia (Pérez, 2019). Despite counselor educators recognizing that diversity among counseling faculty is important (Baggerly et al., 2017), CES experience similar race-related concerns as faculty in other disciplines. Black counseling faculty have conveyed institutional and situational bias, unequal

treatment, racial microaggressions, and limited mentorship opportunities (Hannon et al., 2019). In a study conducted by Cartwright et al. (2018), the participants, who identified as Black, Latino, Asian, and having multiple heritages, reported experiencing implicit and explicit forms of discrimination and lack of awareness from administrators and counselor education colleagues, as early as the interview process.

Similarly, Bradley and Holcomb-McCoy (2005) found that most of the Black counselor educators used terminology related to racism, unequal treatment, and not being validated to describe their experiences related to promotion and tenure in counselor education. Another study found that Black counselor educators reported experiences of sociocultural invisibility that were characterized by White individuals overlooking, forgetting about, dismissing, or even claiming not to see or hear their Black colleagues (Constantine et al., 2016). Additionally, the study found that participants experienced inadequate mentoring and held the belief that their professional qualifications or credentials were sometimes challenged by other faculty colleagues, staff members, or students who believed that they were not qualified because of their racial group membership.

Racism is twice as likely to affect mental health than physical health and may result in the experiences of depression, stress, emotional distress, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and suicidal ideations (Lewsley, 2020). Shell et al. (2021) found that Black mental health therapists were at risk for burnout when exposed to race-based traumatic stress experiences. This burnout is characterized by emotional exhaustion,

decreased self-belief, and distrust (Shell et al., 2021) and may adversely affect job performance.

In another study, Holcomb-McCoy and Addison-Bradley (2005) found that Black counselor educators' job satisfaction was significantly related to their perceptions of the campus' racial climate. This type of climate was a concern because Black faculty members and other faculty members of color commonly felt isolated, discouraged, and devalued by colleagues (Turner, 2002). Black counselors have also reported encountering White supremacist attitudes from colleagues in those settings (Vasquez et al., 2006). Additionally, some Black counseling faculty have reported experiencing racism in more subtle ways such as: (a) White faculty members and administrators not acknowledging their presence on campus until their expertise is needed or valued; (b) faculty colleagues, staff members, or students questioning and challenging Black professors' professional qualifications or credentials; (c) mentoring being inadequate; and (d) departmental or college-level expectations to serve in service-oriented roles that had little perceived value by administrators or other faculty colleagues (Constantine et al., 2008). With the findings of previous research, there is a concern that the accumulation of race-based stress that Black CES faculty experience, may have negative implications on their physical and mental health wellbeing.

### **Problem Statement**

Professional organizations such as ACA (2014) and CACREP (2015) have placed emphasis on cultural competence, citing diversity among faculty members in counselor training programs as a key consideration. The recruitment and retention of faculty who

represent a variety of life experiences, backgrounds, and identities is an important part of the diversification process (Cartwright et al., 2018). However in 2019, Black men made up less than 4% of CES faculty (Hannon et al., 2019). Furthermore, research shows that the percentage of faculty decreases as the academic rank increases, which suggests issues related to retention and promotion (Oller et al., 2021).

The underrepresentation is the consequence of several social forces that have led to Black individuals being excluded from faculty roles, largely based on racism (Bonnor et al., 2021). Researchers have found that Black faculty experience various forms of discrimination and microaggressions (e.g., unequal treatment, having their work invalidated) that impedes their ability to meet tenure expectations (Hannon et al., 2019). Discrimination against Black faculty reportedly emanated in the form of feelings that they were not fully accepted as colleagues in their workplace. Blacks defended their credibility to teach courses and were questioned on their placement within academia (Whitfield-Harris & Lockhart, 2016).

Consequently, the acts of racism take their toll on the individual's mental health and, for Black faculty, can limit productivity (Hannon et al., 2019). These race-related concerns are compounded by Black male faculty's difficulty occupying spaces that they perceive as potentially psychologically unsafe (Hannon et al., 2019). CACREP (2015) standards note that program leaders must create and support an inclusive learning environment. When representation of a particular population of individuals is lacking, it is a reminder that diversity, equity, and inclusion have not yet been reached (Jones, 2021).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore how Black male faculty experienced race relations in CES programs located at predominantly White institutions (PWIs). I sought to provide deep contextual understanding of the lived experiences of being a Black male faculty in CES programs. Documenting the lived experiences of Black men has implications for positive social change. Highlighting race-related issues in the field and providing information could inform the development of policies to support the improvement of job satisfaction and job effectiveness of Black male faculty in the CES field.

### **Research Question**

This study was underpinned by the following research question: How do Black men who are CES faculty experience race relations when they teach in CES programs located at PWIs?

### **Conceptual Framework for the Study**

I drew from Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology and the critical race theory (CRT). Phenomenology concerns how one understands phenomena. Hermeneutic phenomenology provides glimpses of the meanings that reside within human experience (Crowther et al., 2017). It also grants researchers access to rich contextual data and surfaces meaning from human experiences as lived-in and lived-through (Crowther et al., 2017). Heidegger (1968) stated that phenomena are understood from one's point of view, which he coined the individual's *being*. Drawing from Heidegger, although people feel

that they understood what it means to be Black, there may lack an understanding of what this identity entails.

Heidegger challenged Husserl's idea of being through the concept of *Dasein*, a German term signifying human existence, being-there, consciousness, and mind. Heidegger's concept is a person's inquiry into being, and in particular, ability to question and focus on personal existence (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016). How one experiences a phenomena, determines how one interprets it. The way in which phenomena is understood is through a process that Heidegger termed the *hermeneutic circle* (Heidegger, 1968). In research, the hermeneutic circle is a process of circular movement of understanding that runs backward and forward along the text and ceases when the text is thoroughly understood (Gellweiler et al., 2018).

### **Nature of the Study**

I used the second theoretical framework, the CRT, as another lens to give context when using the hermeneutic phenomenological framework. The CRT is composed of five different tenets: (a) counter-storytelling, (b) the permanence of racism, (c) Whiteness as property, (d) interest convergence, and (e) the critique of liberalism (DeCuir & Dixon, 2004). The tenet of counter-storytelling challenges the narratives of the majority or dominant population by exploring the perspective and experiences of minorities and people of color (Goessling, 2018). Permanence of racism implies that racism is persistent in the United States due to race and racism being deeply rooted in society (Milner, 2017). Whiteness as property identifies that everything associated with Whiteness is considered valuable (Harris, 1993).

Interest convergence involves the idea that Whites only promote the advancement of Blacks when it also promotes the advancement of Whites (Taylor, 2000). Critique of liberalism focuses on the inadequate ways in which race issues have been addressed in the United States (Harris, 1993). Such tenets provided a useful framework for understanding the existence and persistence of racial inequities and identifying key intervention points (Lantz, 2021). Using the CRT in conjunction with the hermeneutic theory allowed exploration of the two viewpoints to delve into the meaning of racial experiences from the comparative perspective of Black male faculty in Black institutions and/or PWIs.

### **Definitions**

*Black man*: A man belonging to the racial group of Americans, including mixed races, who identifies as Black or African American; a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022).

*Counselor education and supervision (CES) faculty*: Master's- and/or doctoral-level instructors who teach in the field of CES.

*Lived experience*: Self-reported events that participants found important to express regarding their experiences of race relations (Garcia et al., 2015).

*Race relations*: The ways in which CES faculty, students and administration differ by racial groups and engage with one another within CES programs (Paradies et al., 2015).

### **Assumptions**

An example of an assumption is “when a researcher attempts to discover the relationship between two variables and must believe that the relationship between the two variables exists and can be discovered” (Latief, 2009, p. 2). One assumption I had was that the participants willingly engaged in the study without coercion and responded honestly to the questions posed. Additionally, I assumed that my presence as the researcher did not have an impact on participants’ responses. Finally, it was assumed that Black male faculty experienced some form of negative race relations with White faculty and administration.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

I explored the perceptions of Black men who worked in counselor education and expressed experience race relations in their respective college or university settings. To accomplish this objective, I used purposeful and snowball sampling methods to identify participants (Valerio et al., 2016). The Walden University Institutional Review Board granted me permission to conduct this study after reviewing the study documents and determining that I had safeguards in place to protect the identity of the participants. I conducted semistructured interviews to collect data. Informed consent was obtained prior to interviews. Regarding delimitations, participants were Black male faculty members who currently worked in or had previously worked in counselor education programs as faculty at Black institutions or PWIs.

### **Limitations**

The study's limitations relate to its qualitative methodology. Due to the small sample size of six participants, the results of the study may not speak to the experiences of other Black male CES faculty. Additionally, though the study's focus was on the experience of Black male CES faculty, the majority of participants that were represented were African-Americans. Only one participant differed, identifying as Afro-Caribbean.

### **Significance**

This study is significant because it may add to the literature that fully explored the lived experiences of how Black faculty men who worked in CES programs in Black and PWI institutions after experiencing negative race relations. Research identified that Black men experienced racism and discrimination as faculty in CES than White faculty (Hannon et al., 2019). Additionally, it was found that there was a clear and robust connection between experiences of racism and decreased psychological well-being, increased psychological distress, and mental health symptoms among Black Americans (Abdullah et al., 2021). This aligns with the findings that discovered the existence of higher stress levels resulting from subtle discrimination and microaggressions and deteriorating of Black faculty's focus and productivity in other fields (Eagan & Garvey, 2015).

The goal of CES programs was to prepare counseling professionals to positively have an impact on their clients and communities through effective practices, leadership, and advocacy. The ACA (2014) code of ethics highlights recruitment and retention of diverse faculty as an ethical responsibility as programs with faculty that value diversity

are able to train culturally competent counselors. In turn, Black faculty may be positioned to provide services to clients from various backgrounds (Cartwright et al., 2018). The results of this study might inform other Black faculty about experiences that could aid in the improvement of CES programs.

### **Summary**

CES programs have the ethical duty to ensure that standards require programs to create and support an inclusive learning environment (CACREP, 2015). In this chapter, I provided background information on the concerns regarding the underrepresentation of Black male faculty and how this underrepresentation is the consequence of social forces that includes racism (Bonnor et al., 2021). To bring more understanding to these concerns, key terms *race relations*, *lived experiences*, *Black male*, and *CES faculty* were defined. As further explored in Chapter 2, there has been a long history of concerns that Black men have faced in education, and the hope is to highlight current race relation concerns to inform how we may support them in successfully navigating the CES profession.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

Black men are notably underrepresented in CES programs. Despite comprising nearly 13% of the general population in the United States, in 2019 Black men made up less than 4% of CES faculty (Hannon et al., 2019). Equally troubling is that the percentage of Black male CES faculty decreases as the academic rank increases, which suggests issues related to retention and promotion (Oller et al., 2021). The impetus for this study was the emphasis placed on cultural competence by the ACA (2014) and CACREP (2015). These professional organizations cited diversity among faculty members in counselor training programs as essential, as diversity among faculty is believed to enhance student learning, promote cultural competence, address disparities in the field, and foster cultural inclusivity within a program. To support diversity among counselor education staff, recruitment and retention of faculty that represent a variety of life experiences, backgrounds, and identities is essential (Cartwright et al., 2018).

The ACA (2014) code of ethics and the CACREP (2015) standards state that counselor educators and programs should be committed in the process of recruiting and retaining diverse faculty. To support these expectations, special focus should be placed on the racial climate of CES programs. Black CES faculty reported that job satisfaction and retention are significantly related to their perceptions of the campus' racial climates (Holcomb-McCoy & Addison-Bradley, 2005). This concern uncovered that Black CES faculty's race-related produced experiences such as institutional and situational bias, unequal treatment, and racial microaggressions (Hannon et al., 2019). Subsequently,

these race-related experiences can have negative implications on Black CES faculty's mental health, which may limit productivity and impede their ability to meet tenure expectations (Hannon et al., 2019). The identified race-related concerns found in CES programs, paired with the fact that Black male faculty have difficulty occupying spaces that can be psychologically unsafe (Hannon et al., 2019); all of which conflicts with CACREP (2015) standards that programs must create and support an inclusive learning environment.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore how Black male faculty experience race relations in CES programs. The study provided deep contextual understandings of the lived experiences of being a Black male faculty in CES programs. By documenting the lived experiences of Black men, it might contribute to the literature on how race relations influence Black male experience in CES. To support this study, I conducted an extensive literature review. This chapter's review of the literature comprises 11 sections and one subsection. These sections consisted of the literature search strategy, the theoretical frameworks, Black men and mental health, societal view of Black men, racial trauma and mental health, a historical look at Black men in education, Black faculty at PWIs, Black men at Black institutions, diversity in CACREP-accredited programs, discussing CACREP, discussing CES, then finally exploring race-based concerns in CES.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

In my search to identify relevant literature that provided full-text peer reviewed articles of past and current trends around Black men, CES, and race relations, I explored

the following electronic research databases: APA Pysch Info, SAGE Journals, SocINDEX and ProQuest. The websites of the ACA and CACREP were also used. To explore the race and ethnicity of interest to the study, the terms Black or African-American and African American or Black American were used within APA Pysch Info and SAGE Journals. When searching for literature in relation to my population, the terms *Black men, African American men, Black males, Black male faculty, African American faculty, CES faculty, counselor education, counselor training, counselor supervision and clinical supervision* were used within APA PyschInfo, SAGE Journals, SocINDEX, and ProQuest. To explore various forms of race relation concerns, the terms *racism, discrimination, prejudice, racial bias, racial trauma, microaggressions, and macroaggressions* were used within APA Pysch Info, SAGE Journals, and SocINDEX.

### **Conceptual Framework**

One's chosen conceptual framework built the foundation for the study and literature review. This study was informed by the assumptions of two lenses, hermeneutic phenomenology, and the CRT. The following sections highlighted these two lenses to address the interpretive nature of data while giving insight to the unique experiences of Black male faculty in counselor education programs.

#### **Hermeneutic Phenomenology**

Hermeneutic phenomenology as a philosophical movement originates from Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) and was further developed by Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002) among others (Guignon, 2012). Heidegger (1968) believed that a researcher should study a phenomenon from one's point of view, coined as the individual's *being*.

This concept emanates from the belief that each individual utilizes his or her background knowledge to give understanding to a phenomena, resulting in a unique interpretation for the individual. For Heidegger, the term *being* was the description or account that Dasein (the being there or man's existence) provided of their everydayness or ordinary existence (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016).

The existential condition, or as Heidegger called it, the "basic constitution" of Dasein is the condition of *Mitsein* (being-with) in a With-world (Ryan, 2007). To elaborate and address any ontological investigation, the consideration of *Mitsein* is pertinent to understanding. In exploring Dasein's fundamental structure of *being*, Heidegger highlighted that being in the world is unitary and "must be seen as a whole" (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016). This view of the world used in the process of understanding a phenomena is a process Heidegger termed the *hermeneutic circle* (Heidegger, 1968). According to Gellweiler et al. (2018), in the context of a study, the hermeneutic circle is a process of circular movement of understanding that runs backward and forward along the text and ceases when the text is perfectly understood.

Gadamar (2006) expanded upon Heidegger's hermeneutic circle by noting that through a person's interaction with a phenomenon, one's knowledge of the phenomenon shifts based on new information obtained about the phenomenon from the interaction. In the case of my research, I understand race-related issues based on my previous experiences and knowledge. However, obtaining data from my participants, I expanded my knowledge on the phenomena. The more I reviewed the data, the more understanding I gained. It is noted that in this approach, researchers must accept that the discovery of

meaning is an infinitive process as one's viewpoint on things is continuously formed through new fusions of horizons. This fusion takes the courage to decide when sufficient information has been generated to provide a satisfactory answer to the research question (Gellweiler et al., 2018).

In exploring how Black men experience race relations in CES, I explored not only the experience of race relations but the meaning that is related to their experience. The way in which participants experienced and created meaning from race relation interactions is important to explore, as it may lead to increased knowledge of how these interactions shaped the way in which Black male CES faculty engaged in their work.

### **Critical Race Theory**

The conceptual framework of this qualitative study is the CRT that examines the role of race in the law (Sue et al., 2009). Post-modernism is a critique of the law influenced by developments in literary theory, and it emphasizes political economy and the economic context of legal decisions and issues. Racism is a phenomenon that has been woven into the structure and history of the United States. Despite most being able to identify racism as something negative, subtle, and systemic, ways of racism continue to be revealed daily (Sue et al., 2009). The CRT was derived during the mid-1970s by legal scholars Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado, in response to the failure of critical legal studies to adequately address the effects of race and racism in U.S. jurisprudence (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004).

Scholars of critical legal studies acknowledge that the law is necessarily intertwined with social issues (Legal Information Institute, n.d.). CRT focused directly on

the effects of race and racism, while simultaneously addressing the hegemonic system of White supremacy on the “meritocratic” system (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). In addition, CRT differs from critical legal studies in that it has an activist aspect, the end goal of which is to bring change that implemented social justice (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004).

CRT demands that a problem is placed in social, political, and historical context while considering issues of power, privilege, racism, and oppression (Daftary, 2020). This makes it a unique framework when exploring the experiences of those who are disenfranchised such as Black men. DeCuir and Dixson (2004) identified that CRT is composed of five different tenets: (a) counter-storytelling, (b) the permanence of racism, (c) Whiteness as property, (d) interest convergence, and (e) the critique of liberalism.

### ***Counter-Storytelling***

Counter-storytelling challenges the narratives of the majority or dominant population that permeates everyday life and is ingrained into social and cultural norms of society. Counter stories told by minorities and people of color serve to dismantle that reality and serve as interpretive structures that can organize experience (Goessling, 2018). The counter-stories of the Black male faculty in this study may shed light on the inequalities and subsequent impact in counselor education. These stories may also provide insight into counselor education experiences that can lead to unfair treatment because of the dominant ideologies about those who identify as Black.

### ***Permanence of Racism***

The second tenet, permanence of racism, suggests that racism is persistent and permanent in the United States. Milner (2017) attributed this tenet to race and racism

being deeply rooted in U.S. society, while also being deeply embedded in the policies, practices, procedures, and institutionalized systems of education. To address this tenet to race and racism, one must be persistent and intentional in approach. This may look like the increase of open communication through professional development opportunities and provided support groups while individuals assist in educating campuses on areas of implicit bias, diversity, and inclusion (Torino et al., 2018). Tevis and Foste (2022) suggested the following:

White higher education administrators explore the historical nature to how higher education is historically linked to White supremacy, while also requiring that they learn about and acknowledge the racist histories of their own institutions; acknowledge racism as a systemic, institutional form of violence enacted on People of Color while simultaneously affording privileges to White people; critique how racism would look differently if leaders operated from the assumption that White supremacy is ingrained in the very fabric of the institution; and move toward spaces of self-critique, vulnerability, and uncertainty. (p. 25)

In my study, there may be a connection to how certain policies, practices, and procedures established in CES programs enable negative race relation interactions with Black men.

### ***Whiteness of Property***

The third tenet, Whiteness of property, finds that Whiteness and everything associated with it, is considered valuable. Harris (1993), who theorized that Whiteness is property protected by U.S. law because property referred to not only physical objects but, anything to which a person attached value. Annamma (2015) identified that in public

education, Whiteness as property is connected to communities with more valuable property funded schools at higher rates which afford more resources, provide access to intellectual property in the form of high-quality curriculum. In higher education, the 1981 Bureau of the Census reported that 90.6% of the faculty were White (Young et al., 1990). Though it has shown some improvement over time, 74% of full-time faculty working in accredited counselor education programs in 2016 identified as White (Cartwright et al., 2018). This institutional power further reinforced the notion that being White was more valuable and necessary than being a person of color (Patton et al., 2007). This dynamic study conducted by Holcomb-McCoy and Addison-Bradley (2005) found that Black counselor educators did not feel included as valuable assets by their White colleagues.

### ***Interest Convergence***

The fourth tenet of CRT, interest convergence, involved the idea that Whites only promoted the advancement of Blacks when it also promoted the advancement of Whites (Taylor, 2000). The concept of affirmative action is a leading example of what this looks like. Affirmative action is a generic term for policies aimed at encouraging and supporting underrepresented groups within a workplace (Foley & Williamson, 2019). Such policies sought to rectify inequality arising from past and continuing overt, institutionalized, or non-conscious forms of discrimination and to create a sufficient mass of representation to trigger a tipping point in an organization's culture (Foley & Williamson, 2019).

In 1987, the Higher Education Coordinating Board included in its master plan for higher education the goal of “establishing and implementing policies and practices that

ensure the full participation of minorities in higher education programs as students, faculty, staff, and administrators” (Taylor, 2000, p. 29). In turn, the Board considered alternative admission criteria and considered issues of race, income, educational attainment of family members, and college preparation (Taylor, 2000). However in 1994, it was found that White students were the greatest beneficiaries with 80% of undergraduate admittance being White men under the new criteria (Taylor, 2000). This tenet indicated that if there were CES programs that had policies in place that supported and facilitated the growth of Black male faculty, it in some way benefited their White counterparts.

### ***Critique of Liberalism***

The fifth tenet, critiqued liberalism, criticized liberal beliefs such as the notion of colorblindness (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). Though on the surface the idea sounded ideal, it failed to consider the long history of rights being withheld within the U.S. based exclusively on race. Colorblindness, defined as a willful ignorance about the continual significance of race and racism to individual and group outcomes (Ifeonu, 2020), neglects the realities of marginalized populations. It was suggested that colorblindness made it nearly impossible to interrogate both the ways that White privilege was deployed and normalized the effects of Whiteness (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). To put it differently, arguing that society should be colorblind ignored the fact that inequity, in-opportunity, and oppression were historical artifacts that were not easily remedied by ignoring race in the contemporary society (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). Ignoring race perhaps gave context as to why despite previous literature identifying that there were concerns regarding the

lack representation of marginalized populations in CES, there was little recent literature that discussed intentional steps taken in the field to recruit and retain these populations.

Henfield et al. (2013) explored 11 Black doctoral students' perceptions of challenging experiences within their counselor education programs at PWIs. A phenomenological study, the CRT was used as a lens to explore Black students' self-identified challenges and any program structural and cultural practices that affected successful retention and matriculation. Using the CRT, themes of feelings of isolation, peer disconnection, and faculty misunderstandings and disrespect were found. The researchers felt that these findings supported CRT, which recognized that racism was engrained in the American education systems. Additionally, racism and microaggressions perpetuated the marginalization of students of color in PWIs.

Hannon et al. (2019) also implemented the phenomenological research design while utilizing CRT as a lens. Their goal was to explore the factors that contributed to the successful earning of tenure for Black male counselor educators. They elected to utilize CRT so that they could contextualize their understanding of the lived experiences of tenured Black male counselor educators. Eight tenured counselor educators discussed three specific dispositions, (a) an openness to community building and being mentored, (b) in-depth awareness (i.e., self-awareness and environmental awareness), and (c) the ability to demonstrate persistence and clarity of purpose that contributed to their success. CRT predicated that all three of these themes were affected by race.

The use of the CRT in the current study is beneficial as it presumed that race was a significant influence in the lives of people of color and furthermore, understanding of

the lived experiences of participants required consideration of race in the face of systemic variables (Hannon et al., 2019). The three primary tenets undergirding this study were (a) counter-storytelling, (b) the permanence of racism, and (c) interest convergence. Counter-storytelling gave power to the marginalized Black male counselor educator to express the narrative through their lens. These tenets may enable readers to contextualize and understand their experiences. Permanence of racism may contribute to the study by highlighting how certain policies and procedures in CES programs within PWIs have maintained environmental factors that have mitigated the growth of Black male faculty within this setting. Finally, interest convergence may bring context to why certain CES policies and goals are put into place but there is no true shift in the culture of the programs.

### **Literature Related to Key Concepts**

#### **Societal Attitudes About Black Men**

Since the founding of the United States, racial tensions, obstacles, and stereotyping have been part of American society. To this day, these dynamics continue to play a role in the day-to-day life of Americans, and subsequently maintained the concern of racial disparity. One of the more prominent groups that is affected by this issue are Black men. Randall Kennedy (1998) explained that the reputation of Blacks has been *besieged* by beliefs about predispositions toward criminality that can be traced back to the enslavement of Africans in the United States. These beliefs are currently manifested in the form of stigmatization of Black men (Teasley et al., 2019). This stigmatization has led Americans to see Black men as violent and dangerous, indolent, non-achieving, and

criminal, which has created a context in which many Black men, particularly those of low-income status, to be viewed as suspicious in a variety of social encounters (Teasley et al., 2019).

These deeply held beliefs stem from White racist attitudes that were operationalized through oppressive and discriminating actions that idealized how slaves should think and behave (Taylor et al., 2019). According to Feagin and Feagin (1999), many White slave owners developed stereotypes to rationalize their economic, social, and political dominations. The dominant group's ideals allowed for them to maintain their superior states while simultaneously subjecting Blacks to a collective identity. These stereotypical beliefs held firmly to the perception that Black men, among other things, behaved like savage beasts, were stronger than White men, lusted for the blood of White women, and could tolerate more pain than White people (Taylor et al., 2019).

According to Henderson-King and Nisbett (1996), an individual Black person's behavior may disproportionately influence a White Americans' attitude toward other Blacks. Such influence may be particularly pronounced when the action of the Black person's behavior is perceived as negative. Previously, Henderson-King and Nisbett noted that people rely too heavily on small samples in making judgments and often fail to recognize that their observations could be attributed to sampling variability. These perceptions may be attributed to the concept of the *law of small numbers*. Current literature identifies that law of small numbers as the notion that atypical results are more likely to occur with a small sample of observations relative to a large sample (Christopher, 2017). Additionally, these perceptions may be exacerbated by how Black

people are portrayed, particularly Black men in the media. Howard et al. (2012) expounded upon this statement suggesting that negative social imageries of Blackness has shaped America's attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs about Black men.

Brooms and Perry (2016) argued that the misrepresentation of Black men, whether in the modern era or the past, has largely been driven by negative stereotypes. This is evident by the stories on Black men that are oftentimes shaped by deficit-based labels such as *anti-intellectual* and *at-risk*, that reinforces the flawed idea that Black men are inherently dangerous and threats to social order that need to be contained (Kumah-Abiwu, 2020). The persistent images that viewed stereotype Black men as criminals and thugs may subsequently lead to prejudice and discriminatory actions toward them.

Mobasseri (2019) conducted a study to explore how hiring managers' exposure to violent crime events affected employment discrimination. Mobasseri sent 368 hypothetical job applications from men to 184 employers in Oakland, California, and tested the effect of race, criminal record, and exposure to violent crime on callback rates. Data showed that Black applicants had an 11.6% lower callback rate than that of White or Hispanic applicants, a similar rate as White and Hispanic applicants who had criminal records (11.9%). Additionally, employers that had recent exposure to violent crimes in their neighborhood reduced callback rates for Black applicants with no criminal background by 11.4%, while not influencing White and Hispanic applicants, even for those who had criminal records.

Wright et al. (2023) surveyed how portrayals of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement in fake news (misinformation) and hard news via either print or video clips

affected viewers' attitudes regarding Black Americans. Most participants in the study identified as male (55%) and White (55.8%). Participants exposed to fake news reported more prejudicial views toward Black Americans compared to those exposed to hard news. Participants who were exposed to hard news subsequently, reported higher pro-Black attitudes. Notably, the effect of both fake and hard news was only significant if the news information was in a printed media modality. The researchers reflected that these reports aligned with previous research regarding the shock value and sensational nature of fake news headlines and how they may influence the opinions of consumers. For both print fake and hard news, less pro-Black attitudes were associated with men and those associated with the Republican political party.

This research highlighted how there is an intersection between how accurate information in news sources are and how the information itself is presented, with the latter having a significant impact. This literature rationalizes my current study as it indicated that race is still a dominant force within American society. The way in which American society views Black men in general, may have implications of how majority CES faculty viewed and engaged Black CES faculty.

### **Black Men and Mental Health**

Previous researchers have found that Black men were often reluctant to seek help for both health and mental health issues, despite the range and severity of health– and mental health–related problems affecting them (Lindsey & Marcell, 2012). Williams (2014) analyzed the mental health service use among Black emerging adults. Data were collected from the National Survey of American Life, in which 806 Black emerging

adults between the ages of 18 and 29 were assessed. Respondents were asked whether they had ever seen a professional for problems with their emotions, nerves, or use of alcohol or drugs and whether they had ever talked to a general medical doctor or any other professional about their problems with a specific disorder. Additionally, they were questioned about talking to a professional about their mental health. This data focused on respondent experiences in the previous 12 months as well as over a lifetime. Among respondents who had utilized services in their lifetime, women were twice as likely as men to utilize services. Women were also almost twice as likely as men to have sought treatment from mental health sector providers. This data indicated that Black women are more likely than their Black male counterparts to utilize services in general and formalized mental health services (Williams, 2014).

Although utilization of mental health services by persons of African descent has increased over time, the most recent data still show significant underutilization (Armstrong et al., 2022). In a survey conducted by Breslau et al. (2017), 16.9% of Black Americans reported experiencing mild to severe mental health illness. Of the sample, 9.4% perceived a need for mental health treatment. Compared to their White counterparts, 19.4% of participants reported mild to severe mental health illness of which 17.9% perceived a need for treatment. The data found in this study is a concern as The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health stated that in 2020, suicide was the third leading cause of death amongst Black Americans, with Black men being 4 times as likely to die of suicide than Black women. Without adequate

treatment for their mental health, Black men may experience additional health concerns that may be detrimental to their well-being.

According to Hankerson (2015), factors influencing mental health service use among Black men include cultural mistrust, concerns of being misdiagnosed and the use of more informal support networks for mental health support. This data coincides with results found by Sachs et al. (2017), who explored Black community members' perceptions of health and factors that influenced their health. Participants reported the belief that most of the time they were misdiagnosed and therefore received substandard care. As a result, most participants reported resorting to home remedies and/or avoiding the health care system completely for primary or preventative care.

Data found by Alang (2019) gave additional insight that identified sociodemographic, economic, health status, health insurance characteristics, and the fear of double discrimination (around race and mental health) were associated with reasons why Blacks reported unmet needs for mental health care. One may be able to assume that Black men who work in the CES would be receptive to receiving mental health support however, it is possible that there may be some existing factors that would hinder this population from receiving the help that they need. Without adequate treatment, Black male CES faculty who experience negative race relations may endure chronic symptoms that could affect job performance and retention in their programs.

### **Racial Trauma and Mental Health**

Race is defined as a social construction in which people are identified by their skin color, language, and physical features, and are placed into distinct racial groups

(Carter, 2007). Expanding upon the idea of race is the construct of racism. Racism has been defined in various ways throughout time and may be contingent on the perspective of the individual who defines it. For this study, racism is defined as a complex set of rational and logical beliefs and attitudes that serve to justify the superiority of the dominant racial group while deemphasizing its systemic characteristics and sociohistorical context (Carter, 2007).

Stress, on the other hand, is defined as a person–environment, biopsychosocial interaction, wherein environmental events (stressors) are appraised first as either positive or unwanted and negative (Carter, 2007). Stress may serve as a protective tool for the body but could also be damaging. Of the two kinds of stress, there are good stress and bad stress. Good stress is generally in reference to experiences that are limited in duration and that a person can master and may leave them with a sense of exhilaration and accomplishment. Whereas bad stress, refers to experiences where a sense of control and mastery are lacking and are often prolonged or recurrent, irritating, emotionally draining, and physically exhausting or dangerous (McEwen, 2007).

Then, there is trauma in general is considered as a form of stress. However, it is distinct in that it is a more severe form of stress understood in terms of both the nature of the stressors and the type of reaction to the stressors (Carter, 2007). Trauma is defined as an individual's physical and psychological response to having experienced, witnessed, or been confronted with events that involve actual or threatened death, or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of the self or others (Flannery, 2022). There are three domains of good physical and mental health: reasonable mastery, the ability to shape the

environment do meets one's needs; caring attachments to other persons; and a meaningful, prosocial purpose in one's life to guide one's activities (Flannery, 2022). The idea behind trauma is that any of the previously mentioned events may disrupt one or more of these domains.

Black Americans are exposed to significantly more incidences of racial discrimination than any other racial group within the United States (Spann, 2022). According to Spann (2022), evidence has shown that 90% of both Black adults and children have experienced a discriminatory racial encounter (DRE) in their lifetime. Though now well documented in literature, psychological and physical trauma was not always effectively linked to experiences of racism. Carter noted that previous researchers (i.e., Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005) explored the phenomena using PTSD criteria. Carter argued that this failed to acknowledge the complexities in how individuals weigh traumatic events using their relationship with their racial identity. With this in consideration, Carter (2007), proposed the race-based traumatic stress injury model. This model suggested that negative race-based encounters can lead to extreme levels of stress and thus may have the potential to produce traumatic reactions (Carter et al., 2020).

Race-based traumatic stress has been coined in different ways over the years as scholars continued to gain an understanding of the relationship between racism stimuli and stress reactions. Despite differing labels, race-based traumatic stress has consistently encompassed one or more of the following definitions: (a) an emotional injury that is motivated by hate or fear of a person or group of people as a result of their race; (b) a racially motivated stressor that overwhelms a person's capacity to cope; (c) a racially

motivated, interpersonal severe stressor that causes bodily harm or threatens one's life integrity; or (d) a severe interpersonal or institutional stressor motivated by racism that causes fear, helplessness, or horror (Bryant-Davis, 2007).

Dr. William A. Smith also extensively studied this concept and applied it to the experience of Black professors. Smith (2004) coined the concept as *racial battle fatigue*, in which he defined it as a response to the distressing mental/emotional conditions that result from facing various forms of racism daily. Smith expressed that this stress-response can be mobilized not only in response to physical or psychological insults, but also in expectation of them. Similarly, Comas-Díaz (2016) described race-based traumatic stress as danger related to real or perceived experience of racial discrimination, threats of harm and injury, and humiliating and shaming events, in addition to witnessing harm to other ethno-racial individuals because of real or perceived racism. For the cohesion of this study, race-based traumatic stress, or racial battle fatigue, was referred to as racial trauma moving forward.

Since its creation, empirical evidence has been generated in support of the construct and measurement of racial trauma (Carter et al., 2020). One such example is the study conducted by Williams et al. (2023), who utilized the Trauma Symptoms of Discrimination Scale (TSDS), a 21-item self-report measure that broadly assesses the traumatizing impact of discrimination by focusing on anxiety-related symptoms of trauma. The goal of the study was to examine the TSDS and its relationships to clinical symptoms of depression, anxiety, stress, and PTSD. Participants were recruited through the Amazon Mechanical Turk (mTurk) Prime, now known as the Cloud Research

platform. This generated a sample of 941 participants. The gender demographics of the participants consisted of 56% male and 44% female. The racial demographics consisted of 30% White, 31% Black, 22% Asian, 9% White Hispanic, and 8% Non-White Hispanic.

For general experiences of discrimination, TSDS was strongly related to lifetime experiences than recent experiences (Williams et al., 2023). TSDS was also related to the amount of stress associated with experiences of discrimination. Similarly, TSDS was related to reports of microaggressions and race-based traumatic stress symptoms. The relationship between the TSDS and measures of psychopathology was that trauma symptoms of discrimination were associated with higher levels of depression and anxiety symptoms, traumatic cognitions, and PTSD symptoms. The instruments used to measure psychopathology were the PTSD Civilian Checklist-5 (PCL-5), Posttraumatic Cognitions Inventory (PCTI), Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI), and Beck Depression Inventory (BDI). The findings of this study indicated that implicit and explicit forms of racism contributed to traumatization.

Scholars uncovered that race-based events should be considered as potentially traumatizing due to its consequences having similarities to other forms of trauma. This may look like incidents of racial discrimination and bias resulting in negative psychological, emotional, and/or physical health outcomes (Spann, 2022). In a study conducted by Benjamins (2013), questions from five different discrimination measures were used in a survey to assess experience of discrimination and the health outcomes across races. Data were collected from 1,699 participants who consisted of non-Hispanic

Blacks, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and non-Hispanic Whites. Results revealed that discrimination appeared to be most consistently related to the health outcomes for both Whites and Blacks. For Blacks, at least one measure found that discrimination was significantly associated with depression.

In addition to racial encounters resulting in overlapping symptoms with PTSD, Carter et al. (2017), found that it may also involve criteria unrelated to PTSD (e.g., processing and understanding race and racism) that could result in racial trauma injury. Carter et al. (2020) expanded the understanding of racial trauma by exploring the relationships between symptoms of racial trauma and symptoms associated with PTSD conceptualizations of trauma. Carter et al. reported that participants exposed to racial discrimination experienced a wide range of emotional responses with feelings of disrespect and anger, insult, disappointment, frustration, outrage, hurt, and shock.

Although there was far less literature that focused on the physiological effects associated with exposure to extreme stressors (Schnurr & Green, 2004), there were clear concerns regarding the potential physical effects of traumatic events. Individuals who have been exposed to traumatic stressors had adverse physical health outcomes, including poor self-reported health status, a greater number of self-reported medical problems, increased morbidity and mortality, and greater service utilization (Schnurr & Green, 2004). In the study conducted by Benjamins (2013), there were findings that discrimination was associated with having at least one activity limitation, rating one's health as fair or poor, binge drinking, and being less sedentary. These results were similar to other research findings that suggested that a history of trauma exposure was also

associated with an increased risk of substance use disorders and that individuals with a history of trauma engaged in more adverse health practices than individuals without a history of trauma (López-Martínez et al., 2018). What this literature illustrated is that there was a clear relationship between racial bias and negative health outcomes. Black male CES faculty who were exposed to negative race relations in their programs may also experience those adverse physiological and psychological effects.

### **Historical Look at Black Men in Education**

America has more than a 300-year history of higher education; yet not more than 139 years ago, it was illegal for Blacks of any age to be taught to read (Jenkins, 2006). Throughout the United States' infancy, there were state laws that were put into place that mitigated the success of Black families. Southern slave states enacted anti-literacy laws between 1740 and 1834, prohibiting anyone from teaching enslaved and free people of color to read or write (Maddox, 2022). Despite the difficult beginnings, by the late 1800s, one-third of Black children were attending schools (Palmer & Maramba, 2011). Black people have traditionally linked their educational pursuits to a sense of liberation and a desire to improve the plight of their people (Palmer & Maramba, 2011). This was illustrated by the actions of prominent Black notables such as William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, Booker T. Washington, Frederick Douglass, and Denmark Vesey.

To further support the educational growth of Black people, legislators and educational leaders created HBCUs. HBCUs are institutions of higher education that were founded in the United States prior to 1964 (Stefon, 2022). The first of which were founded in Pennsylvania and Ohio prior to the American Civil War. The purpose of these

institutions was to provide Black youths, who were largely prevented from attending White established colleges and universities due to racial discrimination, with a basic education and training to become teachers or tradesmen (Stefon, 2022). HBCUs have consistently functioned as engines of social change and racial uplift and are among the few places where Black culture was placed at the forefront, appreciated, and sustained (Mobley, 2017). These colleges and universities supported the academic growth of Black students as graduation rates at HBCUs are similar to those found at PWIs.

Although this initial data do not appear to be impressive, a deeper look showed a different story. Beginning Postsecondary Students (BPS) data reveal that Black students at HBCUs were more likely to receive Pell grants, have a high school grade point average under 2.5 and are less likely to have taken advanced placement courses in high school (Cook, 2022). In this regard, the students who were accepted into HBCUs were less likely to be accepted into many PWIs yet were graduating at the same rate. Gasman et al. (2017) found that a contributing factor for the success of Black male students in HBCUs were programs that created opportunities for community, mentorship, and academic enrichment.

In addition to the facilitation of academic success, HBCUs appeared to be a refuge for Black students. Williams et al. (2021) sought to understand how the racial climate under Donald Trump may have influenced Black students to enroll in HBCUs. Eighty participants who identified as African American/Black and would be attending HBCUs during the 2017–2018 school year were selected. Three themes emerged from the study: (a) experience of racial microaggressions and peer political views, (b) physical

safety, and (c) learning of Black culture. Participants explained how experiencing racial microaggressions in high school and learning about the political views of their White friends when Donald Trump discussed policy-centered topics, motivated them to apply to HBCUs.

Williams et al.'s (2021) second finding emphasized how participants had concerns about their physical safety on the campuses of PWIs. Specifically, participants indicated that racially fueled protests on or near PWIs coupled with racial profiling that was highlighted in the media on college campuses made them choose an HBCU. To them, HBCUs served as a secure place where they knew that they would not be subjected to racially based harassment. In the final theme, participants discussed their gravitation toward HBCUs, stating that they felt that it would allow them to become familiar with Black culture and to experience Black excellence.

Despite the support of HBCUs and improved academic policies, there was still a significant discrepancy in the graduation rates of Black men and other racial and ethnic groups. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2022), only 36% of Black male students completed their bachelor's degree within 6 years, a significant discrepancy compared to the 63% completion rate of their White male counterparts. The deficit incurred by history is substantial and has had a generational impact on the Black community, the family unit, and the individual. However, the question remains, why have Black men in particular not been as successful academically as White men?

Rowley and Bowman (as cited in Hucks, 2011) suggested that successful academic outcomes for Black men in higher education are impeded by cross-generational family. Student role strains specifically cited the absence of Black fathers and male role models as negatively influencing student motivation and peer-risk behaviors both in and out of school. Although Black families throughout history have established strong family units and created their ritualistic marriage bonds, despite the laws of the day, the direct and intentional role of society in stunting the growth of a family ethic within the Black community was important to note (Jenkins, 2006). The results had devastating effects on the nuclear families of Black Americans.

The Statista Research Department (2021) found that in 2020, there were about 4,250,000 Black families in the United States with a single mother, an increase from 1990 levels, when there were about 3,400,000 Black families with a single mother. The mix of inferior education, persisting discriminatory practices, and an internalized sense of defeat has proved lethal to the young Black man and thus to the Black family (Jenkins, 2006). With parents suffering a sense of defeatism, many Black children are then left to navigate the psychological and social oppressions that began for them at a very early age (Jenkins, 2006). A plight that Black men struggled greatly with and consequently reinforced the cycle of defeat. However, hope is not lost.

Research has found that through the development of educational resiliency, Black men can overcome various factors that may hinder academic achievement (Scott & Sharp, 2019). This educational resiliency may be developed in Black men through the use of initiatives that emphasize the development of social capital and draw upon a networks

of people and community resources (Scott & Sharp, 2019). There had been a number of institutions who created Black-male centered programs or Black Male Initiatives (BMI) as an intervention method to support students' academic success, academic and social integration, and personal development.

Brooms (2018) explored the way in which BMI programs mattered in the experience of Black male college experiences. Forty Black male college students who attended PWIs and were between the ages of 19 and 26 were interviewed for this study. Four major themes emerged from the data with respect to how Black men in college experienced their engagement in BMI programs: (a) sense of belonging is comprised of statements of mattering and feeling connected on campus; (b) gaining access, which comprised of statements where students expressed the importance of increased access to sociocultural capital; (c) academic motivation, which comprised of statements positing the efforts of BMI to support and enhance students' academic and educational performances; and (d) heightened sense of self, or feeling connected to a collective identity and consciousness among BMI staff and peer BMI members. The data revealed that their BMI community played a significant role in the thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors of Black men on campus. The benefit of BMIs appeared to align with the climate in which HBCUs provide.

Johnson (2019) explored the experiences that motivated Black and African American students to choose HBCUs. Using data collected from 48 participants across 20 HBCUs who identified as Black or African American, data revealed two primary themes: pride and prejudice. HBCUs appealed to many of the participants, as through hearing the

stories of HBCU experiences (via family members, school personnel, and/or alumni), participants recognized that this was an environment that they wanted to be a part of. Additionally, the experience of academic isolation at the intersection of race and gender, was prominent, particularly for Black male participants as they attempted to maintain social connections with fellow Black students in their high school and home communities. Like what was found with BMIs, HBCUs appear to contribute to Black male students' sense of belonging and connection to a collective identity.

Historically, Black men have faced various challenges that have hindered their ability to succeed in education, however some have been able to overcome these challenges with resilience. Research has shown that this resilience may be supported through the fostering of community and having a sense of belonging. Black male CES faculty, like this population, have successfully navigated these exact challenges in order to obtain their roles. Results of this study may draw parallels from how Black men have historically experienced education to how Black male CES faculty experience their environments working in higher education at PWIs.

### **Black Men at Predominantly White Institutions**

One primary struggle Black men have historically faced when attending PWIs is the experience of racism. This racism frequently manifests itself in the actions of other students on campus and other individuals within the community—often despite the efforts of concerned administrators, faculty members, and staff members (Black & Bimper, 2020). The experience of both micro and macro aggressive behavior is largely attributed to the fact that individuals in the majority population of the community,

actively or passively, perform discriminatory prejudicial acts because they are from or have lived in segregated, homogenous, non-diverse communities or maintained connection to networks with these characteristics (Black & Bimper, 2020).

Literature has shown that the experiences of racism may have negative implications on the mental health as well as behavioral habits of Black men. Smith et al. (2016) investigated how experiencing persistent Black racist misandric stereotypes could produce psychological symptoms of racial battle fatigue (racial trauma) with Black male students who attended PWIs. Researchers examined the responses of 36 self-identified Black male students between the ages of 18 and 25. All participants reported experiencing various forms of racial microaggressions in academic, campus-social, and public spaces. The two major themes that emerged from the data were Black misandric stereotyping and marginality and hyper surveillance and control. The participants described differing levels of severity of the microaggressions that they experienced. However, what was unanimous was that they perceived the college environment as much more hostile and unwelcoming toward Black men than toward other groups. As a result of these race- based interactions, participants reported having psychological responses, i.e. frustration, shock, avoidance/withdrawal, disbelief, anger, defensiveness, uncertainty/confusion, resentment, anxiety, helplessness, hopelessness, and fear.

Feraud-King Mwangi (2022) conducted a study that explored the relationship between Black misandry and segmented assimilation for foreign-born Black male collegians. Data were collected from eight foreign-born Black men who had currently or previously attended a PWI. The participants of the study unanimously reported that they

did not identify with African Americans or African American culture, but instead aligned their identities with their ethnicities, culture and/or nationalities. Despite the disconnect they felt with African Americans, the participants expressed that they were treated in the same manner as them. It was discussed that this manifested in direct and indirect forms of racism that included being stereotyped as ghetto, lazy or violent. As a result of these studies, several participants reported that they were made to feel that they did not belong on campus. Despite the participants initially expressing how they never considered their race, many reported that their experiences at a PWI forced them to contend with race and racism.

Similar results were found in a study conducted by Patterson (2020), who studied the perception of 17 Black American men from low socioeconomic status backgrounds. Patterson explored how their identity would affect campus engagement and the role it would play in their social integration at a PWI. Participants reported finding themselves in a predominantly White and affluent setting which forced them to acknowledge the campus culture related to their race and socioeconomic status. In various settings on the campus, participants discussed experiencing microaggressions and discriminatory behaviors that contributed to their experience of culture dissonance. In one instance, a participant described an experience where he attempted to attend a fraternity party with his White friends. Upon arrival, members of the fraternity would not let them in due to the participant's presence. In another instance, the participant recalled attending an audition for a cappella group and saw how the student members interacted with White men who tried out. The participant reported that they engaged with each other in a warm

and welcoming way as they talked and laughed with one another when walking toward the elevator. When it came to his turn to walk to the elevator, there was complete silence. Experiences such as this was a shock to the participants, as they believed that they were entering into a progressive environment however, the experiences of racism and discrimination led many of the participants to believe that they could not be themselves.

Barry et al. (2016) examined the association between alcohol use and mental health conditions among Black men attending PWIs compared with those attending predominantly minority institutions. Data were collected from 416 Black male students and Black men attending a PWI reported significantly greater levels of alcohol consumption compared to those attending a predominantly minority institution. Similarly, Black men attending a PWI also reported significantly more mental health conditions compared with Black men attending a minority-serving institution. What this data suggests is that Black men who attend HBCUs may fare better in their mental health than those who attend PWIs.

This notion was supported by the data found in a study conducted by Thyden et al. (2023) who explored the long-term mental health effects for Black students attending HBCUs compared with Black students attending PWIs of higher education. The researchers theorized that Black students at HBCUs were exposed to less structural racism during college than Black students at PWIs. Their goal was to estimate the effects of structural antiracism vs. structural racism in higher education, and its impact on mental health. Of the 488 participants, 24% attended HBCUs and 76% attended PWIs in 2001-2002, they found that for Black students who had higher depressive symptoms at

baseline, attending an HBCU was more beneficial than attending a PWI in terms of depressive symptoms 7 years later. It is also worth noting that for Black students who attended HBCUs, frequency of depressive symptoms was low even for those who had high depressive symptoms in high school. Low depressive symptoms were signs that HBCUs might implement certain practices and protective factors in their settings that structurally supported the mental health of their Black students.

Black men who attend PWIs may benefited from the implementation of protective factors that may mitigate the adverse effects of negative race-based interactions. Black and Bimper (2020) explored the strategies that undergraduate Black men employed that enabled them to respond to campus racism and persist through graduation. Participants were recruited from a college campus in which Black students only made up 1.2% of the campus' total population. Data were collected from 11 participants, whom all reported that they had experienced racism. Consequently, participants expressed having had feelings of alienation, isolation, and inferiority. Participants adjusted to these experiences and persisted to graduation by seeking support from those like them within the institution's affinity organizations, groups, and programs. The results of this study align with those found in Brooms (2018), in that the creation of community is an effective protective factor for Black men in an environment in which they feel racially disconnected. This data may translate over to ways in which Black CES faculty in higher education may be supported to improve work experience.

### **Black Faculty at Predominantly White Institutions**

Although Black students represent approximately 12% of the total enrollments in higher education, the number of faculty continues to lag at a dismal 7% of all full-time faculty in American higher education settings (NCES, 2020). An increase was noted from the past where it was documented in 1981 that Black faculty members in higher education were at 4.2% (Journal of Blacks in Higher Education Foundation, 2008). However, this deficit was more evident when compared to the 56% of Black professionals who were employed as full-time faculty at HBCUs (Gasman, 2021). Sluggish growth indicated that progression continued to be a concern for Black faculty members within higher education at PWIs and was unique to this setting.

### ***Microaggression Experiences of Black Faculty***

The unique challenges experienced by Black faculty were just as persistent as their lack of growth over the years. Evidence was shown in a study conducted by Constantine et al. (2008), who explored the racial microaggression experiences of Black faculty in academia. Respondents reported experiencing microaggressions that came in the form of invisibility and hypervisibility, challenges to their qualifications, inadequate mentoring, high service-oriented assignments, racial discrimination, and pressure *to not be too Black*. Current literature indicated that there had not been much change and that Black faculty was still presented with concerns centered around PWIs higher education environmental factors.

In a study conducted by Louis et al. (2016), the experiences of microaggression through the stories of four Black faculty at PWIs were explored. Each of the participants,

two men and two women, were either tenured or on tenure track. The results of this study found four major themes: (a) the frequent experience of microaggressions, (b) feelings of futility, (c) high levels of stress, and (d) resiliency developed from negative actions toward them. A participant expressed the experience of microaggressions was a common occurrence with another participant noting that these microaggressions derived from various sources such as students, faculty, and administration. As a result of these experiences, all participants expressed a sense of helplessness, stating that they felt that no positive outcome would ensue for addressing the incidences. The experience of microaggressions also heightened levels of stress that adversely affected their work performance and shifted the way in which they engaged with their work environments. Despite the negative implications found in the data, there was a *silver lining*. All participants expressed how the discomfort they experienced from microaggressions, fueled them to overcompensate and subsequently increased their productivity.

### **Promotion and Tenure Process of Black Faculty**

Arnold et al. (2016) examined the psychological, physiological, and emotional and behavioral effects of racial microaggressions on Black faculty going through the promotion and tenure process. The researchers explored the experiences of two Black faculty, one male and the other female, who worked in educational leadership and policy departments located at PWIs. Through this narrative research, three intersecting themes emerged from the data: (a) entrapments, (b) being out of place, and (c) pseudopolicy directives.

***Theme 1: Entrapments***

Arnold et al. (2026) described entrapments as certain languages, norms, metaphors, and scripts that underlie the assumptions about, expectations for, and images of faculty in higher education, particularly for Black faculty. Within this theme, the Black man reported that despite receiving positive annual evaluations, he was told by senior faculty to wait additional time before applying to undergo the promotion and tenure process.

***Theme 2: Being Out of Place***

The Black woman described her pay discrepancy when being promoted to tenure, as her pay was significantly lower than her colleagues, and even lower than those that she had more experience. When advocating for an increase in salary, she was repeatedly denied, receiving different reasoning in which she was able to dispute. Regarding the theme of being out of place, both participants described their place in the department as a technicality, not an integral and embedded member of the institutional network (Arnold et al., 2016).

***Theme 3: Pseudopolicy and Hidden Directives***

The Black man reported receiving comments that were rooted in racial bias and led him to feel isolated. These comments included him being characterized as someone who lacked collegiality and respect for colleagues (Arnold et al., 2016). The theme of pseudopolicy and hidden directives consisted of experiences that focused on the major facets of academia: research, teaching, and service. The Black man expressed that despite him publishing in top journals, it was never considered enough. When teaching, both

participants expressed the resistance they endured from students when teaching their coursework that centered around diversity and equity. With service, both participants were expected to serve on department and college committees concerning diversity, race, and gender which in turn, took away essential time from research. There was a consensus that despite these obligations being counterproductive toward the promotion and tenure process, they were concerned that if they turned it down, they would be labeled as not collegial. The accumulation of these experiences was described by the participants as being associated with adverse physiological and psychosocial effects, such as weight gain, migraines, stomach issues, depression, and anxiety (Arnold et al., 2016).

Chambers and Freeman (2020) supported this literature by exploring the career pathways of Black full professors who attained the rank of full professor before age 45. Data were collected from seven participants who identified as Black or African American faculty at public institutions. The ages of the participants ranged from early thirties to mid-to-late forties, with men and women equally represented. Notably, the type of institution the faculty worked in was intentionally excluded, due to concerns of breach in confidentiality. Overall, the participants did not perceive age as a barrier or even a concern to promotion. However, there may have been intersection between age and race that played a role in their experience. Three participants described hostile work environments where their work was scrutinized unduly in manners not experienced by other-raced faculty. The origin of these interactions, nonetheless, was difficult to decipher for the participants as they could not determine if it was due to age, sex, and/or race (Chambers & Freeman, 2020).

In another study by Killough et al. (2017), aimed to improve understanding how race shapes relationships Black faculty have with colleagues at PWIs. The researchers also wanted to increase knowledge of the specific communication strategies employed by Black professionals in PWI settings. The central question posed by this study design was, “What does it mean to be perceived as Black in a PWI?” Sixteen participants were recruited from a national pool of full-time faculty and professional staff. Each participant was employed at a PWI and self-identified as Black or African American. The data illustrated eight predominant themes: (a) race exists, (b) race had conditional positive implications, (c) race influenced the lack of collegiality, (d) race influenced negative experiences, (e) they felt marginalized, (f) Blacks felt minimized, (g) there was a noticeable lack of diversity in university settings, and (h) how race created a hostile environment. Granting 83% of participants described positive experiences, they were dependent on finding and engaging others who would mentor them in positive ways and having the support of other minorities and Black students. Perhaps concerning support systems such as this may not be in place as 50% of participants stated that there was an absence of diversity in their programs such as half felt marginalized, and half felt minimalized. Similar to the data found by Louis et al. (2016), the results of this study reflected the prominence of psychological and sociocultural clashes that likely influenced the professional development of Black faculty in PWI settings.

In higher education, Black faculty experienced negative race relation challenges that could be psychologically disadvantageous and socially isolating. By exploring how Black male faculty experience race relations in the CES environment, similar race

relation concerns may be identified as those found in their Black faculty counterparts. This finding was important to identify as the literature has discussed the potential detrimental physical and psychological implications racial trauma can have on Black men. Additionally, by highlighting their experiences, other implications of race relations may be revealed that may contribute to the success and retention of Black male CES faculty.

### **Mental Health of Black Male Faculty at Predominately White Institutions**

According to the NCES (2020), in the fall of 2020, Black men represented 3% of full-time faculty in higher education (compared to 4% of Black women). In contrast, White men represented 41% of full-time faculty and White women were 35% of full-time faculty (NCES, 2020). Similar to the data found when looking at the percentage of Black faculty in general, the number of Black male faculty in PWIs have made little statistical progress over the years.

Higher education has a long history of underrepresentation of faculty of color, particularly Black men (Turner & Grauerholz, 2017). The lack of representation of Black male faculty in higher education has shown to be detrimental to Black male students who experienced marginalization, isolation, and racism (Black & Bimper, 2020; Brooms, 2018). These challenges had negative implications on the mental health of Black men in these environments. Challenges of which are present from the beginning of Black male faculty careers. Henry (2021), a Black man, reported on his lived experiences when working as faculty at PWI. He noted that issues of race began as early as his interview process. During his interview, Henry recalled a question that was posed to him by one of

the faculty search committee members, who was a part of an all-White interview panel. A White person asked, “Oregon is a predominately White state, so tell me how are you going to get along with lily White people at a lily White university?” Experiencing the racial tension, Henry questioned if he had a fair and equitable opportunity to compete for the faculty position.

Ford (2023) expanded further on how a fair and equitable opportunity to compete for the faculty position and thus explored how Black men experienced early career faculty roles at PWIs. Identifying seven Black male faculty who graduated from their respective programs no more than 5 years prior, the data produced three main themes from their experiences: (a) classroom and teaching experiences with students, (b) navigating research and service, and (c) negotiating identity in historical White spaces. All participants reported what they perceived race-related challenges with their students.

Aligning with what was found in Arnold et al. (2016), it was reported that White students would challenge and critique their teaching methods. In a more overt instance, one participant expressed receiving threatening emails from students due to his dialect and ethnic background. Similar sentiments were described by the participants when it came to their engagement with other faculty. Regarding their research, half of the participants described receiving resistance when conducting research on the advocacy of people of color. Participants described their colleagues as not understanding or valuing the work. Additionally, participants were concerned about how they were being perceived, and they described negotiating their identity. Two participants described

battling against any negative perceptions about themselves, by working twice as hard, a notion that was mirrored in the findings by Louis et al. (2016).

Negative race relation experiences are not limited to adjunct or non-tenured faculty but also those in administrative roles as well. Turner and Grauerholz (2017) conducted a study with a goal to inform postsecondary education administrators on the experience of Black professional men to begin supporting them and, in turn, Black male students. They explored the race-based experiences in the professional lives of Black men working in higher education. Ten Black male faculty participated and were employed at the same PWI. The data revealed four reoccurring themes: (a) they felt isolated from other Black male professionals, (b) their professional credentials were consistently questioned, (c) their positions of authority were challenged or ignored, and (d) they experienced tokenism and the cultural taxation associated with representing diversity. The acknowledgement of data left participants with the feeling of having little margin for error in their work. Similar findings were found by Arnold et al. (2016) and Louis et al. (2016) that Black male faculty responded by engaging in their work in a way that was more than what was formally required, so that they could prove their expertise and commitment to their roles.

### **Black Men in Leadership Roles in Predominantly White Institutions**

Sparkman (2021) studied Black men who worked in leadership positions in higher education at PWIs. The goal was to understand how Black men experienced leadership within this context. Sparkman examined how being a Black man affected the experience of leadership? Ten participants who self-identified as either Black or African American

men were selected. Each participant held a senior-level to executive-level position within a PWI of higher education. The data generated three themes that reflected the leadership experience of the participants: (a) responding to a call; (b) overcoming negative perceptions; and (c) compartmentalizing race, which respectively represented what motivated them to lead, the obstacles that they faced, and how they coped with issues influenced by race. Participants expressed experiencing varying levels of microaggressions that ranged from being mislabeled as the athletic assistant coach to colleagues questioning their ability to fulfill their titles. Despite these experiences, participants felt a drive to overcome these obstacles.

Supported by what was found in Ford (2023), Louis et al. (2016), and Turner and Grauerholz (2017), participants expressed in overcoming racial stereotypes, they felt that they had to be twice as good to get half as far. Regarding the compartmentalizing of their race, participants of the study either used their identity as a Black man as a motivator in their practice of leadership, or a variable to be removed from their practice of leadership. Where some participants lead with their identity, others elected to not allow it to define who they were in their leadership role (Ford, 2023).

Black men who worked as faculty in higher education have consistently described in the literature their negative race relation experiences within the PWI environment. Though these experiences may have negative implications on their well-being, some Black male faculty described a sense of resilience that encourages them to push forward and not allow themselves to succumb to their negative racialized work

environments. Similar findings may be found among Black male faculty who worked in CES at a PWI.

### **Historical Perspective of Counselor Education and Supervision**

Counseling as a profession emerged from the guidance counseling movement of late 19th and early 20th centuries (Del Rio & Mieling, 2012). As the 20th century advanced, counseling evolved to meet the demands of historical events within American society such as two World Wars, the great depression and women joining the workforce (Del Rio & Mieling, 2012). To meet the ever-shifting demands, CES was dedicated to educating future counselor academics and counselor practitioners. Since its inception in 1981, CACREP has sought to ensure that academic programs are “optimal to provide human development” services through counseling and other related academic programs (Del Rio & Mieling, 2012). The facilitators of these academic programs are counselor educators. Counselor educators met the responsibility of supervising students, modeling professional counseling behavior, monitoring conduct, infusing ethics, and helping students understand their scope of practice as counselors (Burns & Cruikshanks, 2018).

Earning the CES doctorate is an increasingly sought-after degree (Snow & Field, 2020). CACREP stated that between the years of 2012 and 2018, CACREP-accredited CES doctoral programs increased by 50%, with a 43.8% increase in student enrollment. However, an increase in interest in the counseling profession has not necessarily equated to an increase in CES faculty. A recurring theme in past literature suggested that counselor education graduates had an array of career choices with such programs as

community, mental health, substance abuse, and marriage and family counseling and therapy that led them away from a career as counselor educators (Maples et al., 1993).

Though the increased career opportunities certainly played a role 3 decades ago, the higher salaries of doctoral degree holders who worked outside of higher education, appeared to be the most important factor (Maples et al., 1993). Additionally, Maples et al. (1993), maintained that many counselor education doctoral graduates preferred to be practitioners as opposed to professors due to the inherent pressures of publishing and other nonteaching-related activities. This trend continued for 2 decades based on results of a National Board for Certified Counselors survey. Forty-one programs responded to the survey and results found that only 18% of their graduates would go on to become counselor educators (Isaacs & Sabella, 2013). Thus, relatively few new counseling graduates from doctorate programs sought counselor educator positions during that time when enrollments grew and faculty retired (Isaacs & Sabella, 2013).

More recent literature provided additional insight behind the decrease in interest in roles as CES faculty. The 2009 CACREP standards required that all core faculty hired after 2013 possess doctoral degrees in CES, preferably from CACREP-accredited programs (Field et al., 2020). As a result, from 2013 onward, newly appointed core faculty with doctorates in counseling psychology or other non-counseling disciplines could no longer qualify for faculty positions in CACREP-accredited doctoral CES programs (Field et al., 2020). This requirement may serve as a barrier or at the very least, a deterrent for a role that was seen as less lucrative and requires much more time investment than other CES professional options. Nevertheless, there was little current

literature that discussed the trends of counselor education graduates working as counselor educators. Literature presented in this section may indicate that Black men elected to engage in CES options more financially lucrative and required less time investment to be successful.

Diversity in Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational accredited Programs (CACREP) specialized in counseling programs that met the standards of counseling for educators. These programs are designed to provide individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to become professional counselors and are recognized by the ACA and the National Board for Certified Counselors as meeting the highest standards of quality in the field of counseling (CACREP, 2020). CACREP states that programs must demonstrate a commitment to diversity and inclusion in all aspects of their operations, including the recruitment and retention of diverse staff, faculty, and student body. Despite this requirement, CACREP-accredited faculty bodies tend to lack the diversity that is reflective of the United States population.

### **Racial Demographics of the United States in 2020**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2022), the racial demographic of the United States in 2020 was estimated to be at 60.1% White, 13.4% Black or African American, 18.5% Hispanic, 5.9% Asian, and 2.1% Other. The gender demographic during that time in the United States was 50.8% male and 49.2% female. In comparison, the average racial demographics of faculty in CACREP-accredited programs in 2020 consisted of 77.2% White, 7.2% African American , 5.2% Hispanic, 4.2% Asian, and

6.2% Other (CACREP, 2020). And the average gender demographic of these programs consisted of 68.3% female and 31.7% male (CACREP, 2020). What this indicates is that there is work to be done as the demographics found amongst CACREP faculty are not representative of the population.

Baggerly et al. (2017) conducted a study to understand the longitudinal trends of faculty diversity within APA- and CACREP-accredited programs. Their hopes aided in directing efforts for the recruitment, employment, and retention of diverse faculty. In their research, they found that having diverse faculty could have several benefits for CES programs. First, they found that diverse faculty added breadth and depth in teaching and modeling multicultural competencies and social justice advocacy. As a result, this finding supported aspiring counseling professionals in their development to serve diverse clients. Second, the diverse faculty may attract diverse counseling students, who may in turn increase retention of diverse clients. Third, they discovered that diverse faculty could increase the success of other minority faculty members by providing opportunities for networking and mentoring with similar peers. Lastly, it was reported that higher diversity among the faculty may prevent work-related stress among racially and ethnically diverse counselor educators due to tokenism, effects of visibility, contrast, role encapsulation, and assimilation.

There are several ways in which diversification among CACREP-accredited program faculty could be supported. Strategies for recruiting and retaining diverse faculty include salary incentives, research support, mentoring programs, policies supportive of diverse faculty, inclusive standards for tenure and promotion, collegial networks and

collaboration, institutionalization of diversity goals, and faculty diversity training (Turner et al., 2008). Other strategies included creating a welcoming environment for diverse faculty and facilitating structured dialogues on racism (Baggerly et al., 2017).

Additionally for recruiting diverse faculty, it was necessary to establish a pipeline of diverse undergraduate students (Baggerly et al., 2017). Faculty can be intentional about this process by seeking out and encouraging Black, Hispanic, and male undergraduate students to consider a career in counselor education. This may look like CES programs providing mentor opportunities and financial scholarships that are geared toward these individuals. For underrepresented groups who are currently enrolled in CES programs, professional development opportunities based around teaching and research should be facilitated to bolster competitiveness of potential employment.

Lastly, CES programs can make efforts to ensure that diversity is reflected as a core value. Stadler et al. (2006) suggested revising department diversity policies and procedures through strategies such as including the value of diversity in mission statements, reducing the 1st-year teaching load of diverse faculty, mentoring faculty in research, and setting annual goals for recruitment of diverse students. It was also recommended that programs create culturally relevant curricula by planning out courses that address specific multicultural counseling competencies, infuse multicultural experiential activities into courses, invite diverse counselors to speak to students, adopt pertinent multicultural textbooks, and add diversity items on the student evaluation of the course (Baggerly et al., 2017).

Diversity among CES faculty might add a vast number of benefits to the counseling field. Research highlighted ways in which the diversity among CES faculty can be accomplished. With Black male CES faculty being underrepresented in the field, data from this study may speak to the experience of Black men who engaged in an environment in which they did not see others who looked like themselves. By contributing this data to the literature, further considerations may be taken regarding action steps that need to be implemented to improve diversity concerns.

### **Concerns About Race in Counselor Education**

Diversity is oftentimes an important pillar of higher education (Dollarhide et al., 2018). Despite this, there is a significant discrepancy between those who identify as Black and other ethnic groups who worked in CES. One of the most underrepresented groups are Black men. According to CACREP (2020), less than 4% of nearly 2,500 full-time faculty identify as Black men. This is not a new phenomenon as a National Study of Post-Secondary Faculty in 1999 found that only 5% of full-time instructional faculty members were Black with speculation that Black men were considerably less (Brooks & Steen, 2010). The reasoning behind this has been attributed to several factors. The most supported rationale behind this is due to the low graduation rates for Black Americans in high school and subsequently college (Brooks & Steen, 2010). However, there is another explanation that may contribute to this lack of representation. Stress, barriers, limited financial and mentoring support, challenges when striving for promotion and tenure, and unwelcoming work environments have been identified as factors that influence the retention of Black men in CES (Brooks & Steen, 2010).

Past literature found that Black CES faculty in general experienced racial barriers and challenges that hindered their professional ability. Bradley and Holcomb-McCoy (2004) aimed to gain insight into the career experiences of Black counselor educators as at the time, there was little literature that explored the unique challenges that confronted Black faculty in counseling programs. Forty-nine Black faculty who taught at CACREP-accredited programs were selected, with no mention of the type of institution in which they taught.

The data mirrored results found by Arnold et al. (2016) with participants frequently using terms such as racism, unequal treatment, not being validated and stereotypes in their description of the promotion and tenure process. Supporting this notion, most of the participants believed that protocols for tenure were subjective and often invisible. Most of the participants also described the excessive service/committee demands relating to diversity from their department and college. And when it came to their research that supported those in the Black community, several participants expressed that it was seen by their White colleagues as a *soft discipline* and that promotion and tenure committees had a lack of understanding and appreciation for research within the Black community.

Holcomb-McCoy and Bradley (2005) added to this previous research by analyzing job satisfaction and perceptions of their respective departments' racial climate. Forty-eight Black CES counselor educators of which the majority taught at CACREP-accredited programs (81%) were analyzed. The findings indicated that Black counselor educators were generally satisfied with their jobs. At the same time, their level of job

satisfaction was significantly related to their perceptions of their department's racial climate.

Despite some of the challenges identified in past literature, there is recent literature that explored how Black male CES faculty successfully navigated the profession. Hannon et al. (2019) conducted a study that successfully tenured Black male faculty attributed to their successful earning of tenure. The researchers identified eight Black male participants who were tenured in CES programs. Six participants were faculty at PWIs while the other two were faculty at HBCUs. There were two primary themes that were generated from the data: personal dispositions and institutional support. The participants described three specific dispositions as having an openness to community building and being mentored, in-depth awareness (i.e., self-awareness and environmental awareness), and having the ability to demonstrate persistence and clarity of purpose. For institutional support, participants unanimously expressed that their institutions' intentionality in helping faculty succeed in their teaching, research, and service was essential to their success. There were two specific forms of institutional support that participants consistently mentioned: clarity of expectations and active mentoring systems. Notably, two elements missing in the experiences of participants were found in Arnold et al. (2016) and Killough et al. (2017) studies.

The literature identified that Black faculty historically endured negative race relation experiences that have implications on their work experience. These concerns are heightened with the population of Black men as there is data that showed that they may be less equipped to deal with such stressors (U.S. Department of Health and Human

Services, Office of Minority Health, 2020; Williams, 2014). Nonetheless race relation interactions of Black male faculty was thoroughly explored in other fields, there is a noticeable gap in past and current literature that explored how Black CES faculty and Black male CES faculty experience race relations at PWIs.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

The review of the literature illustrated a lack of research that focused specifically on the race relation experiences of Black male counselor educator faculty at PWIs. Despite there being a clear gap in literature that focused on how Black male CES faculty experience race relations in this environment, there is a clear correlation in what was found in past studies on Black CES faculty experiences and what has been recently found in studies exploring the race relation experiences of Black male faculty in other fields. In that regard, Black CES faculty's job satisfaction is significantly related to their perceptions of department's racial climate (Holcomb- McCoy & Bradley 2005). With various study results finding that Black male faculty at PWIs experienced concerns with racism, unequal treatment, feelings of isolation, not being respected, and stereotypical incidents (Arnold et al., 2016; Ford, 2023; Henry, 2021; Sparkman, 2021), there are rationale to explore how Black male CES faculty at PWIs experience race relations today.

In an effort to fill the gap in literature, the hermeneutic phenomenological framework was implemented through the lens of the CRT, to gain insight into the lived experiences of race relation engagements through the counter-storytelling of Black male CES faculty at PWIs. As the United States' population continues to become more

diverse, there is a need for CES programs to add diversity among faculty as it is believed to enhance student learning, promote cultural competence, address disparities in the field, and foster cultural inclusivity within a program (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2015). As CES programs should be committed in the process of recruiting and retaining diverse faculty (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2015), special attention should be committed to one of the scantest populations in the field of recruiting Black men. With race relation interactions being identified as a contributing factor to the work experience of Black male faculty, exploring these interactions may inform CES programs on how to meet the CACREP (2015) standard of creating and supporting an inclusive learning environment. The following Chapter 3 details how the goal of this study was accomplished.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this hermeneutic-CRT hybrid study was to gain an understanding of how Black men who worked as CES faculty experienced race relation concerns. The focus of this study was placed on the experience of race relations for six Black male faculty who worked in CES programs at PWIs. Previous research identified that Black men's experiences of implicit and explicit forms of racial bias and discrimination within PWIs (Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Cartwright et al., 2018; Constantine et al., 2016). Highlighting this area of focus could inform policies that improve the recruitment and retention of Black male CES faculty.

### **Research Design and Rationale**

Researchers who utilized the qualitative approach were interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attributed to their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). According to Merriam and Tisdell, there are six commonly used qualitative approaches: basic qualitative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, narrative analysis, and qualitative case study. Of these various approaches, I believed that the most appropriate method to explore the phenomena of interest, is the phenomenological approach. Phenomenology may be explained as the study of people's conscious experience of everyday life and social action (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This methodology aligns with the research question of this study: How do Black men who are

CES faculty experience race relations when they teach in CES programs located at Black institutions and/or PWIs?

### **Role of the Researcher**

As the sole researcher and a primary instrument in the study, it was important that I explored the potential implications of my involvement in the research. Using the hermeneutic phenomenological approach, the hermeneutic circle must be discussed (Peoples, 2021, p. 48). The hermeneutic circle was described by Gadamer (1989) as the fusing of horizons, which is circular in process. He argued that to understand the meaning of something held by another, we must remain open to embracing the meaning held by the other person or text (Gadamer, 1989). To do so, a researcher must be aware of their biases throughout the process, for the text's uniqueness to be recognized against fore-meaning (Gadamer, 1989).

I am a Black man who is obtaining his doctorate degree in CES. Due to the focus of the study, there may be instances where bias or assumptions may interfere with data collection and analysis. To ensure that the data collected is reflective of participants' experiences, the processes of bracketing was used. Bracketing is a method used by some researchers to mitigate the potential deleterious effects of unacknowledged preconceptions related to the research, increasing the rigor of the study (Tufford & Newman, 2012). This process is important to the quality of the study as the research of potentially emotionally challenging topic can infuse the researcher with its inherent challenges, skewing the results and interpretations (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Bias, assumptions, and experience were bracketed through journaling and member checking.

## **Methodology**

The purpose of this study was to gain a deep understanding of the lived experiences of Black men with race relations in CES. Sampling in qualitative research focuses on the richness of information and the number of participants required, therefore, depending on the nature of the topic and the resources available (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). There were two key considerations that guided the sampling methods in qualitative research, appropriateness, and adequacy (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). Because the goal did not generalize the data, the number of participants used for the study was not the focus, but instead the richness of data. To ensure that participants taking part in the study can provide the rich data sought, purposeful and snowball sampling was used.

### **Participant Selection Logic**

Using purposeful sampling methods, I sought participants who met the following inclusion criteria: (a) Black male; (b) currently or formerly employed in a CACREP-accredited CES program as faculty at a PWI; (c) available and willing to participate; and (e) have the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reactive manner (see Palinkas et al., 2015). The purposeful sampling method used was a method of participant selection. Purposeful sampling is a technique that is widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources (Palinkas et al., 2015). This process involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest, as it yields the most appropriate and useful information (Malterud et al., 2016; Palinkas et al., 2015).

To increase the likelihood of identifying participants who have experience with the phenomena of interest, I used the snowball sampling procedure. Snowball sampling is when the researcher has access to informants through the contact information that is provided by other informants (Noy, 2008). The process is, by necessity, repetitive: informants refer the researcher to other informants, who are contacted by the researcher and then refer them to yet other informants, and so on (Noy, 2008). This procedure is a particularly effective tool when trying to obtain information on and accessing hidden populations (Noy, 2008).

The number of respondents selected to participate in the study through these sampling methods was determined by data saturation. Data saturation is realized when no additional issues or insights are identified, and data begins to repeat so that further data collection becomes redundant (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). Saturation is an important indicator that a sample is adequate for the phenomenon studied and that data collected have captured the diversity, depth, and nuances of the issues studied -and thereby demonstrates content validity (Hennink, & Kaiser, 2022). When data saturation is reached, it is oftentimes underestimated by researchers. Hennink et al. (2017) found that code saturation (i.e., the point at which no additional issues are identified) was achieved at nine interviews, however meaning saturation (i.e., the point at which no further dimensions, nuances, or insights of issues are identified) required 16–24 interviews. For the purpose of this study, six participants were interviewed.

## **Instrumentation**

According to Mahat-Shamir et al. (2021), one of the best ways to enter into the other person's perspective and develop thick descriptions of a given social world, analyzed for cultural patterns and themes, is through the commonly used technique of in-depth, semistructured interviews. Semi-structured interviews consisted of several key questions that helped to define the explored areas, but also allows the interviewer or interviewee to diverge to pursue an idea or response in more detail and collect rich data (Gill et al., 2008; see Appendix for the interview questions used in this study). This method is preferential over structured and unstructured interviews as the former has no scope for follow-up questions to responses that warrant further elaboration, and the latter is typically very time-consuming and can be difficult to manage and participate in as a researcher (Gill et al., 2008). I conducted follow-up interviews with participants to assess the validity of the data collected (Stokes & Bergin, 2006). During these follow-up interviews, the focus was to "gain clarity where concrete interpretation cannot be obtained during analysis and to fill any gaps in the data" (Peoples, 2021, p. 64).

Conducting research on the human experience is subtle and personal with the researcher being the center of the process (Hart, 1996). With my being a Black man in a CES program and playing a critical role in the data collection for the study, reflexivity was essential. Reflexivity is the process of a continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation of a researcher's positionality, and active acknowledgment and explicit recognition that this position may affect the research process and outcome (Thurairajah, 2019). Reflexivity is particularly important when implementing hermeneutic

phenomenology due to its subjectivity and the preunderstanding of the researcher (Dowling, 2004).

### **Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection**

Once I received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (approval no. 08-31-23-1020108), I began recruiting participants from the social media platform, GroupMe. Two identified groups were used to recruit potential participants: Black Men in Counseling and Counselor Education, which had 370 members at the time of the study, and Atlanta Black Male Therapists, which consisted of 74 members. I identified these two groups because they contained Black men who currently or have previously worked in CES.

In each of these platforms, I placed a digital flyer containing information about the purpose of the study, inclusion criteria, and no financial incentive associated with participating. The flyer contained instructions to recruit potential participants to contact me via email or phone call for further details. I issued a call-to-action to refer those that fit the inclusion criteria. Finally, I recruited potential participants at the 2023 Association for Counselor Education and Supervision conference, utilizing the snowball sampling strategy to recruit additional participants. For those who qualified, I sent a Google document containing the informed consent to each participant. This informed consent included the following information: confidentiality, length of interview, potential risk of participation, purpose of the study, and my contact information.

I conducted the interviews by using the Zoom videoconferencing platform. This videoconference allowed for a face-to-face interview feel, while having the convenience

of not having to meet in a particular location. I scheduled each initial interview for 1 hr. I used follow-up interviews to address any gaps in the data collected, which included any excluded data, and data that was implicit or deficient in any way (Peoples, 2021, p. 52). I scheduled follow-up interviews for 30 min. Each videoconference was audio recorded for me to later hand transcribe. Additionally, I took descriptive notes to capture aspects of the interview that I was unable to capture in the audio recording. Interview recordings and notes were stored on an encrypted jump-drive.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

I used phenomenological analysis to complete data analysis on raw data found during research. This form of analysis was broken down into six different steps. In the first step, I analyzed and removed any “irrelevant or unnecessary dialogue, such as vocal disfluencies or repetitive statements” (Peoples, 2021, p. 59)—for instance, phrases such as “yeah, yeah, yeah.” In the second step, I created “preliminary meaning units” (Peoples, 2021, p. 60). A meaning unit can be part of a sentence, a sentence, several sentences, a paragraph, i.e. a piece of any length that conveys just one meaning (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004). In Step 3, these preliminary meaning units were broken down to final meaning units otherwise known as “themes” (Peoples, 2021, p. 60). In this process, the essential meaning of each meaning unit is expressed in everyday words as concisely as possible (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004). In the fourth step, “each of the participant’s experiences were organized into themes” (Peoples, 2021, p. 61).

Based on the themes developed from the situated narratives, general narratives were developed. In this fifth step, data from each individual interview were applied to

create a general description that captures the meaning found in all participants' "exigencies" (Peoples, 2021, p. 61). In the final step of analysis, I united the major phenomenological themes that were found in all or most of participants into "cohesive general description" (Peoples, 2021, p. 62). I captured how Black male faculty in counselor education experiences integrated with race relations in faculty and administration.

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

Qualitative research has gradually gained acceptance within counseling and psychotherapy research however, there existed a subtle and lingering concern that qualitative research provided merely a collection of anecdotes and has not firmly established its scientific grounding (Williams & Morrow, 2009). Historically, qualitative research had been criticized for its lack of rigor and subsequently had been viewed as producing less reliable results (Mackieson et al., 2019). To address these concerns, steps to ensure trustworthiness in a study have been developed. Guba (1981) suggested that there are four major concerns relating to trustworthiness, and it is to these concerns that criteria must speak. The concerns were described as the following:

- Truth value: "How can one establish confidence in the truth" of the findings of a particular inquiry for the subjects (respondents) with which and the context in which the inquiry was carried out?" (pp. 79);
- Applicability: "How can one determine the degree to which the findings of a particular inquiry may have applicability in other contexts or with other subjects (respondents)?" (pp. 80);

- Consistency: "How can one determine whether the findings of an inquiry would be consistently repeated if the inquiry were replicated with the same subjects in the same context?" (pp. 80); and
- Neutrality: "How can one establish the degree to which the findings of an inquiry are a function solely of subjects and conditions of the inquiry and not of the biases, motivations, interests, perspectives, and so on of the inquirer?" (pp. 81).

To address these questions, Guba developed a model that establishes trustworthiness through four concepts credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability:

### **Credibility**

Credibility refers to the idea of internal consistency, where the core issue is how we ensure rigor in the research process and how we communicate to others that we have done so (Morrow, 2005). To ensure credibility, researchers may implement several methods. I utilized researcher reflexivity, member checking, and the use of peer debriefers (Morrow, 2005) as means of mitigating bias and establishing that participant experiences are communicated accurately.

### **Transferability**

Transferability refers to the extent to which the reader is able to generalize the findings of a study to their own context and addresses the core issue of how far a researcher may make claims for a general application of their theory (Morrow, 2005). This is not to be confused with or used interchangeably with quantitative researcher's generalization. Given the anticipated relatively small sample size, the findings were not

applied to other settings or populations. Instead, the focus was to help readers to decide how the findings may transfer by providing them with sufficient information about the researcher as the instrument, the research context, processes, participants, and researcher-participant relationships (Morrow, 2005).

### **Dependability**

Dependability deals with the core issue that the way in which a study is conducted should be consistent across time, researchers, and analysis techniques (Morrow, 2005). I accomplished this process through keeping a detailed chronology of research activities and processes; influences on the data collection and analysis; emerging themes, and categories (Morrow, 2005). In theory, implementing this process would mean that future studies that utilize the same methodology, under similar conditions, and with demographically equivalent participants, would generate data that resembled the results of the original research.

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability addresses the core issue that findings should represent, as far as humanly possible, the situation being researched rather than the beliefs, pet theories, or biases of the researcher (Morrow, 2005). Confirmability was based on the perspective that the integrity of findings lies in the data and that the researcher must adequately tie together the data, analytic processes, and findings in such a way that the reader is able to confirm the adequacy of the findings (Morrow, 2005). Many of the procedures used to accomplish the goal of the aforementioned dependability is also applicable here, particularly accountability through an audit trail (Morrow, 2005).

## **Ethical Procedures**

The ACA Code of Ethics (2014), Section G informed the ethical procedures of the study. First, informed consent was obtained from all participants in the study. Informed consent contained information about the purpose of the study, procedures that were implemented, instruments that were used, participants' right to withdraw from the study, limits of confidentiality, and compensation information. All data were secured on a password encrypted jump drive.

## **Summary**

A hermeneutic phenomenological approach was taken to address the question: How do Black men who are CES faculty experience race relations when they teach in CES programs located at PWIs? This qualitative method was selected as it allowed for an in-depth understanding of the phenomena of interest. To capture this data, purposeful snowball sampling will be utilized to identify participants who have had direct experiences with the phenomenon. To ensure that participants can provide this rich data, the inclusion criteria consisted of those that are Black men and are currently or formerly employed in a CACREP-accredited CES program in the United States. The recruitment of these individuals took place in two groups within GroupMe, respectively titled Black Men in Counseling and Counselor Education and Atlanta Black Male Therapists.

To collect the data, I conducted semistructured and follow-up interviews using the Zoom video conference platform. I then organized and analyzed the data. Phenomenological analysis allowed me to gain an understanding of how Black men who

worked as CES faculty at PWIs have experienced race relations. In Chapter 4, I present the study results.

## Chapter 4: Results

### **Introduction**

In this qualitative study, I sought to answer the following research question: How do Black men who are CES faculty experience race relations when they teach in CES programs located at PWIs. Some participants were the only Black members of the faculty and others were only a few minorities and that included Asians and Hispanic professors. In this chapter I will explore the four major themes that emerged from analysis of the participant interviews: (a) negative implications of navigating race relations, (b) awareness used as a tool to navigate negative race relations, (c) behavioral adjustments, and (d) seeing racial disparity in hiring and promotion process. Additionally, I will discuss the participants, data collection/analysis as well as the general narratives and general structure. Finally, I will explore the responses of the participants through the theoretical lens of hermeneutic phenomenology and the CRT. The results of this study may inform CES departments on how to improve their culture and dynamics, enhance the experience of their Black male faculty, and improve their retention.

### **Setting**

The setting for the interviews occurred through the Zoom online meeting platform. The audio was saved and later hand transcribed for each interview that lasted approximately 45–60 min per participant.

### **Demographics**

Table 1 includes participant demographics. The first information noted in the chart is each participant's identifier number. The participant's age range is then identified

in increments of 10 in the second column. In the third column of the table, the participant's ethnicity is identified. In the final column, each participant's years of experience in CES is identified.

**Table 1**

*Participant Demographics*

Participant identifier	Age range (years)	Ethnicity	Years of CES work experience
1	40–50	African American	11
2	70–80	African American	12
3	30–40	Afro-Caribbean	3
4	40–50	African American	4
5	40–50	African American	9
6	40–50	African American	7

*Note.* CES = counseling education and supervision.

### **Data Collection**

This qualitative study required data collection through individual, semistructured interviews with six Black men who are currently or were formerly employed as CES personnel in PWIs. The participants were all between 36 and 72 years of age. These interviews revealed the true stories of these men's lives in the CES profession. Some participants were hired into full-time positions and were working on tenure whereas others were contributing professors in colleges and universities. I identified four themes based on my interviews with the six Black male participants: (a) negative implications of

navigating race relations, (b) awareness used as a tool to navigate negative race relations, (c) shifting behavior to adjust to PWI environment, and (d) seeing racial disparity in hiring and promotion process.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis plan in Chapter 3 was adhered to throughout the process. Steps 3 through 6 are outlined in that chapter and further explained and discussed here. The process in these steps was known as thematic analysis. In Step 3, these preliminary meaning units were broken down to final meaning units otherwise known as “themes” (Peoples, 2021, p. 60). In this process, the essential meaning of each meaning unit is expressed in everyday words as concisely as possible (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004). In the fourth step, “each of the participant’s experiences were organized into themes” (Peoples, 2021, p. 61). Based on the themes developed from the situated narratives, general narratives were developed. In this fifth step, data from each individual interview were applied to create a general description that captures the meaning found in all participants’ “exigencies” (Peoples, 2021, p. 61). In the final step of analysis, I united the major phenomenological themes that were found in all or most of participants into “cohesive general description” (Peoples, 2021, p. 62). I captured how Black male faculty in counselor education experienced race relations in PWIs.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

Guba (1981) developed a model that establishes trustworthiness through four concepts credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. I used these four

concepts to establish trustworthiness of the six Black men's stories about their experiences at PWIs throughout their established careers.

### **Credibility**

Credibility refers to the idea of internal consistency, where the core issue is how we ensure rigor in the research process and how we communicate to others that we have done so (Morrow, 2005). To ensure credibility, researchers may implement several methods. I utilized researcher reflexivity, member checking, and the use of peer debriefers (Morrow, 2005) as means of mitigating bias and establishing that participant experiences are communicated accurately.

### **Transferability**

Transferability refers to the extent to which the reader is able to generalize the findings of a study to their own context and addresses the core issue of how far a researcher may make claims for a general application of their theory (Morrow, 2005). This is not to be confused with or used interchangeably with quantitative researchers' generalization. Given the anticipated relatively small sample size, the findings were not applied to other settings or populations. Instead, the focus was to help readers to decide how the findings may transfer by providing them with sufficient information about the researcher as the instrument, the research context, processes, participants, and researcher-participant relationships (Morrow, 2005).

### **Dependability**

Dependability deals with the core issue that the way in which a study is conducted should be consistent across time, researchers, and analysis techniques (Morrow, 2005). I

accomplished this process through keeping a detailed chronology of research activities and processes; influences on the data collection and analysis; emerging themes, and categories (Morrow, 2005). In theory, implementing this process would mean that future studies that utilize the same methodology, under similar conditions, and with demographically equivalent participants, would generate data that resembled the results of the original research.

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability addresses the core issue that findings should represent, as far as humanly possible, the situation being researched rather than the beliefs, pet theories, or biases of the researcher (Morrow, 2005). Confirmability was based on the perspective that the integrity of findings lies in the data and that the researcher must adequately tie together the data, analytic processes, and findings in such a way that the reader is able to confirm the adequacy of the findings (Morrow, 2005). Many of the procedures used to accomplish the goal of the aforementioned dependability is also applicable here, particularly accountability through an audit trail (Morrow, 2005).

### **Results**

I identified four themes: negative implications of navigating race relations, awareness used as a tool to navigate negative race relations, shifting behavior to adjust to PWI environment, and seeing racial disparity in hiring and promotion process. Table 2 shows which participants were associated with each theme.

**Table 2***Themes*

Theme	Participant					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Theme 1: Negative Implications of Navigating Race Relations	X		X	X	X	X
Theme 2: Awareness Used as a Tool to Navigate Negative Race Relations		X		X	X	X
Theme 3: Shifting Behavior to Adjust to PWI Environment	X	X		X		X
Theme 4 Seeing Racial Disparity In Hiring and Promotion Process		X	X	X		

Note. PWI = Predominantly White Institution.

**Theme 1: Negative Implications of Navigating Race Relations**

When it comes to lived race relation experiences of Black male CES faculty who work at PWIs, the most prominent theme that appeared was the negative implications of navigating race relation interactions. This theme consisted of participants experiencing various race relation interactions that shaped their work experience. Five of the six participants described experiencing race relation dynamics that had negative implications on their well-being. Participant 1 would break down his experience of stress and anxiety as a result of making mental calculations when navigating race relation interactions with his majority White colleagues and students.

I think that it caused stress and anxiety for me. I think that if I am looking at myself as a computer, I don't know where this is. I do not know how this scenario

is going to go. It may not work out. You know how a computer has a certain amount of memory or a certain amount of speed that it has. And the more windows that are open, it says the other stuff would slow up because all of those other windows were open. I didn't have as much energy, or as much power, as much mental wellness to expand to other areas. But it was operating in the background, and I wasn't even aware of it as much.

Participant 3 spoke to an experience in which he perceived that his culture and background was not considered in his approach to teaching, leaving him to feel inadequate. He stated,

They wanted to see how you give feedback. It had to be a certain way. And I understand there are certain standards, but again, I do things differently (due to my foreign background). I write differently. I have a different experience and a different background. And so how I give feedback may not necessarily be the way they wanted me to give feedback. And so sometimes that posed a challenge. I was given a White mentor at one point and when I looked at what the mentor gave me as an example of feedback, I was like, I don't think so. However, it was like without even understanding that they are being biased or stereotyping, it just came out. It just came out naturally that, "Oh, I'm going to send a White person to save this person and show them how to do it." And it left me feeling inadequate. It made me question myself. But compared to what I do now as a professor, compared to that professor, I'm way more advanced in how I give feedback and how I navigate that in terms of my teaching.

Participant 4 described various experiences in which his White students would challenge and critique his teaching methods, particularly when it came to multicultural topics. He stated, “So my student sent me that email like, ‘Hey, I think we should have a different textbook. It talks about this and this.’ And he CC’d my colleague, a White tenured professor.” This was an action that Participant 4 saw as passive-aggressive behavior. He stated,

So I replied back to him, CCing my dean (a Black woman) and I said, ‘Hey, just so you know, the person who co-authored this text also co-authored our multicultural and social justice counseling competencies. Therefore, we’re still using the text. I’ll see you in class on Monday.’ And I just left it at that. In another instance, we talked about issues of privilege and oppression, which is very much rooted in multicultural social justice counseling competency. It’s one of the core things in how we view ourselves in those lenses and how those things come out in interactions in our counseling relationships. Well, once of my students was like, ‘I don’t believe that the opposite of privilege is oppressed.’ And then other students are like, ‘yeah, I agree’, which I’m like, ‘hang on, let’s come back. Let’s look at the literature that I had assigned to you all to read and to reflect on.’ Students still sided with that other student. So I’m like in this class, and I’m like, okay, experts in literature and even just social practice agree with me, and yet I have to hold the weight. And it didn’t help that, again, I’m the only Black person in the class. I’m a Black man, but I’m also the professor. So I’m like, oh, okay, how do I navigate this dynamic?”

Participant 4 expressed that the strain associated with the repeated instances of resistance over the course of the school year, resulted in what he described as experiencing burnout.

Unfortunately those experiences tend to weigh more than those who don't [challenge him in class]. And that's sometimes hard. So when I left my institution, I felt very burnt out. Specifically from teaching because my last teaching of multicultural resulted in a remediation plan put in for one of my students. I saw some severe deficits in cultural competency, and I genuinely don't second guess that decision one bit. I still agree with it and support it, but it was so exhausting just going through that process that it didn't help that I did that. And also was navigating department chair and CACREP and all these institutional financial stuff. So all of that just led to, and I was living in an expensive area and frankly, not being compensated enough for it. So all that stress just added to, "okay, I don't want to do this anymore. I don't know if I want to teach anymore.

Participant 5 described his own concerns with burnout and similar to what was described by Participant 2, was a result of constantly making mental calculations associated with navigating race relation experiences.

My colleagues are mostly White. And it's not very, I mean, they're collegial as far as greetings and hello, but it's not really been a collaborative space, not in a way that I would like anyway. I didn't realize the amount of mental calculations I have to do daily at work. There's so many hills I want to die on for advocacy or for

cultural responsiveness, and they matter. But I was like, 'If I do them all the time, I'm going to burn out again.' But nobody else is pushing for some of the stuff.

Participant 5 further gave an example of how he advocated for multiculturalism to be integrated into a course, a CACREP standard, and the subsequent mental strain associated with the exchange.

So our program is a mindfulness space. One of my colleagues does a lot of mindfulness courses. And I was just asking him, "How do you infuse multiculturalism into mindfulness? Well, mindfulness is a skill. We don't got time to teach multiculturalism and dah, dah, dah." And I was like, "Well, you know there are people who are from different backgrounds who don't like mindfulness in the way it's presented now. It seems too White, dah, dah. 'Well, it's a skill. They just have to get the skill.'" And so it is sad to me that the other professionals who are trained to do this, don't think that's part of their mission So even those kind of moments. So it becomes mine because I'm racialized as Black. But also who else is going to push it if I don't? So every day I go in (with the mindset), "Do I use my social capital on addressing this? Or do I save it for an issue that I think is bigger? It's a lot more calculations I do daily (where) I don't get to just be in my body. But I'm just thinking like, "Okay, they just set this. Nobody's checking them. I'm not tenured yet, but it needs to be checked." And I'm the one most at risk here if I do this. So I'm doing those kind of calculations.

In another example, Participant 5 experienced mental strain when discussing with the dean his concern with the lack of interest that Black male students show at their

university with applying to their CES programs. The dean retorted by stating, "Maybe we'll need to lower the standards and we'll get more Black men".

I didn't even respond. This is how I just sat there (stared blankly). It took me a minute. Then I was like, "What?" And then I still didn't respond. And I was like, "I'm swallowing this. I don't feel good swallowing this, but I don't know how to respond without showing my complete ass right now."

Because I wanted to go off. What the hell about what I said makes you think that we need a lower standards? That was nothing about. And so yeah, that stuck in my craw for a little while, but I never even addressed it. So that was a moment too. I was like, "I didn't even address that." And I'm kind of upset and I didn't address it.

So it's those little moments like that. And so trying to figure out again, how to push back on it. And let them know without sounding disgruntled, because I'm not unhappy. I just want to get my points across and advocate in spaces.

Participant 6 expressed that he was not cognizant of how engaging in an environment that lacked diversity affected his experience until he moved to one that was more racially diverse.

My research, in a lot of ways, has had to do with Black people or Black therapists. When I was at the first PWI, I was the only person really focused on these issues. My colleagues appreciated my work. They hired me. And I mean, I truly believe they appreciated my work at the first institution. But it wasn't until I went to the second institution where I had other Black colleagues, honestly, who were deeply

invested in my work. They were as invested as I was. But I realized that I had new energy, fresh energy to engage. Oftentimes, I don't recognize the stress I've been under until I leave or until something has happened, like, 'Whoa! That was tough.' Because part of my ideal is, you just kind of put your head down and you just do the work. You try to make the best of any situation you're in. Yeah, there was a real struggle there. And I say all that on this end, and I say this intentionally after bringing up my history, even for this middle class boy, who grew up in these White environments and for whom, on the surface, knows how to navigate, who on the service has actually done quite well. When I left both institutions, they didn't want me to leave. I mean, I did very well in some ways, but there was a cost to it. There was a real cost to it.

### **Theme 2: Awareness Used as a Tool to Navigate Negative Race Relations**

Four of the six participants described what helped them to overcome the challenges associated with difficult race relation dynamics in their PWI environment. Participant 2 described how his experience in navigating diverse spaces prior to his time in CES, served as a buffer against the negative implications of difficult race relations experiences.

Were there some of the racial stuff going on? Yes, likely. But I experienced that my entire life in education. So that was a given for me. That wasn't something that I had to focus specifically on. I already knew that that was a part of everything I did. That was always in the back of my mind because as I shared with you in high

school, in undergrad, in grad, in my situation in the army, etc. That was always a thing because I was in a multiracial environment.

Accepting that racism is a part of life, Participant 2 did not allow it to dictate his experience. He attributed his past experiences of being in racially diverse environments to him being able to address race relation concerns in CES, without it having a negative influence on his work.

So those barriers to someone who maybe was coming from a different environment, (difficult racial dynamics) may have stuck out more and they may have been something that felt more like an impediment. But for me, I didn't let that be an impediment. That wasn't something that I did, that wasn't something I worried about. So if there are professors who are not as supportive, then is there something I could do to help mitigate that? Can I help work through that? So my long-winded way of explaining my experience at (my university) has been one in which I am fully aware of the racial issues but they aren't the kinds of things that stop me from doing what I feel like I need to do to help the students. To build my program.

Participant 4, who struggled with burnout as a result of his negative teaching experiences, had awareness that he was in need of support and a sense of connection.

I reached out to colleagues after the 1st week of class, I said straight up, "Hey, any of y'all struggling with burnout? I'm feeling it hard, and I'm only teaching one class." I'm so appreciative of one guy who reached out to me, a Black man, my full professor. He just reached out to me and said, "Hey, let's connect, let's talk."

And he just took it upon himself to just continue to mentor me at this stage. And he saw that I needed it, and he saw that I just needed encouragement, and I was really appreciative of that because he didn't need to do that.

Participant 5 expressed similar sentiments of having the awareness to seek connection as a Black man in the majority White space of CES departments located at PWIs.

It often feels isolating, like I'm alone on an island sometimes. There are some people(White colleagues) who are similar minded, I got to say. But it is not enough to shift the experience. I'm like, "Wow. And this is the counseling place and I'm not making community." But what has helped me is being able to network with faculty across campus. Other minority faculty across campus have been a Godsend. I have this Black woman from Texas, a Historian. And so I call her "Sister Cousin" when I see her on the yard. And I'm like, "Hey, Sister Cousin." She's like, "Hey, Brother Cousin." And we just give each other big hugs and dap each other up. And we've gone into the city and gone to plays together. So we do social stuff. So being able to connect with the few other Black faculty around the campus has helped me to create a nice safe home place. And that's been nice. Because if I had to depend on my department, I'd probably still think I'm alone.

Participant 6 spoke further on his awareness of the need of connection and community with other Black faculty. "You need home place. We have some brothers, who are doing this very well. They're intentionally dealing with this (racial trauma).You

need to have a connection.” Participant 6 elaborated on how he created this connection for himself in the isolating environment of his first program.

It was probably the middle of my 2nd year, I got a list of all the Black faculty and staff across the college. I just sent an email and said, “Hey, how about we do a once a month dinner?” And I chose a local restaurant, and once a month, I'd send an email saying, “This Monday night, we're going to meet up.” And most didn't come. Most couldn't come every week, but several showed up. In addition to that, there was about three or four of us that were most consistent. We developed a book club, where we only read Black authors.

Participant 6 expressed that it was these connections, that helped him to excel in his career.

So I would say that's the main thing. You need to have a sense of connection with your people who are struggling, sharing the same struggle, but who are also inspirational. I think that's huge. You need people who are able to do well, even with restrictions of working within these PWIs. Me and this group, we've talked about how central that group has been for our career and our development. And two of us are doing very well. We've gone on, we've done things that we probably couldn't have dreamed of 6 years ago. And I think we would both say a lot of it has to do with this group that we're in.

### **Theme 3: Shifting Behavior to Adjust to the Environment of a Predominantly White Institution**

Hyperaware of how they may be perceived, four of the six participants described adjusting their behavior in some way as a result of the predominately White space.

Participant 1 described his internal struggle with the negative stereotypes associated with Black men that would subsequently shift the way he interacted with his students.

So, I never forgot that I was a Black male. By that, I mean I would be aware my office is down the hall from everyone else. Let me not give these people any reason to be afraid of me. I would be aware that my office is down the hall from everyone else. Let me make sure my door always stays open. I mean, I remember students would come in, "Oh, can I talk to you for a second?" "Oh, sure. Come on in". "Okay." "No, no, maybe leave the door open." Are okay with that. So, things like that would be in my mind. I didn't realize that so much then, but in counseling and talking to some friends later, I realized that that was something that was kind of an automatic thing. And that can weigh on me.

Participant 2 described his experience in intentionally adjusting his behavior to navigate his space and accomplishing certain goals.

We hear a lot about code switching, right? It's a real thing. When things slip out of my mouth that are more colloquial, I usually do it for effect on purpose. I know I'm aware of what I'm saying, how I'm saying it, the tones I'm using, I'm very much aware of that. And again I can't emphasize enough, all that comes from experience of what that looks like with my principals and with other

administrators (from my time in school counseling). And I carry that on into the university to understand that I can act one way and that's going to get a reaction back. Is that one that I want or I don't want? Is that one that's helpful for what I want done or not? So I'm always on cue with that.

Participant 5 added to this narrative, as he spoke on how he would modify his language to ensure that he was able to connect with his majority White students. “So it's been interesting thinking about my language. And I want to show up authentically, but I also thinking, ‘Oh, they don't understand some of my frames of reference.’ So I have to come back and put it in terms that they understand. So it's been a little more work for me to be intentional that way.” Attributing it to the cultural difference, he recalled the difference when teaching at a HBCU with Black students: “I was less in my head at the HBCU. I think we spoke a common language for the most part. We had the same cultural touchstones, even though I'm older than the students, I still understood.” To give further context, he gave the example of a conversation that took place in one of his trauma courses.

They had a moment where they were just talking about Kanye and what happened to his mom, and then how it's impacting how people had called him crazy, all that other stuff. But it was such a nuanced discussion. And I was like, “Wow, I'm not even a Kanye fan and I'm grasping.” And so in this new space (new program at PWI), they don't always pick up what I put down.

Participant 6 also noted his experience, identifying that he assimilated to the White American culture of his department. He attributed his ability to do so to his upbringing and teachings from his parents.

Both of my parents had college degrees by the time they got married. By the time I was in the third grade or fourth grade, both of them had gotten master's. So from a very young age, not only were they grooming me for higher education, but for graduate level higher education, as well. And I think there's a certain degree of assimilation that comes with that. And I recognize all the problems with assimilation. I get that. And my parents are very pro-Black and they've served the Black community, but there were certain things like always being on time. And your grammar needs to be a certain way. There are several things that we would say falls under White supremacy, but I was just raised that way. Even though I had been groomed in some ways (to assimilate to White American culture), I really was restricting myself in that first position. It was a very White institution. And so although I knew how to function in that space, it took a lot of energy to do so. So I was able to get along with the people relatively well, but I was not always being as honest with them about how I was feeling about certain things.

#### **Theme 4: Seeing Racial Disparity In Hiring and Promotion Process**

In the final identified theme, three of the six participants vocalized challenges that centered around the hiring and promotion process in CES. As associate faculty, Participant 2 witnessed and challenged program policies that had previously prevented qualified racially diverse faculty from being hired.

We were in the process of trying to hire people. That became an issue. And what I saw, the same thing that I saw with students trying to get into AP classes. Very similar in that there's a list of things that you're able to accomplish that are not necessarily in line with the kinds of things that they were looking at at the university. But they were just as good, but they were different. And so as a result, they got judged differently. I would have to say and put my foot down in some instances. "I don't know what you guys are looking at." "This person has blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." "Yeah, I understand that. But do you understand why this person would be a good fit?"

It was only through Participant 2's advocacy and challenging of previously established practices that the department began to diversify their faculty.

We've got in school counseling, there's three professors, two of them are African-American. We have two in school psych that are African-American, male and a female. And then we have some Asian folks. But already when you look at the representation in a faculty meeting, you see maybe six or seven out of 22 when there were (previously) only two. So there's some changing going on in that (department) who prides itself on being multicultural."

Participant 3 disclosed a challenge he experienced when seeking a position as assistant professor. Applying for the role, he had previous experience teaching as adjunct at various universities. Despite him applying to a teaching university, his background was not considered enough.

I applied for a position somewhere before and I was told that I should seek additional experiences as a CES at different universities. And I was like, "Okay, okay, but you gave me general feedback. You didn't give me specific feedback, increase my competencies in publishing and increase my presentation and research leadership and all that. I was told to do that. But again, your university is not based on all the components. It's a teaching university, so why are you telling me to increase my area of scholarship and I have a good teaching record?"

Participant 4 spoke on his own experiences navigating the process of becoming tenured faculty. Before speaking on his own experience, he identified experiences that have hindered the tenure process of his Black male CES friends. "What I have seen and experienced, is that traditionally faculty of color often find themselves disproportionately assigned with service, mentorship, and excessive advising responsibilities, which can detract from their tenure profile and job security. What I've seen is that when it was time to go for promotion and tenure, Black colleagues were sandbagged by their in-department colleagues on their reviews because they did not do enough research." Participant 4, who was in his 4th year on the tenure track, feels that he experienced many of these challenges himself.

I felt like my institution was very protective, and I did not have any advising duties or university service or departmental administrator responsibilities, which was helpful at the time. I completed my doctorate degree while also teaching three courses because that was my goal. However, after completing my doctorate degree, I was given more responsibilities such as serving on several committees

and assignment as the pre-tenure professor department chair. This was due to a financial crisis with numerous faculty leaving the department. We went from a faculty of five to two in the course of a year.

Despite being a pretenured faculty member, he was pushed into the role of department chair and assigned subsequent roles that did not contribute to his tenure track. Participant 4 found this experience frustrating, particularly because his White male counterpart was able to avoid a lot of the negative brunt associated with the shifts. This was an experience that he feels had racial undertones.

It's unfortunate because I feel like I had a colleague in my department who was a full professor for over 20 years, and was completely qualified to do this role, but essentially was not doing it because he didn't want to. They were using institutional policies to get around, having to essentially do their job. And it was hard for me as department chair to try to get them to do it, because I'm not their boss. I couldn't tell them to do anything. And then you add in the fact that they were tenured, I was pre-tenure. They provide evaluation on my stuff, they have that kind of power. So it was very weird.

### **General Narratives**

Despite their experiences in teaching in different regions of the United States, the six participants of this study all shared similar race relation experiences in their time working at PWIs as CES faculty. When it comes to lived race relation experiences of Black male CES faculty who work at PWIs, the most prominent theme that appeared was the negative implications of navigating race relation interactions. This theme consisted of

participants experiencing various race relation interactions that shaped their work experience. Five of the six participants described experiencing race relation dynamics that had negative implications on their well-being. These experiences resulted in participants reporting stress and anxiety, feelings of inadequacy, and burnout.

Four of the six participants described what helped them to overcome the challenges associated with difficult race relation dynamics in their PWI environment. This included prior experience navigating culturally diverse spaces as well as having a sense of connection and community with other Black faculty. Adjusting to their predominantly White environment, four of the six participants described shifting their behavior in some way when engaging with their students and colleagues. Examples of this included using certain precautions when engaging with students, changing the way in which they spoke, and assimilating to the overall cultural norms of the PWI environment.

Finally, three of the six participants vocalized challenges that centered around discrepancies in the hiring and promotion process in CES. One of the participants engaged with and challenged hiring practices that prevented the hiring of racially diverse staff, a concrete experience. Another participant described challenges with being considered for hire. The final participant found themselves disproportionately assigned to serving on committees and assignments that detracted from their tenure profile. With the latter two participants, it was assumed that their experiences were in direct relation to their identity as Black men; however, there was no concrete evidence to support this assumption.

## **General Structure**

Despite teaching in different regions of the United States, Black male CES faculty share similar race relation experiences in their time working at PWIs as CES faculty.

When it comes to lived race relation experiences of Black male CES faculty who work at PWIs, the most prominent theme that appears are the negative implications of navigating race relation interactions. This theme consists of Black male CES faculty experiencing various race relation interactions that shape their work experience. Most of Black male CES faculty describe experiencing race relation dynamics that had negative implications on their well-being. These experiences result in Black male CES faculty reporting stress and anxiety, feelings of inadequacy, and burnout.

Many Black male CES faculty describe what helped them to overcome the challenges associated with difficult race relation dynamics in their PWI environment. This includes prior experience navigating culturally diverse spaces as well as having a sense of connection and community with other Black faculty. Adjusting to their predominantly White environment, most Black male CES faculty describe shifting their behavior in some way when engaging with their students and colleagues. Examples of this include using certain precautions when engaging with students, changing the way in which they speak, and assimilating to the overall cultural norms of the PWI environment.

Finally, some Black men vocalize challenges that center around discrepancies in the hiring and promotion process in CES. Some Black male CES faculty engage with and challenge hiring practices that prevent the hiring of racially diverse staff, a concrete experience. Some Black male CES faculty describe challenges with being considered for

hire. Some Black male CES faculty also find themselves disproportionately assigned to serving on committees and assignments that detract from their tenure profile. With some of the experiences of Black male faculty, it is assumed that their experiences are in direct relation to their identity as Black men; however, there is no concrete evidence to support this.

### **Theoretical Reflection**

The counter-storytelling of the six Black male CES faculty participants is one that is marred by race relation challenges that affects their well-being and engagement in their work. Signs of the third tenet of the CRT, Whiteness of Property, were shown in the experience of some of the participants. Here, Whiteness and everything associated with it is considered valuable. Participants experience an environment that skews toward the norms of White American culture as the proper way to engage in academia and as a result, many of the participants present in inauthentic state. From the experiences reported by Black male CES faculty working at PWIs, they also engage with microaggressions, underrepresentation, invalidation, and multicultural incompetence. As shown by the literature, these current concerns were also reflected in the past, which acknowledges the second tenet of the CRT, permanence of racism.

In the fifth and final tenet of the CRT, critique of liberalism, colorblindness or the willful ignorance about the continual significance of race and racism to individual and group outcomes is identified as a concern (Ifeonu, 2020). This is reflected in a statement made by Participant 5, where race was not previously seen as important within his program.

Nobody in my program discusses the multicultural and social justice counseling competencies with the students at all until I came in. That's one of the CACREP standards. And so I pull the research. I hate that, that has to justify what we do, but I pull the research. White counselors have a problem sometimes with this, when ruptures happen and they don't address it. And we talk about broaching why it's important and why they need to be aware of what's going on with their clients. And I was like, "So if we're not doing that, we're doing them a disservice." Because we got more minoritized people coming to counseling. We don't have enough minoritized practitioners to work with them. And a lot of these strategies we're doing will help all of their clients.

A tenet that was not found or did not align with the experience of the participants was interest convergence, the idea that White people only promote the advancement of Black people when it also promotes the advancement of White individuals (Taylor, 2000).

Black male CES faculty's Dasein, or being in the world, changes due to the *Mitsein*, their togetherness or being with other students and faculty who are different from them. As a result of these experiences, Black male CES faculty adjust their behavioral norms to conform with that of their work environment. This was identified by some participants as "code-switching" and assimilation. They also seek *Mitsein* with other Black faculty across campus or within their networks, as a means of continuing their work in their PWI environment. Several of the participants expressed the need for togetherness with those who could empathize with their unique experiences associated with working in their departments. Through the hermeneutic circle, this togetherness

would sometimes give context to experiences they had within this environment. A question that develops from this dynamic is, does this sometimes create a reality that does not serve them?

### **Summary**

In this phenomenological study that was viewed through the lens of the CRT, the experiences of Black male CES faculty working at PWIs was explored. The study's results generated four main themes: (a) negative implications of navigating race relations, (b) awareness used as a tool to navigate negative race relations, (c) shifting behavior to adjust to PWI environment, and (d) seeing racial disparity in hiring and promotion process. In each theme, participants described experiences that they felt were unique to being a Black man in this setting. Undertones of race-based stress appeared throughout the different themes with them having varying implications on the mental health of each participant. A consistent buffer that was identified to battle this stress, was a sense of community amongst other Black faculty, termed by a couple of the participants as home place. Because the participants were the only Black in their programs, they often sought this community by connecting with Black faculty across departments. These experiences described by these participants help to give insight as to why there retention amongst Black male CES faculty is low.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore how Black male faculty experienced race relations in CES programs at PWIs. The purpose was to provide deep contextual understanding of the lived experiences of being a Black male faculty in CES programs. By documenting these lived experiences of Black male faculty, my goal was to inform social change by highlighting race-related concerns in the field and provide information that could generate policies to support the improvement of job satisfaction and job effectiveness of Black male faculty in the CES field.

This chapter contains discussion and future research possibilities to help answer the research question: How do Black men who are CES faculty experience race relations when they teach in CES programs located at PWIs? The race relation experiences of the Black male CES faculty comprised of four different themes: (a) negative implications of navigating race relations, (b) awareness used as a tool to navigate negative race relations, (c) shifting behavior to adjust to PWI environment, and (d) seeing racial disparity in hiring and promotion process. All of these experiences helped to contribute to an environment that provided challenges that they learned to overcome.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

This study contributes to the understanding of Black male CES faculty's' lived experiences with race relations in their programs located at PWIs. Guided by the hermeneutic phenomenology theory through the lens of the CRT, I explored the lived

experiences of Black male faculty in terms of how these interactions shaped their experience.

### **Black Men and Mental Health**

Previous research has found that historically, Black men are often reluctant to seek help for both health and mental health issues, despite the range and severity of health– and mental health–related problems affecting them (Lindsey & Marcell, 2012). In studies conducted by Williams (2014) and Breslau et al. (2017), data illustrated that Black people in general and Black men in particular, are more susceptible to underutilizing mental health service to address mental health concerns. This was reflected in the data of the current study as five of the six participants described navigating race relation stressors that had an impact on their mental health, however out of those five participants, only one discussed openly about seeking counseling support.

### **Black Faculty at Predominantly White Institutions**

Previous literature has identified that Black faculty have persistently been underrepresented over the years at PWIs. As of 2020, the percentage of Black faculty in higher education stood at 7% (NCES, 2020). This number dwindles further when looking at the number of Black male CES faculty, in particular. This lack of representation becomes more apparent when compared to the 56% of Black faculty located at HBCUs (Gasman, 2021). Between 1981 and 2020, PWIs only saw a 2.8% increase in the Black faculty population. In the current study, four of the six participants described being the only Black man in their department while three of the six participants described being the only Black faculty within their department overall.

Being the only Black faculty in the department appeared to provide unique experiences for the participants of the study. Some of these experiences were internal, where participants would respond to their environment in a particular way as a result of being the only male Black faculty. In other instances, the experiences were external, where those around them would react to the participants in a particular way, presumably due to them being the only Black male faculty. An example of the latter was when one participant described how their department chair expressed apprehension of the aesthetic associated with placing him, the only Black male faculty member in the department, in a particular office. Participant 1 elaborated on the experience.

I was the only Black male so that kind of just stands out. And I do remember the department chair, very nice guy, very welcoming. They had just expanded, which is why they added on my position. And the office that they've made into an office was away from everyone else's down the hall, truly next to a water closet. And he was like, "You cannot go in that office". He was like, "That's just going to look bad." He's like, "I want you to have something different. And that will look bad. You can't put the one Black male in there." So, he actually was moving out of his office to give me his office. And I was already a professional for a number of years and held several positions. I already knew offices did mean a lot. But I'm telling that story to say that I like the fact that they were aware of certain messages. And the fact that I was the only Black male and my experiences would be different.

Internally, some participants struggled with how they would be perceived, battling with the negative stereotypes associated with Black men. This is reflective of the term stereotype threat, a term coined by Claude Steele and Joshua Aronson in 1995 to refer to the pressure or threat a person experiences when a negative stereotype about one's identity group could potentially be confirmed by one's individual performance (Adams, 2022). This was reflected in a thought had by Participant 5, when he first transitioned from working at a HBCU to a PWI, "Oh, I got to be the perfect Black man counselor educator because I'm the first one many of them ever had. And so if I mess this up, they'll never have another one. Or they're going to think all Black men counselor educators are trash." As a result, some of the participants modified their behavior in some way to avoid association with negative stereotypes or to assimilate into the culture of their majority White environment.

Being the only Black male faculty in their department, half of the participants spoke on the importance of having some form of community. Some of the participants of the study alluded to the sense of isolation they felt being the only Black men and oftentimes, only Black faculty within their department. Consequently, these participants were intentional about creating some form of community through means such as mentorships and social groups with other Black faculty across their campuses and networks.

### **Microaggression Experiences of Black Faculty**

Previous literature has found that Black faculty have reported experiences of microaggressions that may sometimes have negative implications on their work

experience (Hannon et al., 2019; Arnold et al., 2016; Louis et al., 2016; Smith et al. 2016). Described as the death by a thousand cuts, the phenomena of microaggressions is defined as the brief and everyday slights, insults, indignities and denigrating messages sent to people of color by their well-intentioned White counterparts who are unaware of the hidden messages being communicated (Nittle, 2019, p.10). In earlier studies conducted by Constantine et al. (2008), the racial microaggression experiences of Black faculty in academia was explored, identifying microaggressions such as invisibility and hypervisibility, challenges to their qualifications, inadequate mentoring, high service-oriented assignments, racial discrimination, and pressure *to not be too Black*.

In a more recent study, Louis et al. (2016), found that Black faculty at PWIs experienced microaggressions from various sources such as students, faculty, and administration. These experiences resulted in the participants experiencing a sense of helplessness that resulted in heightened feelings of stress that negatively affected their work. The difficult experience of microaggressions, rather real or perceived, was openly discussed by four of the six participants of the current study. In a blatant situation of microaggressive behavior, Participant 5 recalled a conversation had with his dean.

Like many counseling programs, we do interviews. And we went through our cycle last year and we interviewed maybe 50 candidates. And out of those interviews I had zero Black men. And I know it's a national trend, so it's not like we're special in that way. But also we had zero Black men and we're in a metro area that has Black students. And we have Black students on campus who probably would be interested in counseling. And I was like, "Why aren't they

coming to our program? Or even interviewing? They don't have to come, but why are they not even checking us out?"

So I had that question and nobody had the answer. I was talking to my dean about it, a White man, and this is what he said. I said, "Hey, I just noticed this." And so it's really helping to inspire some research I want to do about our profession. And so he said, "Oh, let me know the results. Maybe we'll need to lower the standards and we'll get more Black men." And I was like, "Huh?" I didn't even respond.

Without recognition of his offense, the dean had undeniably communicated his view that Black men were unable to meet the program's standards. In another instance, though they did not equate it to a negative experience, a participant identified that he was often sought by students and staff alike on his opinion on certain things, as they wanted the opinion of someone who was Black. This experience spoke to the hyper visibility identified in the data collected by Constantine et al. (2008). Where experiences such as this was clearly linked to race, what some participants described as microaggressive behavior was not as clearly connected. Examples of this include students challenging one of the participant's teaching, as well as a participant being assigned a mentor following the critique of how they gave feedback to their students. However, rather it was real or perceived, what was evident was the negative implications this had on the individual participants.

### **Mental Health of Black Male Faculty at Predominantly White Institutions**

The literature found that Black male faculty experience unique race relation challenges that have persisted over time. These challenges have typically centered around

Black male faculty being one of the few, if not the only Black male faculty in their department. These experiences, which oftentimes begin when Black men are CES students, include Black men experiencing marginalization, isolation, negative classroom and teaching experiences with students, struggles with navigating research and service, and negotiating their identity (Ford, 2023; Black & Bimper, 2020; Brooms, 2018; Arnold et al., 2016). This was reflected in data of the current study as five of the six participants described experiencing race relation dynamics that had negative implications on their well-being.

In a couple of the participants' experiences, they were not always aware of their stress response within the moment. These participants spoke openly of how they did not recognize that they were experiencing stress until they later reflected with colleagues, their own counselor or when they were removed from the stress inducing environment altogether. This brings concerns as these individuals were not aware of the stress that they were enduring and subsequently were not intentional in taking actions to reduce it. Contingent on the intensity, duration, and magnitude of the stress, this could have potentially had detrimental effects on various body functions involving their cognition, memory, immune, cardiovascular, endocrine and gastrointestinal systems (Yaribeygi et al., 2017).

While some participants identified that they did not initially register their stress response, others were able to identify the negative implications within the moment. Arnold et al. (2016) found that as a result of race relation stressors, participants became concerned about how they were being perceived and subsequently would describe

negotiating their identity as they battled against the negative perceptions of themselves. This data was illustrated in the experience of two participants with one identifying their discomfort when engaging with students in certain school settings or the other struggling with the idea of “messaging up” as the only Black male professor many of his students had ever had. As the result, they shifted the way they engaged with their students either by changing the way that they spoke or by avoiding certain settings.

Unlike what was generated in the data of other studies, in general, participants of the current study did not report that they felt the need to engage in their work in a way that was more than what was formally required (Turner and Grauerholz 2017 ; Arnold et al. 2016; Louis et al. 2016). However, one participant recalled advice given from a Black male CES faculty member when he was still a Ph.D CES student, "Don't give them any excuse to not give you tenure." And that stayed with me, and I never gave them any excuse not to.” Despite this mindset, this participant described feeling that the notion, “we must work twice as hard” found in data generated in previous research conducted by Arnold et al. (2016) and Louis et al. (2016), adds additional pressure that sometimes is not helpful.

Despite the differing stress experiences of the participants, most of the participants felt that navigating the challenges associated with them working in a majority White space took away from their mental capacity to some capacity. This reflects the idea of racial trauma or what was coined by Smith (2004), racial battle fatigue. Sliverstein (2020) explained the idea further identifying that instead of dealing with the energy that we need for daily life events, we are redirecting it to deal with racism. Some participants

described the feeling of being burnt out while others described not feeling mentally present or as if they had “a bunch of tabs open in their mind”. Because they had to dedicate so much of their mental capacity to navigating the space, they were not able to focus solely on things that they found most important such as their teaching and research.

### **Hiring Concerns in Counselor Education**

Diversity is oftentimes an important pillar of higher education (Dollarhide et al., 2018). Despite this, there is a significant discrepancy between those who identify as Black and other ethnic groups who worked in CES. One of the most underrepresented groups are Black men. According CACREP (2020), less than 4% of nearly 2,500 full-time faculty identify as Black men. The literature has identified that some of the some of the factors that contribute to the Black male retention in CES include stress, limited financial and mentoring support, unwelcoming work environments and challenges when striving for promotion and tenure (Brooks & Steen, 2010). An additional factor that contributes to Black male faculty representation in CES begins as early as the hiring process. Struggles with the hiring process for Black faculty revolve around pseudopolicies, hidden directives and having their qualifications challenged (Arnold et al., 2016; Constantine et al., 2008). Two of the six participants of the current study spoke on their experience with navigating these challenges.

In one participant experience, the participant expressed how the program denied him employment due to him lacking experience within the domain of research. This was a decision that the participant felt was unjust as the role was at a teaching-intensive university, a domain in which he had a wealth of experience. It is unclear why a program

at teaching-intensive university neglected to see the value in his teaching experience, nor why they placed so much value on his research however, there may have been other factors that contributed to their decision making outside of his race. Notably, this participant described experiencing various forms of bias as a CES student prior to pursuing a career in the field. These past encounters could have contributed to the lens in which the participant assessed their CES experiences.

The second participant's experiences contrasted with the initial as the participant was able to draw more clear lines of the department's hiring practices and the implications it had on the diversity of its staff. According to Arnold et al. (2016), pseudopolicies and hidden directives come from those in power and produce other power-ed people who reinforce and confirm exclusionary practices. With the latter participant, he served as a disrupter to the process, challenging the practices that were in place which ultimately resulted in the department hiring more racially diverse faculty.

In both experiences, the participants perceived that the departments utilized hiring criteria that prevented racially diverse faculty from becoming hired. The question then arises, if this was the case, how do departments ensure that their hiring criteria, as well as hiring panels do not allow for racial bias to determine who's considered qualified or not? This issue speaks to the second tenet of the CRT, permanence of racism, which suggests that racism is persistent and embedded in the policies, practices, procedures, and institutionalized systems of education (Milner, 2017).

### **Contributions of the Study to the Counseling Field**

Regarding this study's contributions of knowledge to the counseling field, it is important to note that the lived race relation experiences of Black male faculty had been thoroughly studied across professions, however this study highlighted how this dynamic looks within CES. This study found that Black male faculty are typically the only Black men within their department, if not their entire campus. As a result, Black male CES faculty experience similar dynamics as their counterparts of different fields. Like what was found in previous research, participants of this study experienced being challenged by their students, negotiating their identity in White spaces, the experience of tokenism, as well as feelings of isolation (Arnold et al., 2016; Ford, 2023; Turner & Grauerholz, 2017). As a result of these experiences, participants described feelings of isolation, inadequacy, burnout, stress and anxiety.

However, to mitigate the symptoms associated with negative race relation experiences, participants found the importance of creating homeplace, a concept created by Hooks (1990), which is a safe space that Black people can affirm one another and by doing so, heal the wounds associated with racism. Participants sought this by reaching out to Black faculty across campus or within their networks for mentorship and other forms of community. Though it did not change their environment, it validated their experiences and provided the refuge needed for them to persevere.

### **Reflections**

The purpose of this study was to highlight the experience of Black male CES faculty who work at PWIs by employing the principals of Heidegger's hermeneutic

theory while utilizing the CRT as a lens. The study was designed to contribute information to the counseling profession that could illuminate and give understanding to the challenges faced by Black men who work as CES faculty. Based on the literature reviewed, the data generated was mostly anticipated. My Dasein influenced the way in which I processed my data. As a Black man who intends on working in CES, I found myself feeling a sense of disappointment and discouragement in how many of the participants experienced the profession. Subsequently, I took time away from analysis of my data and reflected on if it was something I still wanted to pursue. Through my time away from analysis, I completed reflective journaling before returning with a different lens. Revisiting the data through the process of the hermeneutic circle, my perspective shifted from the experiences coming from a deficit lens to one of hope and resilience.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The study's limitations relate to its qualitative methodology. Due to the small sample size of six participants, the results of the study may not speak to the experiences of other Black male CES faculty. Additionally, though the study's focus was on the experience of Black male CES, the majority of participants that were represented were African-Americans. Only one participant differed, identifying as Afro-Caribbean.

### **Recommendations**

This study contributed to research that studies the lived experiences of minority faculty at PWIs. The research's data highlighted what this experience looks like particularly with Black male CES faculty, a previously understudied focus. Despite the insight that this research illuminated, questions are raised regarding the intersectionality

of not only race and gender, but also age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic background. Recommendations for further research include exploring how each of the aforementioned identity characteristics and their intersections, influence the faculty member's experiences in their CES departments. By exploring these intersecting dynamics, one will have a better understanding of the experience of marginalized populations.

In future studies, researchers should also explore the experience of other Black ethnicities outside of African Americans, such as Africans, Afro-Caribbeans, and Afro-Latins. Additionally, Participant 3 who had experience teaching in both brick and mortar as well as the online setting, found that there was a difference in experience in the two settings. "Again, in the online space compared to a brick and mortar, the department is huge. That's something that needs to be looked at, because of the limited face-to-face interactions, it is harder to experience race relations as a Black man in a larger online university compared to a smaller knit brick and mortar university." Based on this insight, a comparative study between the race relation experiences in a brick and mortar setting compared to an online setting, could produce additional insight.

### **Implications**

The race relation experiences of Black faculty in general, as well as Black men specifically, at PWIs has been documented well in past literature (Arnold et al. 2016; Constantine et al. 2008; Hannon et al., Henry, 2021; 2019; Killough et al., 2017; Louis et al. 2016; Sparkman, 2021). These faculty identified unique challenges that influenced the way in which they navigated the PWI academia space. The experiences included varying

levels of microaggressions, overcoming negative perceptions, feelings of isolation, being challenged or critiqued by their White students and colleagues, as well as negotiating their identity (Arnold et al., 2016; Ford, 2023; Killough et al., 2017; Louis et al., 2016; Sparkman, 2021; Turner and Grauerholz, 2017). The findings of this study confirmed that Black male CES faculty who work at PWIs experience similar challenges.

The goal of CES programs is to prepare counseling professionals to positively impact their clients and communities through effective practices, leadership, and advocacy. With those of various races and cultures seeking the support of counseling professionals, it is important to incorporate best practices to meet their unique needs. Preparation to meet these needs begin in academia. To support these needs, the ACA (2014) code of ethics highlights recruitment and retention of diverse faculty as an ethical responsibility, as programs with faculty that value diversity are able to train culturally competent counselors. However, CES still lacks in its diversity of their full-time faculty with approximately 62% of them being White and less than 4% of them being Black men (CACREP, 2020). By highlighting the lived experiences of these Black men, this study could inform dialogue on how CES programs may create more inclusive environments that could improve the experience of not only Black male faculty, but also the experiences of other minority faculty. The hope is that by improving the experience of minority CES faculty, the experience of CES students will be positively influenced, which would subsequently improve the experience of clients of various experiences and backgrounds.

## **Conclusion**

Contributing to the current literature of CES, the study focused on exploring the lived race relation experiences of Black male CES faculty who work at PWIs. This study's findings confirmed many of the challenges that were experienced by Black faculty in other fields of study. The four main themes that were produced from this study were Negative Implications of Navigating Race Relations, Awareness Used as a Tool to Navigate Negative Race Relations, Shifting Behavior to Adjust to PWI Environment, and Seeing Racial Disparity In Hiring and Promotion Process. The experiences that occurred within these themes centered around participants adjusting their behavior, identifying bias in hiring practices, exploring the implications of navigating race relations, and identifying supporting factors that helped them to persevere. The results of this study may be used inform CES departments on how to improve their culture and dynamics, enhance the experience of their Black male faculty, and improve their retention.

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### Appendix: Interview Questions

Hello, my name is Timothy Irving, and I will be facilitating this interview today. The goal of this study is to explore the lived race relation experiences of Black male CES faculty at PWIs. As a Black male who has experience working as CES faculty at a PWI, I value your insight. My hope is that this study will highlight race relation issues in the field and provide information that could generate policies that support the improvement of job satisfaction and job effectiveness of Black males in the CES field.

Before we get started, did you have any questions or concerns that I can address?

#### **Interview Questions**

1. To get started, tell me a bit about how long you have worked in CES and your role.
2. Tell me about your experience of becoming employed in your role as a counselor educator.
3. What is your experience working in a predominantly White institution?
4. Have you also had experience working in a HBCU?
5. How would you compare these experiences?
6. What has been your experience when engaging with other cultures within this environment?
7. If any, how have negative and/or positive race relation experiences looked like for you in your program?
8. Did this experience have an impact on your emotional health? How?
9. Did this experience have an impact on your physical health? How?
10. In your experience, how has race relation concerns been addressed in your program?

**End of Interview**

Thank you for extending me your insight and time today. If there is any missing or unclear information, I may reach out to you for a follow-up interview. Also before everything is finalized, I will allow you to look over the analysis of our interview, in order to ensure that I capture what you wanted to communicate accurately. If there are any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out, thank you.